



NUI MAYNOOTH

Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

Gendered Rhetoric in the Pedagogy of Non-Korean Sŏn

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This dissertation is dedicated to

the memory of

Prof. Jackie Sheehan  
(1966-2018)

Asian Studies Scholar, Expert on China, Human Rights Champion and  
for a short time, Friend.

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### **Conventions and Abbreviations**

Korean names and terms have for the most part been transliterated using the McHune-Reischauer (MR) system with the exception of extant placenames or words which are better known according to the revised system e.g. Seoul, Gyeongju, *hangeul* (Korean alphabet). Japanese placenames and terms are transliterated using the modified Hepburn system and Pinyin is used for the transliteration of Chinese terms except in the case of the word for 氣 “intrinsic energy” (Korean: *ki*) which I have transliterated as *chi* rather than *qi*. I observe the East Asian convention of giving the family name first. One of the most important words in this dissertation – Sŏn, can be transliterated as ‘Seon’ according to the new revised system without diacritics but I prefer the MR version which, once one is familiar with it, is less open to misinterpretation and it also captures the monosyllabic nature of the original Chinese character better. The Korean language honorific for an ordained monk or nun, is transliterated as *sŭnim* according to MR system which I have used here without the diacritic; *sunim* since that is invariably what is used by South Korean monastics despite the revised romanization system being used for their names. I have chosen to use the revised transliteration for the words ‘Jogye’ (Order of Korean Buddhism) and ‘woori’ (‘we’) rather than the MR, “Chogye” and “Uri” simply because that is how the order transliterates the word at present and Woori is quite a common word in public discourse and is better recognized in the revised transliteration.

I use the following abbreviations to indicate which language is transcribed or translated; K. (Korean), C. (Chinese), J. (Japanese), Skt. (Sanskrit), T. (Tibetan), Th. (Thai), P. (Pāli).

All dates used in this study unless otherwise stated within the text, follow the Gregorian calendar with the abbreviation CE (Common Era) afterwards as an alternative to Anno Domini. I have endeavoured as much as possible to make the text available to a readership unfamiliar with Buddhist, East Asian or Korean Studies and have for that reason I hope the reader will not find the frequency of footnotes too burdensome.

At times, I put the English translation of a Korean word in brackets after the preceding transliteration in MR. For example *Pulgyo* (K. Buddhism). In places where an established term in East Asian Buddhism common to all of the three countries (China, Korea, Japan) is used, I will put the Korean MR romanized transliteration first followed by the classical Chinese and if necessary an English translation in brackets afterwards. I will generally leave out the Korean language script and use MR so as not to confuse things too much. In the case of introducing concepts in English, the translation will be introduced in inverted commas followed by the Chinese characters and then the pinyin transliteration in brackets afterwards, the C. indicating that what is transliterated is Chinese e.g. “Five Periods and Eight Teachings” 五時八教 (C. *wǔ shí bā jiào*) or “mode of exposition” 化儀 (C. *huà yí*). Names of individuals will be given in the East Asian style with family-name first. If that person is Korean, their name will be transliterated Korean followed by classical Chinese followed by their dates of birth and death e.g. Kim Iryöp 金一葉 (1896-1971). If the person is Japanese, it can be taken that the transliteration of their name accords with the modified Hepburn system followed by the kanji/ classical Chinese and their dates e.g. Hakuin Ekaku 白隱 慧鶴 (1686 – 1769).

All Abbreviations are listed in the Glossary at the end of the dissertation but the most frequently repeated are:

**DMZ** – De-Militarized Zone, the border which divides the Korean peninsula.

**DPRK** – Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea)

**KHS** – Kanhwason or *Kànhuà Chán* 看話禪 (J. kanna Zen/ kanwa Zen) “Questioning Meditation,” the type of Sōn/ Zen practice most commonly associated with contemporary South Korean Buddhism.

**KSZ** – the Kwanum School of Zen, founded by the Korean Zen Master Seung Sahn.

**NCP** (Non-Conceptual Pedagogy) – what Buswell calls ‘illocutionary,’ non-verbal, gestural, sometimes seemingly bizarre pedagogies which are intended to shock the student out of an everyday ‘conceptualizing’ state of mind. These types of pedagogies can be vocal (i.e. spoken words or non-verbal shouts) or they can be physical (i.e non-verbal gestures with the body or even strikes and or beatings qualified as appropriate due to the timing and context in which they are used).

**ROK** – Republic of Korea (South Korea).

**SKSB** – South Korean Sōn Buddhism

**TSP** – The Temple Stay Program run by the South Korean Ministry of Tourism in co-operation with the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism

**ZCR** – Zen Centre Regensburg run by South-Korean trained Hyongak Sunim in Germany.

## Summary

This research can be reduced to two fundamental questions; what happens to Sŏn Buddhist pedagogy when it moves beyond the Korean peninsula into various contexts in Europe and elsewhere in Asia? And; might there be a gendered aspect to any adaptations and accommodations in non-Korean contexts? This project adopts a constructivist methodology to conduct an ethnographic investigation into the semiotic function of Korean Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy in various non-Korean social and cultural contexts in Europe and Asia. By adopting a hitherto unused gender paradigm through which to research Sŏn pedagogy itself and its transnational interactions, mediations, transcultural-flows and relationships, this research investigates contemporary South Korean Sŏn Buddhist transnationalism itself to present four key findings.

Firstly, this study frames post-Korean War (1953 onwards) Sŏn transnationalism and its spread from South Korea to the Global North, in the backdrop of the South Korean Buddhist ‘Purification Movement’ (1954-1970) which ostensibly ‘purified’ South Korean Buddhism of colonial ‘Japanized’ elements but which this research argues was a gendered division of the South Korean Sŏn institution itself, a bifurcation which reflected a “Western” orientalist view drawn from Buddhist modernism which dichotomized Buddhist meditation and ritual.

Referring to historical precedents and following Walraven’s use of the ‘public’ and ‘private’ within historical Korean religious culture as a paradigm, this research shows that this division is both symptomatic of the influence of Buddhist modernism on early twentieth-century Korean Buddhist transnationalism and that it characterizes subsequent post-war South

Korean transnationalism until the present. I apply Walraven's notion of public and private to domestic and transnational Sŏn.

Secondly, as the spread of post-war South Korean Sŏn Buddhism correlates with the transition of the South Korean economy from the Global South to the Global North it also coincided with the second-wave of global feminism. Building on the first point above of 'public' and 'private' being gendered in the historical Korean socio-religious context, this research shows that the gendered institutional-division of Sŏn during the 'Purification Movement' in South Korea, constructed an institutional ecclesiastical Sŏn which participates in re-masculinizing the nation. This extrapolates abroad in Sŏn transnationalism to reveal a continuum in which exist 'parallel congregations' – Sŏn Buddhist communities of ethnic-South Korean emigrants which sprung up in the post-war period and non-Korean 'convert' centres which for the most part do not overlap and I include the southern half of the Korean peninsula in this analysis of Sŏn transnationalism. The nature of these parallel congregations within the continuum of contemporary transnational Sŏn have implications for whether Sŏn can even be called [South] Korean any longer and how despite sometimes virulent anti-Japanese sentiment used to divide Sŏn institutionally at home, it exhibits rhetoric of Japanese imperial Zen in Europe with respect to race and providing in some cases, a type of generic Zen 'couture' for right-wing extremism.

Thirdly, through participant-observation at South Korean Buddhist sites in Europe (Germany, France and Poland) and in Asia (Hong Kong, Myanmar and Thailand) as well as semi-structured qualitative interviews of both Sŏn teachers and learners, this gendered perspective implemented in this research suggests that despite 'traditional' perceptions of Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy, the eclipsed feminine collaborates in this rhetoric in a number of ways. In the East

Asian context, this collaboration co-constructs masculinity while outside of South Korea, this collaboration co-constructs the empowerment of the individual.

Offering itself as a form of gendered bio-power for the state, institutional South Korean Sŏn is inextricably tied to the androcentric military-industrial-complex of South Korea which ecclesiastic South Korean Sŏn endorses politically with its gendered rhetoric. Based on this gendered notion of public and private within domestic and transnational South Korean Sŏn mentioned above, this research relates the political aspect of gendered Sŏn-rhetoric in transnational contexts back to the super-structure of domestic South Korean Sŏn by theorizing if ethnic-South Korea Sŏn transnationalism is part of a state-endorsed re-masculinizing within the Global North – what I call an ‘eschatology of re-unification’ which being nationalized can never be transcended until the existential crisis of the androcentric-state is resolved through re-unification or by destruction. In that sense, the semiotic function of Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy participates in state discourse.

By conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews on location in Europe and Asia, participant observation, interviews online and an online-survey of monastics in South Korea, this research is one of the most extensive inquiries into contemporary Sŏn practice as well as contemporary Sŏn transnationalism at large. Specifically, this project is one of very few which takes women into account in the analysis of Sŏn Buddhism and the only research conducted into the gendered nature of Sŏn pedagogy.



## 1.1 Introduction

On February 28<sup>th</sup> 2012, I was in the impressive lecture hall at the headquarters of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism in Seoul, South Korea. The hall was thronged with grey-robed monastics filing into the hall near the palace district of the city. With its polished wooden panel-walls and high conical-bore ceiling reaching up to a skylight, it is a bright space with both excellent acoustics and a sense of quiet. Tiered rows of big comfortable armchairs face a dais upon which a long heavy cabinet-style committee-table screens the legs of the speakers looking out at eye-level with the middle rows of the audience. The majority of the monastics in attendance are women.

On the front of the committee-table is a golden ring with three golden circles on the inside signifying the Triple-Gem, the graphic insignia of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism. High up on the polished timber-panel walls, the lampshades on either side are crafted in the form of a lotus flower.<sup>1</sup> In a deep square alcove set high up into the curved timber-panel wall behind the committee-table was a reasonably large statue of Shakyamuni Buddha in gold about 3.5 feet in height sitting in a lotus-position watching over proceedings. Hanging above the Buddha's head across the length of the dais is a banner detailing the reason I was lucky to be in attendance.

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<sup>1</sup> The lotus flower symbolizes an enlightened mind in Buddhism because it grows in the mud but remains unstained by its surroundings. The lotus-motif is found everywhere in Buddhist Asia, on plinths for sculptures, in paintings, held in the hands of Buddhist saints in those paintings or sculptures, as shades for lanterns, floral carvings on pillars and in the eaves of temples or as graphic-symbols for a plethora of Buddhist purposes. The Three Jewels of Buddhism, sometimes called the Triple Gem refers to the foundational vital components of; 1) the Buddha Himself; 2) the Dharma (the Buddha's Teaching) and; 3) the Sangha or community of Buddhists, lay and monastic.



Figure 1 Status and Role of the Bhikkhuni Saṅgha in South Korea Conference, 28 February 2012

February 28<sup>th</sup> 2012 is a day-long conference on the Status and Role of the Bhikkhuni Saṅgha in South Korea (*piḡunisūṅga-ūi uisangwa yŏkhal*).<sup>2,3</sup> Besides many bhikkhuni sunims and a scattering of male sunims, were members of the Buddhist Women's

<sup>2</sup> Both *Bhikkhuni* and *Saṅgha* are Pali words. *Bhikkhuni* means a female monastic i.e a Buddhist nun. *Saṅgha* refers to the monastic community, either male or female or both and sometimes can refer to the wider community of Buddhists lay or monastic. 'Sūnim' (MR) or 'Sunim' (revised) is a transliteration of Korean meaning *Venerable* (abbr. Ven.), an honorific title for a monk or a nun. On the panel was the Ven. Takyeon, Member of the General Assembly of the Jogye Order of (South) Korean Buddhism - or Takyeon *Sūnim* following the Korean convention (*Sūnim* is the standard form of address for a Buddhist monastic in South Korea); Beopan Sūnim of the Special Committee for Constitutional & Law Reform also of the General Assembly; Cho Eun-su, a Buddhist philosophy scholar of notoriety from Seoul National University; Ms. Oak Bok-yeon from the Religion and Gender Research Centre; Ms. Kim Yeong-ran of The Arbour Counselling Center for Women's Rights; the Planning Director of the National Bhikhuni Association, Hyotan Sūnim; and Mr. Woo Hee-jong a representative of Buddhist Solidarity for Justice and Peace.

<sup>3</sup> Some of these organizations don't have a name in English so I've tried to translate them as best I could.

Development Institute (BWDI) who did some outreach work with elderly South Korean survivors of Japanese imperial-military sexual-slavery (most often referred to as ‘comfort women’ – Korean women who had been abducted or coerced into sexual-slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army before and during the Pacific War). The BWDI undertook the regular scheduling of visits to spend time with the elderly survivors at their walk-in museum/ care-home facility not far from Seoul (BWDI 2012).

A core group of the same elderly survivors had campaigned weekly for almost three decades directly in front of the fortress-like Japanese Embassy compound just two streets over from where we sat in Jogye Order headquarters. They would be there the day after the conference on the Status and Role of the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha in South Korea as the conference fell on a Tuesday and their weekly protest was called ‘Wednesday Demonstration’ for obvious reasons. I’d heard around that time that the surviving women, affectionately and respectfully called ‘Grandmothers’ in the Korean vernacular, co-habited in a house which had originally been funded by Buddhist monks and I’d attended the Wednesday Demonstration on a few occasions to witness for myself the enduring legacy of colonialism on the Korean peninsula and the decades long defiance of these survivors.<sup>4</sup> I’d later visited the ‘House of Sharing’ where the Grandmothers lived to interview one of the women, Lee Ok-seon.

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<sup>4</sup> I had attended a couple of the millennial protests and written about it at the time; <https://www.irishexaminer.com/world/shadow-of-japanese-sex-slaves-mars-relationship-with-korea-178636.html>

For the Grandmothers, the Wednesday Demonstration was a lengthy campaign for a proper apology but for others, participation in the Wednesday Demonstration was less about women's or human rights than it was about national pride. In fact, the survivors had been shunned and vilified by their fellow South Koreans for decades before the discourse on the issue changed. On January 7<sup>th</sup> 2017 facing the fortified Japanese Embassy in Seoul - a Buddhist monk of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, the Venerable Jungwon intentionally set himself ablaze at the same weekly Wednesday Demonstration (BBC News 2017). His self-immolation was not so much in solidarity with the survivors as a protest against then president (since impeached) Park Geun-hye (b. 1952).

Rather than the individual women's rights Jungwon Sūnim felt that the Korean nation had been betrayed and disgraced at the hands of the colonial oppressor due to President Park's botched handling of the 2015 resolution with Japan, a resolution which continues to haunt South Korean-Japanese relations under Park's successor Moon Jae-in and Abe's protégé, the recently elected Suga Yoshihide. Korea was yet again humiliated and the ordained Buddhist monk called Park a 'traitor' before he died a couple of days later from the third-degree burns - though the long history of bodily sacrifice in East Asian Buddhism was probably lost on most of the Western media.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Since the Second Patriarch of Zen, Dàzǔ Huìkě 大祖慧可 (487 – 593 CE) cut-off and presented his own arm as an offering to the First Patriarch in the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE, East Asian Zen monks have been amputating their own fingers to avoid compulsory military-service and the possibility of having to kill someone (Buswell 1993) or participating in righteous monk armies to defend the country and at other times self-immolating in political protest more often seen in Tibetan Buddhism and perhaps more famously seen in Vietnamese Thiền/Zen Buddhism.

At the same Wednesday Demonstration outside the Japanese Embassy compound in 2013, Vietnam Veterans Association of Korea (VVAK) members had burned Shinzo Abe's effigy along with Japanese flags when the Mayor of Osaka announced that the 'comfort women' had been necessary to 'maintain discipline' within the imperial army (Malm 2013). The VVAK were back again two streets over at the gates of Jogye Order headquarters on April 7, 2015 hysterically protesting against a reconciliation event scheduled to be held for Vietnamese survivors of South Korean atrocities during the Vietnam War (Chomsky and Herman 1973:27). This time round, in front of the temple-headquarters built with the help of the Japanese colonial government in 1937 - formerly known as T'aego-sa temple - the veteran's association were accusing the Jogye Order of being 'anti-state.' In the spirit of *hoguk Pulgyo* (K. 'state-protectionist Buddhism'), the order cancelled the reconciliation event at a day's notice with the Vietnamese survivors in-country ready to attend the event (Hankyoreh 2015). In both cases of 2013 and 2015 the women themselves, be they either Korean or Vietnamese, were a footnote to national pride and in that sense, accessories to it.

I had watched intently the story of the VVAK's protest outside Jogye Order headquarters via the internet from a Korean Zen centre in the south of France and observed Jungwon Sūnim's self-immolation while back in Ireland having started this research, asking myself the difference between a Jogye Order monk Jungwon Sūnim's burning of himself and VVAK veterans' cries of 'anti-state' at the gates of Jogye-sa Temple. As Sharf is careful to point out, Sōn/ Zen "had a long history of allying itself with state interests, resisting the state only when its material interests were at stake" (Sharf 1995:47) and the order had

not only participated in the Vietnam War but offered Buddhism as a “spiritual weapon” to the state in a “sacred war” (Tikhonov 2017b:16–17). Jungwon Sūnim’s self-immolation protest was against President Park disgracing the South Korean state. We can assume that due to his lack of counter-protest against the VVAK in 2015, Jungwon Sūnim was not protesting brutality against women in general but only against Korean women if even that. His was a pro-state if not a state-protectionist protest.<sup>6</sup>

Going to war in Vietnam while the Korean monastic community was splitting along gender lines back in Korea, was the backdrop for post-liberation present-day Korean Zen or *Sōn* transnationalism. In *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory and the Post-Cold War in Asia*, Charles Armstrong (2007:299) traces the legacy of the Japanese imperial army within the ROK armed forces after independence through the Korean War and those active in Vietnam from 1964 to 1973. Many of the officers amongst the some 300,000 South Korean troops in Vietnam, like then President of South Korea Park Chung-hee (1917 – 1979), had been officers in the Japanese military before independence and received their training in Japanese colonial military units. Like Park himself, many of those troops professed Buddhism.

Military training within the South Korean military-industrial-complex after independence was still modelled on the Japanese template which Armstrong notes for its harshness (ibid). As Japanese Buddhism had collaborated with the Imperial Army and its

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<sup>6</sup> I had also interviewed one of the surviving ‘Comfort Women’ in 2013 and had made one of the first attempts to merge the two discourses mentioned above but failed to publish the interview accessible here; <https://youtu.be/vYSirZIVIS8>

aggression - especially the Japanese Sōtō Zen sect – by the time of the Vietnam War the Jogye Order had vigorously campaigned to the Buddhist military dictator President Park to be allowed to send Buddhist chaplains to Vietnam and succeeded (Tikhonov 2017b; Victoria 2006). Parallel to getting a foothold in university campuses in the United States during the second-wave of global feminism and counter-culture ideals of egalitarianism, South Korean nuns of the T'aego Zen Order in South Korea were being denied the right to marry while their male counterparts in the Taego Order were allowed to forego vows of celibacy as were Jogye Order military chaplains.

Fast-forward to 28 February 2012 at the conference on the Status and Role of the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha, I should not have been so shocked by what unfolded. Towards the latter half of the proceedings during the conference on *the Status and Role of the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha*, a late-middle-aged male monk stood up in the middle of the floor, previously indistinguishable from the shaven-headed grey-robed monastics and simply started a loud aggressive tirade on the role of women in Buddhism. He must have been in his mid to late sixties and he was shouting. His opinions were not complimentary and he cited scripture to back up his claims - that in their present incarnation as women which was a result of transgressions in past-lives - it was far more difficult for them to attain Buddhist 'Enlightenment' (spiritual-realization and its simultaneous – and some would contend sudden/ instantaneous - liberation from existential suffering) with the implicit suggestion that they were wasting their time. I was sitting there embarrassed like everyone else but also wondering where all the Enlightened men were in that case.



*Figure 2 Though a few monks were seated in the front rows here according to their ranks, mostly female monastics attending the Status and Role of the Bhikkhunī Saṅgha in South Korea conference 28th February 2012, Seoul South Korea.*

Hurt grumblings and murmurs from the younger bhikkhunīs could be heard rippling around the auditorium but he was an elderly male and Confucian ethics or Korean etiquette meant it was difficult to interrupt him – he went on for quite some time. After some very heated exchanges, it was left for an elderly bhikkhunī sunim sitting to my right (I can be seen in the top left of the above photograph), to put him in his place and tell him in so many words, that he was a dinosaur but not until it had devolved into a little bit of a shouting match. This was something the younger nuns could not have done. Emotion had reached a pitch, tempers were frayed, voices trembled and what had up until that point been a pleasant event, was spoiled.



I had attended the conference interested to see issues of gender addressed by what was and is a monastic community with progressive aspirations but out of the few male monks there, this particular sūnim had ruined it all. The elderly nun, senior and obviously held in high esteem was visibly emotional, her face whitened from adrenalin and her eyes watered with what I imagined as the weight of many years of having to listen to the same narrative or perhaps the necessity to put the belligerent monk in his place which was no mean feat. The conference ended on a low note although sadly it probably reflected the role and status of Bhikkhunī sunims quite fairly in the minds of some of the old-guard of Korean male sunims and in South Korea, it was the old-guard that decided everything.



*Figure 3 Cubicle-door in the segregated men's room at the Buddhist temple of Bongeun-sa temple, Seoul circa 2013.*

However at the time, still entertaining somewhat romantic notions of Buddhism, I simply didn't factor in an ethnocentric and androcentric interpretation of Buddhism despite one of the most famous temples in Seoul having segregated lavatory cubicles marked "Foreigner." I'd been excluded from a meditation-retreat at a famous Seoul Zen centre on a similar basis - because "foreigners" would "disturb the practice."

### 1.2.1 Overview

The events and experiences mentioned above amongst others during 7.5 years in South Korea occurred at the intersection of religion, gender, nationalism, postcolonialism and trans-nationalism. Those and later experiences have shaped this research which is a study of what happens to Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy when it functions in transnational contexts away from the androcentric ecclesiastical contexts of its native South Korea. By attempting to open the purview of academic enquiry into the patriarchal Sŏn and Zen traditions to include women's Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy as well as men's and to bring them both under the same lens, this dissertation attempts to deepen our understanding of Sŏn, Zen and Chán pedagogy simply by departing from the more androcentric scholarly focus on an androcentric lineage of Zen patriarchs and their own gendered pedagogy. Chán, Zen and Sŏn history has much to say about women if even through the qualified silence which is sometimes a feature of the Meditation sect's rhetorical pedagogy.<sup>7</sup>

After the various teachings we call "Buddhism" spread out of India and seem to have become emplanted in China from circa the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards, different strands and teachings within this new religion developed in different ways. *Sŏn* is the historical Korean branch of a Sinified Buddhist sect which called itself the "Meditation School" or in Chinese, the *Chánzong* 禪宗, *Sŏn* being the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese character *Chán* 禪. The Meditation School of East Asian Buddhism is better known globally by the Japanese pronunciation of the same character, *Zen* which retains the

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<sup>7</sup> Sŏn is the Korean branch of the East Asian Meditation School of Buddhism more commonly known in the West by its Japanese variant 'Zen.' Sŏn is sometimes referred to as 'Korean Zen' though this hardly does justice to the many variants of both Korean Sŏn and Japanese Zen.

meaning, “Meditation” or “Concentration.” This monastic and ecclesiastical sect of East Asian Buddhism which continued to develop in China from about the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century onwards and in Korea and Japan from about the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, rhetorically and in practical terms, emphasized direct experiential insight into the fundamental nature of reality which – according to the Meditation School – could only be gained through introspective meditation. This was in opposition to doctrinal sects and schools of Buddhism that placed emphasis on scriptural study.

Within the Meditation School and its culture, Chán/ Sōn/ Zen can refer to the sect itself in ecclesiastical-institutional terms as explained above, and it can also refer the particular practice of introspective-meditation extolled by the sect i.e practicing Chán, practicing Sōn or practicing Zen. It can further refer to the very moment of experiential insight which comes when the practitioner least expects it after having prepared through years and sometimes decades of introspective practice. Added to these layers of traditional meaning, “Zen” in global terms and in numerous languages including English, can now signify an ambient mood, minimalist design and it can refer to someone who is calm, impassive and/ or not easily fazed. The Japanese variant “Zen” is attached to the branding of a multitude of products and services from restaurants to clothing, music, electronic equipment, sleeping pills, hotel/ health spa/ therapeutic experiences, tea-pots, cosmetics, cigarette rolling-papers, shoes, environmental sustainability projects and much more.

Buddhism - according to the theological parlance often adopted by Buddhist Studies scholars - is soteriological in that it is concerned with liberation from suffering. Some

methods devised for this purpose and attached to the particular school or sect which taught those methods, focused on prayer and morality, leading a good life in the hopes of attaining liberation from suffering after death or at least a better reincarnation which would be more conducive to spiritual liberation or ‘Enlightenment’ in the next life.<sup>8</sup> Such a practice towards the ultimate goal of Buddhism was and still is in Sōn/ Zen terms, considered a ‘Gradual’ approach towards Enlightenment. The Meditation School in China, Japan and Korea; the Chán, Zen and Sōn schools respectively, claim superiority over the other meditative and scriptural-study-based methods of other sects on the basis of their ‘Sudden’ approach to achieving Enlightenment in this life-time in the here-and-now.

### **1.2.2 Sōn Rhetorical Pedagogy**

Unlike classical Western traditions such as political and legally orientated Greek and Roman rhetoric as a persuasive art, persuasion ‘by rational or emotive means’ is irrelevant to the concerns of Chán, Sōn and Zen rhetorical pedagogy (Wright 1993:26). Chán, Zen and for our purposes, Sōn rhetoric is an idiom of ‘concrete linguistic and rhetorical devices’ related to ‘sociopolitical, doctrinal and sectarian contexts’ (Anderl 2011:2). Students in some schools and sects of Indian or East Asian Buddhism might

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<sup>8</sup> The *raison d’être* and the goal of all introspective Buddhist practice be it scriptural study or meditative, is to achieve ‘Enlightenment.’ The English language word is a translation of the Sanskrit *Bodhi* बोधि, which became current in English around the 1870s. Enlightenment is generally explained not as some state-of-mind that is attained or generated through meditative-practice but rather as the original state of the mind. This original state of our minds is held to be obscured by deluded, negative thought-patterns based on conditioned conceptualizing thought based on our culture, background, education, gender, class and past actions and experiences. The ‘enlightened’ state is not attained or received from the outside but rather returned to by removing the obscurations (usually through meditative practice) and is therefore defined as seeing reality as it really is in the here and now.

simply study scripture throughout their careers or debate Buddhist logic. Other schools practice meditation but do so ‘gradually’ according to the perspective of the Chán, Zen and Sōn schools in the sense that the meditation practice is not supplemented by any additional means. Deriving from Chinese Chán, masters of the Sōn school have access to a range of non-verbal though sometimes vocal, gestural and what Buswell calls ‘illocutionary’ pedagogies which are contingent on the ‘Enlightened wisdom’ (spiritual insight). The discretion or (in Buddhist terms) the ‘skilful means’ (Skt. *upāya*) of the Sōn/ Zen master i.e being able to discern the opportune moment when the student’s introspective-meditation practice has ripened to the point when they are ready to receive such seemingly unorthodox pedagogy, is itself held to be the hallmark of a highly realized master who has mastered this skill through years of introspective practice.

Like its Chinese and Japanese counter-parts, the ‘Sudden Teaching’ of the ecclesiastical Sōn sect consists of pedagogy that is designed to supplement the student’s regular meditation practice with a trigger in the form of a loud shocking non-verbal shout or roar, a silent non-vocal bodily gesture in answer to a question, a qualified non-gestural silence, a slap in the face or a strike with a stick to the end of bringing about a sudden, revelatory, instantaneous and experiential realization into the fundamental nature of reality. These triggers or innovative pedagogies are by now a quite defined traditional corpus or idiom of techniques employed by the Sōn/ Zen master. This pedagogy is designed to shock the student/ practitioner out of their everyday conceptualizing thought patterns so as to bring about Enlightenment or liberation/ release from suffering. Therefore Sōn and its pedagogy in the way that it supplements an otherwise indefinite period of meditative

practice, considers itself to be a 'short-cut' towards Enlightenment which is immanent. In some recorded cases, amputation and physical mutilation has occurred. These are all what Buswell calls Non-Conceptual Pedagogies (NCPs).

According to classical literature and tradition, NCPs are an instantaneous and spontaneous response from the Sōn/ Zen master to the individual needs of a student in a particular situation however, the idiom of responses is by now quite recognizable and there is a performative, rehearsed (though not necessarily less effective) and ritualized aspect to NCPs. What I mean by Sōn rhetorical pedagogy includes both the spontaneous incidence of a non-conceptual pedagogy such as a shout or a slap in a random situation as well as for example, a rehearsed and ritualized strike of the Sōn master's staff to open a sermon.

This 'subitist' or 'Sudden' pedagogy and the rhetoric surrounding it, distinguish the Meditation School from its East Asian counterparts. Such pedagogy - some would say, conveniently - seems non-sensical to those who are not ready to receive it i.e the ignorant and unenlightened amongst us. Such pedagogy is inseparable from the Sōn/ Zen master or at least is inseparable from her/ his Enlightenment which affords her/him the insight to know exactly what kind of NCP to implement spontaneously at a given moment in order to trigger the Enlightenment and liberate a fellow sentient-being from suffering. The NCPs are inseparable from the body of the master who through the utilization of NCP evokes and embodies the androcentric classical Chán and Sōn texts which establish the authority and lineage of patriarchs who have transmitted their Enlightened Mind through

the same NCPs and texts. Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy will be discussed in more detail in the excursus between chapters one and two.

### **1.2.3 Aims and Objectives of the Research**

This research can be reduced to the fundamental question; what happens to contemporary Sŏn Buddhist pedagogy when it moves beyond the Korean peninsula into various contexts in Europe and elsewhere in Asia. In asking that question, I also inquire if a gendered aspect to Sŏn pedagogy might account for these changes. It was towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that Sŏn Buddhism began its unsteady journey to internationalization in the modern period. As Buswell (2005) has shown, up until this point with the exception of a period during the middle of the Chosŏn Dynasty 1392 – 1897, Sŏn had not only been in dialogue with Chinese Chán and Japanese Zen throughout the course of its history but Sŏn on the peninsula had also informed the development of continental Chinese Chán (Buswell 1989, 2017).

The supposedly anti-intellectual, iconoclastic, antinomian and sometimes seemingly irreverent nature of Chán, Sŏn and Zen pedagogy on the other hand, though its early development was characterized by a non-uniform fluidity of approach, had remained largely unchanged since the ecclesiasts of the Chinese Sòng Dynasty 宋朝 (960 – 1279 CE) brought Meditation School pedagogy to a form largely unchanged by the 19<sup>th</sup> century and indeed the present. Nevertheless, by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Sŏn on the Korean peninsula was marginalized and found itself having to compete with missionary Christianity and missionary Japanese Buddhism.

Due to the period of Sŏn's internationalization and laicization continuing through the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945) which still exerts a contentious influence over East Asian politics to this day, South Korean scholars have largely tended to avoid this area of study. Where previously most scholarship on Korean Buddhism was concerned with the distant past or was text based, philological and thus heavily reliant on knowledge of classical Chinese - the last two decades has seen a notable growth of interest in Korean Buddhism throughout the modern period (Baker 2012, 2014, 2016; Buswell 1997, 2010; Cho Sungtaek 2002, 2012; Chung 2012, Han 1998, Harris 2002, 2012; Huh 2000, 2012; Kang 2003; Kim 1995; Lee Youngho 2002; McBride 2006; Mok 2004; Nathan 2009; Park JY 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2011, 2019; Park Pori 2005, 2009; Ryu 1999, Sorensen 1991, Tedesco 2002, Tikhonov 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010; Walraven 2007) with much less scholars looking specifically at the place of women in Korean Buddhism or in Korean religion generally (E. Cho 2012a; Cho Eunsu 2009; Kendall 1987; Lee 2006; Park 2005a, 2017; Walraven 1998; B. C. A. Walraven 2019).

Research that exists specifically on the subject of women in Korean Buddhism has emerged only very recently. To date, no extant research asks if gender might be the area where a difference in rhetorical pedagogy might emerge in transnational Sŏn contexts or if indeed Sŏn/ Zen or Chán rhetoric generally might have a gendered aspect to begin with. In spite of this growing field of interest in the development of modern Korean Buddhism throughout the course of the previous century, very little attention has been paid to how contemporary Sŏn operates and functions outside of South Korea today or indeed for that matter, inside or outside North Korea.



The aim of this dissertation is to explore non-Korean Sŏn in Europe and Asia in order to understand the ways in which rhetorical Sŏn pedagogy adapts in different non-Korean contexts. As the first in-depth study into how contemporary Sŏn operates pedagogically outside of Korea and asking if that operation is facilitated or hindered by gender, this research represents a contribution to our knowledge of contemporary Sŏn, non-Korean Sŏn. This work also contributes to an understanding of gender as it pertains to Korean Buddhism generally and Global Zen Buddhism as a whole. By examining all of the ways in which ecclesiastical Sŏn and Zen are taught by both men and women, it is hoped there will emerge a fuller picture of what Sŏn and Zen actually are and if they are something different in different contexts. However it is first necessary to discuss the terminology used to engage in this research. This will be followed by a deeper contextualization of the study, situating this research not only historically but also in relation to existing literature on Zen with a final section on the organization of the chapters within this dissertation.

### **1.3.1 The Meaning of ‘Korea’ and ‘Zen’ in the Global North; Theorizing [South]**

#### **Korean Sŏn Transnationalism**

South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism is unique in that it is trans-national in its domestic context due to the peninsula being divided between the two Koreas as well as being the location of a conceptual boundary between the global North and the global South. Both Koreas have diverging political discourses with regard to themselves and each other’s legitimacy as well as their respective pasts and their interpretation of Korean history. Hyung-il Pai (2000) and Andre Schmid (2002) have shown how ‘Korea’ and its foundation-myth were constructed as a response to Japanese colonialism in the early

twentieth-century. As in Ireland where a middle-class urban elite constructed a rural, peasant, Gaelic-speaking west coast and island-world as the essence of “Irishness” (Kiberd 1996) early twentieth-century nationalist scholars in colonial Korea such as Ch’oe Nam-sŏn (1890 – 1957) constructed a marginalized and by that point, private religion – Buddhism - as the quintessence of Korean-ness.

Both generally and with specific reference to Buddhism however, Korean-ness and the exonym “Korea” is applied to two different nation states who both refer to themselves differently in the Korean language.<sup>9</sup> “Korea” as a term, is misleading in the English language as it can be deployed on either side of the DMZ by either political-state in the abovementioned historical contexts. It can also be used in opposition to contemporary Chinese or Japanese historical, cultural and territorial claims (Gries 2005; Pai 1994, 2014). “Korea” as a term in isolation can refer to a pre or mid-colonial peninsula or indeed it can refer to the collection of kingdoms, confederacies and commanderies which occupied the peninsula throughout the course of history and which at times encompassed large swathes of present-day Manchuria.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> *Daehan Minguk* (“Country of the Great Han People”) is the endonym of South Korea which is officially called the Republic of Korea. *Chosŏn Minjuju-ŭi Inmin Konghwaguk* (“Democratic People’s Republic of Chosŏn”) is officially called the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea – Chosŏn is the name of the dynasty which held sway over a unified peninsula from 1392 – 1897 CE. The word “Korea” derives from *Koryŏ* (998 – 1392CE) which was the dynasty which preceded Chosŏn. *Koryŏ* was itself named after an earlier kingdom called *Koguryŏ* which occupied much of the north of the peninsula as well as present-day Manchuria up until 668 CE. The ROK dates the founding of *Koguryŏ* to the year 31 BCE. The DPRK claims *Koguryŏ* was founded in 277 BCE. In 2004 China claimed the kingdom of *Koguryŏ* as having been Chinese. See (Hundt and He 2015).

<sup>10</sup> The DPRK rejects South Korea’s nomenclature referring to the “Unified” Silla period (668 – 935 CE) on the grounds that though the preceding three separate kingdoms on the peninsula were united, vast areas of *Koguryŏ* territory was lost resulting in the formation of the kingdom of Palhae (698 – 926 CE). Consequently, the DPRK refers to the years 668 – 935 as *Nambuk Punnyŏl Sidae* (Period of Disunion Between North and South).

For this reason, I will be careful to refer to South Korea and North Korea where appropriate and will only avail of the blanket term “Korea” when referring to the peninsula as a whole in geographic terms and/ or referring to pre-colonial pan-Korean history and Korean Buddhist history before the partition of the peninsula.

In his aptly titled “Imagining ‘Korean Buddhism’: the Invention of a National Religious Tradition,” Robert Buswell shows how in the context of Buddhism, ‘the invention of an ethnolinguistic nationalism such as that found in Korea was aided by the growing use of the vernacular in literature and abetted by the expansion of print capitalism in newspapers and magazines, all features’ he notes ‘found as well in the Korean Buddhist tradition’ (Buswell 1998:74). Buswell goes on to note how with respect to Korean Buddhism, ‘the nationalist narrative’ of early twentieth-century scholars like Ch’oe Nam-sŏn ‘continues to inform contemporary scholars demonstrating how ingrained this shibboleth has become’ (Buswell 1998:105).

The practice of identifying Buddhism as the quintessence of Korean-ness began in the early twentieth-century during which time - although certainly connected to global circuits of knowledge - Korean Buddhist transnationalism was predominantly limited to the Global South i.e. elsewhere in East Asia (Kim 2018) but by no means limited to the borders of the Korean peninsula. In the latter half of the twentieth-century, the flow of South Korean Buddhism to the Global North mirrored an integration with the American world-empire that resulted in South Korea becoming integrated into the Global North while the DPRK remained firmly and deliberately in the Global South.

Though due to prevailing colonial discourses until relatively recently, Buswell (2005) showed that the Korean peninsula - though peripheral to the continental Chinese metropole - was very much an active participant in goings-on in Buddhist East Asia since various *buddhisms* spread into the peninsula in the first centuries CE. Though Buddhist culture became marginalized or at least privatized through a withdrawal of state support during the Chosŏn Dynasty 1392 - 1897 (Baker 2014a; Walraven 2007) it was by no means moribund. Yet throughout the twentieth-century until the present, organized ecclesiastical Buddhism in South Korea would never reclaim the monopoly on state-level endorsement which it had enjoyed in its pre-Chosŏn days.

I should finish this section by stating that I see no conflict in adopting an emphasis on *South* Korean Buddhism for the purposes of scholarly inquiry and South Koreans referring to their own tradition as simply “Korean Buddhism.” This, they are entitled to do not only for historical reasons and for the experience of living out their traditional practice from day to day but for the reason that *Pulgyo* (K. Buddhism) originally constructed the peninsula as a holistic geographical, social and political monad. The Sŏn monk Tosŏn 道詵 (827–898 CE) was active at the end of the Unified Silla Period (668 – 935) just before the Koryŏ Dynastic transition circa 918.

According to his own geomantic theory, *pibo sat’ap sŏl* (C. 裨補寺塔說) he advocated the placement of temples and pagodas at auspicious sites throughout the Korean peninsula, not only according to the traditional ritual of demarcating a sacred site (Skt. *sīmābandha*) but as ‘a palliative to geographic anomalies’ and a way to correct blocked or weakened

flows of energy in the native geography, a notion unique to Korean geomancy in which Tosŏn also saw the peninsula as a ship in need of ballast to be kept on an even keel (Buswell 2003:3799)(Vermeersch 2007:79). In this way Tosŏn viewed the country as a *maṇḍala* and his practice was adopted in the succeeding Koryŏ Dynasty as a means of protecting the nation and ‘integrating local power groups into the dynastic structure’(Buswell 2003:3800)(Choi 1989:85–88). In this sense, to be a Buddhist in South Korea is to view the peninsula as a geomantic whole despite political partition. One might say the same for North Korean Buddhists of course.

### **1.3.2 B/ordering Buddhism as a Process of the DMZ; South Korean Buddhism in the Global North**

I argue that South Korea’s transnational “Korean Buddhism” participates in a process of ‘b/ordering’ between the North (DPRK) and South (ROK) Korean states. B/ordering as discussed by Jacobs and Van Assche (2014) regards borders as fluid processes which are constantly reproduced. The De-Militarized Zone (DMZ) separating the DPRK and the ROK not only divides the Korean peninsula but is a conceptual boundary between the global North and the global South. Mohandesi et al. (2018:5) stress, ‘the concept of the Global North is far from perfect’ but like the above authors who stress the transnational flows within the Global North and emphasize that it is ‘neither separate nor homogeneous,’ like Mohandesi et al., I feel not only that the concept of the Global North ‘has value as a working concept’ but is especially useful as a theoretical framework in the South Korean case where the purpose is not to emphasize the destination of South Korean Buddhism beyond its own borders but rather as a paradigm for understanding the forces

exerted on the trans-national flow of South Korean Sŏn back and forth across a continuum and the growth of a non-Korean Sŏn at nodal points in that continuum which are predominantly in the Global North.

South Korean Buddhism found in the Global North coincided with South Korea's induction into that Global North. Put another way, as the 'discursive practice of b/ordering' is a process of distancing or disassociation from North Korea, the growth of South Korean Buddhism in the United States and Europe can be viewed as part of a bordering process amidst which the ROK leaves North Korea behind in the Global South. The growth in religious, and by extension Buddhist affiliation in South Korea 'coincided with the development of South Korean capitalism' (Tikhonov 2017a:165) which had begun to develop in Korea with the tying up of Korean interests such as mining by Japanese corporations in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Calman 1992).

While of course [Korean] "Buddhism" existed prior to this time (but not as we now know it), affiliation or even thinking of oneself as "a Buddhist" was not something that was to the forefront of Chosŏn-Korean priorities until the lead up to the colonial period in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century brought with it Japanese Buddhism and the influx of Christianity. The spread of South Korean Buddhism into the United States and Europe in the latter half of the twentieth-century is the story of South Korea's transition from the Global South to the Global North.

South Korean Buddhism is connected to international flows of information, knowledge, goods and people through which channels; South Korean television dramas, K-pop (South Korean pop music), movies and international sporting events proliferate. Through these channels, South Korea can control or at least manage their international image in a particular way. International perceptions of North Korea due to isolationism, internal censorship, perceived human rights abuses and international economic-sanctions are influenced by historical military exchanges, threats of such in the present and are mediated by the western media which is a process that the DPRK have far less control over.

At the very least we can say that North Korean Buddhism can be defined by not being globalized, not having to compete with Christianity at home and not feeling the need to compete with and define itself in opposition to Japanese Zen or other buddhisms abroad. In those terms alone, it is probably much more similar to any “traditional” Buddhism that existed on the peninsula. Furthermore, it seems safe to suggest that a large demographic within North Korean Buddhism is most likely *not* viewed as ‘*Japanized*’ even though the community of Buddhist monks are all married which is not the case for half of the monastic community in South Korea.

### **1.3.3 [South] Korean Buddhism and Epistemic Violence**

South Koreans are of course absolutely entitled to refer to their tradition as “Korean Buddhism.” On the above bases I argue that in terms of a *scholarly* approach to understanding South Korean Buddhist transnationalism, unquestioningly adopting this

nomenclature obscures a true picture of the mobility of *South* Korean Sŏn Buddhism. Acknowledging that there is a North Korean Buddhism as well as a South Korean Buddhism is essential for ‘untying religion from emplaced communities’ and for understanding the ‘mediations and implications of religiosities on the move in Asia’ and beyond (Cao and Lau 2013:4). What Lopez says with respect to Buddhism and colonialism generally could as easily be applied to South Korea’s “Korean” Buddhism – ‘the hypostasized object,’ in this case ““Korean” Buddhism,’ because it has been created by [South] Korea, ‘could also be controlled by it’(Lopez 1995:7).

Present-day South Korean Buddhist rhetoric about ‘Korean Buddhism’ which lays claim to the whole 1600 year tradition on both sides of the DMZ does so in the space created by North Korean (Buddhist) silence.<sup>11</sup> Buddhism is seen by both countries as part of a shared ethnonationalist identity and is one of the few areas of co-operation between the North and South Korean governments which take place at the joint-economic zone of Kaesŏng, at the Kŭmgang Mountain tourist resort and in the restoration of some Buddhist temples within North Korea (Senécal 2013) (Vermeersch n.d.).<sup>12</sup> That being said, Mark A. Nathan notes that the conditions for Buddhism in North Korea ‘are so starkly different and the information about the current state of Buddhism in that country so unreliable that

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<sup>11</sup> The *Chosŏn Pulgyodo Ryŏnmaeng* or *Chobulyŏn* for short (Korean Buddhist Federation) is the governing body for the Buddhist community in North Korea overseeing 67 temples with approximately 300 married monks (there are no nuns in North Korea) who administer to a lay congregation of some 10,000 according to Senécal who says this number swells to 100,000 once a year during the annual Buddha’s Birthday celebrations (Senécal 2013:13).

<sup>12</sup> One Buddhist monk of the Jogye Order of (South) Korean Buddhism, the Venerable Pŏp’ta has visited North Korea hundreds of times while another monk of the Jogye Order lived in the north for 3 years during the renovation of Singye-sa temple (Senécal 2013:12). To put this in perspective, it is an unprecedented level of access and co-operation when South Korean citizens usually cannot enter the north.



the subject really requires separate treatment'(Nathan 2016:100). By the same token, North Korean Buddhism and South Korean Buddhism require not just separate treatment but separate terms.

On those bases alone, North Korean Buddhism is markedly different from its southern counterpart which by the same definition, could be regarded as trans-national on home soil. For example, a traditional-style wooden Korean Buddhist temple (Wonkwang-sa temple) constructed according to traditional Korean Buddhist architectural methods exists in Hungary. Though the Jogye Order of (South) Korean Buddhism's participation in the renovation of Singye-sa temple in the Kūmgang mountains of North Korea was in the renewal of existing infrastructure, both the Singye-sa and Wonkwang-sa projects involved South Korean Buddhism crossing borders.

Acknowledging South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism as a function of the DMZ is necessary for understanding it's flow into global contexts and helps us to think 'about how the flow of Asian religiosities across territories (re)produces or challenges conceptions of Western modernity, play a part in shaping what it means to be modern in the context of a globalizing Asia, and articulate a discursive category of Asia in diasporic conditions'(Cao and Lau 2013:4).

In a globalized world which North Korea is excluded from, South Korean Buddhist rhetoric about 'Korean Buddhism' has political implications for knowledge production and has the potential to reinforce Buswell's 'shibboleths' mentioned above and exemplify

a view where a ‘primordial religious traditions constitute Asia as distinct, rooted and essentialized’(Cao and Lau 2013:4). While it can acknowledge a shared pan-Korean Buddhist culture and tradition, it takes control of the narrative on that tradition committing a type of epistemic violence against North Korean Buddhism if not North Korea generally, in the process of distorting the image and perception of South Korea. The Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism for example, engages in epistemic violence when it routinely re-writes Korean Buddhist history and depicts historical monastic figures in the modern colours of their order when those figures wore different coloured robes in the past. This is not trivial when we consider that different Buddhist sects and their beliefs are recognized by their different coloured robes.

When we speak about Buddhism beyond *South* Korea and start speaking of a South Korean Buddhism (which automatically groups North Korean Buddhism with Chinese, Japanese or Western buddhisms), it may seem that we are entrenching what Cao and Lau called an Asia which is ‘rooted and essentialized.’ However, adhering to the notion of a pan-Korean “Korean Buddhism” with its implicit presumption of a Westernized modernity on the part of Buddhism in the South, commits far more epistemic violence by not acknowledging the border between the two countries across which the essentialized historical and teleological “Korean” tradition supposedly straddles but which in fact feeds into the process of b/ordering in which transnational South Korean Buddhism participates.

Adhering to the notion of South Korea's "Korean Buddhism" also perpetuates the Purification Movement which took place within South Korean Buddhism during the 1950s and 60s and was ostensibly concerned with removing "Japanized" elements from the ethnonationalist mainstream of South Korean Buddhism but which caused a pro-state - and therefore androcentric - gendered division of the South Korean Sōn Buddhist Saṅgha (monastic community).

It is interesting to note a number of things at this point - that the non-celibate status of North Korean Buddhist monks does not seem to be seen as a "*ch'in-il*" pro-Japanization issue since all of the approximately 300 Buddhist monks in North Korea today are married and don't shave their heads. Membership of the *Chosŏn Nodongdang* 朝鮮勞動黨 (Chosŏn [North Korean] Worker's Party) dictates one's loyalty in the non-globalized north of the peninsula. In the globalized south of the peninsula, an anti-Japanese identity is as important as being [South] Korean. It is also worth noting that in the period of South Korean Buddhist trans-national expansion and formation, Seung Sahn while decrying the 'militarized' nature of Japanese Zen, had no problem aligning his teaching with the Japanese word 'Zen' and its attendant rhetoric in the West as well as integrating pedagogical methods which would be viewed by South Koreans at least, as "Japanized" or "Japanese."

By the 1980s South Korean Buddhist activities involved Europe as well as the United States and continued throughout the 1990s. By 2002 when South Korea joint-hosted the World Cup with Japan, the Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism co-operated with

the South Korean government to open up South Korean Buddhist temples international tourists visiting the southern half of the peninsula under the Temple Stay Program (TSP). While married North Korean monks usually don't reside in their temples, people from all over the world can now sleep in the many South Korean temples which have been opened up as part of the TSP – it has become rather difficult to distinguish which Buddhism, north or south is more laicized.

#### **1.4.1 [South] Korean Buddhist Mobility and Translocation within the World-System**

At times when speaking about the various schools of Buddhism in historical and contemporary China, Korea and Japan, I will make reference as much as possible to the continent, peninsula and the archipelago respectively as a way of de-centring the discourse from that of modern nation-states and connoting the sense of a shared Buddhist culture which transcended modern borders and emphasized economic, cultural and informational flows in and out of the Korean peninsula independent of state nationalist discourses. In this I follow the innovation of Cox (2013) in applying world-systems analysis to the study of Buddhist flows (Wallerstein 1987).

In de-coupling Korean and indeed South Korean Buddhism from place and instead emphasizing it's flows and exchanges – what Tweed calls the 'trans-locative' study of Buddhism (2011:20) - there are a number of implications for the received view of Korean Buddhist and particularly Sŏn trans-nationalism. A trans-locative analysis helps the inquiry to step outside of binary understandings which separate East and West by virtue of ignoring such trans-locative flows (Cao and Lau 2013:4) and avoid the political role of

Buddhism which in a process of b/ordering, constantly reinforces that East-West binary by helping to perpetuate the cultural hegemony of a unique ethnonationalist and essentialized Korean identity. Also by de-coupling the analysis of South Korean Buddhism from a bordered ethnonationalist territory, the prevailing reluctance within much twentieth-century South Korean scholarship which views colonialism and modernity as mutually exclusive can be avoided.

Suffice it to say for now, ‘American hegemony brought together North America, much of Western Europe, [Korea] and Japan through a series of dense economic, cultural, political and above all military linkages, creating a chain of advanced capitalist countries’(Mohandesi et al. 2018:6). Korea north and south was released from one World-empire (Japan) only to be sequestered by another (the United States). ‘South Korea represents an interesting variation as a location that has moved, from a neo-colony whose own migrants’ and immigrants’ “return” was destined for the United States, to a sub-empire to which other ex-colonized peoples of Asia migrate short of reaching metropolises’(Lee 2010:31). The same cannot be said of North Korea. Looking at how South Korea became part of a Global North united by capitalism and military exchanges, we can start to ask if the flows of Japanese Zen to the Global North in the early twentieth century and the flows of South Korean Sŏn in the latter half of the twentieth-century are even two separate strands and both flows were heavily bound up with military exchanges.

Buddhist chaplaincy in the ROK armed forces in support of America during the Vietnam War are the earliest examples of South Korean Buddhist transnationalism in the post-

Pacific War period. This is another reason why I believe it is imperative we refer to a South Korean and not simply a “Korean” Buddhism. If “Korean” Buddhism can be defined at all, outside of its emic construction as a syncretic, ancient tradition with a timeless essence, it is that it is a buddhism with both a foot in the Global South (North Korea) and in the Global North (South Korea). However this conceptual break is no different from the transformation of Chosŏn Buddhism during the colonial period into something unlike anything that had gone before. Since South Korea is - in what military historian Bruce Cumings calls ‘a party of forgetting’ - I will refer to the South Korean-centric version of “Korean” Buddhism as [South] Korean Buddhism (Cumings 2010:161).

#### **1.4.2 [South] Korean Buddhist Trans-nationalism and “Europe”**

The meaning of “Europe” as a term to designate or conceive of as a fixed space which acts as a point of departure/ arrival for trans-locative flows between South Korea and “Asia,” has changed over time. Beckford is careful to draw our attention to the changing and relative definitions of globalization which until very recently ‘had not engaged adequately with questions of religion.’ Depending on the context, he notes that globalization can refer to a type of world-wide distribution, an unprecedentedly high-level of integration among social and cultural phenomena or it can refer to a type of standardisation in terms of homogenization of products globally (Beckford 2003:125).

According to the trimodal structural paradigm of world-systems theory which separates core, semi-peripheral and peripheral states, South Korea is a semi-peripheral state while

Europe is made up of both core and semi-peripheral states. Sites where I conducted ethnographic fieldwork outside of South Korea but also in Asia were also semi-peripheral; the Hong Kong autonomous region of China and the Kingdom of Thailand.

Besides the ‘economic, political and transformative potential of this zone of the world-system,’ Dunaway and Clelland note that semi-peripheries, as peripheral to the core but yet dominating peripheral states, are ‘both exploited and exploiter’ and can even ‘cause, contribute to and exacerbate world ethnic/ racial inequality’ (Dunaway and Clelland 2017:401, 416). Sites where I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in “Europe” were in Germany (a core state in world-systems terms) and in Poland, a post-socialist semi-peripheral state. I also conducted remote interviews with Sŏn teachers in France (also a core state) and in Serbia and Greece, also semi-periphery states.

Some of these countries were post-Christian but in the case of Hong Kong, a little bit more difficult to argue that it is a ‘post-Buddhist’ society given the British Victorian-era construction of “Buddhism” (Almond 1988). There were a number of factors which subverted the notion of an essential, rooted and bounded “Europe.” The existence of established and habitual flows of Polish and Lithuanian people between both Hong Kong and South Korea as well as the flows of South Koreans between one site in Germany as well as the movement of the non-Korean teacher from that site between Germany, South Korean, Greece, Norway and the United States. What seemed from the outset to be a distinct survey of “Europe” and “Asia” mediated by a “Korean Buddhism” was in fact a network of trans-locative flows between rhizomatic locations which depended more on

the ethnicity of the teacher in question than any organized or systematic plan for propagation. Furthermore, as Mohandesi et al. show above according to their theory, there are pockets of the Global North in the Global South and vice versa and I conducted fieldwork in one such pocket (Hong Kong) and a remote interview with a teacher resident in another (Singapore).

Furthermore, overlaid or perhaps inter-fused with this network of trans-locative flows was the existence of a virtual network of communication whereby global Sōn networks and Zen schools such as the Kwanum School of Zen organize, converse and even transmit the timeless teaching of Zen by transcending space in the creation of “virtual social spaces” (Ó Riain 2006:2). In the cases of both South Korea and Japan, Inoue Nobutaka attributes the globalization of religion in those countries to the rapid growth and uptake of informational technology and its global connectivity (Nobutaka 2007:470).

Such global connectivity and the transnational nature of cyber-space itself, adds a dimension to assessments such as that of Caroline Plüss – ‘processes taking place in trans-national arenas, such as the adaptation of migrants’ religion to the migrants’ new surroundings, are partly de-territorialized because the processes cannot be explained by the characteristics of one territory alone’ (Plüss 2009:492). Cyberspace becomes both new territory and process, both spatial and temporal. This might best be explained by what Ó Riain calls the ‘intensification of time-space’ where ‘the social experience of time and space becomes more explicit and more crucial to socio-economic actors’ lives, time



and space are mobilized more explicitly in individual and corporate action, and the institutionalization of time and space becomes more politicized' (Ó Riain 2006:2).

While this theory might seem to apply only to the workplace, Zen schools such as the global Kwannon School of Zen are well aware of these issues and their effects on potential members whom they hope to appeal to on the basis of providing an antidote to the pressures of modern life. The non-Korean abbot of Zen Centre Regensburg (ZCR), Germany broadcast live meditation sessions daily throughout the global pandemic lockdown of 2020 via Youtube and Facebook with people joining the meditation practice via video-link from European countries such as Austria, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Norway, Russia, Spain and the U.K, but also people joining from South Korea, South Africa various parts of the USA, Canada, various places in South America, Mexico, Iran and Israel. As Bernard Faure has shown, the homogenization of space which the Zen school contributed to, has always been politicized (Faure 1996) - in East Asia, the Chán, Sōn and Zen schools literally contributed to the creation of the political 'containers' we know as nation-states. Global Zen/ Sōn both reinforces East Asian shibboleths while crossing boundaries.

Robertson notes that, 'globalization is both challenging the existence of the nation-state as the major "container" of human-beings and *strengthening* it' (Robertson 2009:457).

Dis-embedding Sōn and Zen from 'time-space containers' (Korea and Japan as geographical locations and economic-political zones) where 'time and space were normalized as aspects of everyday life and political economic conditions (Ó Riain

2006:7, 12) and dis-embedding ethnographic Sŏn sites from rooted notions of “Europe” and “Asia,” was necessary in order to free “Korean” Sŏn and non-Korean Sŏn from modern discourses of an ethnonationalist and timeless “Buddhism.”

This was necessary when considering the South Korean context when South Korea’s ethnonationalist “Korean Buddhism” began to spread abroad into non-Korean contexts in a time period of torrential industrialization and modernization south of the DMZ during which South Korea essentially skipped modernism and went straight to postmodernism. This was not the case for North Korea who have not made this temporal shift. As South Korean Buddhism and North Korean Buddhism should be recognized as such and differentiated, the notion of a bounded “Europe” does not hold up to scrutiny.

### **1.5 Zen and the Sŏn of Korean Buddhist Nationalism**

Emphasizing ‘Korean’ or ‘South Korean’ in the above cases is not simply a case of decoupling religion and political territory in order to reveal the mobility, flows and mediations made by peninsular Buddhisms. The ethnonationalist South Korean reaction to the ‘Japanese Zen’ of the archipelago to where historical Korean Buddhisms flowed in the past is also vital for an understanding of South Korean Buddhist transnational mobility. Japanese Zen, though it became transnational in the early twentieth-century, did so in earnest in the post-war period from the 1960s onwards. For this reason, the Japanese pronunciation of the classical Chinese character 禪 ‘Zen’ has become current in the West.

To say however that there are no differences between these traditions besides the pronunciation of the original Chinese, would be to do them all a disservice and for that reason, I will make reference to Korean *Sŏn*, Japanese *Zen* and Chinese *Chán* where appropriate. As regards Vietnamese Zen which is a putative derivative of the Meditation Sect called *Thiền* in Vietnamese – I will omit it from this study for the most part because, if there is more Chán in Vietnam beyond some traces of literary topoi as Buswell and Lopez contend (2013:3749), I simply know little about it.

Within those cultures before globalization occurs, there are many Sŏns, Zens and Cháns and a variety of ways to practice any of them. When referring to all four in a general Asian context, I will use the phrase ‘the Meditation School’ or ‘The East Asian Meditation Schools.’ However, since ‘Zen’ has become current in the west, when referring to the Meditation School in European and Western contexts outside of East Asia, I will use the terms ‘Global Zen,’ ‘Western Zen’ in a general sense or ‘Zen in Germany,’ ‘Zen in Poland’ which is intended to refer to all East Asian Meditation Schools present in that country.

When speaking about Sŏn specifically, I will refer to either a pan-Korean historical Sŏn, South Korean Sŏn and non-Korean Sŏn. Examples of contested or at least disputed terminology have been seen in Europe with the lay [South] Korean Buddhism Promotion Foundation refusing to have the word ‘Zen’ in the name of their centre near Aix-en-Provence in the south of France because it is Japanese. Japanese Zen is popular in France and the word ‘Zen’ is well-known - there are hundreds of branches of Taisen Deshimaru

(1914 – 1982) affiliated Japanese Zen centres of the Sōtō sect amongst other sects of Japanese Zen and the European headquarters of Thích Nhất Hạnh’s Vietnamese Thiền (though Thích Nhất Hạnh generally uses the Japanese variant ‘Zen’ himself). The word ‘Sōn’ is unknown to the French however and the South Korean centre near Aix-en-Provence is generally unknown in the locality and attracts few visitors and little interest.

### **1.6 Ecclesiastic versus Monastic Chán and Sōn**

A final note on the distinction between the terms ‘lay,’ ‘monastic’ and ‘ecclesiastic’ within East Asian Buddhism. Though undoubtedly a laicization of both ecclesiastical and monastic Buddhism has occurred along with modernism the two are still somewhat distinct in the East Asian context. Monastic Buddhist environments in East Asia were not always limited to ordained religious ascetics as in the case of the Shaolin Temple from where Chán, Zen and Sōn issued or in Korean and Japanese temples which hosted high-ranking officials and visitors at certain times. In the case of the Shaolin Temple, it was not uncommon for lay-men to live in the temple and study before returning to the secular world. While of course they were required to follow monastic discipline while resident in the temple which included celibacy, it was understood that some residents e.g. the sons of high-ranking officials sent there to study martial arts, would be returning to lay-life. Their monastic vows were not taken for life.

The distinction between ecclesiastic and monastic, I believe hinges on institution. I will use ecclesiastic to refer specifically to ordained monks and nuns with a religious vocation in an institutional religious setting which is often, though not necessarily always,

monastic. ‘Monastic’ as a term can have a wider range of meaning as some temples for example are not affiliated with any order or religious institution though the ordained monks and nuns there live a monastic lifestyle. Monastic Sōn in South Korea for example could not function without the clandestine labour of literally thousands of lay-women many of whom receive lodging within the temple compound in return for their domestic work. These women certainly live and adhere to a monastic schedule but could not be called ecclesiasts any more than the son of a rich nobleman sent to a temple to study martial arts or scripture for a couple of years.

### **1.7 Why Non-Korean Sōn Pedagogy? The Purpose, Significance and Limitations of the Study**

This research project is based upon 42 semi-structured qualitative interviews and participant-observation conducted by this author throughout 2018 and 2019 in Europe and in Asia. Research participants were all in some way affiliated to a Korean Sōn Buddhist school, temple, *Sōnwōn* (Zen centre) or a teacher who had either done their Sōn/ Zen training in South Korea or who had trained under a Korean teacher. Denoting these sites as ‘non-Korean Sōn’ requires further clarification. I have chosen to term them as non-Korean on the basis of simply being sites where Sōn is taught and practiced outside the Korean peninsula be that in Asia (Hong Kong, Singapore, Bangkok) or in Europe.

However while I attempted to include ethnic Korean centres and temples in Europe for example, as part of ‘non-Korean Sōn,’ these centres and temples in which ethnic South Koreans were resident and practicing in Europe, were far more difficult to contact, access

and interview even when offering to do so in Korean. Furthermore, these ethnic South Korean Sōn Buddhist sites in Europe were almost exclusively aimed at ex-patriate South Koreans with limited exceptions in each case in which host country citizens who attended the temple or centre were married or in some way associated with South Koreans attending the site in question. For that reason, I do not include those centres as ‘non-Korean’ but nevertheless pursued contact and in two cases was able to conduct email interviews with them in order to contrast their practice and pedagogy with that of Sōn-sites with non-Korean teachers teaching Sōn/ Zen to local people.

In the context of this study, building a comparative body of interviews with male and female monastics in South Korea could have significantly increased the scope and depth of this project. There were a number of reasons why I decided against this approach. Apart from an extended trip to South Korea potentially consuming most of my limited research budget and apportioning resources away from my main area of interest which is non-Korean Sōn, there were also practical issues to be considered apart from logistics.

Having worked as an assistant-lecturer at a monastic college for Buddhist nuns in South Korea run by the dominant and mainstream Jogye Order, I knew that gaining access to Bhikkunī temples was very difficult for a male and a non-national. South Korea’s Confucian culture is very much based on connections even in Buddhist circles and I did not know anyone who could give me an introduction to a high-ranking monastic at any of the Bhikkunī temples. In spite of being able to make contact with the ethnic Korean Sōn-sites in Europe through the Korean language, it was still proving very difficult to contact

them and tentative overtures towards some of the larger Bhikkunī temples in South Korea proved unfruitful. I surmised based upon my experience of having lived in South Korea, that South Korean monastics are far more wary of a researcher with whom they have not built rapport with face to face according to South Korean etiquette and social-norms.

Attempting to arrange interviews from abroad was unlikely to yield the access required to match my data-set in Europe or if so, the cost in time and energy doing so would have been prohibitive. Accessing interviews successfully would have required relocating to South Korea for an extended period of possibly up to one year given the monastic schedule of intensive 3 month retreats in the Summer and in the Winter. Monastic life at these times is focused, intense and in many ways off-limits to the general public. The intensity is balanced somewhat by a period of relative freedom in the Spring and Autumn when monastics are allowed to wander from temple to temple or travel as they please making it difficult to predict the whereabouts of monks and nuns.

By the same token, studying Chinese Chán, Vietnamese Thiền and Japanese Zen rhetoric in Europe or outside of China, Vietnam and Japan but in Asia would also certainly have augmented the findings of this study. Chinese Chán is rarer in Europe than Japanese Zen and as mentioned, the most famous branch of Vietnamese Thiền, Thích Nhất Hạnh's Plum Village in France refers to itself as 'Zen' using the Japanese nomenclature if they refer to themselves as Meditation School at all. Japanese Zen is the most represented of the East Asian Meditation Schools in Europe if not globally but a number of considerations deterred me from a solely Korean Sŏn – Japanese Zen comparative study

at this time which I felt would be difficult to steer away from the politicized historical binaries mentioned above. My background in terms of experience immersed in practice environments in East Asia was Korean Sŏn and my own personal practice is rooted in Southern Shaolin (Chinese) Chán to be exact which being a non-ecclesiastic martial arts based practice is radically different from monastic styles of Korean and Japanese Zen (though martial arts based ways of practicing Sŏn and Zen exist in those countries either in some way connected to ecclesiastical modes of practice or being unconnected).

Also quite simply, while Korean speakers made up a minority of my final data set, this was not known from the outset and my lack of Japanese language proficiency deterred me from considering a foray into deeper ethnographic comparisons with Japanese Zen during this project which I also felt might detract from any attempt to explore non-Korean Sŏn rhetoric from a gendered standpoint. If there was going to be a binary, I wanted it to be between Korean and non-Korean Sŏn. There was also a practical note – my lack of contacts with those other traditions in a monastic/ ecclesiastical sense and factoring in the time-line of the PhD journey, it was decided that a more comparative approach would be impractical at this time. Nevertheless, this study suffers from a lack of the comparative approach which deepens any understanding of the social world and would have undoubtedly augmented and enhanced the findings below. From within the Korean context, this study is one-sided in terms of focusing on non-Korean Sŏn in contrast to South Korean Sŏn. I contacted the North Korean embassy in London in an effort to at least make some kind of remote contact with a representative or a member of the *Chobulyŏn* but received no reply. When in the later stages of the project I considered



going to South Korea to augment my data set, the coronavirus pandemic made international travel impossible.

The genesis of this dissertation was certainly my own experience having worked in South Korea as a visiting-researcher at the Buddhist affiliated Soomdo Cultural Centre in Seoul and as an assistant-lecturer at the International School of Buddhist Studies (ISBS) in South Korea. I also lived and worked for one year and a half at a South Korean lay *Sōnwŏn* (Zen centre) in the south France. The International School of Buddhist Studies near Seoul was run by the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism in association with Dongguk University, South Korea's oldest Buddhist university. The purpose of courses at ISBS was to prepare Buddhist nuns to propagate South Korea's "Korean" Buddhism at home and abroad, one of the defining features of modern Korean Buddhism (Mark Andrew Nathan 2010). *P'ogyo* or propagation and raising the profile of "Korean" Buddhism was also the purpose of the centre in France run by the lay and quite anti-clerical *Taehan Pulgyo Chinhŭngwŏn* (Korean Buddhism Promotion Foundation) or KBPF for short. While the monastic Jogye Order and the lay KBPF did not see eye to eye – the KBPF being characterized by somewhat of an anti-clerical demeanour – both viewed '*Woori*' *Pulgyo* (K. *Our* Buddhism) that is "Our" [Korean] Buddhism as being in need of promotion and propagation.

Having seen South Korean Buddhist propagation efforts both on the Korean peninsula and in Europe, its preparatory stages and its execution and having spent much of my 7.5 years in South Korea in Buddhist and Sōn practice environments, it was during the

undertaking of this project that I realized I harboured an amount of unquestioned opinions and biases about “Korean” Buddhism. I had to be careful to not only guard against when I projected those opinions onto the study but also guard against filling in gaps that were not there with my own knowledge about Buddhist social life in South Korea and to be faithful to the reality of European Sŏn contexts without committing any epistemic violence.

Similarly, it was important to guard against a presumption of discrimination. While there is patriarchy in South Korea, the *experience* of South Korean women is not necessarily an experience of being under patriarchal dominion. That point is important for our understanding of Sŏn in trans-national contexts beyond the Korean peninsula where we might also fall into the trap of presuming a context of gender equality in the so-called more socially ‘enlightened’ west in contrast to a context of presumed oppression in South Korea. “Buddhism” as a belief-system anywhere can also be ideological. The notion of Buddhism as a monocultural monolithic entity, the notion of “Korean” Buddhism, “Buddhism” or the notion of *Woori Pulgyo* (K. *Our Buddhism*) are all monolithic discourses which by their nature exclude something outside of themselves and have certain agendas. Monastic Chán and twentieth-century Sŏn ideology certainly had and have an ideology and the expansion of Sŏn abroad often conceals domestic ends and concerns related to state discourses of the South Korean military industrial complex.

### **1.8.1 Korean Sōn in a Time of Terror**

This theses will argue that *Sōn* helped to create global Zen discourse and therefore cannot be separated from it. In “Reconsidering Zen, Samurai, and the Martial Arts” (2016), Oleg Benesch cites the Zen-Samurai inspired “Warrior Mind Training” program used by the U.S military in Iraq as well as the case of Anders Behring Breivik (b. 1979), the terrorist who murdered 77 people in Norway in 2011 as examples of the enduring influence of ‘Samurai-Zen’ in Western culture. Defending himself against attempts to label him psychotic, Breivik – a self-proclaimed fascist and Nazi sympathizer who wanted to rid “Eurabia” of all muslims - attributed his calm and his ability to de-emotionalize himself to “bushīdo meditation” and said he lived by the ‘bushīdo codex’ (Benesch 2016:1) which had been constructed as a driving ideology for Japanese imperial aggression during the Pacific War. During that time pro-Japanese Korean Buddhist monks had also encouraged young Korean conscripts in the Japanese imperial army to become ‘military missionaries of Korean Buddhism in battle’ (Tikhonov 2015:10).

The earliest incidences of South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism was elsewhere in Asia during the first half of the twentieth-century to Manchuria and China. The first Korean Buddhist missionary to the West was also during this period when Toh Chinho (c. 1889 – c. 1979) settled in Hawai’i in 1931. In the post-war period however Korean Buddhism began to reach the mainland United States and Canada when a Korean monk named Samu Sunim (b. 1941) arrived in New York from South Korea via Japan in 1967.

Samu Sunim had been drafted into the ROK military in 1965 just as South Korea entered the Vietnam War and seems to have left South Korea soon after being drafted.<sup>13</sup>

As Samu Sunim was beginning to spread Korean Buddhism in the United States (although he operated using the Japanese word ‘Zen’ rather than Sōn), ROK Buddhist chaplains were operating in Vietnam during the Vietnam War in Buddhist field-temples. The Society for Buddhist Missionary Work in the Army viewed military chaplaincy as ‘the first step in making a Buddhist world’ and that the precepts of the Buddhist-influenced Korean counterpart to Bushīdo, called *Hwarang* after the Silla-Korean Buddhist warriors of the same name, be ‘a guiding philosophy’ and a ‘great spiritual weapon’ (Tikhonov 2015:18). The Sōn establishment with its historical military associations seemed perfectly willing to offer itself as an ideology.

In September 2018 in southern Poland at a Korean Zen temple during the second Pilot Study for this research, I listened to a Polish man participating in the meditation-retreat speak about how Europe was turning into a “caliphate.” The same man asked me if I had heard of Tommy Robinson (real name, Stephen Christopher Yaxley b. 1982), the anti-islam co-founder of the English Defence League (EDL) and whom this Polish man felt ‘says it like it is.’ I had indeed heard of Tommy Robinson; the terrorist and bushīdo-meditator Anders Breivik had claimed to have contacts with the EDL (Murray 2011).

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<sup>13</sup> The ROK would supply approximately 320,000 troops to the American war-effort in Vietnam which was the highest troop presence in Vietnam after the Americans.

At the same retreat, the “n-word” was also used at one point in the context of a “joke.” One of the other participants, a gracious and kind middle-aged Polish man tells me he left Ole Nydahl’s Diamond Way Tibetan Buddhism school - well-represented in Poland - in order to get away from such disturbing islamophobic, right-wing and racist views. The resident priest told me later in response to my questions and in typical Zen-fashion that I ask too many questions, ‘too much thinking’ and that Zen is ‘beyond words.’ The *Zaine* mentioned ironically by Bernard Faure springs to mind as do the words of a Greek participant in my research, “Who is Zen for?”

During the same retreat, the head of the American-Europe Parish of the Taego Order of Korean Buddhism flew in from the United States to ordain an Italian monk. A small candle-wick is burned into the flesh on the inside of his left forearm which leaves a small dot-like scar; bodily-sacrifice. In the past they used to burn nine wicks on the shaven forehead of aspirants, a mark that there was no turning back once the secular world had been renounced. It also helped to distinguish real monks from impostors. Western nuns in this same order are allowed to marry or have partners but back on the Korean peninsula, South Korean women are required to remain celibate while their male South Korean counterparts within the Taego Order can take a wife; bodily-sacrifice. It occurred to me that one didn’t have to demand an amputated arm (re: Huikē the Second Patriarch of Chán) in order to mutilate a woman; you just had to change the rhetoric from motherhood to impurity. During the Purification Movement within the South Korean sangha (community of monks and nuns) in the 1960s, monks of the same Taego Order retained the right to marry which had been introduced during the Japanese colonial period. Jogye

Order monks and Buddhist nuns in both orders were required to remain celibate.

Meanwhile, the Vietnam War raged on with many South Korean Buddhist soldiers implicated in atrocities and Samu Sunim began spreading a Korean Zen to the United States during the Second Wave of Global Feminism.

### **1.8.2 Sŏn and Extremism or the Martial Roots of Sŏn?**

Since South Korean Buddhism and Sŏn began to spread in Europe in the 1980s, it is one of the few not only officially sanctioned but also informal manifestations of South Korean cultural presence in European countries. It is also one of the least understood. Ironically (or perhaps not), I found it extremely difficult to gain access and make contact with ethnic-South Korean temples in Europe and had to extend my area of research to include centres in Asia. However, Westerners teaching South Korean Sŏn in Europe had all trained in South Korea.

Japanese Zen has been shown to be adaptable to extremism (Victoria 2006) and there is no reason to assume that South Korean Sŏn should be impervious to extremism when we consider that Buddhism is an ethnonationalist identity marker within South Korea itself and the above example of my unexpected experience in Poland ties South Korean Sŏn to wider discourses of Buddhist islamophobia and extremism perpetrated by monastic Buddhists in the south of Thailand (Jerryson 2012) and the disturbing case of the Buddhist monk Ashin Wirathu (b. 1968) who incites racial hatred and attacks against Rohingya muslims in Myanmar (Lehr, Lehr, and Roughley 2019). Not coincidentally, Ashin Wirathu, like Anders Breivik and the Polish Sŏn/ Zen enthusiast, has also

referenced the EDL as the inspiration for his policy of apartheid (NYP 2013) and boycotting of Muslim business in Myanmar. In the case of Thailand, though Lehr notes that anti-Muslim rhetoric is generally subdued, he also notes the emergence of *thahān phra* (Th. Soldier-monks) in the present-day, a precedent for which doesn't exist in the Theravāda Buddhist traditions of Southeast Asia but in the Shaolin Chán traditions of China and the *sūngbyōng* and *sōhei* (C. 僧兵) traditions of Korea and Japan respectively.<sup>14</sup>

It is also worthy of note that at the same retreat in Poland where I conducted my second Pilot Study, a Taego Order priest from Nürnberg, Germany was also in attendance. In order to be ordained in the America-Europe (A-E) Parish of the Taego Order, he had like his colleagues, completed the online study course conducted through the Institute of Buddhist Studies which was established by Ven. Dr. Jongmae Park, the head of the A-E parish. The German priest whose Korean language ordination name is Hae Sun runs a martial arts school in Nürnberg where he goes by the Chinese name of Chi Sim who was the last abbot of the Southern Shaolin monastery (dates unknown, c. mid-19<sup>th</sup> century). Hae Sun has a [website](#) for his martial arts school which overlaps with the [website](#) for his Taego Order Buddhist activities. As he teaches Wing Chun Kungfu which traces its lineage to the Southern Shaolin monastery, Hae Sun's Taego Order website has a section acknowledging the Shaolin roots of the Taego Order although it should be mentioned that these roots would be connected to the Northern Shaolin Temple where the First Patriarch

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<sup>14</sup> At various points throughout Korean history, Buddhist monks formed *Ŭibyōng* or Righteous Armies, most notably to repel the Japanese Invasions of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

of Chán, Bodhidharma taught.<sup>15</sup> Hae Sun's website states that he is not only the first Chán monk "in the main lineage of Wing Chun Kung Fu masters which has endured since the fall of the South Shaolin Monastery but that after 350 years (which he estimates to be the time-lapse since the burning of the Southern Shaolin monastery), the southern lineage is reunited with the original Chán lineage of Northern Shaolin Patriarch Bodhidharma" after whom he has named his Zen centre in Nürnberg.

Due to ethnonationalist concerns in South Korean Sŏn, the Chinese roots of Sŏn are usually downplayed if not passed over in silence in South Korea. The Sinophile Chosŏn Dynasty was in any case, less than hospitable to Buddhism and Sŏn. However, Chán, Sŏn, Zen and Shaolin in the West are less discriminating. It is an introspective technology which is used by Western armed-forces, terrorists and business-people alike. While Westerners have thus far been generally forgiving of the imperialist associations of ecclesiastical Japanese Zen, Korean Sŏn in the West has not only in some cases failed to distance itself from Japanese Samurai-Zen but has often aligned itself with that rhetoric. This dissertation will be a valuable contribution to answering as to why that may be the case.

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<sup>15</sup> Like later monastic Chán which split between Northern and Southern Schools, a Southern Shaolin Monastery was established in southern China which is said to have eventually grown to two, possibly three locations. Though documentary evidence is thin on the ground, the oral traditions of southern China trace nearly all major schools of Kungfu in the south back to the Southern Shaolin Temple as does Okinawan and by extension, Japanese Karate. The Southern Shaolin Monastery is held to have been destroyed by Qing Dynasty armies.



### **1.9.1 Position of the Researcher**

While this research is not specifically feminist, it explores the relationships between the masculine and feminine in Sŏn pedagogical contexts outside the Korean peninsula and in so doing makes a valuable contribution to opening up the under-researched field of gender related to Buddhism, South Korean Buddhism and Sŏn. In that sense this study explores both sides of the gender disjunction in order to uncover ideologies of nationalism, spirituality, power and control repressed beneath monastic Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy.

Aside from the performative tendency within some scholarship to make no claims to objectivity usually for the purposes of sidestepping labels of ‘positivism,’ acknowledging positionality seems more pressing than a simple admission of subjective bias. Having worked for the dominant monastic order in South Korea and also for a lay Korean Buddhist foundation in France, undertaking this study was a process of confronting biases and unquestioned opinions which I had held myself. These biases were in hindsight, a lack of self-reflexivity but on a deeper level, a lack of awareness surrounding the political reality of my position within organizations vying for space and legitimacy both domestically and trans-nationally at a specific point in time which I became more aware of as this research progressed.

In *Crossing and Dwelling – A Theory of Religion*, Tweed rejects the notion that ‘the theorist and the theorized are static’ and reimagines ‘theories as itineraries’ in the sense that ‘theories are embodied travels’ (Tweed 2009:8–9). In that sense as the vortices of my

relationship to certain buddhisms and my location within and adjacent to them shifted, my scholarly subjectivity shifted throughout the process of this research as my understanding of “Buddhism” (as a defined and unchanging Religion) and *buddhisms* (as embodying various discourses) changed.

This research was begun from the Western Buddhist standpoint that “Buddhism” should be socially-engaged and with the perhaps somewhat idealistic or even ideological position that “Buddhism” has a responsibility to effect positive social-change and that it would therefore be “un-Buddhist” to remain silent on certain issues of gender and race in contemporary Buddhism. Needless to say, I began with a number of universalist assumptions such as “Korea” and “Buddhism” not least the questionable notion of a universal and timeless “Korean Buddhism” which could somehow be interpreted as an object of study.

In terms of self-reflexivity and acknowledging bias, I feel like I have experienced both South Korean patriarchy as well as South Korean Buddhist ethno-nationalism. In broad daylight on the streets of Seoul, South Korean women in my company have been referred to with the derogatory term *yang-gongju* (lit. ‘Western Princess’ but figuratively more in the sense of ‘Western whore’) for simply being in the company of a western white-male such as myself which is not to mention the litany of other passive and micro-aggressions; stares, comments from surrounding tables at restaurants or even refusal of service at restaurants. It was at times an alienating experience to live in South Korea precisely because South Koreans refused to believe that such a thing as being refused service in a

restaurant for example, could happen in their country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century compounded by the presumption that “everything in Korea is easy for white people.”

My over-whelming impression at times like that however was how much more difficult it was for my girlfriend. By dating an Irishman, she was literally stepping outside the *minjok* – forsaking her place in the ethno-nation. To this day mixed-couples in South Korea in which the male partner is South Korean, are considered “Korean.” Mixed-couples in which the male is not South Korean are considered by law to be “multicultural couples” even if the female partner is South Korean. The ultimate effect of *Woori*-based conformity is that there was little freedom to love and in my experience it was a way of controlling women.<sup>16</sup> Society seemed to be constructed in such a way that a woman lost claim to her Korean-ness if she chose to date a non-Korean man and only men could transmit Korean blood.

Some South Koreans will no doubt comment that I am being negative about South Korea however I do this because I am obliged to acknowledge my subjectivity in this study and I must say from a research perspective, such experiences were invaluable. As someone who at that time considered themselves a “Buddhist,” such experiences as spending a lovely afternoon in a *Sŏnwŏn*/ Zen centre learning about *Woori* “Korean” *Pulgyo* and then at dinner afterwards with my girlfriend at the time and the conversations at all the

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<sup>16</sup> *Woori* 우리 lit. “Us” or “Our” e.g. *Woori Pulgyo*, “Our Buddhism” -a standard colloquialism to refer to Korean Buddhism. A South Korean by-word to connote the strong feeling of togetherness, collectivity or membership of the ethno-nation, it is by definition exclusive. Though it has some positive aspects in terms of a civic-spirited ability to mobilize on mass to protest or clean up the environment for example, I experienced it from the outside. I use the revised transliteration here. MR; *Uri*.

tables around us turning to the subject of “the type of Korean girls that date foreigners” were eye-opening. Though not specifically referencing my girlfriend, the message from the *Woori-Minjok* was clear. I would not have arrived at a place where I could theorize about gender and South Korean Sŏn without having had such experiences.

It was not just in general society that I felt on the outside but I was also excluded from Sŏn Buddhist practice-spaces in South Korea on the express grounds that I was ‘a foreigner’ and would therefore ‘disturb’ the practice (this was at the Zen Centre of one of South Korea’s most famous contemporary Sŏn/ Zen teachers). As with the previous examples, this occurred during the years 2006-2007 and 2009 – 2011. I attended a Zen centre in Seoul religiously almost every week during those years and living in specifically Zen Buddhist country was one of my many motivations for going to South Korea initially in 2006. I returned to South Korea in 2009 with the specific goal of pursuing an MA in Buddhist Philosophy though I moved away from Korean Sŏn practice myself after about 2011.

Besides being rather disillusioned, I found that the emphasis in Korean Sŏn meditation seemed to be - from my own personal perspective - for advanced monastic practitioners and unsuited to my own lay-life i.e. holding a *hwadu* as if your life depended on it every minute of every day (which is what one is supposed to do if one is practicing it properly) is an intensity of introspection which a monastery is set up to facilitate and was, in my own personal opinion, not suitable for laity negotiating the pressures of contemporary modern life in the secular world.

That being said, leaving urban Zen centres behind was a blessing in disguise as from that time I sought out South Korean mountain temples and went to the mountains almost every weekend for a period of years. Though I did not practice a specifically “Korean” type of Sŏn or Zen, I had many positive and enriching experiences to do with South Korean Buddhism at this time for which I am immensely grateful and spent many nights in temples on Mt. Seorak and on the Chiak mountain range.

To be welcomed in a mountain temple by South Korean monks and given a place to sleep in a cave with a linoleum covered floor, a sliding-door covering the mouth of the cave, a cast-iron Buddha statue in a small grotto above a comfortable mattress were some of the most enriching experiences of my own life. Sitting on a rock in the dark behind a Korean mountain temple with the sound of the bamboo rustling in the breeze and watching the occasional shooting-star beam across the night-sky was far more meaningful for me than trying to get into the clique at an urban Zen centre. I will leave it to the reader to decide if such experiences have clouded my vision and if my subjectivity compromises the present study too much.

As regards my own relation to Zen and Buddhism, I should mention that I worked for a time as an assistant-lecturer at the International School of Buddhist Studies run by the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism and also worked for the *Taehan Pulgyo Chinhŭngwŏn*, a lay-Buddhist foundation that ran a cultural centre in Seoul and a Zen centre in France where I lived for 1.5 years prior to undertaking doctoral studies. My own Zen practice, which is a type of Southern Shaolin Chán and in which style I am qualified to teach

Kungfu, is founded on the practice of traditional Shaolin martial-arts where martial practice is the foundation of introspective spiritual cultivation. It is immediately distinguishable from more ecclesiastical modes of Sōn or Zen practice which emphasize the ritual sitting-meditation posture for practice. This is not a criticism but is in a sense natural if one is only training the mind and not also training the body in which case, the approach I practice favours a regular base of standing-meditation complimented by sitting-meditation on occasion. As I discussed earlier, I have made the distinction in this study between ecclesiastical Sōn and Zen practice because it is a fact that there are also martial-types of Sōn practice in South Korea and martial-based practices of Zen in Japan which vary from the orthodox mode.

### **1.9.2 Studying Religion? Studying Buddhism?**

In *Genealogies of Religion*, Asad (2009:29) cites Geertz's (1973) attempt to define *religion* when he [Asad] questions the notion of religion as having 'a transhistorical essence' and goes on to say that 'there cannot be a universal definition of religion.' This is not to say that religions don't exist but that when notions of a universal "Buddhism" and a transhistorical notion of "Korean-ness" associated with it are deconstructed, the object of study and knowledge claims associated with it are radically different. I have found that implementing a gendered approach to research in this area also produces radically different results.

Acknowledging my positionality as researcher was not simply about avoiding scholarly subjective bias and making claims to knowledge but seemed political. Researching one of

the few ways in which South Korean culture officially moves across borders in an organized way (including across the DMZ) is political especially when it is often promoted as pan-Korean at North Korea's expense. Proposing to research "non-Korean" Sŏn is at the very least controversial if not provocative in an East Asian context were Sŏn is the property of *Woori Pulgyo* and the hegemony of the word 'Zen' is hotly contested in trans-national contexts. In taking recourse to style for the comfort of the reader and explaining his dispensing with inverted commas on terms such as 'religion,' Beckford concludes 'that 'religion' is a social and cultural construct with highly variable meaning' (Beckford 2003:5). Following Beckford's lead in taking a variable approach to Sŏn and Zen in Asian and European contexts, I will also adopt his convention of phasing out the inverted commas, hoping that the reader will find this dissertation at least a little less tedious though I will retain my convention of qualifying [South] Korean Buddhism when referring to situations where South Korean Buddhists make pan-Korean and universalist claims.

Returning to Assad, who urges social-scientists that they observe the proper place for theorizing about religion which includes 'how theoretical definitions are made by particular people in particular times and places and for particular purposes' (Scott and Hirschkind 2006:216), I found it helpful to question the idea that I was researching 'religion' at all. To suggest that I was researching something that was un-religious would of course be absurd as I avail of certain methodologies and the sources and body of literature which has built up over time deals with its own epistemic category.

Nevertheless, with Assad and Beckford in mind, it was helpful to leave the question there

unanswered and to adopt at least for a time, a lens of ‘two-way cultural transformation’ (Tweed 2011:19).

Tweed (2011:18) applies a term coined by Ortíz (1995:97) - ‘transculturation’ – to an approach in Buddhist Studies scholarship according to which “culture” is viewed as contested, changing and de-coupled from “place.” Where my own relationship to “Korean Buddhism” was concerned then, it seemed less about confession to scholarly subjectivity than about identifying for myself as a practitioner of Southern Shaolin Chán, my relationship to contested discourses about “Korean Buddhism” and “Japanese Zen.” With “Sŏn” de-coupled from “Korea” (*South* Korea) as fixed location and the political implications of a “non-Korean Sŏn” it still seemed that even on the level of association with the epistemic category of “Korean Buddhism,” I might be unavoidably participating in the very process of “intercultural mimesis” which Jaffe speaks about (2004:68).

With regard to post-liberation South Korean religions generally and so-called universal, essentialized, timeless and syncretic “Korean” Buddhism, itself a product of transculturation and Jaffe’s intercultural-mimesis, I share the views of Walraven who contends that the concept of syncretism is useless because;

...in every conceivable human situation actual religious beliefs always are an amalgam of what is on offer. That may include traditions coming from outside, but this “extraneous matter” always has to be fitted into existing social, intellectual and mental contexts; without a process of appropriation what comes from the outside remains meaningless. There is no human culture that is not in some way syncretic, and thus syncretism cannot be a useful, distinguishing characteristic. As a species, humankind always engages in what Michel De Certeau has called bricolage... (Walraven 2011:15).



In “The Place of Religion in North Korean Ideology,” Kenneth Wells (2008:248) reminds us that ‘religion may be defined as the way in which humans connect all the otherwise disparate parts of their lives into one meaningful whole’ in the same spirit of integrating and bricolage of which Walraven and De Certeau speak of respectively.

Nowhere is the uselessness of syncretism as a paradigm more apparent than on the Korean peninsula. In the introduction to *Religions of Korea in Practice* (Buswell 2018:1), Donald Baker notes that for such a small area as the Korean peninsula, ‘the spectrum of religious beliefs and practices... is wider than almost any other place on earth.’

Nevertheless, the syncretist paradigm adopted as an approach to Korean Buddhism by scholars of Korean religion such as James H. Grayson who - perhaps somewhat informed by his position as a Christian minister - divides syncretism into low or ‘normal’ syncretism and ‘high’ or reverse-syncretism – began to show around the same time as Shim’s inquiry, that the category of “Buddhism” in Korea was a porous one even if the syncretic paradigm he used presumed that Buddhism and the “Shamanism” with which it synthesized, were absolute categories themselves (Grayson 1992).

Though any discussion of Sŏn or for that matter Chán rhetorical pedagogy cannot by its very nature avoid issues of gender on the Korean peninsula or further afield, my purpose is not necessarily to take part in any contemporary South Korean debates about gender or discrimination though I must candidly admit that it was almost with a sense of relief that I finally observed the emergence of the #metoo movement in South Korean during the

writing of this dissertation. I would not however, while speaking, presume to speak for South Korean Buddhist women (or men for that matter), lay or monastic.

### **1.10 Organization of the Chapters**

Before continuing with chapter two, an Excursus discusses Sōn pedagogy from the perspective of its martial roots in Shaolin Chán and the plurality and variety of pedagogies associated with the wider Meditation School tradition in the past and in the present. Chapter Two then explores the historical Sōn and Chán literature and the androcentric nature of the corpus of Chán historiography which upheld androcentric state discourse. This vast body of literature largely eclipses women but in so doing tells us about women's place in Chán and Sōn and in relation to that dominant state discourse. A focus on the male-dominated higher echelons of Sōn, Chán and Zen ecclesiastical hierarchies has not only taken texts such as the *yǔlù* genre as fact but has obscured the agency of ordained and lay-women's practice from the bottom up. As men cannot experience the political, social, Buddhist and Sōn world's as women do, a review of themes in this literature sets the foundation for later analysis in the methodology and empirical chapters.

Chapter Three lays out the methodology and methods for this study through the two pilot studies which laid the foundation for later fieldwork and online interviews. It also acknowledges the place of the researcher, my experience in European and South Korean Buddhist contexts as well as my own relationship with Chán practice before concluding with a discussion of grounded theory. Chapter Four is the first of the empirical chapters

and gives a general overview of the accommodations and adaptations made by Sŏn in non-Korean contexts in Europe and elsewhere in Asia. The chapter considers the laicization and branding of South Korean Sŏn while looking at themes of yogic-femininity and martial arts-based masculinities present within transnational Sŏn contexts. The chapter also introduces the findings from the online survey of South Korean Buddhists and attempts to triangulate their general perceptions of Sŏn and its Korean heritage with transnational contexts.

Chapter Five embarks on the analysis of the primary data generated by interviews with Sŏn students in Germany, Poland and Hong Kong as well as online interviews with Zen practitioners in France. As a way of theorizing the difference between Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy in its native South Korean and transnational context, this chapter introduces the idea that Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy is not only dialogical but is collaborative in the South Korean context and much less so in transnational contexts. The chapter also theorizes the difference between ‘parallel congregations’ within the continuum of transnational Sŏn and proposes a theory of an eschatology of reunification based on the gendered South Korean state as one of the main differences between the two parallel congregations. The chapter closes with a consideration of the survey of South Korean Buddhists in order to frame the transnational context of Sŏn in relation to native Sŏn orthodoxy.

Chapter Six builds on the previous two empirical chapters in that it examines the primary data from interviews with Sŏn pedagogues and prominent figures who engage in teaching Sŏn and Zen in rhetorical style to greater or lesser degrees. Drawing on interviews with

Sōn teachers in Germany, Poland, Hong Kong, the United States, Singapore, Thailand and Burma. This chapter examines the localization of Sōn, the rhizomatic nature of its transnational expansion corresponding in most cases with the ethnicity and background of the teacher and how gender impacts the rhetorical teaching of Sōn and Zen in transnational context. This chapter also closes with a triangulation of findings with the responses of South Korean Buddhists to the online survey mentioned above. Chapter Seven concludes the study with a discussion of the nature of the gendered aspect of these parallel congregations within transnational Sōn and the role of Sōn rhetorical pedagogy in each context.

## Excursus: A Brief Overview of Sōn, Zen and Chán Pedagogy

### E.1 Introduction

The various ecclesiastical manifestations of the Meditation School/ Sect in East Asia and in Vietnam which developed in tandem with and often in opposition to doctrinal-based sects of institutionalized Buddhism, traces its roots to the Shaolin Temple 少林寺 on Mt. Song, Henan Province, China. In transnational terms and in the case of what we call Global Zen, every temple, *Sōnwŏn* (Zen centre) and Zen group in the world today traces its lineage back to the obscure figure of the Indian monk Bodhidharma at the Shaolin Temple in the 5<sup>th</sup> century and through him, to the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama (c. 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE).



Bodhidharma Immersed in his Wall-Gazing Meditation at the Shaolin Temple

by Tsukioka Yoshitoshi, 1887

## **E.2 Sŏn's Martial Heritage**

Where the study of Zen rhetoric overlaps with the academic study of martial arts is precisely in the continued martial influence exerted by the Shaolin Temple on the later identity of the ecclesiastical East Asian Meditation Sects in their respective countries of China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam. The Shaolin Temple was a monastery where spiritual-cultivation was based on the practice of martial arts and the later Meditation School sects could never fully elide the martial heritage of their claimed lineage and were always in a dialectic with it. I suggest in fact that there is a correlation between the development of ecclesiastical pedagogies relative to the growing distance in both time and space from their martial roots at the Shaolin Temple. The development and construction of rhetorical pedagogy and “Sudden Teaching” by ecclesiastical Meditation School sects can be viewed not only as both soteriological and as a response to the need for factional supremacy in competition with doctrinal schools but I suggest the rhetoric of immediacy in Meditation School pedagogies can also be viewed as the institutionalization of an urgency that was once an inherent part of martial arts-based Chán practice but necessarily had to be simulated the more that ecclesiastical Chán grew away from the Shaolin Temple and the immediacy of its martial arts based pedagogies.

It is important to emphasize here that the Sŏn derivative of the Meditation School that this study is concerned with - like its Chán and Zen counterparts – has been predominantly ecclesiastical, institutionalized and not solely based on martial arts practice for the majority of its history. However, there have not only been exceptions to this but the rhetoric of power, impending threats and non-conceptual pedagogies within

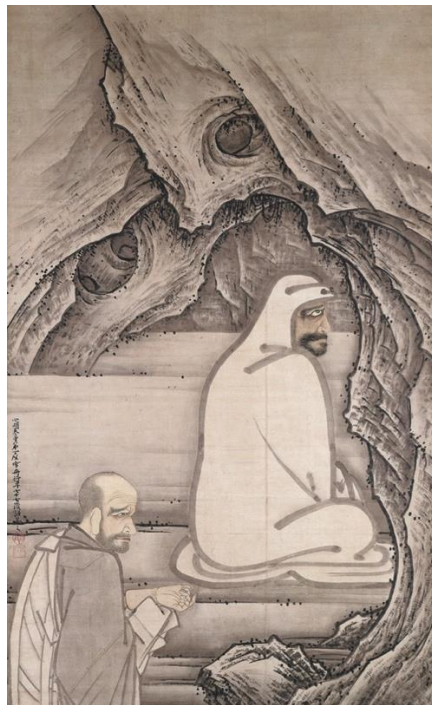
Sōn have always co-existed with themes of martial pedigree and strength as will be discussed below, and Sōn Buddhist monks, like their Chinese and Japanese counterparts have taken up arms at various points throughout history. In short, there has been a long history of martial culture intertwined with Korean Buddhism and Sōn. By being aware of the discourses of Buddhist modernism which has separated meditation away from ritual and other pedagogies, a retrieval of martial based pedagogies into the purview of inquiry allows us to better assess issues of gender in relation to Sōn and does better justice to the wide array and plurality of Sōn, Chán and Zen pedagogies.

### **E.3 Pedagogy and Sectarian Identity**

Coinciding with what John McRae (2003:50–53) calls the proto-Chán period c.500- 600 CE, a Chinese contemporary of Bodhidharma’s from this time, Zhiyi 智顓 (538 – 597) who founded the Tiāntāi Sect 天台宗, systematized the Indian Buddhist teachings into “Five Periods and Eight Teachings” 五時八教 (C. *wǔ shí bā jiào*) which made a distinction in pedagogy or ‘mode of exposition’ (C. 化儀, *huà yí*) between indefinite/ variable teachings, esoteric/ secret teachings, gradual pedagogy and a direct ‘subitist’ style tailored to a student who, depending on his/ her proclivity might be ready to hear and realize the Truth.

Though not Chán himself, Zhiyi’s rubric of a ‘Sudden Teaching’ 頓教 (C. *dùn jiào*) - what has been called ‘subitism’ in modern scholarship on the subject - was taken up as a sectarian polemic by the Chán monk Héze Shénhuì 荷澤神會 (684 – 758 CE) who used this supposedly superior subitist pedagogy to justify his own teacher Huìnéng’s (638 – 713) rightful place as the Sixth Patriarch of Chán. Shénhuì criticized the “Northern School” for

their heterodox if not heretical ‘gradualist’ pedagogy in contrast to his own Southern School (Huìnéng had fled from northern China and established himself in the south) whose pedagogy was radically or at least moderately subitist. This was during the period of Early Chán which McRae puts at somewhere between c.600 – 900 CE, roughly contemporaneous with China’s Tang Dynasty (618 – 907 CE). It was at this time and through such contentions that Chán became a sect and predicated its identity on the ‘sudden and direct’ character of its pedagogy upon which its lineage was also established (McRae 1986:143).



Famous painting of the Second Patriarch Huikē offering his arm to Bodhidharma

by Sesshū Tōyō, 1496.

Shénhuì’s identitarian polemics would define what was to come after him and a ‘Sudden-Gradual Debate’ would continue down through the centuries and still provoked massive



controversy in twentieth-century Korean Buddhist ecclesiastical circles. In the *kyōngdōkchōndŭngnok* 景德傳燈錄 (The Record of the Transmission of the Lamp), a Chinese text produced c.1004~1007 CE, the lamp being transmitted refers to the Enlightened mind which is transmitted from person to person. The Record retrospectively institutes a lineage of 6 Chinese patriarchs appended to 28 Indian patriarchs descending directly from the Buddha (please see the chronology of Sōn history at the end of this dissertation in Appendix I for major shifts in the development of Sōn). This was done in order to claim legitimacy for the increasingly institutional sect on the basis of it and its patriarchs' descendancy from the Indian monk Bodhidharma who, recorded as the First Patriarch of Chinese Chán, formed the link with India and Indian Buddhism.

In this Early Chán period, the identity of the sect was founded on its patriarchal lineage and upon the enlightened minds of those patriarchs whose insight had been transmitted by a unique 'Sudden Teaching' which was held to be superior to other schools. This was itself an elaboration on the idea within Buddhism that the highest Enlightenment (spiritual-insight), requires in the vast majority of cases to be transmitted from person to person i.e that only a master (someone who has previously attained that level) can catalyse that same realization within a student through various skilful-means. In a sense, pedagogy became inseparable from the lineage of the patriarchs as the *pangp'yōn* 方便 (K. skilful/ expedient means) of subitist teaching – less spontaneous and increasingly ritualized over time - became an expression of the 'enlightened' mind of the patriarchs.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> 'Skilful Means' or sometimes 'Expedient Means' (Sk. उपाय, *upāya*) is the philosophical and pedagogical notion within Buddhist philosophy that the response of a highly insightful/ realized teacher to everyday, mundane - or even seemingly profane situations such as violence or sex – is an expression of universal-truth with the implicit (and some might say convenient) condition that less 'enlightened' or less spiritually-realized

Despite producing a huge corpus of literature, the sect claimed to dispense entirely with scriptures as expressed in this stanza attributed to Bodhidharma;

A special transmission outside the scriptures 教外別傳

Not depending on words or letters 不立文字

Pointing directly at Mind 直指人心

Awakening, see one's True Nature 見性成佛

It was during this phase of Early-Chán that Meditation School practices spread to the Korean peninsula where Buddhism had arrived approximately 450 years earlier. The Silla-Korean monk Ch'ingam Hyeso 眞鑑慧昭 (774–850) went to study in China under a disciple of Mǎzǔ Dàoyī 馬祖道一 (c. 709 - 788) and while in China, Hyeso studied at the Shaolin Temple in 810 CE where he took precepts and studied esoteric aspects of Chán and chanting in the Indian style (Orzech, Sorensen, and Payne 2010:589). While at the Shaolin Temple, Hyeso met his compatriot Toŭi Wŏnjŏk 道義元寂 (d. 825) to whom the Jogye Order trace their constitution although whether Hyeso or Toŭi practiced martial arts as part of their Chán/ Sŏn practice is unknown (Buswell and Lopez Jr 2013:802)(Jeong 2010). The records of Hyeso's travels in China are recorded on his stele

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beings will fail to understand their actions (sometimes called “crazy wisdom”) and wrongly perceive the actions of said pedagogue/ teacher/ authority figure as profane. This skilful and expedient ability to adapt spontaneously and correctly to any situation is held to be predicated on spiritual insight which is held only to be attainable by one person via transmission from another person. In a teaching situation it may mean that at a particular moment, only the master (defined by his skilful abilities acquired through spiritual training) could perceive that a student was close to Enlightenment and that all that was needed as a firm slap in the face to interrupt the student's intellectualizing mind so that s/he could free their mind for spiritual insight in that moment. The Zen Canon is full of such stories. Asian Buddhist transnationalism in Europe and the United States in the latter half of the twentieth-century and into the twenty-first has been accompanied by accounts and allegations of sexual abuse within some Buddhist communities where abuse was predicated upon it being the ‘skilful means’ of responding to the student's spiritual need and the seemingly profane aspect of the transgression from the perspective of breaking vows of celibacy or abuse of power being explained by the “crazy wisdom” of the master.

at Ssanggye-sa temple in present-day South Korea, however, while depictions of Bodhidharma are ubiquitous in South Korean temples, the Shaolin and indeed the Chinese connection is usually downplayed in the modern era (S.-H. Kim 1995)(Eo 2009).

All but one of the original *kusan sŏnmun* 九山禪門 or ‘Nine Mountain Schools’ of Korean Sŏn – which would in time collectively become referred to as the Jogye/ Chogye Order - trace their lineage back to the subitist Tang Dynasty Chán pedagogue Mǎzǔ Dào’yī and his Dharma-Heirs Bǎizhàng Huáihái 百丈懷海 (720 – 814) and Huángbò Xīyùn 黃檗希運 (d. 850 CE) whose most famous student, Línjì Yìxuán 臨濟義玄 (d. 866 CE) would also profoundly impact the Meditation School in Korea and Japan with his innovative pedagogy.<sup>18</sup>

#### **E.4 Sòng Dynasty Chán and Koryŏ Sŏn**

The Sòng Dynasty (960 – 1279 CE) was when the preceding Táng Dynasty Chán was constructed as a ‘golden age’ of Chán in retrospect. The Chán masters mentioned in the previous section, ‘operating in enlightened spontaneity’ came to be imitated ‘in highly ritualized Sòng-dynasty settings’ (McRae 2003:52). As a textual paradigm (as Faure views Bodhidharma) Mǎzǔ Dào’yī mentioned above remains ‘one of the most important monks in the whole history of Chán’ and in Sŏn as the random spontaneity and iconoclasm of his Sudden-Teaching and his breaks with standard pedagogical by supplementing conventional introspective practice with unexpected shouts, soft or hard

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<sup>18</sup> Bǎizhàng Huáihái is said to have introduced the concept of farming and *Ulyŏk* (K. 윤력) ‘communal work’ into Chán monasticism. Manual labour (which was not previously engaged in by monastics) helped Chán monasteries to be self-sufficient and *Ulyŏk* was adopted enthusiastically in Korean monasteries.

strikes with the *xiāng bǎn* 香板 [C. a yielding slat of bamboo], suddenly calling a student by name as they were leaving, deliberate and qualified silences in answer to questions, slapping the student or in one case, supposedly twisting a student's nose - provided 'a paradigm for orthodox practice' and helped define 'the basic identity of a religious tradition and establishing the parameters of its orthodoxy' (Poceski 2004:54, 2004:73)(Faure 1986:198). As Zen Master Dae Bong, abbot and head of the global Kwanum School of Zen's regional temple in South Korea mentions in chapter 6, the idiom of non-conceptual pedagogies all come from the same period and were reified according to the value-systems of that period.

During the Chinese Sòng and Koryŏ (Korean) Dynasties, Chán became increasingly formalized, orthodox and text-centred to appeal to its power-base of literati supporters and officials in the government civil-service. Chán texts were written for an elite audience and vernacular Chinese was incorporated into the rigid classical written style in order to convey the enlightened spontaneity of the Táng Dynasty masters which resulted in a new literary genre. Colloquial language began to be incorporated into literary Chinese in order to convey this sense of immediacy and the spoken word of past masters became classical/ orthodox literature in its own right where stylized rhetoric was 'establishing a specific master as living embodiment of the wisdom and realization (and the authority accompanied by it) of his predecessors' (Anderl 2012:28–29).

This in turn placed a high demand on the literary abilities of ecclesiastical Chán, Sŏn and Zen masters who often came from elite literati families themselves of officials at court familiar with Confucian ritual and etiquette (Jorgensen 1987:90). The same ranks of the

state that the Chán elite hailed from then legally recognized that a monk had to treat his teacher like his father’ and the importance of lineage was underscored when ‘pupils inherited their master’s property at times’(Jorgensen 1987:97). Meditation School rhetorical pedagogy became inseparable from Meditation School lineage and patriarchal lineages upheld the status quo in society.

### **E.5.1 Sudden and Gradual Pedagogies; The Three Gateways**

As a pedagogical rubric, Línjì (according to Sòng Dynasty texts) is recorded as having integrated the non-conceptual subitist innovations of his predecessors and now official Dharma-ancestors Mǎzǔ Dàoyī and Huángbò into existing doctrinal approaches using the analogy of three mysterious ‘gates’ known in Korean as *samhyŏnmun* (C. 三玄門, *sānxuánmén*) which were levels of understanding and insight related to one’s spiritual practice (Park 2005b:85).<sup>19</sup>

### **E.5.2 The First Gate**

The first ‘gate’ was ‘Mystery in the Essence’ *ch’ejunghyŏn* (C. 體中玄) - this gate, according to Buswell ‘is the most basic level of Sŏn discourse [which] uses rhetoric similar to that found in the doctrinal schools of Buddhism’ and is the acquisition of the ‘theoretical basis’ required to proceed to the second gate as described by Jin Y. Park (Buswell in Anderl 2011:358) (Park 2005b:86). Graduation past the first Mysterious Gate is commensurate with a solid intellectual understanding that all sentient beings arise

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<sup>19</sup> Reference to the Three Mysterious Gates hermeneutical principle also occurred in the writings of Línjì’s contemporary Guīfēng Zōngmì (C. 圭峰 宗密 780 – 841) often quoted by the Koryŏ Sŏn Master Chinul (Buswell in Anderl 2011:358).

dependent upon each other and share the same Essence/ Buddha Nature or noumenon; an eco-psychological understanding of the phenomenal world akin to something like Galen Strawson's panpsychist-physicalism (Strawson et al. 2006). There is very little difference between the curriculum and practice style of the first gate and other Buddhist sects.

In Chán or Sōn terms, such pedagogy might be 'gradualist' and a variety of Chán practices exist which might also be termed 'gradualist' according to Chán's own definition such as some of those that fall within the category of zuò Chán 坐禪 (J. zazen; K. chwasōn) or "seated meditation" like the practice of zǔshī Chán 祖師禪 (J. *soshi Zen* ; K. *Chosa Sōn*) 'Patriarch Chán/ Sōn' which simply consists of training the mind on counting one's breath to the exclusion of all else, focusing on the breath to reduce all thoughts to one thought through sustained practice and acquiring the skill of a 'one-pointed mind' which is necessary before advancing further. The practice of *nianfo Chán* 念佛禪 in China (J. *nembutsu Zen*; K. *yōmbul Sōn*) which is a synthesis of Pure Land Buddhism and is based on recitation of the Buddha's name similarly recites and focuses on the Buddha's name to the exclusion of all else with the goal of acquiring a one-pointed mind. Nembutsu is famously practiced by the Ōbaku Zen sect, the Ōbaku-shū 黄檗宗 one of the three main sects of Japanese Zen.

*Wenzi Chán* 文字禪 (J. *monjizen*; K. *muncha Sōn*) or "lettered Chán" (sometimes referred to as Yili Chán or theoretical/ theorising Chán was 'a literati style of Chán exegesis that valorized belle lettres, and especially poetry, in the practice of Chán' (Buswell and Lopez Jr 2013:4105) during the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127). Whether it can be classed as pedagogical is debatable but it can be viewed as an approach to Chán that was

generally gradual in its engagement with the immanence of Buddhist Enlightenment. Other types of what might be termed ‘gradualist’ Chán include the Chán or Zen of playing the bamboo-flute (J. shakuhachi) practiced by the Japanese 普化宗 Fuke-shū sect though whether it can be considered as falling within the methods that comprise Línjì’s First Gate is as arbitrary as the rest, a point I will take up further below.

### **E.5.3 The Second Gate**

In general terms, the mostly intellectual understanding gained through scriptural study and theorizing during passing through the first gate next becomes ‘the object of criticism’ at the second gate, the ‘Mystery in the Word’ *kujunghyŏn* (C. 句中玄)(Park 2005b:86).

The hallmark and signature-technique of contemporary mainstream South Korean Buddhism, Kanhwa Sŏn (KHS) 看話禪 (J. *kanwa Zen*; C. *kànhuà Chán*) “Questioning Meditation” is also a hallmark of Línjì’s Second Gate. The technique of KHS involves the sustained and intense reflection over time on the key-word or *hwadu* 話頭 (J. *watō*; C. *huàtóu*) found in the midst of the anecdotal stories or ‘public-cases’ called *kongan* 公案 (J. *kōan*; C. *gong’an*) which record the encounters between past Chán masters and their students. For that reason the Kanhwa Sŏn technique (KHS), which was developed by Línjì’s 12<sup>th</sup> generation successor the Sòng Dynasty monk Dàhuì Zōnggǎo 大慧宗杲 (1089 – 1163), is as often as not referred to simply as ‘Hwadu Meditation.’ Dàhuì Zōnggǎo was the Chinese master who would come to exert the most influence over South Korean Sŏn orthodoxy due to its identification with the KHS technique.

The Sŏn master using his 'skilful means' and Enlightened mind, discerns which keyword or *hwadu* from out of the many *kongan* or 'public-cases' which exist in the corpus of Sŏn/ Zen writing, is suitable for the mind of an individual student at a particular time based on that student's level of practice and state of mind. The KHS technique then consists of a sustained and intense reflection by the student over time upon that *hwadu*/ keyword, the purpose of which intense reflection is to interrogate intellectualization itself which is seen as an obstruction to true understanding.

Any attachment to the intellectual ideas and doctrinal concepts of Buddhism which the student acquired while graduating past the level of the first 'gate' and might mistakenly cling to as ultimately real, are subverted and undermined at the Second Gate by the very words used to create those ideas. Words at the Second Gate may often seem out of context and nonsensical but they are used to pre-empt intellectualization at every turn - simultaneously the antibody and the pathogen. This deliberate pedagogical measure generates a physical "sensation-of-questioning" or Great Doubt within the body and mind, *ũjŏng* as it is called in Korean (C. 疑情).

The purpose of generating Great Doubt – expressed another way as bringing the student's mind to a critical point - is soteriological in that it is held as necessary for the student to reach this critical point in order to transcend conceptualizing thought and attain the psycho-physical state of liberation from existential suffering otherwise known as 'Enlightenment.' Having reached this critical juncture of Great Doubt which can only be stoked up by a zealous and single-minded devotion to the *hwadu*, the student may



penetrate through to Enlightenment on their own or be at the point when a Third – and final - Gate must be passed through, where the Sōn master need only implement their ‘non-conceptual’ and unconventional pedagogy of strikes, shouts, gestures or silences in order to supplement the *hwadu*-practice at the consummate moment and complete the process. Before describing the NCPs of the Third Gate, it should be mentioned that Korean and South Korean Sōn pedagogy is characterized by utilizing just one and the same *hwadu* uniformly and universally while Chinese Chán and Japanese Zen generally avail of the wider corpus of *hwadus* and *kongans* and which may vary from school to school or from teacher to teacher.

There are many types of Sōn and Chán and it is difficult to say whether different techniques and approaches belong to the first, second or third gate for the simple reason of subjectivity – it depends on the proclivities and capabilities of someone practicing and being subjected to such pedagogies and the ‘skilful means’ of a master which by definition adapts to the needs of an individual student in each situation, adjusts accordingly. A line of scripture which might be passed over as one student passes through the First Gate might be the equivalent of a mind-opening NCP of the Third Gate as was the case with one of Korea’s most famous Sōn masters Bojo Chinul 普照知訥 (1158 – 1210). The Sixth Patriarch Huìnéng, having no prior formal training, attained Enlightenment on over-hearing a monk chanting the Diamond Sūtra. Sōn Master Kusan got Enlightenment in standing-meditation and not in the masculine ritual-posture of seated meditation. Zen Master Seung Sahn was derided by fellow Korean monks because

he got Enlightenment while chanting the Diamond Sūtra (chanting apparently being a practice for women, discussed further in chapter six).

Meditative practices such as *yōrae Sōn* 如來禪 (J. *rurai Zen*; C. *rúlái Chán*) or ‘Tathāgata Sōn’ which develops the skill of ‘No-mind’ or in conventional Western terms, non-thought similar to the practice of *pyōkkwan* 壁觀 (J. *hekikan*; C. *Bìquān*) or ‘wall-gazing,’ also a type of seated introspective meditative contemplation, can be considered first, second or third gate depending on the person practicing them. The case of *mokushōzen* 默照禪 (K. *mukcho Sōn*; C. *mòzhào Chán*) or “Silent-Illumination,” the signature technique of the Japanese Sōtō-shū, demonstrates how politics, factional rivalry and sectarianism can take precedence over the soteriological needs of individual students when an ecclesiastical institution overly identifies with one particular introspective technique. *Mokushōzen* (“Silent-Illumination”) meditation became the subject of such vitriol from the rival Rinzai-shū that the name was changed to *shikan taza* 祇/只管打坐 or “Just-Sitting” i.e. sitting in meditative poise without letting any thoughts arise (even though some teachers view Silent-illumination and Just-sitting as different practices).

#### **E.5.4 The Third Gate**

Advancing through the levels of the first and second gates may and usually does take years of diligent doctrinal study and introspective-practice to reach a point where the student is judged to be ready for the pedagogy of the Third Gate – the gate of ‘Mystery in the Mystery’ *hyōnjunghyōn* (C. 玄中玄). The third gate is the end of the path and may only take a few months of intense cultivation if the student has genuinely reached the level

where they are ready for the pedagogy of the third gate. This is the stage of *kyōgoe Sōn* 格外禪 (J. *kakugai no Zen*; C. *géwài Chán*), literally “unconventional Chán/ Sōn,” the non-conceptual pedagogies of unconventional words and absurdities, contradictions, negations, non-verbal shouts, what Buswell calls ‘illocutionary’ wordless gestures, physical strikes, slaps and hits (Buswell and Lopez Jr 2013:1349). This is the stage and pedagogy of *ch’oesangsūng Sōn* 最上乘禪 (J. *saijōjō Zen*; C. *zuì shàngshéng Chán*) or ‘Supreme Vehicle Chán’ which is founded in subitist practice and pedagogy is usually considered equivalent to the unconventional pedagogy of *kyōgoe Sōn*.

At this stage, the student must free themselves from the words which were used to stoke up and build this sensation of doubt to the critical-level of becoming what is called the Doubt-Mass *ūidan/ ūimun tōngōri* (C. 疑團 / 疑問 덩어리).<sup>20</sup> If the student has done the work in the first and second stages and built the Doubt-Mass, the discerning and skilful Sōn master deploys the NCP associated with the Mystery in the Mystery *hyōnjunghyōn* (C. 玄中玄), the third gate and its non-conceptual, often non-verbal ‘forms of pedagogy such as striking, beating and pregnant pauses,’ qualified silences, gestures such as holding up a finger, nose-pinching etc. (Buswell in Anderl 2012:358). If this supplemental pedagogy is successful at this stage, the last structural support of words is dropped and the student sheds the Doubt-Mass along with the *hwadu* (key-word) used to generate it, attaining Enlightenment – a state of being which is in a sense primordial in that it is held to be a state of awareness that is unmediated by conceptualization and intellectualizing thought patterns

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<sup>20</sup> Note that in the term *ūimun tōngōri* (疑問 덩어리), *tōngōri* (bracketed in bold) is pure Korean and does not have a corresponding classical Chinese character.

arising from language, culture, gender, education, social background and previous life-experience - 'the objectless awareness that is the goal of cultivation' (Garfield 2014:71).

The most distinctly Chán/ Zen/ Sōn pedagogy then, that which we most associate with the Meditation School, is that which is utilized towards the end of a student's introspective journey and is effectively implemented on only a minority of students as Enlightenment by definition is a rare achievement. There is no way of telling if the superior Sudden-Teaching of the Meditation School produces more enlightened people than the pedagogy of Buddhisms in other parts of Asia. In fact there is no way to tell if someone is enlightened at all.

#### **E.6 Sōn Rhetorical Pedagogy and the Performance of Masculinity**

In many ways NCPs and rhetorical pedagogy are a way of acting 'Enlightened' and following Powers (2009:182) who shows that 'Mahayāna texts commonly link skill in means and masculinity,' I suggest that Sōn rhetorical pedagogy can in some circumstances, be viewed as a way of performing masculinity. In her work on the gendered rhetoric of heroism and equality in seventeenth-century *yǔlù* records, Beata Grant makes reference to Judith Butler (1990) who in moving away from the binary conception of gender rooted in biological sex, pioneered the theory of gender performativity;

Indeed, some of these Buddhist monks and nuns would have found by no means revolutionary the claim by the contemporary feminist critic Judith Butler that gender is ultimately performative, a verb rather than a noun, "a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed." Indeed, Butler asks her readers to think about Nietzsche's claim that "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming, 'the

doer' is merely a fiction added to the deed [which] is everything"—a notion that Nietzsche most surely derived from his readings in Eastern thought. In the west, contemporary feminists nevertheless balk at Butler's notion that there is no such thing as a fixed gender identity, the idea of an absent doer, because it puts into question the possibility of agency and, ultimately, the possibility of transforming society. For many seventeenth-century Chinese Buddhists (and, apparently, for many modern Buddhists as well) the fundamental Mahayāna Buddhist notion of an absent doer, a performative and fluid gender, presented both a challenge to those who felt the necessity of retaining and reinforcing the traditional gendered social order, and an opportunity to those who felt confined and limited by that very order (Grant 2008:210–11).

Butler's (1990:35) proposition - that 'there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results' can be used to interpret Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy in the ways suggested by Grant above; 1) to confirm Buddhist metaphysical theories of non-self and non-duality or 2) that the performance itself – in this case Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy as expression – produces the individual and by extension, produces the Sŏn master.

Following Powers who shows the link between pedagogical skill and masculinity in Mahayāna Buddhist texts, the question then is to what extent Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy is linked to masculinity in the SKSB context where a *kundaehwa* military-style of Sŏn practice has emerged in the post-war period and more importantly for our purposes here, to what extent that extrapolates in transnational contexts. If this seems far-fetched from the perspective of South Korean Buddhist sensitivities then a further question could be posed; why insist on the superiority of the pedagogy attached to one meditation technique (KHS) and an androcentric transmission of Enlightenment attached thereto when it clearly contradicts the definition of skilful means, masks the actual lack of said

pedagogical skill and is at the expense of the actual soteriological needs of a student? What Grant calls ‘the traditional gendered social order’ in the post-war gendered South Korean state is upheld when the culture of vying for factional and religious supremacy in competition with Protestant Christianity always appeals to the ethno-nation state for validation in return for legitimating it i.e SKSB, like conservative religious institutions in any country, does not transcend the hierarchical top-down nature of the South Korean state where as Kim Hyun Mee has shown, citizenship itself is gendered (Kim 2001, 2011).

### **E.7.1 Sōn Orthopraxis and a Nationalized Pedagogy for South Korea**

South Korea’s “Korean” Sōn did not become fully orthodox until the latter half of the twentieth century coinciding with the split of the Sōn component of wider South Korean Buddhism into the opposing Taego and Jogye Orders which I discuss further below in section 2.4. The [South] Korean Sudden-Gradual Debate (*han ’guk ton-chōm nonjaeng* 韓國頓漸論爭) within South Korean Buddhism (Buswell Jr 1989; Mueller 1992; Park 1994; Senécal 2012) was also taking place at this time from 1967 onwards.

The reader will remember that Shénhuì used a pre-existing pedagogical binary within Chinese Buddhism; Sudden versus Gradual teaching to claim that his teacher Huìnéng was the true Sixth Patriarch on the basis that true ‘genuine’ Chán/ Zen was a Sudden Teaching compared to Northern Chán which was accused of being ‘gradualist’ and therefore inferior if not ineffective altogether. In South Korea, T’oeong Sōngch’ōl (1912 – 1993) reignited the Sudden-Gradual in the latter half of the twentieth-century proclaiming that ‘true’ or essential Sōn practice was radical subitism i.e that

introspective-cultivation/ practice (cause) was *as sudden as* its realization/ spiritual insight/ Enlightenment (effect) or ‘Sudden Cultivation-Sudden Enlightenment’ for short. In so doing, Sōngch’ōl was denouncing, if not 1000 years of Korean Sōn practice, certainly the retrospective narrative of it endorsed by mainstream South Korean Buddhism which is that Sōn practice was moderately-subitist or in Chinese, *dùnwù jiànxiū* 頓悟漸修 (J. tongo zenshu; K. tono chōmsu) i.e that spiritual-cultivation (cause) is a gradual process while the moment of Enlightenment or insight (effect) comes in a sudden revelatory moment – Gradual Cultivation-Sudden Enlightenment - a position held by Bojo Chinul mentioned above who got his own Enlightenment while reading a scripture.

Despite there being a Sudden-Gradual debate within South Korean Sōn Buddhism and a plethora of techniques, approaches and styles within each of Sōn, Zen and Chán, the general rhetoric generated by the Jogye Order asserts the superiority of the KHS technique above all other meditation techniques (and by extension asserts the superiority of the [South] Korean Buddhist tradition above all the other schools of Buddhism from other countries) and that the KHS technique – which originated in China – has survived and was preserved most faithfully in Korea having been passed down intact through unbroken generations of Sōn masters, undiluted and unaltered.<sup>21</sup> While other practices (and schools such as Pure Land and Tientai Buddhism) exist in South Korea, KHS is held

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<sup>21</sup> For a discussion of the construction of this lineage which is very much broken in places, see; Senécal, B., 2011. A Critical Reflection on the Chogyé Order's Campaign for the Worldwide Propagation of Kanhwa Sōn. *Journal of Korean Religions*, pp.75-105.

by the mainstream of Korean Buddhism, to be the crown jewel of Korean Sŏn and the Korean Buddhist tradition as a whole.

### **E.7.2 Hwadu Absolutism**

Due to the distinctly formalized rhetoric surrounding the the KHS technique – generally referred to as *hwadu* or ‘keyword’ meditation technique – has seen the dominant Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism be accused of ‘Hwadu Absolutism’ (a rigid tendency to answer any question about Sŏn practice with ‘just keep the *hwadu*’) and there is certainly a prevailing rhetoric of superiority within the order based on KHS and *hwadu* practice (Senécal 2011). Such an approach to practice is perhaps compatible with the goals of the Jogye Order related to which a national identity for the tradition is a genuine necessity.<sup>22</sup>

The selection of KHS for identification with a Korean way of Sŏn, has allowed the Jogye Order not only to emphasize their position as a sanctified repository of East Asian Buddhism but also provides them with a convenient spiritual and religious counter-identity to Japan in post-war transnational context. Since the colonial period, both purity and reform have paradoxically been the main preoccupations of Korean Buddhist modernizers. Dàhuì Zōnggǎo who innovated the KHS technique as an adaptation of the broader Línjì method, also happened to be a fierce critic of the Cáodòng (C. 曹洞宗) School of Chán, denouncing their practice of ‘Silent Illumination’ meditation (C. 默照禪

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<sup>22</sup> Cho Sungtaek acknowledges the Jogye Order’s nationalist tendencies but frames their response to Japanese colonialism in the context of a dilemma rather than a binary reaction in; Sungtaek, C., 2012. Reconsidering the Historiography of Modern Korean Buddhism: Nationalism and Identity of the Chogyae Order of Korean Buddhism. In *Buddhism and Violence* (pp. 66-84). Routledge.



*mozhao Chán*), as heretical. In Japan, the the Cáodòng sect became the dominant Sōtō-shū sect of Japanese Buddhism and responsible for a vast propagation beyond Japan beginning in the early twentieth-century in Asia and in both North and South America. The ecclesiastical style of Japanese Sōtō sect Zen is responsible for most of the Western imaginary of what Zen is.

The Jogye Order while co-operating with the South Korean Ministry of Tourism in operating the country's Buddhist Temple Stay Program, have at times at least stated their mission to 'Enlighten the World' on the basis that KHS practice, which they identify with a distinctly Korean way of practicing, is the best way to achieve the most complete Enlightenment. It is interesting to note at this point that the Enlightenment upon which the later ministry and missions of late twentieth-century South Korean Buddhisms most successful missionaries to Europe and the United States, Zen Master Kusan and Zen Master Seung Sahn were predicated, were achieved in "unorthodox" ways, one in standing-meditation and the other chanting. Rev. Dr. Jongmae Park of the Taego Order overseas parish doesn't even teach Sōn. A quick perusal of Sōn and Chán history shows also that, as mentioned, Bojo Chinul got his Enlightenment reading and the towering figure of the Sixth Patriarch Huìnéng got his Enlightenment by being in the right place at the right time.

### **E.7.3 Martial Pedagogies as an Example of Diversity**

The discourses within Buddhist modernism (McMahan 2008) of Protestant Christianity, Scientific Rationalism and Romanticism can all be found in the formation of post-war

South Korean Buddhism through the gendered division of the South Korean sangha known as The Purification Movement mentioned in the opening paragraphs of this excursus. The Purification Movement itself as an explicit effort to purify out of nostalgia for a “timeless” and essentialized “Korean” Buddhism can be said to adhere to the romantic discourse listed above. The introspective aspect of a personal relationship with the divine inherent in Protestant Christianity can be found in the emphasis on meditation within Buddhist modernism to the exclusion of ritual.

Indeed, as Heine and Wright (2007) have shown, there is a ritualistic aspect to Chán, Zen and Sōn meditation which was not separated from ritual chanting and ceremony prior to the modern period and it is the discourse of Scientific Rationalism within Buddhist modernism which has cast Buddhist meditation as a philosophical scientific inquiry into the nature of being. I suggest that the Purification Movement was a division of ritual labour along gender lines, masculinizing the scientifically rational pursuit of meditation dominated by the Jogye Order and promoted through extolling the superiority of KHS while the ritualistic aspects of [South] Korean Buddhism are left to the less rational and by implication more emotional and therefore feminized Taego Order amongst others and by extension, Shamanism. Buddhist modernism in Korea and later in South Korea has been a story of this divergence of Chosŏn Buddhism which has also been gendered in terms of institutional “Korean” Buddhism’s masculinizing appeals to the gendered state. Paradoxically, along with ritual, martial pedagogies and ways of practicing Sōn also fall casualty to the constant essentializing and purifying impetus in mainstream [South] Korean Buddhism. There continue to be martial-arts based forms of Chán, Zen and Sōn

practice today just as in the early years of the East Asian Meditation School, Chán pedagogy was synonymous with a martial arts curriculum and it is by considering the array of martial-based pedagogies so often separated from institutionalized Chán, Zen and Sŏn that we can grasp the variety extant within Chán and Sŏn pedagogy. To this day, there is a temple in South Korea, Golgul-sa, dedicated to a martial arts based form of Sŏn practice known as *Sŏnmudo* and the development of Shaolin Kungfu and Chi Kung (body-movements synchronized with the breath) as a means of cultivating Chán continued in the Shaolin Temple after a later lineage of Chán patriarchs grew elsewhere in China away from the temple.

Nevertheless within ecclesiastical Sŏn, the writings of figures such as Hyujŏng Sŏsan Daesa 休靜 西山大師 (1520 – 1604) in Chosŏn Korea make numerous reference to the holding of a sword as a metaphor for training the mind in his famous text, the *sŏngagwigam* 禪家龜鑑 (The Mirror of Zen) showing the pervasive and continued relevance of martial rhetoric within Sŏn. Hyujŏng also led a militia of Sŏn monks to help repel the Japanese samurai invasions of 1592-1598 and his near contemporary in Japan, Takuan Sŏhō 沢庵 宗彭 (1573 – 1645) who was a priest of the Rinzai Sect of Japanese Zen wrote one of the very first explicit treatises on the unity of Zen and martial arts in his *fudōchi shinmyōroku* 不動智神妙錄 (The Unfettered Mind).

This is relevant when one considers the embeddedness of Sŏn within the global Zen field and its appeal to minorities of a far-right persuasion in contemporary times besides its general appeal to many young men who find Sŏn and Zen through the practice of martial

arts. The post-Korean War period saw the growth of Sŏn transnationalism, the systematization and international growth of the Korean martial art of Taekwondo which like South Korean Buddhism began to internationalize during the Vietnam War and also the creation of the [Korean Buddhist Martial Arts Association](#). Three empty-hand forms in the curriculum of both the International (ITF) and Global (GTF) Taekwondo federations are named Sŏsan, Wŏnhyo and Hwarang after, respectively, the Sŏn master mentioned above, the Silla-Korean Buddhist monk Wŏnhyo 元曉 (617- 686 CE) and the Silla Dynasty 新羅 (57BCE – 935 CE) warrior fraternity named the Hwarang 花郎 that followed the Buddhist precepts of the Buddhist monk Wŏnkwang 圓光 (541 – c.630 CE).

The sword art of Shim Kumdo developed by Zen Master Seung Sahn's disciple Kim Chang-sik was taught to students in the United States where a sword was also used by Zen Master Seung Sahn in ordination ceremonies and Shim Kumdo is still performed in South Korean temples today as can be viewed [here](#). Buddhist connections continue to surface in the research on the the obscure Chosŏn Dynasty martial art of *hop'aesul* 號牌術 which the South Korean martial arts scholar Han Byeong-cheol learnt from the abbot of the Korean Temple in Bodhgaya, India in 1991 and described by Do Ki-hyun in his book on the subject (Do 2017). None of this proves that Sŏn condones combat or violence for that matter. The Thai Buddhist Sangha prohibits violence yet martial arts and combat sports are often performed on temple grounds and the *wai kru* ritual-dance performed by fighters in the ring prior to competition pay respect to the combatant's own teacher as well as honouring the Buddha. Though not performed to honour a teacher or

the Buddha specifically, the Korean Shamanist sword-dance is also interesting as a ritual when we consider Sŏn Buddhist ordinations are sometimes conducted with a sword and the sword is invested as a symbol of spiritual power and authority in both cases. See Appendix II for a further comparison of Sŏn and Shaolin Chán martial pedagogies.

## Chapter Two

### Androcentric States and Gendered Historiography in Sōn; a literature review

師問一尼、善來惡來。  
尼便喝。  
師拈棒云、更道更道。  
尼又喝。  
師便打

*The Master asked a nun, "Well-come? Or 'ill'- come?"*  
*The nun gave a shout.*  
*"Go on, go on, speak!" cried the Master, taking up his stick.*  
*Again the nun shouted.*  
*The Master hit her.*

- *The Record of Línjì*, c. 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> From the Ruth Fuller Sasaki translation of *The Record of Línjì* (2009), "Well-come or ill-come. According to the *Ahan jing* 阿含經 (*Āgama* sutras), the Buddha customarily greeted monks who had newly left their homes to join the sangha with the words, "Well-come 善來, bhikku!" Here Linji is punning on the literal meaning of the greeting by coining the opposite phrase, "Ill-come!" The *Zengyi ahan jing* states: Then Mahākāśyapa, leading his five hundred disciples, went over to the place where the Venerable One was, and touching his head to the ground, saluted the Buddha's feet. Standing by his side, Mahākāśyapa said, "I implore you, my Venerable Buddha, to let us be monks and let us practice the practice of purity, for, according to the general laws of the Buddha, if you, Venerable One, say, 'Well-come, bhikku', one instantly becomes a monk." Whereupon the Venerable One said to Mahākāśyapa, "Well-come, bhikku. But this dharma is subtle. Practice well the practice of purity." Then the clothes of Mahākāśyapa and his five hundred disciples transformed into monk's robes and their hair fell out by itself, leaving them looking as though they had shaved their heads seven days before" (t 2: 621c-622a). (Sasaki and Kirchner 2009:308).

## 2.1 Introduction

Shim Jae-ryong (1999:175) offers the caveat that ‘when discussing [South] Korean Buddhist scholarship in the past fifty years, we should... be aware of the historical and societal relationship of all the factors involved in actually producing such a degree of scholarship in Korea.’ The relevance of those historical and societal factors in relation to historical Korean and South Korean Buddhist scholarship will be touched upon in this chapter. The modern period of Chosŏn-Korea’s opening up from the 1870s onwards broke the monopoly which ordained monastics had over Buddhist textual commentary with the emergence of lay-scholars of Buddhism early 20<sup>th</sup> century Korea (Shim 1999:174). In the post-liberation/ post-war period, heightened interest in Buddhism saw increased treatment of historical Korean Buddhism by western scholars but it is worth to note that the initial phases and approaches to historical Korean Buddhist studies in the post-war period were mediated by the South Korean political context.

Richard D. McBride identifies three main approaches to studies of Korean Buddhism which began emerging in North America during the post-liberation period onwards – namely; 1) the evaluation of historical Korean Buddhism in its East Asian context; 2) the examination of Korean Buddhist practice and ritual; 3) the observation of Korean Buddhism from the standpoint of modernity (McBride 2006:27).<sup>24</sup> This chapter broadly

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<sup>24</sup> The reader can take my use of ‘post-liberation’ here below to refer to the time after the Korean War (c.1948 - 1953) which is obviously also after the ending of the Pacific War if those events and circumstances are even in any way separable in a Korean context since as Bruce Cumings (2010) notes that, what we call the Korean War flooded into the power-vacuum resulting from Japanese surrender in 1945 which was when “Korea” (soon to be divided) was liberated. The reader will note then my ever so slightly controversial dating of the start of the Korean War to 1948 though it is usually given as 1950 in South Korean and American accounts. I do this primarily because it is a fact that both DPRK and ROK forces were skirmishing, firing and raiding across what is now the DMZ from that time and any number of incursions on either side north or south could be cited as the beginning of the Korean War. As it happens, one particular southwards advance made by

situates the study in relation to all three of the categories outlined by McBride by beginning with an overview of scholarship on Korean Buddhism, working through the historiographical development of Chán and Sōn before proceeding to a focus on McBride's third category of Korean Buddhist modernity. In relation to that third category, I observe a gradual shift of focus towards a gendered reading of "Korean" Buddhism. From there I move on to consider the gendered aspects of South Korean Sōn trans-nationalism.

### **2.2.1 Androcentric Buddhist Historiography**

Hwansoo Ilmee Kim, who has pioneered the area of early modern Korean Buddhist history (Kim 2018; Kim 2017, 2009, 2010b, 2010a, 2012, 2012b), has shown the extent to which Korean buddhisms emerging from the Chosōn Dynasty in the late nineteenth-century were anything but disconnected from the wider world and had begun to expand into Japan and Manchuria making the Korean peninsula something of a 'Buddhist Crossroads' (Turner, Cox, and Bocking 2013) in Northeast Asia if not a trans-national rhizome itself already by that time. The two incidences of trans-nationalizing Sōn in the modern period – in the late nineteenth/ twentieth-century and in the post-war period, coincided with the first and second waves of global feminism respectively (Cox 2013).

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northern forces has been logged as the beginning of the war as a justification for defensive retaliation by the American-backed south. The other reason I take 1948 as the beginning of the Korean War is that it undermines conceptualizing the conflicts as somehow separate by virtue of Japanese surrender being in 1945 and a Korean War supposedly beginning 5 years later in 1950 after a presumed period of peace which was not the case.



At this time as the Christian missions - which accompanied the incursions into Korea of Western imperial powers such as Russia, France and Britain - and Japanese imperialism caused Chosŏn Buddhisms to re-form and amalgamate amidst a growing Korean nationalist consciousness within “Korean” Buddhism. The laicization occurring within Sŏn buddhisms generally as a consequence of Western imperial encroachment in Northeast Asia and Japan’s militarized response to it, is explored in the work of scholars such as Micah Auerback (2007). This also entailed the laicization of scholarship about Korean Buddhism at the same time. In “The Formation of Modern [Korean] Buddhist Scholarship,” Cho Sungtaek reminds us from a critical perspective that ‘Buddhist scholarship originating in Europe in the early nineteenth century was introduced to Korea through Japan and developed into its current form. Thus, it entirely reflects ‘a Western-orientated worldview and a Western perception’ (S. Cho 2012:327).

Concerning the first wave of global feminism reaching Chosŏn-Korea, Yung-hee Kim shows how ‘modern Korean feminism from its birth in the late nineteenth century was inextricably interwoven with nascent nationalism’ and this continued throughout the twentieth century when she argues that nationalism and feminism ‘coalesced’ (Y.-H. Kim 1995:120). Just at the moment when the predominantly male Buddhist monastic scribes began to relinquish their historical monopoly on Buddhist scholarship in Korea in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, first-wave feminism became hijacked and deployed in the service of an increasingly androcentric anti-colonial Korean nationalist state.

The influence of nationalist historians such as Sin Ch'aeho 申采浩 (1880 – 1936) was immense. Sin's early twentieth-century mythology-zing of the patrilineal ethno-nation or *minjok* led to a new conception of the peninsular Korean state - appended to which was the traditional Manchurian hinterland - as masculine (Schmid 2002:17). Following Sin's all-encompassing ethno-nationalist theory, Korean nationalist scholar Ch'oe Namsŏn (1930) portrayed "Korean" Buddhism in similar grand-unifying terms as synthesizing all the various strands of Buddhism and therefore as 'syncretic' (K. *T'ong Pulgyo*).

Ch'oe Namsŏn also lamented the loss of masculinity in Korea and went so far as to claim that the Japanese had inherited their historical samurai fighting spirit from the peninsula while at the same time he placed an essentialized and timeless "Korean" Buddhism at the centre of Northeast Asian civilization throughout history (Allen 1990a). Scholarship and knowledge production on this newly constructed "Korean" Buddhism throughout the twentieth-century, though laicizing, remained androcentric and continued to be influenced by what André Schmid calls 'history as genealogy.' By this Schmid means history as a way of proving legitimacy and as a way of seeking validation from the androcentric state which Sheila Miyoshi Jager (2016:132) also notes posits the military as the principal agent defining the national community and 'the people.'

### **2.2.2 The Decline of Androcentric Nationalist Scholarship in Buddhism**

In the previous section I discussed how twentieth-century Korean Buddhist scholarship laicized but expressed the concerns of androcentric state identity-formation. French scholar Bernard Faure and well-known theorist of all matters to do with Chán and Zen,

laments in recent years the persistence of ‘nationalist elements’ that characterize areas of modern South Korean Buddhist scholarship (Faure 2005:153). As mentioned above, Kim notes that the dynamism of Chosŏn and early Colonial Korean feminism was co-opted by Korean nationalism.

Though there were young women’s Buddhist associations and groups, Buddhist figures such as Han Yongun 韓龍雲 (1879 – 1944), who was a signatory of the Korean Proclamation of Independence, did not envisage a role for women much beyond the colonial discourse of the ‘good wife, wise mother,’ which he compared to the ideal of the devoted - and sometimes ‘slave-like’ - wife mentioned in the Buddhist *Sīgālavādā* and *Sujātā* sūtras (Tikhonov 2012:408–12)(Kwon 2015:6). Feminists such as the Buddhist nun and writer Kim Iryŏp 金一葉 (1896-1971) who returned to Korea from Japan in 1920 though pioneering, were isolated. The *Sinyŏja* or ‘New Woman’ movement which she founded, though radical for the time – had little sustained impact in colonial Korea. Kim Eun-shil (1994) also notes that [South] “Korean” feminism has acted as ‘a powerful cultural ideology to restrict the enquiry on feminism itself.’

Shim describes how the nationalist approach to Korean Buddhist history described above prevailed in the post-war period and ‘was influenced by the national crises and concomitant psychologically charged emotions’ as well as being ‘associated with patriotism and some sort of counter-ideology, such as anti-communism or anti-Japanese feeling’ (Shim 1999:175). It would not be until 1989, just a year after South Korean military dictator Chun Doo Hwan had stepped down and Roh Tae Woo, the first

democratically elected president of South Korea took power, that nationalist scholar Ch'oe Namsŏn's (1930) syncretic construction of an essentialized "Korean" Buddhism would begin to be questioned by the mainstream of South Korean Buddhist scholarship. Shim Jae-ryong's paper "On the General Characteristics of Korean Buddhism-Is Korean Buddhism Syncretic?" (Shim 1989) emerged as a decade when Buddhists had suffered surveillance and persecution in the *Pulgyo Bŏmnan* purges and the socially-engaged resistance of the *Minjung Pulgyo* (K. People's Buddhism) movement as part of the democracy protests came to an end (Wells 1995).<sup>25</sup>

From the early to mid-nineteen eighties, Walraven (1983) and Kendall (1987) produced some of the first works in English on women and gender in Korean Shamanism and religion generally before anything about women in Korean Buddhism was produced. It would be some time yet before women in South Korean Buddhism would receive focused attention which would first require opening up androcentric nationalist South Korean Buddhist scholarship generally – a near monopoly which the tradition of *muncha Sŏn* 文字禪 or 'lettered Chán' as well as the "Confucian" scholastic tradition - both historically and contemporaneously - had helped to construct, connected as it was to the elites educated in Sino-Korean and keeping the intellectual means of production in male hands and ink-brushes.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See "Northeast Asia Centered Around Korea: Ch'oe Namsŏn's View of History" (Allen 1990b) and "Ch'oe Namsŏn and Identity Construction through Negotiation with the Colonizer" (Scholl 2019).

<sup>26</sup> I put the term "Confucian" in inverted commas to signify the openness of it as a concept with meanings which can fluctuate over time. Walraven (2011) speaks of Confucianism in the Korean context as a 'moving target' and Han (2017) continues Walraven's theme discussing the 'identifying power' of "Confucianism" as being destabilized at a cultural-religious nexus.

The immediate post-war decades of military-dictatorship and the attendant nationalist censorship in South Korea had been dominated by the continuation of focus on analysis of classical texts in Sino-Korean/ classical Chinese which McBride calls ‘high textual scholarship’ (McBride 2008:1) and translation work into other languages by non-Korean scholars. Lancaster (Lancaster and Park 1979; Lancaster and Yu 1989) and Robert E. Buswell Jnr. (1990, 1991, 1993) began some of the first work in English to focus on [South] Korean Buddhism in the post-war period. Such high-textual scholarship and historical studies continues to this day as it does in elite scholarly circles in South Korea.

The 1990s began to see an increasing number of scholars willing to question the nationalist structures of South Korean Buddhist knowledge. Following on from Shim’s earlier work of 1989, Mok Jeong-bae also began to question the ‘syncretic’ label (Mok 1993) with Buswell’s “*Is There a 'Korean Buddhism' in the Pre-Nationalist Age?*” not long after (Buswell 1996). The late 1990s and from the early 2000s onwards saw conditions which allowed scholars to question the nationalist narrative which had eclipsed the role of women in [South] Korean Buddhism. It was after the 2002 World Cup in South Korea and Roh Moo-hyun’s (1946 – 2009) relatively liberal tenure as South Korean president (2003 – 2008) that scholars began to question the dominant narrative of a timeless yet syncretic “Korean” Buddhism as the fountainhead of East Asian Buddhism.

### 2.3 Modern Sŏn and Gender

Later twentieth-century South Korean Sŏn Buddhism (SKSB) began to spread to the global north during the second wave of global feminism at a time when South Korea was industrializing and as androcentric scholarship on “Korean” Buddhism began - albeit slowly – to give way to a broader view. SKSB spread abroad along pathways previously carved out by Japanese Zen in the first half of the twentieth-century and Sŏn was quick to make use of the language of non-dualism within Buddhism and the by then more established and familiar term ‘Zen’ – the Japanese pronunciation of Sŏn - in order to appeal to the counter-culture of the 1960s and its liberal values during the second wave of global feminism. Samu Sunim, the monk who had brought Buddhism from the South Korean heartland to (in Buddhist terms) the ‘periphery’ of the United States, published his article “Manseong Sunim, A Woman Zen Master of Modern Korea” but significantly, writing outside of South Korea at this time (Samu Sunim 1986). Nevertheless, in the relative privacy of the Korean peninsula, ‘Japanese-ness’ signified a gendered impurity and a religious heterodoxy if not heresy which will be dealt with below in the section on the Purification Movement in this chapter.

As the South Korean military-industrial complex became integrated into the global north through a troop presence in Vietnam and an American troop presence on Korean soil in exchange for which South Korea benefited from huge financial aid packages, Europeans and North Americans travelled in the opposite direction to Samu Sunim from (in Buddhist terms) the periphery to the core. Martine Batchelor and scholars such as Robert Buswell spent time as monastics in South Korea in the 1970s and 80s with Batchelor

publishing one of the first valuable contributions to knowledge about the life of Korean Buddhist nuns in a European language ‘Women in Korean Zen’ (2006) albeit some decades after the experience.

After Rita Gross’ *Buddhism After Patriarchy* (Gross 1993) established a Western feminist methodology albeit for a Buddhism based on texts, advances in that wider global field of gender to do with Buddhism began to make headway and the late nineteen nineties and early two-thousands saw the production of ethnographies on Buddhist nuns by Arai (1999), Falk (2007) and Gutschow (2009) in the Japanese, Thai and Himalayan contexts respectively. The impression persists that South Korea may have been behind global trends but it was also around the late 1990s and early 2000s that an androcentric focus in South Korean Buddhist scholarship began to give way and more female voices and studies of Buddhist women emerged in South Korean Buddhist scholarship. If gendered approaches to Buddhism in South Korea are somewhat ‘thin on the ground,’ it is a per capita reflection of the field globally.

As Buswell’s (1998) “Imagining ‘Korean Buddhism’: the Invention of a National Religious Tradition” started to de-construct the essentialized and timeless notion of a “Korean” Buddhism and linked that constructed to the modern state, Ha Chun-saeng’s (1998) *kkaedalŭm-ŭi kkot* (“Flower’s of Enlightenment”), the *first* historical overview of Korean Buddhist nuns emerged the same year. The use of the word ‘flowers’ in Korean to refer to women let alone nuns, is somewhat questionable; *kisaeng* (historical Korean courtesans) were also referred to as ‘flowers’ such as in the title of Kawamura Minato’s

book, “Kisaeng; the Speaking Flowers” (Kawamura 2002) but that the book was published at all was significant.<sup>27</sup>

Jo Seung-mee’s “Dharma, Interpretation and Buddhist Feminism” (2002) is one of the first works from a South Korean Buddhist scholar (female) to mention Buddhism and feminism yet treatments of women in Korean Buddhism and Korean Buddhist nuns remained largely historiographic for some time. Cho Eun-su continued to deconstruct the bounded-notion of an essentialized and universal “Korean” Buddhism (Cho 2004a, 2004b) while a decoupling of the modern nation-state from the analysis of historical East Asian Buddhist transnationalism began occurring with Buswell’s own editorial *Currents and Countercurrents* (Buswell 2005) and continued with Hur Nam-lin in “In Search of ‘Korean-ness’ in Korean Religions through Border-crossing: A Comparative Approach” (Hur 2011).

Historical surveys concerning women and Korean Buddhism emerged through the 2000s (Kwon 2005)(Jung 2008)(Choe 2010). Cho Eun-su’s “Reinventing Female Identity; A Brief History of Korean Buddhist Nuns” (2009) and her editorial *Korean Buddhist Nuns and Laywomen* (E. Cho 2012a) were still largely historic but began raising issues of the androcentric record in historical Korean Buddhism. Jo Seung-mee’s (2006, 2013) articles are some of the very few works dealing with gender with respect to the South Korean Buddhist context while Sharon Suh’s (2012) treatment of gender in transnational South

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<sup>27</sup> In the Korean vernacular, ‘flower’ is not always a complimentary term for a woman.



Korean Buddhism in the U.S remains one of the very few ethnographies that treats gender in South Korean Buddhism either domestically or transnationally.<sup>28</sup>

Ok Bok-yeon's focus on the Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism - "Politics of exclusion of laywomen's participation rights in the Jogye Order of Korea Buddhism" (Ok 2015) was the first work to focus on systemic violence against women at the hierarchical lay-monastic interface of South Korean Buddhism. Nevertheless, Ha Chun-saeng's *Korean Bhikkunī : the Hidden History of Female Buddhist Monks Illuminated* (2018) shows how ordained Buddhist nuns organize and group themselves around matriarchs in communities of *munchung* 門中 (K. 문중) or Dhamma-Families (Ha 2018:273–308) as much as their male counterparts do around patriarchs. Though the patriarch is absent, the family is not.

Away from South Korean Buddhism, Nirmala Salgado did for colonizing western-centric approaches to the study of Buddhist women what Rita Gross had done to patriarchal approaches two decades before in her *Buddhist Nuns and Gendered Practice* (2013). In fact Salgado criticizes the Western feminist approach of Gross mentioned earlier which views Asian women as being in need of Western feminism thus depriving them of agency. Jessica Starling (2012, 2013, 2019) takes her cues from Salgado in her studies of lay Buddhist women in the Japanese context but no comparable study of South Korean Buddhist lay-women has ever been conducted - though Uri Kaplan notes the prevalence

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<sup>28</sup> *Kūndae hanguk pulgyo-ūi yōsōng suhaeng munhwa* (2006)  
*Hyōndae hanguk pulgyo yōsōng sōngjikja-ūi hyōnhwanggwā jendō gyōnghōm* (2013)

of female students in his deeply insightful study of South Korean Buddhist education, his point of departure was not to study gender issues pertaining to that education specifically (Kaplan 2017). In sum, there have still been very few gendered approaches taken to the study of South Korean or general Korean Buddhism, something which this project hopes to aid in addressing.

Considering that all religious renunciation of secular life in Korean Sŏn contexts begins with the family, a gendered sociological approach to the study of monastic Sŏn rhetoric and indeed Zen rhetoric in general, is something that is markedly lacking. The Sŏn sacrifice – the archetypal hero’s journey of the Sŏn disciple/ practitioner to the mountains to undergo the sacrifice of his/ her Sŏn training upon which his/ her later ministry and performance of rhetorical pedagogy is founded – begins with leaving the family home, *ch’ulga* 出家 in the Korean vernacular which figuratively means to ordain as a monk but literally means to leave home with much scope for analysis from the perspective of classic sociological theories such as gender role socialization and structural location to newer theories such as risk aversion and power control.

In “Gender Differences in Religion” (2014), Francis and Penny discuss how ‘there is a link between socially structured power relations outside the household and variations in the social control of sons and daughters within the household,’ particularly relevant in the East Asian context where in Confucian societies, filial piety (loyalty to one’s parents) practiced at home is held to be practicing loyalty to the state which as we shall see, was

often supported militarily by the Sōn Buddhist establishment. In terms of gender role socialization theories, Francis and Penny (2014:314) also state that;

gender difference in religiosity can be attributed to different experiences of socialization among males and females. According to this theory, males are socialized in terms of accomplishment and aggressiveness, which are ideals congruent with secular culture. By contrast, females are socialized in terms of conflict resolution, submission, gentleness, and nurturance, which are ideals congruent with religious emphases.

From this point of view, the study of ecclesiastical Sōn rhetorical pedagogy with its sudden shouts, occasional strikes and ceremonial use of a stick can be approached as a gendered socialization both in terms of how it is learned, performed and received. In addition to this, I have adopted perspectives from scholars such as Butler (1990) and her concept of gender as performativity - discussed in section E.6 of the excursus in this dissertation – along with Kristeva’s (1982) idea that that patriarchal performance happens in the space created for it by women’s exclusion, also discussed further in section 2.3.5 below. This socialization perspective underpins the central research questions of this project discussed in the next chapter.

### **2.3.2 Masculinizing Buddhist Historiography**

After John Powers’ (2009) *Bull of a Man: Masculinity, Sex and the Body in Indian Buddhism* was published about Indian Buddhism, studies on masculinity in South Korean Buddhism are yet to emerge though some studies such as Vladimir Tikhonov’s (2015) begin to veer towards the role of Buddhism in militarized masculinity in the South Korean context as Keeler (2017) does in the Burmese. While there are virtually no in-

depth studies of masculinity with respect to Korean or South Korean Buddhism, that the vast majority of ‘Korean Buddhism’ scholarship produced in South Korea is still concerned with national identity, distant history, philology and textual-analysis is an indicator of masculinity in itself in an androcentric military-industrial complex. Due to the Confucian respect for mastery of classical Chinese as a badge of academic excellence, scholarship on foundational Chán/ Sŏn texts in that language and more recently other philological scholarship in canonical languages such as Pali, Sanskrit, Japanese, Chinese and Tibetan are what are academically prestigious. Performative Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy as an expression of the enlightened mind of past-patriarchs can be viewed as a historiographical socialization in the sense of acting out masculinized hagiography.

Women were traditionally not given an education in Sino-Korean (classical Chinese) and the Korean script *hangeul* was once pejoratively referred to as ‘women’s letters.’

However though still comparatively small, there has been a huge increase in the number of women undertaking Buddhist Studies scholarship in South Korea – which includes Buddhist nuns - though relatively few of this number research anything to do with gender. Anthropological or sociological investigations of South Korean Buddhism from the etic perspective are generally dismissed as “un-Buddhist” and lack credibility within the mainstream field of South Korean Buddhist studies for that very reason as only doctrinal-based truth prevails and its male-centred interpretation. Dominated as the field is by male South Korean scholars who predominantly profess Buddhism as their religion, the etic perspective is seen as dissenting or simply dismissed as irrelevant. This is a type of censorship practiced by the dominant androcentric discourse and is not dissimilar from

the practice of denying that certain monastics who might have committed sexual assaults or other crimes were ever part of the monastic order they belonged to. Nowhere in the developed world are the defamation laws more strict than in the South Korean military-industrial complex, a type of gendered state-censorship in itself.

Critical studies of the Buddhist status quo in South Korea are not only seen as un-Buddhist or pro-Christian but as un-Korean since [“Korean”]Buddhism is a national-identity marker for South Korean Buddhists, distinguishing them as “truly Korean” in contradistinction to adherents of “foreign” religions such as Christianity. Since the [South Korean] *minjok*'s (ethno-nation) Buddhism is patriotic if not masculinized itself, it is vaguely if not tangibly un-patriotic to question the dominant androcentric narrative. Nevertheless, recent years have seen a growth in interest for research about women and gender issues in South Korean Buddhist studies and this has paralleled the deconstruction of Korean Buddhist nationalism in South Korean Buddhist scholarship and English-language scholarship about Korean Buddhism.

Though some Buddhist nuns do conduct research in Pāli, Tibetan, Sanskrit or early Buddhism, the monastics conducting research into topics such as vegetarianism and the ‘traditional’ [South] Korean monastic diet under the brand of “Temple Food” are invariably ordained women and I personally never met a male monastic who was researching Temple Food. Male monastics invariably research early Chinese Chán and Sōn in *hanmun* (classical Chinese) and occasionally Zen also in Japanese as well as foundational texts in other canonical languages as mentioned. Most of the knowledge

production surrounding monastic diets and Buddhist culinary arts is done by women in line with the fact that the vast majority of culinary duties even in male-only temples is performed by women who live within the temple compound with the monks.<sup>29</sup>

### **2.3.3 Mǎzǔ Dào'yī and Línjì – Textual Paradigms of Martial Masculinity, Gendered History**

In 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century Koryŏ-Korea as in China, the abbots of Sŏn temples were often themselves direct blood-relations and members of an elite milieu of bureaucrats, aristocrats and literati who received tax-breaks through the sponsorship of temples which were often the symbol of monarchic state-authority in the remote regions in which they were located. Edward J. Shulz (2000) shows how the rise of the Sŏn school of Buddhism in Koryŏ-Korea was intimately connected to its historical elite and military associations during the one hundred year period from 1170 until Mongol rule in 1270. Vermeersch and Anderl both show that the Sŏn school was financially dependent ‘on secular powers and laity in addition to the fact that ordinations had to be authorized by secular officials whom the clergy had to submit to during Sòng China and Koryŏ Korea (Anderl 2012:74)(Vermeersch 2002).

Shulz goes on to describe not only how ‘military officers and civilian leaders jointly endowed temples and paid for services by leading clerics’(Shultz 2000a:147) but also

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<sup>29</sup> It is also worth noting that there are now a number of Temple Food restaurants in South Korea run by Buddhist nuns. The reader may also be interested to note that in contrast to Buddhist countries such as Taiwan, almost all Buddhist laity in South Korea eat meat and though not served openly at temples, a large proportion if not most South Korean monastics eat meat due to native Korean beliefs about what constitutes a healthy diet. That is to say, “Temple Food” is not only a new brand but somewhat of a construction based on the Western imaginary of what should constitute an essentialized “Buddhist” diet. The reader will please note that I do not intend to morally judge South Koreans who eat meat be they lay or monastic.

describes the militarization of Sŏn and how ‘the authorities recruited monks into the army.’ This merging of Buddhist and state interests (Shultz 2000a:142) and ecclesiastic-bureaucratic elite provided a form of Foucauldian bio-power for the state (discussed further below) and an increasingly formalized rhetoric of Sŏn emerged in Koryŏ-Korean society at this time. This climate was the background to a major innovation in both Meditation School historiography and pedagogy which was the incorporation of the vernacular into the literary Chinese of the *yǔlù* 語錄 genre or “Recorded Sayings” (of past Chán masters).

Anderl cites two but almost inextricably related goals for that innovation during the time of the Sòng Dynasty 960 – 1279 CE (Anderl 2012:57–59). The first goal was soteriological or at least this new literary genre availed of ‘numerous linguistic and rhetorical devices in order to record the performative behaviour of the masters’ (Anderl 2011:230, 2012:59), constructing what Faure calls ‘the rhetoric of immediacy’ (Faure 1994). McRae notes the didactic function of recording and ‘patterning’ these performative instances of spiritually enlightened behaviour. ‘These men (and very occasionally women) serve as exemplars of enlightened behaviour, whose stories are told and retold in order to pattern the behaviour of subsequent generations of students. Even as Chan involves the transcendence of patterned behaviour in enlightened spontaneity, this abandoning of patterning must itself be patterned in order to be understood, modelled before it can be imitated, deconstructed, and refigured’ (McRae 2003:47–48).

The secondary impetus behind this innovation was to appeal to the literati and government officials for financial and political support. As a new literary genre, the apocryphal or at least what Welter calls the ‘fictionalized’ *yǔlù* genre (with regard to Sòng Dynasty *yǔlù* constructing Tang Dynasty Chán) targeted the readership of the Sòng (and Koryŏ-Korean) literati, governing officials and educated elite whose financial support was paramount for their factional supremacy (Welter 2008:160). The spontaneous and therefore “Enlightened,” anti-authoritarian iconoclasm of a Chán master such as Mǎzǔ Dàoyī 馬祖道一 (709 – 788 CE) of the Táng Dynasty 唐朝 (618 – 907 CE), unencumbered by social norms formed a new subitist literary genre which appealed to officials weighed down with duty, obligation and responsibility in a society regulated by strict Confucian etiquette.

These same officials were the ones who funded temples and donated large sums for the upkeep and support of monastic practice communities who in turn supplied monks as soldiers to the state in times of military crisis and in whose official records, nuns like Sŏn Master Chinhye were omitted by what Rita Gross (1993:90–91) calls the ‘androcentric record-keeping’ of that patriarchal system in the vast majority of cases. In historiographical terms, we can apply Gross’s concerns for a ‘usable Buddhist past’ to the Korean context and arrive at an androcentric and therefore usable Korean Sŏn Buddhist history which ‘by definition, cannot be accurate. It will be riddled with omissions about women but will also in most cases, whitewash many negativities about the patriarchal past’ (Gross 1993:19).



Until very recently, the *yǔlù* genre of “Recorded Sayings” of past patriarchs has been treated as fact within scholarship and are still treated as fact by most lay-practitioners of Global Zen and the genre has had a profound effect on Chán, Sōn and Zen scholarship as it was written down mostly by men for other men who had access to the means of intellectual production. The effect of that androcentric record-keeping on Chán and Sōn pedagogy itself has been immense. Furthermore, ecclesiastical Sōn pedagogy according to the ‘patterning’ which McRae identifies above, has remained largely unchanged since the roughly contemporaneous Sòng (China) and Koryō (Korea) dynasties.



Figure 4 Chán Master and Patriarch Mǎzǔ Dào'yī 馬祖道一 (709 – 788 CE) wielding his Zen stick, Museum of Fine Art, Boston.

Mǎzǔ Dào'yī’s putative ‘Dharma-Heir’ or spiritual-descendant, Línjì Yìxuán 臨濟義玄 (d. 866 CE) or *Imje* as he and his lineage is known in South Korea, was to have the most profound impact on the Korean Sōn Schools with the later introduction of his style of critical-phrase meditation was. As with the process of editing and embellishment of Mǎzǔ Dào'yī which occurs in retrospect during the Sòng, a similar process occurs with Línjì resulting in what Albert Welter calls ‘the creation of Línjì’s persona’ as well as the creation of Línjì’s link to Mǎzǔ which hadn’t previously existed (Welter 2008:126, 136).

There are no records of Línjì until eighty-six years after his death when he appears in the *Chodang chip* 祖堂集 - *Collection from the Patriarch's Hall* compiled in 952 (Welter 2008:109). Mǎzǔ Dàoyī's spontaneous subitist pedagogy had become political and Chán historiography had become didactic in and of itself.<sup>30,31</sup> As the Sōn school became more powerful in Koryō-Korea, it not only appealed to the literati, elites and government officials but those very officials themselves weighed down with duty, obligation and responsibility were not just Confucian bureaucrats but were Sōn monastics themselves. As Sem Vermeersch shows, the Koryō Dynasty governmental examination for Sōn Buddhist monks was strict, highly organized at state-level and surpassed that of China (Vermeersch 2001).

Unlike Táng Dynasty Chán constructed in retrospect, sermons, encounters and sayings of eminent masters were now recorded during their lifetimes such that text became pedagogy and pedagogy became text. By the time that the Sōn School displaced the doctrinal schools in Koryō, Sōn masters were preparing their sermons with *yǔlù* records in mind; always speaking to the text and the male literati ascendancy simultaneously;

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<sup>30</sup> According to the Blue Cliff Record 碧巖錄 (K. *Byōkamrok*), Mǎzǔ's successor Bǎizhàng Huáihái 百丈懷海 (720 – 814), who is believed by Korean Buddhists to have taught the First Patriarch of Korean Sōn, Toǔi 道義 (died c.825) also taught Huángbò Xīyùn 黃檗希運 (d. 850 CE) (perhaps more popularly known by the alternate transliteration of his name, Huang-po).<sup>30</sup> From Fujian in southern China, Huang-po is also noted for his patterned utilization of non-verbal pedagogies when he struck his student, the future Dàzhōng Emperor, Xuānzong 大中, 宣宗 (810 – 859, r. 847 -859). It is unclear if the Emperor learned much from the exchange unlike Huángbò's most famous student Línjì Yìxián 臨濟義玄 (d. 866 CE) whom he is recorded as having hit in the face on three occasions and who then went on to have a profound impact on Korean Sōn, all of the Northeast Asian Meditation Schools and thereby, global Zen (Cleary and Cleary 2005:75-79).

<sup>31</sup> After an edition issued in 1036, the most well-known 'standard' version of the *Línjì Yǔlù* 臨濟語錄 (*Record of the Sayings of Línjì - Línjì Lù* for short), was compiled by Yuánjué Zōngyǎn (C. 圓覺宗演 d.u) in 1120, 'over two hundred and fifty years after Línjì's passing' (Welter 2008:109). Zōngyǎn's 'standard' version of the *Línjì Lù* was a rearrangement of the previous text to highlight Línjì's political connections and his delivery of sermons at the behest of local officials and magistrates (Welter 2008:126).

displacing ‘the classical Buddhist texts as the prime arbiter of Buddhist wisdom’ and therefore replacing the historical Buddha Himself as the authority on enlightened wisdom (Welter 2008:137, 162).



Figure 5 Chán master Línjì Yìxuán 臨濟義玄 (d. 866 CE) of Zhènzhōu, known as Imje in Korea

While in no way moribund during the following Chosŏn Dynasty 1392 – 1897, the Buddhist tradition as a whole experienced a change of fortunes when the Buddhist schools lost their official state-level endorsement and became a matter for private devotion (Walraven 2007)(Baker 2014b). When it did emerge publicly during the Chosŏn Dynasty, it did so only as a form of military bio-power spoken of earlier, to lend arms to the defence of the nation against the 1592 Japanese samurai invasions. When Sŏn began to regain some ground at the end of the Chosŏn Dynasty in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was by merging with Pure Land and speaking directly to women or by laicizing in response to

the competition posed by missionary Christianity and Imperial Japanese Buddhism on Korean soil.

To this day, due to the elitism and sectarianism of modernist propagators such as D. T. Suzuki (1870 – 1966) who continued the aims of that hagiographical tradition when he brought his form of ecclesiastical Japanese Zen to the West in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the sectarian and socio-political agenda of the ecclesiastic Japanese Zen schools have been unwittingly reinforced by western writers such as John Blofeld (1959) and in the work of Chang Chung-Yuan (1971:129–32), who take the mythologizing of Mǎzǔ Dào'yī's subitist 8<sup>th</sup> century pedagogy as historical fact (Poceski 2004:75). The consequences of taking the *yǐlù* records as fact has been to reinforce an androcentric view of Chán, Sōn and Zen history and the reinforcement of institutional supremacy or at least, in contemporary South Korea, the claim to such.

What McRae calls the 'mythopoeic' impetus in Sōn/ Zen historiography (which ostensibly looks back) and the mythopoeic consciousness in contemporary orthodox monastic Sōn/ Zen rhetorical pedagogy (which ostensibly takes place in an eternal-present but always speaks to a future line of succession) are for all intents and purposes the same activity – the constant renewal of the monastic orthodox Sōn/ Zen School's elite position in an eternal present which through the rhetorical and mythopoeic 'ritualization' causes the past to 'lose its historical dimension'(Faure 1996:192). The mythopoeic process Chán, Sōn and Zen historiography then is androcentric state discourse in action through which 'male domination is eternalized'(Jay 1992:147-148).

In addition, I suggest that the further Chán, Sŏn and Zen were removed from the martial arts-based system of monastic introspection found in the Shaolin Temple, the birthplace of the Meditation School and the temple to which all Chán, Sŏn and Zen temples and centres worldwide trace their lineage, immediacy had to be generated rhetorically and through ecclesiastical ritual which acted as a surrogate for the immediacy of martial arts-based Chán practice in order to retain any claim to the ‘Bloodline Transmitted by the Patriarchs’ (C. 祖師相傳血脈). In Sŏn temples such as Gulgul-sa near Gyeongju in South Korea where introspection is based upon the practice of *Sŏnmudo*, quite literally ‘Sŏn Martial Art’ – rhetorical pedagogy was noticeably absent though admittedly I visited there and a *Sŏnmudo* training hall in the Bangbae area of Seoul on only a few occasions and did not conduct an ethnography.

#### **2.3.4 Gendered Transmission, Gendered Enlightenment, Gendered History**

Hagiography, mythologization and the ‘ritual veneration of ancestors’ (Grayson 2007:436) as features of East Asian culture then also characterize and constitute the androcentric record and historiography which André Schmid’s theorizes as ‘history as genealogy’ (Schmid 2002:180). If not as historiography but even simply in terms of praxis, Chán and Sŏn have been called a ‘genealogical model of religious cultivation’ (McRae 2003:51). History and historiography in the Meditation School is rhetorical pedagogy as much as a strike with a bamboo stick. As Anderl has noted the contribution of the Meditation school to innovation of incorporating vernacular spoken language into literary Chinese, I suggest that the ecclesiastical rhetoric of the Meditation School has played a role in the formation of, if not the gendering of East Asian historiography itself, the East Asian view of history and possibly by extension the gendering of the state itself.

The nationalizing *Samguk Yusa* or “Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms,” attributed to Koryŏ Dynasty State Preceptor Iryŏn 一然國師 (1206 – 1289) was much more than an idle collection of myths mixed with historic events – it was a politicized history and justification of the nation written by a Sŏn monk (or his disciple) at a time when the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1271 – 1368) held sway over the Korean peninsula. As Uri Kaplan shows, the ‘mythological-historical’ *Samguk Yusa* is one of two native Korean texts on the present-day Jogye Order monastic education syllabus (Kaplan 2020:85).

In *Narratives of Nation-Building in Korea: A Genealogy of Patriotism*, Sheila Miyoshi Jager identifies in South Korean nationalist discourse, a focus on ‘the generational link between father and son, “patriotic genealogy” and ancestral piety’ (Jager 2016:15). These ‘fundamental concerns’ she attributes to ‘a primordial anxiety about paternity’ which is common to both dissident *and* State national discourse’ (ibid). The inheritance of Buddhist Enlightenment or Zen realization itself always had an intergenerational familial flavour within organized monastic communities in that it was traditionally held to be transmitted from person to person since the time of the Buddha (see page 65 of this text). Bodiford (2007:262) shows how the transmission of Dharma (i.e the inheritance of teaching authority and conferral of ‘insight’ upon which that authority is predicated) is constructed along familial and patriarchal lines and ‘the master-disciple bond was compared to the relationship between father and son’ (Bodiford 1991:437)(Anderl 2011:55). This relationship became codified in law in the Tang Chinese context; ‘the state even legally recognized that a monk had to treat his teacher like a father, in the same way a layman was required to serve his father’ (Jorgensen 1987:97). ‘Patriarchal lineage’

and narratives about the human body were compounded and tied together by explicit references to blood within the wider tradition. The inheritance of a temple was and is accompanied by a succession certificate entitled ‘Bloodline Transmitted by the Patriarchs’ (C. 祖師相傳血脈).<sup>32</sup>

It is the gendered bloodline which transmits the fundamental Teaching of the Patriarchs and discussed with regard to the transmission of Buddhism to Korea by Heo Heung-sik (Heo 1997,2004) but the most direct criticism of the genealogical bloodline narrative however comes from Bak Hae-dang who discusses Sŏn in terms of familial and personal connections *inmaek* (K. 인맥, C. 人脈) and calls into question any expectation that Korean Buddhism can fulfil its self-proclaimed soteriological goals when the tradition is defined by what he calls *inmaekchungshimŭi p’abŏlchu ’ŭi* - a ‘personal connection-centered factionalism’ reminiscent of Faure’s statement that Chán (in this case Sŏn) claims ‘to achieve an ideal harmony that hides the real relations of power’(Bak 2000:73)(Faure 1996:192). In this manner, orthodox ecclesiastic Sŏn rhetoric can be said to mirror state (military-industrial complex) discourse. Bodiford also shows the common aspects of both Dharma lineages and family trees which he argues directly accounted for Meditation Sect dominance (Bodiford 2007).

Reading Bak, the proposition that at least some of the performative aspects and semiotic functions of ecclesiastical Sŏn might be expressions of Jager’s primordial anxiety about paternity within an androcentric state are borne out when we factor in the Confucian

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<sup>32</sup> The last two classical Chinese characters in the above title, 血脈 pronounced in Korean as *hyŏl maek* (K. 혈맥), *kechimyaku* in Japanese pronunciation, mean ‘bloodline.’

influence upon the East Asian Meditation School. This is achieved by forming ‘a closed concept around personal connections *inmaek* (K. 인맥, C. 人脈) continued from certain teachers to certain disciples, and it leads to a concept about a clan or family that excludes other people or traditions’ (Bak 2000:72). This frames Cho Eun-su’s description of how, if she attempts to teach at all, a female Sōn master is lucky if she is even referred to posthumously as a *yōdaesa* (‘Female Master’) as in the *single* surviving case from the Koryō Dynasty of Sōn master Chinye (1255 – 1324)(Cho 2012:1)(Heo in Cho 2012:91). The Koryō Dynasty incidentally spanned almost half a millennium.

It also begs the question why, if she had mastered Sōn Buddhism, why was it necessary to refer to her posthumously as a ‘female’ master and not simply just as a ‘master’? ‘Death, with parturition and menstruation the major source of defilement, could also become the source of ultimate purification’ for a Buddhist nun (Faure 2009:237). Cho also reminds us that in case we might opt to think that women played a backseat role to male monasticism in the past, the Korean Bhikṣuṇī sangha and lineages have existed alongside male lines of succession since the inception of Buddhism on the Korean peninsula (E. Cho 2012b:1). Women were simply not included in the historical record in the vast majority of cases.

To this day in South Korea, the institution of the mainstream Buddhist Church embodied by its patriarchs prohibits Bhikkhūṇīs (nuns) from conferring *inka* 印可 – the official recognition of Dharma Transmission – recognition and certification of a spiritual-realization implying a direct connection with the historical Buddha. This means that nuns can be recognized as ‘enlightened’ but cannot officially confer that recognition on others



which – to borrow Jager’s term – is ‘agnatic’ and kept within lines of males. The effect of this is that it keeps the living historiography of the Sōn tradition as male, constructs a gendered Enlightenment and a gendered historiography about it. The Koryō Dynasty Sōn master Chinye was not only barely included in the historical record but “Enlightenment” (and the spiritual and political authority derived therefrom) was reserved for males as she would never have been able to approve a successor’s spiritual-realization, at least not publicly. This point about *inka* or Dharma Transmission will be discussed later in chapter 6 section 6.8.2.

### **2.3.5 Rhetoric of Blood Sacrifice in Sōn**

In *Throughout Your Generations Forever; Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity*, Nancy Jay (1992:137) recognizes the debt her work owes to Durkheim for the realization ‘that people, sometimes men only, bring aspects of their societies into being in ritual action.’ I ask if the ritual re-enactment of the sacrifice made by the Sōn master on his/ her archetypal hero’s journey is a way in which, as Kristeva (1982) argues, those patriarchs and that patriarchal culture rhetorically and politically excluded the feminine and the maternal so that it could come into being or retain power. Jay notes that;

sacrificial traditions have rarely been questioned about the ways they are grounded in the social relations of reproduction or about the ways they work to achieve male domination. Most theories have ignored the ways in which sacrifice remedies having-been-born-of-woman, establishing bonds of intergenerational continuity between males that transcend their absolute dependence on childbearing women... and make sacrifice coterminous with patriarchal civilization... to legitimate a world in which male domination is eternalized (Jay 1992:147-148).

We rarely consider Sŏn or Chán to be a “sacrificial” tradition in spite of many examples of blood sacrifice, most notably that of the Second Patriarch who cut off his own arm as an offering. Even if we make allowance for Koryŏ Dynasty Sŏn ecclesiasts and their successors performing ritualized pedagogical rhetoric to have been fully conscious of their own inter-textuality and intentionally engaged in a conscious ‘sacrifice of the author’ (Barthés 1967), the symbolic effect of encountering live Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy expounded by a master in ritual posture seated on the cushion with her/his ceremonial stick, can be a hermeneutical act in itself; reading embodied sacrificial and androcentric text. Anderl reminds us, the objective of Sŏn rhetoric - unlike that of Greek rhetoric - is not to persuade however that does not preclude there being a dialectic between, as Ricoeur calls it (1973:561) – *explanation* (in this case the Sŏn master’s expounding or rhetorical exposition of the Dharma) and the *understanding* of what is expounded regardless of whether that understanding is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ in Sŏn Buddhist terms. The ‘hermeneutical circle’ remains the structure of knowledge and experience even if we take it on Sŏn’s own terms of the Dharma being a “heart-to-heart transmission” (Ricoeur 1973:562).

Much of this research is concerned with the question as to whether semiotically, the signifier and the signified may be different between genders within East Asian cultures and different again outside of East Asia in European cultural contexts. According to the hero’s journey archetype of the Chán/ Sŏn/ Zen master, what is the function of an ecclesiastical Sŏn master’s spiritual-authority based on such great physical sacrifice of years of meditating often in caves and mountain hermitages? Being soteriological does

not preclude the semiotic function of that sacrifice enacted through ritual propriety and rhetoric, from being ‘coterminous with patriarchal civilization’ and ‘transcending dependence on childbearing women’ to borrow from Jay quoted above.

It was during my first pilot studies in Germany and Poland that I could contrast the dynamic in the Sōn-space and could compare it to the South Korean context. Noticing much less *ye* 禮 or ‘ritual etiquette/ ritual propriety’ in European contexts, I began to enquire if in the South Korean context, the semiotic function of the ubiquitous and gendered prostration-practice of *posalnims* (Buddhist lay-women) didn’t just compliment or support the re-enactment of the male sacrifice embodied by the ecclesiastic Sōn-master sitting on his cushion but even participated in that sacrifice and collaborated in the Sōn-rhetoric of it through the ritual-labour of sacrificing themselves to support the body of the Sōn-master.<sup>33</sup>

In this way, ecclesiastic Sōn-rhetoric could be viewed as ‘an extraordinarily efficient method for control of the production of religious meaning, especially effective in centralizing and making exclusive the means of communication with the transcendent powers that legitimate the social order’ (Jay 1992:149). Applying Walraven’s definition to Sōn rhetoric as ‘an intervention’ on behalf of someone – discussed further in the following section - then the only thing that separates the usually male Sōn master from

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<sup>33</sup> I hope to explore in the future also, the possibility that as Sōn, Chán and Zen grew further removed from its Shaolin roots (where all East Asian meditation schools trace their root to and where martial arts were practiced as part of spiritual-cultivation) and became more ecclesiastic, the Jungian “hero’s journey” undergone by earlier generations of martial-artists at the various Shaolin temples had to be re-enacted in social-context which resulted in an eventual formalization of Sōn, Chán and Zen rhetoric and its martial and sometimes military undertones.

the usually female *mudang* (Shaman) is what Beata Grant (2008) calls a gendered rhetoric of heroism. Through rhetorical pedagogy then, ‘the male norm’ of ecclesiastical Sŏn-rhetorical pedagogy ‘and the human norm are collapsed and become identical’ from an androcentric perspective where ‘the generic masculine covers the feminine’(Gross 1993:295) however even from a familial perspective or a focus on gender we can see that in the South Korean context, South Korean women support the bodily “sacrifice” of the male Sŏn monk and the spiritual authority derived therefrom (though many monks are quite pampered) and often he is collectively treated as a mother would a son.

The state-endorsed authority to engage in Sŏn-rhetorical pedagogy is derived from or predicated upon having undergone a rigorous course of introspective spiritual-cultivation which, in the Korean context, usually takes place in mountain hermitages located along the mountainous-spine of the Korean peninsula.<sup>34</sup> The biographies of even contemporary or at least modern monks are replete with the hardships endured such as Zen Master Seung Sahn and Zen Master Kusan both subsisting on a raw-diet of pine-needles ground into a paste which when consumed turned their skin green. Sŏn-rhetoric then is what bridges the gap between the liminal space of the solitary mountain-retreat and the social

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<sup>34</sup> The Koryŏ Korean Sŏn master Tosŏn’s (K. 도선, C. 道諤, 827–898) Buddhist-Geomantic theory, *Pibo Sat’ap Sŏl* (K. 비보사탑설, C. 裨補寺塔說) through which he advocated for the auspicious placement of temples and pagodas at auspicious sites throughout the country, was on in which he saw the peninsula as a ship in need of ballast to be kept on an even keel (Buswell 2003:3799)(Vermeersch 2007:79). In this way Tosŏn viewed the country as a *maṇḍala* and his practice was adopted in the succeeding Koryŏ Dynasty as a means of protecting the nation and ‘integrating local power groups into the dynastic structure’(Buswell 2003:3800)(Choi 1989:85–88). Bernard Faure discusses ‘the strong socio-political impact’ that this Buddhist-derived “mandalization” of space had in the Tang context and positions Chán within a wider “spatialization of thought” (Faure 1996:156). A similar spatial-turn was happening in Silla Korea as it centralized, unified and transition to Koryŏ. While on the continent proper it may be hard to discern exactly if this spatialization was driven by Buddhist “mandalization” or if Buddhist conceptions of space were symptomatic of a wider movement, Sem Vermeersch shows in the Korean context how the construction of Buddhist temples ‘literally helped to construct the nation’(Vermeersch 2007:77).

world of the city, the social and the individual, public and private, the sacred and the profane. It could be suggested that the sacrifice of the Sŏn and Chán aspirant's hero's journey at the end of which the status of 'master' is conferred officially and recognized by the state, is a continuation of the theme of blood-sacrifice made by the monks of the Shaolin Temple and many after them since. The imperial endorsement of the Shaolin Monastery during the Tang Dynasty (Shahar 2008:22) retained its significance not just in China but also on the Korean peninsula and the Japanese archipelago long after the Táng Dynasty.

### **2.3.6 The Semiotics and Sacrifice of South Korean Women Teaching Sŏn**

The still well-known (in South Korea) proverb, *namjon yŏbi* 男尊女卑, literally 'Men high, Women low,' hardly requires a figurative translation but is rendered 'Men are revered, women lowly.' Even radical reformers of the twentieth-century ecclesiastic Buddhist mainstream in Korea such as the renowned Han Yongun did not extend his Buddhist ideals of universal altruism much beyond the role of 'Good wife, Wise mother' (C. 賢母良妻) for women (Tikhonov 2012:412). Hyaewol Choi recounts how the colonial-era discourse of the "Good wife, Wise mother" supported by Han Yongun a century earlier continued to exert its influence in the year 2007 when the first woman ever to feature on Korean currency was not the first Korean female aviator, historical queen or independence-activist but a woman famous only by virtue of having been the mother of one of Chosŏn Dynasty Korea's most famous (male) Confucian scholars, Yi I (1536 – 1584)(Choi 2020:36–42).

The notion of the Good Wife, Wise Mother speaks to what Laurel Kendall describes as the ‘tidy division of ritual labour’ in Korean households where ‘men’s and women’s rituals dramatize different, but not necessarily contradictory, components of Korean social organization’ (Kendall 1987:169). Household gods, ghosts and spirits are still petitioned by mostly female shamans in a musical ceremony known as the *kut* (K. 굿), in which the shaman is often possessed by one divinity or other to the accompaniment of cymbals and drums.

To theorize around the sacrificial symbolism of Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy, I refer to Walraven’s definition of a shaman which is;

a ritual specialist who because of a very personal experience is socially recognized as having the charismatic ability to actively establish and maintain contact with the unseen world of spirits or deities and through this ability is capable of intervening in specific cases on behalf of others (2011:12).

The Sŏn master is a person who is a socially recognized ritual specialist with the difference that because of his/her sacrifice s/he can connect with a plane above local-spirits and deities. The *mansin* or *mudang* – usually but not always female – usually intervenes in, though is not always limited to, crises of the social and domestic world. If we consider meditation as ritual then we can view rhetorical pedagogy just as much as an intervention on behalf of others but with different goals. The shaman’s usually female ritual intervention could, in social context, even be said to construct the Sŏn-master’s usually male intervention as spiritual (and therefore of a higher authority).

To be clear, I am not calling the *kut* or for that matter South Korean Shamanism, as “sacrificial” but am juxtaposing two practices - Shamanist ritual and Sŏn-rhetorical pedagogy – overtly opposed but yet expressions from the same cultural context, in order to theorize women (and men for that matter) teaching through and engaging in Sŏn-rhetorical pedagogy. The only difference between a guttural shout made by a female shaman in a *kut* or a guttural non-verbal shout made by a male Sŏn master while in the midst of the Ascending the Dharma-Hall ritual, is that there is a presumption of at least some amount of intensive meditation practice or sacrifice i.e Grant’s rhetoric of heroism is applied to the person using NCP in the Sŏn context, bringing the NCP and the master’s enlightenment, skilful means and masculinity into contact with the world. This rhetoric of heroism is absent in the context of the shaman although she may not shout directly at those seeking her intervention.

Shamanism and Buddhism were jointly out of favour during the Chosŏn Dynasty though shamans on occasion were brought to court and tolerated privately. Nevertheless there was what Walraven (2019) has called a ‘symbiosis’ of Confucianism and Shamanism at this time. Walraven shows that Confucian ideas and Shamanist ideas ‘peacefully co-existed’ in the area of worshipping ‘chaste women’ or *yŏllyŏ* 烈女 (Walraven 2019:36). Buddhism is also said to have undergone a ‘confucianization’ at this time while nevertheless becoming a matter for private concern during that period though we know that Shamanism and Buddhism also peacefully co-existed outside the gates of Seoul during the Chosŏn period with filial-piety and loyalty ceasing to be specifically Confucian but becoming Korean ethics (Walraven 2019:37).

Can the rhetorical heroism of a “warrior among warriors” be successfully re-enacted by women whose own monumental sacrifice (child-bearing) is intended to be transcended by it? Though the South Korean Buddhist church is sustained by the immense clandestine power of female labour and a majority female-following this is generally viewed negatively in South Korea or at least as an inferior type of Buddhist-practice to the type practiced by the minority of men which that system supports.

Kim Hyun-mee (2016:455) notes that the dominant image of Buddhism in South Korean society ‘is that of middle-aged and elderly women who seek good fortune through prayer’ and it is pejoratively referred to with the moniker *ch’ima Pulgyo* - ‘skirt Buddhism’ (Tedesco 2002:135). Uri Kaplan (2017:147) documents the aspirations of one prominent lay-Buddhist school founded by Kim Chaeil in 1982 which was to transform Korean Buddhism from a *ch’ima Pulgyo* ‘dominated by ignorant elderly women to a more philosophically oriented “male Buddhism” (K. *namsŏng Pulgyo*)’ which is presumably grounded on the gendered rhetoric of heroism attached to men’s almost military-like sacrifice for the benefit of “sentient beings” i.e the nation. Nancy Jay suggests that;

the dependence of ancient – [what Max Weber called “patrimonial”] states - on sacrifice reflects the underlying gender and family base of their systems of political domination (Jay 1992:147).

This domination persists and manifests in discriminatory laws preventing lay-women in South Korea from participating in the management of the Jogye Order and various associations connected with it which Ok Bok-yeon calls a “politics of excluding lay-



women's participation" in the Jogye Order which would cease to exist without them (Ok 2015). This institutional exclusion of lay-women within South Korean Buddhism is mirrored by the unofficial and clandestine status of female shamans and their somewhat marginal or at least liminal position in wider society which it could be said was enforced by a formal if not official distancing of Buddhism and Shamanism since the end of the Chosŏn Dynasty due to the discourses of Buddhist modernism. Such a nation envisioned in official Republic of Korea nationalist-rhetoric 'is a patrilineal community of men, the order of which is rooted in the essentialized differences between women and men... [and] in which women exist merely as a precondition'(Moon 1998:35).

### **2.3.7 Korean Buddhist Militias and Bio-power**

In a chapter devoted to the origins of the Shaolin Chán military tradition, Meir Shahaar notes 'that the monks' disregard of the Buddhist prohibition of violence secured their monastery's fortunes under the Tang'(Shahaar 2008:22). Since the ascension of Sŏn above other schools of Buddhism in Koryŏ-Korea, the sect has always been linked to the state's necropolitical power. During Koryŏ, Haein-sa (one of Korea's Three Jewel Temples) was home to a monk militia and monks partook in defending the nation against the Mongols (Shultz 2000b)(Vermeersch 2002:221). During the Chosŏn Dynasty, Sŏsan Hyujŏng led his army of guerrilla fighting monks against Hideyoshi's samurai armies during the Imjin War 1592 – 1598, defending the nation while validating Buddhism to the elites.

Incidentally, Sŏsan Hyujŏng's work *The Mirror of Zen* was the only other native Korean text on the Jogye Order monastic syllabus along with the *Samguk Yusa* mentioned by Kaplan (2020).

The Korean Peninsula is now one of the most militarized regions in the entire world where ‘the androcentric discourse tinted with militarism delegitimizes women as citizens who are excluded from soldiering, constructing them instead as carriers of nationalist wombs to deliver heirs and potential warriors who can defend the nation’ and where ‘the Neo-Confucian principle of patrilineage reduces women to mere breeders to continue agnatic family lines’(Moon 1998:52). Despite egalitarian rhetoric within the broader Buddhist canon which as Bernard Faure observes, remains un-practiced rhetoric for the most part, the perpetual requirement for industrial and military readiness in the name of defence ‘masculinizes [the nation] by linking citizenship to soldiering’(Moon 1998:43)(Kim 2011). The vast majority of male monks in South Korea, have served their 2 years mandatory military conscription service.

Hyujōng’s 16<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist military-intervention is yet often explained today in the South Korean context as another example of *upāya* or ‘skilful means.’ John Powers (2009:182) links the pedagogical idea of *upāya* with masculinity itself after contextualizing his theoretical linkage with a preceding discussion of the lay-man bodhisattva (Buddhist saint) Vimalikīrti as ‘the ideal man’ exemplar of the Mahāyāna (and later East Asian Buddhism). Powers contextualizes Vimalikīrti’s ideal masculinity and his ability to move freely in the secular world with a deconstruction of the *Vimalikīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* or scripture (Skt. विमलकीर्तिनिर्देश), known as the *yumagyōng* in Korean;

The lay bodhisattva, unbound by the vows of a monk, is able to enter brothels, bars, and gaming establishments, but only does so in order to teach their denizens about the evil consequences of their actions. He conducts business deals that generate profit, but he has no interest in making money and uses it only to further

his conversion work. He is credited with great endurance, resolution, and physical strength, and the text extols him as a “warrior among warriors” (Powers 2009:175).

Hyujōng though undoubtedly a great Sōn master was not acting out of context with his Buddhist military-intervention of skilful means and is still revered in North and South Korean Buddhism. To this day in South Korea every June, the Buddhist *yōngsanjae* or ‘Vulture Peak Ceremony’ 靈山齋 which was originally held to feed hungry-ghosts (a trope in Buddhism and one of the realms of existence into which one can be reincarnated for not leading a good life) has over time become a commemoration of South Korean (not pan-Korean) war-dead. This ritual is maintained, guarded and staged at the supposedly ‘Japanized’ Taego Order’s Bongwōn-sa Temple in Seoul. Walraven (2019:31) also describes the Chosōn period *suryukchae* or “Assembly of Water and Land” 水陸齋 Buddhist ritual to appease ‘the accumulated resentment of soldiers fallen in battle’ and such rituals were conducted in the preceding Koryō Dynasty and before it.

As Hyujōng’s Buddhist defence of the nation invoked Sōn’s Koryō supremacy, it would be invoked after him by future Korean Buddhist monks. The first examples of trans-national border crossings in the post-liberation period were to do with South Korean Buddhist chaplaincy during the Vietnam War in which South Korea had the second highest presence of troops on the ground after their American allies, ‘construct[ing] modern South Korea as an androcentric nation’(Kim and Choi 2012:3). The American-backed capitalist and therefore anti-communist stance of the South Korean government in the post-Korean War years played ‘a significant role in producing an official nationalism

that contains a strong militaristic strand and therefore implications for gender hierarchy in (South) Korean society'(Moon 1998:38).

Jin-kyung Lee's analysis of South Korean participation in the Vietnam War under the rule of the Buddhist military-dictator Park Chung-hee applies also to the Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhist military chaplains and monks who staffed military field-temples in that country and therefore participated in a military labour which was 'a gendered and sexualized service labour that was masculinizing or emasculating and racializing or racialized in the context of stratified ethno-masculinities'(Lee 2010:35). From the perspective of Michel Foucault's concept of bio-power (Foucault 2019) historical ecclesiastic Sŏn can in some ways be viewed as a 'disciplinary institution' to inculcate Korean masculinity through martial readiness which was a major feature in the Japanese context in the first half of the twentieth-century (Victoria 2006).

In *Masculinities*, Robert William Connell speaks of the 'crisis of a gender order as a whole, and of its tendencies towards crisis'(Connell 2005:84). Second-wave feminism and 'defeat in Vietnam have stirred new cults of true masculinity in the United States from violent 'adventure' movies such as the *Rambo* series, to the expansion of the gun cult, to what William Gibson (1989) in a frightening recent study has called 'paramilitary culture''(ibid) which we recently witnessed in January 2021 with the storming of the U.S Capitol in Washington D.C.<sup>35</sup> A very similar sub-culture in fact exists in South Korea

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<sup>35</sup> South Korea is not without its paramilitary-culture either as most of the male population are conscripted into the military for two years and many men chose to maintain their skills through combat-seminars which are not out of place amidst South Korean martial culture.

amongst a minority of men who maintain the military skills gained during their conscription service and this culture overlaps with traditional Korean martial culture.

The crisis for what Kim Hyun-mee (2001:53) calls ‘hyper-masculinized state-developmentalism’ and ‘patriarchal capitalism’ in South Korea is two-fold; an ageing and a shrinking population along with the existential threat of an outbreak of hostilities with North Korea entailing the presence of a neo-colonial army (U.S forces) on South Korean soil. The ecclesiastical Buddhist mainstream simply offers itself to the state which it did in the form of military-chaplaincy and later in the form of the TSP. Connell goes on to say that ‘a gender order where men dominate women cannot avoid constituting men as an interest group concerned with defence, and women as an interest group concerned with change’ (Connell 2005:82) and the tradition of State-Protectionist Buddhism – *hoguk Pulgyo* (H. M. Kim 2016:455) - in historical Korean Buddhism could easily be called ‘*Gender Order Protectionist Buddhism*.’ This echoes Jay’s deconstruction of the notion of sacrifice and in Buddhist terms, the Sŏn master’s sacrifice could even be viewed as a form of defence or defending the nation. ‘To recognize masculinity and femininity as historical... is to locate them firmly in the world of social agency. To recognize gender as a social pattern, requires us to see it as a product of history, and also a *producer* of history’(Connell 2005:81). Chán *yǔlù* encounter-dialogues and Sŏn Buddhism’s androcentric record-keeping has not only produced history but produced a historiography which produced South Korean masculinity itself.

## **2.4 Deconstructing the Purification Movement; the Gendered Division of Institutional Sŏn?**

Early South Korean Sŏn Buddhist trans-nationalism took place in conjunction with South Korea's military involvement (1964 – 1973) in the Vietnam War and amidst the backdrop of a “Purification” Movement (1954 – 1970) within South Korean Sŏn Buddhism (SKSB) which resulted in the *sangha* or community of Sŏn ecclesiasts and monastics splitting into the Jogye and Taego orders in 1970. The Jogye and Taego orders are not representative of South Korean Buddhism as a whole and neither are they representative of the whole of the Sŏn school of Buddhism in South Korea however they account for the vast majority of the latter. Ostensibly the “purification” was to purge supposedly ritually “impure” factions which had embedded themselves in the ecclesiastical community though it seems clear that the impetus for the movement was as much about the appropriation of South Korea's significant nationwide Buddhist temple infrastructure using chastity as a convenient basis to do so.<sup>36</sup>

Evon (2001) shows how patriotism and nationhood in the Korean and later South Korean context were traditionally identified with chastity - religious or otherwise – which provided a charge with which to oust monastics of rival “Japan-ized” factions from temples, calling into question their right to Korean identity itself on the basis of their non-celibacy. In spite of what Hwansoo Ilmee Kim (2013) has shown - that there is a precedent of married monks in Korean Buddhist history - and Vladimir Tikhonov (2017a)

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<sup>36</sup> Though anecdotal, this movement for appropriation continues to this day with smaller non-affiliated temples coming under significant pressure to join the Jogye Order.

showing that allowances for the non-celibacy of Buddhist military chaplains were made until very recently within the supposedly ‘celibate’ Jogye Order (oblivious to the contradiction which would supposedly render them as both militarized *and* “Japan-ized”) - the Taego Order to this day is pejoratively referred to in South Korea as “Japan-ized” on the basis of its male priests being allowed to take wives. The implication of Jogye Order Buddhist military chaplains being allowed to take wives while other Jogye monks may not and Taego Order priests are judged as non-Korean and therefore impure for being so, is that serving the gendered military-industrial state complex exonerates one from adhering to celibacy laws, the very thing that in Korean eyes defined the Japanese Buddhism of the colonial era and underpins the accusation of “Japan-ized Buddhism” against Taego Order priests. It should also be stated very clearly that universalizing and essentializing Japanese Zen Buddhism as non-celibate/ ‘impure’ is a flagrant misrepresentation of a tradition that is just as diverse as historical Korean Buddhism in terms of celibate and non-celibate forms of Buddhist practice.

Rather than being a return to a supposedly ritually purer pre-colonial “Korean” Buddhism, the Purification Movement was the process by which state-Buddhism south of the DMZ internalized the discourses of colonial modernity and constructed an essentialized Sŏn Buddhism and universalized *South* Korean Sŏn as a pan-Korean Sŏn appropriating historical Korean Buddhism in the process. It could further be argued that what would become the rational (identified with meditation) versus emotional (identified with ceremonial ritual) binary of Western modernist discourse, while it crept in during since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, had not hitherto been formally dichotomized until the schism

of the Sōn sangha into two orders. Considering what is often a gendered dichotomy of reason and emotion, this institutional dichotomy can also be viewed as gendered which I will discuss further below with reference to the work of feminist scholar Joan Acker.

The fact that Taego Order nuns (though following Evon above, the implication that they are simply ‘more Korean’ than the male priests of the same order is usually ignored) are required to remain as celibate as their Jogye counterparts is not enough to mitigate the charge from the dominant portion of mainstream SKSB of an ethno-national Japan-ized impurity against the order as a whole. Female celibacy/ ritual purity does not redeem the order in the eyes of its fellow-Buddhist detractors yet female celibacy is still required where male celibacy is not.

This undermines the role of female monastics in the Taego Order when we consider that fully-celibate nuns enjoy a similar parity of esteem as the wives of Taego priests or at least that the nuns’ celibacy and ritual purity, identical to that of the male & female monastics of the celibate Jogye Order, is sufficient only to raise them to a level of status somewhat above priests’ wives but still below the priests themselves. I would contend that the chastity of nuns is required by the order to satisfy the demands of Korean-ness rather than the demands of Buddhism as their ritual purity seems to have no bearing on the Buddhist-identity of the order whatsoever but female chastity is required to satisfy the demands of the orders *Korean* identity.



For this reason and considering what Laurel Kendall (1987) calls the ‘gendered division of labour’ in Korean ritual life, I suggest that the division between the Jogye and Taego orders, if not gendered in itself, at least has a gendered aspect to it. Cheonghwan Park and Kyungrae Kim (Park and Kim 2019:4) show how the ‘significant’ under-representation of the Jogye Order’s 12,000 female monastics ‘lends support to longstanding accusations of institutional sexism and gender bias within the order.’ Ok Bok-yeon (2015) highlights a similar exclusion and marginalization of lay-women by the Jogye Order right down to the present day despite the order being largely sustained by the donations and clandestine labour of a lay congregation of devoted Buddhist women (K. *posalnim*). The devotional labour of this very significant amount of non-ordained chaste *posalnim* living within the temple walls ensures the smooth running of both Jogye and Taego order temples in South Korea and of the greater portion of SKSB.

Pioneering the idea that gender, race and class should be not be considered separately but as a single intersecting system of oppression, the American sociologist and founder of the Center for the Study of Women in Society, Joan Acker also suggested that institutions can be gendered and that ‘gender is a constitutive element in organizational logic’ where ‘men are [often] the actors, women the emotional support’ (Acker 1990:145). If we examine the institution of domestic South Korean Sōn in its totality and analyse the Jogye and Taego Orders *together* with a view to the role of women in both, Acker’s theory of gendered institutions is born out in the lived reality and consequences for women in the whole of SKSB as highlighted by Park, Kim and Ok above and reveals a huge amount about SKSB as a whole.

The role of ordained women in both South Korean Sŏn Buddhist orders is often (though not always) identical with that of lay *posalnim* living in temples in exchange for devotional labour and Taego Order temple wives carrying out the same duties. The dynamic of this devotional labour is observable in ethnic South Korean expat temples in trans-national contexts and in some convert temples where South Koreans attend. This was the domestic reality in the 1960s when SKSB began to trans-nationalize and it remains the reality today.

Running concurrent to the domestic movement in South Korea for a gendered and nationalized ritual purity within the South Korean Sŏn orders during the 1960s, SKSB began appearing on military bases in Vietnam and on American university campuses during the second wave of global feminism. Domestic attitudes to women in South Korea at this time can be gauged by the attitude of South Koreans towards the ‘comfort women’ victims and survivors of the coercive Japanese Imperial Army sex-slavery system who were being vilified as impure sex-workers. I do not necessarily mean to equate Buddhist monastic chastity with the Chosŏn cult of chaste women but note that echoes of the *yŏllyŏ* discourse of chaste women can be found in numerous domestic contexts at the time that SKSB moves abroad; the Buddhist monastic context of the Taego Order where women must remain chaste while men do not and in the society-wide invective against survivors of Japanese imperial sex-slavery. Such discourses are suppressed in non-Korean trans-national context where female priests of the Taego Order in western countries are allowed to marry without, presumably, detracting from their credentials as Buddhists and

demonstrating a further schism in the *sangha* between the domestic South Korean and trans-national contexts.

From 1970 onwards, the Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism, supposedly more traditionally “Korean” and therefore more pure, aligned themselves with modernist discourses of scientific rationality and positioned themselves as the custodians of introspective meditation (especially the KHS technique) now supposedly purged of its ritual aspect and itself increasingly portrayed as a rational scientific philosophical inquiry into the self. Though hitherto not divorced from meditation practice, the less pure and “Japan-ized” Taego Order now became the custodians of emotionalized ritual ceremony which I would suggest also became gendered at this time, as these previously non-dichotomized Sōn rituals were now associated with the less pure, less celibate and less Korean.

It is worth noting also that relative to SKSB, North Korea is a trans-national context and Buddhist priests in North Korea could and do marry without any penalty of national-identity loss or being branded as “Japan-ized.” While some scholars might disagree with the claim that the schism in the South Korean Sōn sangha was definitively gendered, it certainly took place at the intersection of national identity and sexuality. Given the fact that this gendered dimension alters significantly in trans-national context such as in the case of non-Korean Taego Order female priests being allowed to marry, it seems fair to suggest that there was at least a gender dimension to the split in the South Korean Sōn *sangha* where, as Acker has shown, gender is ‘a constitutive element in [the]

organizational logic’ of both Sŏn orders and in the differing organization of domestic and trans-national SKSB.

## **2.5 Trans-national Sŏn**

In “Buddhism and Globalization,” Cristina Rocha (2012:293) enforces the idea ‘that global flows do not radiate only between central metropolitan powers and peripheries, in a north–south direction, as imagined by the Enlightenment. There is a multiplicity of centers from which global flows radiate, and they have diverse itineraries and directions.’ This is a globalized world of both Korean and non-Korean Sŏn rhizomes, networks and flows, “complex global loops” and “intercultural-mimesis” (Jaffe 2004) in which the concept of orientalism seems to make little sense on the basis of a by now saturated reciprocity of Buddhistic-acculturations and the exponentially mutual-embeddedness which characterizes Buddhist modernism. On the subject of religious circulations between “West” and “East” Jørn Borup (2017:15) remarks that this dichotomy ‘is too heavily loaded with complexities’ and ‘does not really apply in any postmodern sense in a globalized world.’

Sharon Suh’s work (Suh 2012) is one of the very few ethnographies of contemporary transnational South Korean Buddhism but as I have mentioned above, the ‘trans-nation’ status of the domestic South Korean context as a rhizome oscillating within a transnational continuum undermines any binary of domestic versus transnational. Her work explores a quite closed and heritage/ ethnic South Korean Buddhist environment in

California and quite often the feelings of emasculation and isolation experienced by expatriot South Korean men in the temple community.

Bauman and Prebish point out that ‘globalization [of Buddhism] involves a dissolving of the Asian centre(s) as the main or only agent of authority and the emergence of a variety of authority centres’(Prebish and Baumann 2002:7). While the Asian and in this case the South Korean centre still holds, it can be simultaneously a locus of heritage and of “glocalized” trans-nationalism such as Ugo Dessì describes in *Buddhist Responses to Globalization* (Hershock et al. 2014). The alignment with or at least the accretion onto the spirit of second-wave feminism in trans-national contexts while the domestic situation was characterized by a gendered division of the monastic community is what Jason Ellsworth calls ‘the commodification and consumption of discourses of social change’(Ellsworth 2020). As a ‘Buddhist crossroads’ in northeast Asia, domestic South Korean Buddhism has assimilated the expectations of the West to a large degree and the lessons learned by returning missionaries – one such example of this ‘commodification of discourses of social change’ is the South Korean Temple Stay Program.

Laicization regarding ecclesiastic supported introspective-practice remains negligible as Hwansoo Kim observes the continued “monastic-centeredness” of modern [South] Korean Buddhism which has never recovered the ground lost in the early twentieth-century due to not having had ‘a broad base of local religious-laity’ such as that enjoyed by Christianity in Korea. Reform movements are monk-centred and not only ‘lack strong lay and female monastic involvement in leadership roles’ but marginalize nuns and lay-

women (Kim 2018:294–95). Male-dominated monastic-centred South Korean Buddhism ‘has yet to put forth an effective missionary effort’ according to Kim (ibid). Sōn is most laicized where it is least “Korean” i.e. outside South Korea (which may include North Korea).

The South Korean Buddhist Temple Stay Program (TSP) is both an example of South Korean ‘cultural diplomacy’ (Jang and Won 2012:196) and Baumann and Prebish’s dissolving of the [Korean] center. As well as a growing number of foreign monastics in South Korea (Kaplan 2020), and international scholars in South Korea undertaking Buddhist Studies in academia, the Temple Stay Program (TSP) run by the Jogye Order in co-operation with the South Korean state is symptomatic of South Korea being a Buddhist-crossroads, rhizome or hub amidst a transnational network. This is characteristic of what Lee quoting Appadurai calls a ‘transnation’- ‘a site that is open in its intimate connection with other locations’ (Lee 2010:33) and the TSP within South Korean borders and utilizing South Korean Buddhist infrastructure, appeals to the discourses of Buddhist modernism rather than the traditional concerns of historical Korean Buddhism. Kaplan (2010) was the first to treat the subject in English with a focused but prescient overview of the TSP from the perspective of Baudrillard’s theory of simulacrum and as mentioned earlier, the same author notes that the monastic curriculum in South Korean seminaries has now been fundamentally altered from its traditional Korean format (Kaplan 2020).

Apart from the logistical challenges of the TSP (Shim 2013), its offer of self-development, healing and stress-relief (Song 2013)(Seo 2014) and the health benefits of temple food (Ji et al. 2010), Seung Soo Kim uses the TSP as a metaphor for the state of the contemporary tradition as a whole (S. S. Kim 2017). The TSP is where the emic and etic perspectives of South Korean Buddhism intersect and where the Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism consciously appeals to Buddhist modernism’s imaginary of “Buddhism.”

The TSP suggests that South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism is – paradoxically - more successful or at least far more comfortable at home. In that sense, Buswell’s own autobiographical/ autoethnography, *The Zen Monastic Experience* (1993) could be considered an early investigation into South Korean Sŏn trans-nationalism in that regard as much as the TSP facilitates a similar scenario but on a more commercial level. Yun Yong-hae’s (Yun 2007) description of urban propagation and Buddhist popularization attempts in South Korea could now as easily be considered to be about trans-national South Korean Buddhism. Kaplan (2020:115) notes over 100 foreign Buddhist monastics resident in South Korea who are affiliated with the Jogye Order.

## **2.6 The Paradoxes of Woori Pulgyo Transnationalism in a Time of Terror**

The ‘paradox’ of post-liberation South Korean globalization and Buddhist trans-nationalism would not only be an ‘intensification of ethnic and national identity’ (Shin 2003:9) but would be what has been called the ‘commodification of social discourses’(Ellsworth 2020) such as feminism and - at least a rhetoric of - egalitarianism

abroad during the second-wave of global feminism while there being a systemic exclusion of women from positions of power within the mainstream celibate order of South Korean Buddhism since then until the present (Ok 2015). Though not a Sŏn order, the native South Korean Won Buddhist order only allowed its female clergy to marry since 2019.

The paradox of the “Japanized” Taego Order nuns can be observed in trans-national context where Taego Order nuns in the America-Europe parish can marry while their South Korean counterparts must remain celibate. As mentioned above, Yung-hee Kim shows, ‘modern Korean feminism from its birth in the late nineteenth century was inextricably interwoven with nascent nationalism’ (Y.-H. Kim 1995:120) and thus until “Korean-ness” is decoupled from celibacy and sexual purity in wider society, South Korean Buddhist nuns of both the Taego and Jogye Orders are silenced by nationalism. The dominant androcentric discourse has been constructed such that if they protest for parity, they lose claim to their “Korean-ness.” The other paradox of South Korean Sŏn trans-nationalism is that it is largely indistinguishable from and embeds itself within the trans-national field created by pre-war Japanese Zen and its signature technique of meditation by which it creates an anti-identity in contradistinction to Japanese Zen is also almost inseparable (Senécal 2011:79).

As a “neo-colony” of the United States – something which South Korea has in common with Japan - post-liberation South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism’s ‘postcolonial return of the ex-colonized back to the metropole’(Lee 2010:31) was first via the re-



masculinizing stepping-stone of a military-exchange in Vietnam before arriving in the United States. Moving into the United States from a domestic Buddhist scene which if not misogynist certainly upheld a cult of chaste women, South Korean Buddhist missionaries such as Samu Sunim – dodging his military draft to fight in Vietnam – and later Zen Master Seung Sahn who had fought in the Korean War - neither of whom I'm accusing of misogyny themselves I should add, Zen Master Seung Sahn was far ahead of his time in egalitarian terms - were the first to bring South Korean Buddhism back to the neo-colonial metropole and 'the West' in the post-liberation period.

The neo-colonial relationship between the United States and South Korea has led to most of the early knowledge production *about* Korean Buddhism which American scholars such as Lancaster and Buswell were among the first to take up, being produced in the United States. It is no coincidence that the earliest knowledge-production about South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism concerns the United States such as Yu Eui-Young (1988) dealing with Seung Sahn's Kwan Um School of Zen and the *Puril-Hoe's* Koryō-Sa temple in Los Angeles founded by Buswell's own teacher, Zen Master Kusan.

American monks such as Hyongak Sunim – a graduate of Harvard Divinity School – and the scholar Buswell before him have gone the other way from the metropole to the neo-colony as well as South Korean monks Ryan Bongseok Joo (better known by his ordination name of Haemin) going the other way. Haemin Sunim notes the reverse-effect of Buddhism *returning* to South Korea which 'has changed not only the way Koreans

practice Buddhism but also how they perceive Buddhist history and their own identities' (Joo 2011:614).

The Jogye Order which 'accounts for the greatest activity among the laity including missionary work abroad'(Sørensen 1999:141) remains 'traditional' and un-engaged with a 'temple-based relationship with lay-people' according to Cho Sungtaek (2002:119).

What annual funding the Jogye Order allocates to its centres in the United States is usually spent by the order all in one go for a large annual event for the purposes of publicization back in South Korea rather than actually funding the propagation of Buddhism to interested people and leaving the temples to subsist on the donations of diaspora South Koreans. Hyongak Sunim in Europe similarly notes a reluctance on the part of Jogye Order to fund the establishment of centres in Europe – only when the centres or temples are thriving and 'famous' might they garner attention from the decision-makers in Seoul. Liz Wilson's observes that;

many immigrants have transplanted forms of Buddhism already consciously reshaped by modernization movements in Asia; adapting those modernized forms to Western intellectual and social landscapes has involved additional levels of rethinking and deliberation with regard to gender (Wilson 2012:261).

While this transplantation of consciously reshaped modernized Buddhism might be applied to something like the domestic TSP or some ethnic-South Korean buddhisms in Europe such as the KBPF in the south of France, rethinking and deliberation on gender while extant in domestic South Korean Buddhism is not a prevalent feature of South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism in other countries apart from the KSZ and certainly

not in South Korea if the Taego Order's ordination and the Jogye Order's systematic exclusion of lay-women is anything to go by.

If Sŏn is most laicized where it is least Korean, it is also least “traditional” where it is most “Korean” i.e in *South Korea*. Uri Kaplan's ‘biography of a curriculum’ in his fascinating monograph *Monastic Education in Korea: Teaching Monks about Buddhism in the Modern Age* (2020), shows how ‘a particular sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pedagogic program was reimagined in the course of the twentieth century to become the sole unified Korean monastic program, only to be criticized and utterly reformed in the twenty-first’ imitating ‘the pedagogical practices and canonizing the textual totems of the contemporary international discipline of Buddhist Studies’ (Kaplan 2020:2–3). Kaplan shows how in the transformation of the monastic pedagogy [South] Korean ecclesiastic Buddhist orthodoxy has been transformed ‘from a particular kind of Chinese-centered scholastic Chán, to... a more general, inclusive, and international form of Buddhism’ (Kaplan 2020:3–10). The question that remains is if what is left can be called Sŏn at all or if laicized Sŏn loses any claim to a subitist identity.

## **2.7 Ritualized Sŏn Rhetoric and Utopian Pedagogy**

As a radical response to the effect of neo-liberal globalization on university education as well as to address ‘an urgent need to critically analyse relations of power around nodal points of race, class, caste, and rational-bureaucratic (state) domination,’ the conceptual tool of “Utopian Pedagogy” put forward by Coté et al. can serve as a constructive counterpoint for the analysis of Sŏn-rhetorical pedagogy (Cote, Day, and de Peuter

2007). If any pedagogy could be characterized as utopian, it is certainly that of the East Asian ecclesiastic Meditation Schools who not only claim to be able to ‘enlighten the world’ but by virtue of their superior subitist approach, claim to be able to do this immanently.

Nevertheless as Cho Sungtaek (2002a) has noted there is a distinct lack of social-engagement by the Buddhist church in South Korea. The utopian pedagogy of Côté et al. is one example of a pedagogy aimed at social-transformation and one which, though it could easily fit in to Buddhist rhetorical categories, does not require Buddhism or any other ideology for a vision of universal equality, altruism and human flourishing. ‘The crucial task of our times is not only to analyse and oppose existing forms of oppression and inequality, but to discover within our various communities the powers that will allow us to create viable alternatives to them’ (Cote et al. 2007:333). The meta-narrative in *ecclesiastic* subitist-rhetoric however simply seems to be seeking power through official state-endorsement rather than social-change.

The critical pedagogy of Freire (1996)- first published in 1968 in his *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* – as it was taken up by later scholars, evolved to acknowledge the inherently political position of the teacher who it advocates for becoming a learner alongside their students. Having experienced a South Korean monastic graduate school where English was the only foreign language taught and if their destination within the global North needs any further elaboration, all of the monastics preparing to go abroad were preparing

to go ('return') to the ne-colonial metropole that is the United States, I can say that there was little preparation for even a multicultural setting within the USA.

From a critical pedagogy perspective Lilia Bartolomé speaks of preparing teachers in the United States to encounter students of different backgrounds which she says 'too often occurs without examining teachers' own assumptions, values and beliefs and how this ideological posture informs, often unconsciously, their perceptions and actions' (Bartolomé 2004:97). This common-sense approach is not one generally taken up by ethnic South Korean teachers in trans-national contexts for the main reason that the trans-national context for them is usually an ethnic immigrant temple and therefore more national than trans-national.

The other reason is that, as Anderl has shown, Sōn-rhetorical pedagogy, unlike Greek rhetoric, is not concerned with persuasion. Though it establishes a pattern of behaviour, it is non-persuasive and therefore in many senses non-reciprocal, at least until the student reciprocates by attaining an Enlightenment or spiritual-insight which by definition is extremely rare. It is learned behaviour but learned through McRae's 'patterning' rather than dialogue and is top-down with little regard for who might understand it or how to make it better understood. To keep things on a critical note, in South Korea *ecclesiastic* circles there has been nothing comparable to the "Critical Buddhism" emerging in Japan described by James Mark Shields in "From Topos to Utopia: Critical Buddhism, Globalization and Ideology Criticism" (Shields 2014:51) (Shields 2016). There is Critical

Buddhism in South Korea but is mostly constituted by lay-Buddhist organizations, many of whom are decidedly anti-clerical.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have attempted to account for the formation of Sŏn rhetoric and show how a rhetoric of immediacy and subitist pedagogy generally emerged as much from the Sŏn school's intertwined practices of patriarchal historiography and patrilineal conferring of spiritual authority as from soteriological concerns. This genealogical and what Jager calls 'agnatic' model of institutional and political Sŏn orthodoxy supported state-discourse and participated at times in the necropolitical labour of the state since medieval times and also in the twentieth-century when South Korean Sŏn propagation and trans-nationalism unfolded in the context of a domestic institutional schism in the Sŏn orders.

The vast majority of heritage South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism in North America and Western Europe caters almost exclusively to South Koreans as closed ethnic Buddhist diaspora networks and in that sense, I argue that South Korea itself can be considered a location for Sŏn trans-nationalism since either in South Korea or abroad, communities of Sŏn Buddhist practitioners often don't overlap. Domestically within South Korea, the TSP and the "traditional" Sŏn monastic seminary curriculum have altered Sŏn practice and doctrinal-theory respectively bringing both more in line with the discourses of global Buddhist modernism rather than anything distinctly "Korean" and the schism of institutional Sŏn into two main orders could also be viewed as contesting claims to Buddhist modernity. Yet, that schism has seen lay-women and nuns remain

marginalized at home by a male ‘monastic-centered’ Sŏn while the relatively more laicized trans-national Sŏn has at times commodified discourses of social-change and equality abroad. In contrast to trans-national Sŏn, ritualized ecclesiastic subitism and its pedagogies - in the relatively more ‘private’ domestic sphere of South Korea - was never concerned with utopian social-transformation and has upheld state-discourses especially where women have been concerned. As I have shown in this chapter, it is only with the decline of nationalist scholarship in the last 30 years moving into the post-capitalist period, that we have even seen a growth in interest for researching about women or gender to do with South Korean Buddhism.

Before proceeding to the next chapter dealing with the methodology of this project in more detail, a brief precis of the different approaches in this research might be put forward as follows; while there are modern aspects to it, there is a long-standing gender dimension which can be traced far back in Korean and East Asian Buddhist history generally. This gendered dimension can be discerned throughout history in the state-embedded ecclesiastical Sŏn Buddhist hierarchy with its patriarchal system of inheriting spiritual authority which informed and was sustained by a patriarchal historiography and a rhetoric of immediacy which endeared it to the militarized-state from medieval times through to and including in contemporary South Korea. As South Korean Sŏn Buddhist (SKSB) trans-nationalism is a relatively new phenomenon and Buddhism is one of the few ways in which South Korean culture crosses borders, SKSB and non-Korean Sŏn provide the opportunity to research Sŏn rhetoric and contrast both in order to identify the

gendered component of that rhetoric. A schematic of the research is described in the table below.

<b>Schematic for the Overall Approach to Gendered Rhetoric in Non-Korean Sŏn</b>	
<b>Theoretical approach</b>	Drawing on first-hand experience in South Korea and also within trans-national Sŏn in Europe where SKSB is markedly under-researched, I gradually formulated the theoretical approach that there are parallel communities and congregations of practitioners & adherents within SKSB which do not necessarily overlap. In attempting to theorize if this perceived dichotomy was ethnic versus convert, gendered or a result of linguistic/ cultural factors, I adopted Walraven’s idea of the public and private aspects of Korean religion as a way of viewing trans-national versus domestic SKSB and as a way of analysing Sŏn rhetoric in both contexts on a proposed basis that the domestic South Korean context is ‘private’/ inward-looking/ male-dominated and the trans-national context is (compared to the domestic context) ‘public’/ outward-looking/ and at least subscribes to notions of gender equality.
⇩	
Methodological approach	An ethnography which would gather qualitative data through semi-structured interviews and participant observation conducted in various non-Korean contexts in Europe and Asia seemed to be the best approach to generating knowledge on the basis of the above theoretical approach. An online survey, albeit not statistically representative, would also be used in a supplementary sense to speak to qualitative points which might emerge in the ethnography.
⇩	
Empirical approach	Chapters four, five and six of this dissertation aim to analyse the qualitative data gathered based around the three main research questions, namely; 1) what adaptations and accommodations does Sŏn rhetoric make in trans-national context 2) what is the impact of gender on students’ reception of Sŏn rhetorical teaching and lastly, 3) what is the impact of gender on Sŏn pedagogy from the perspective of teachers? While the sample size for the online survey was too small to draw any meaningful conclusions from, I include data from the survey at the end of each empirical chapter, not to make any claims at statistical representation but in order to frame the qualitative data gathered in the ethnographic component.



Before proceeding to the empirical chapters, methodology and methods will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology Chapter; Sōn Patriarchs and Gender

**Hong Kong, June 2019**

**Min [research participant]:** Now that said, I have heard from female teachers that they had to be very strong to...[pauses] ...to... ...to be, you know, *believed* and to be... ...you know, *seen* as – to really be seen as a *Zen* Master.

- **Later in the same interview** -

**Researcher:** Is there, is there anything that you think I've missed, that I'm thinking about in the wrong way?

**Min:** Yeah...

**Researcher:** ...any questions you think I should be asking?

**Min:** Well I would... I would just make one more comment...

**Researcher:** Yes...

**Min:** ...which is that, I think that - you know - the perception that you started with, that - that Zen patriarchs and the stories that we're told about Zen and I mean the narratives that were written about and told about Zen, is these like really “tough” male monks but actually like in the modern age, at least the narratives *I* hear about *our* [Kwanum School of Zen] male monastic teachers is, how soft they are and how incredibly compassionate and loving they are and how fatherly they are. You know? *And* motherly! Like, they have both motherly and fatherly qualities. If we... if we subscribe to the already biased thinking about fathers and mothers having to be a certain way - really they are *both*. And they, they can be incredibly nurturing, incredibly loving and kind and ya - motherly!

### 3.1 Introduction

The above extract is from an interview conducted between research participant and Zen practitioner Min Trahn and I during my field-work trip to Subong Zen monastery, Hong Kong in June of 2019. Though I might have respectfully argued to Min that I was rather interested in that exact *perception* of toughness which Min referred to, or indeed the perceived need to live up to it and perform it, I was too intrigued by his insights into Zen practice to interrupt him needlessly. In any case his thoughts forced me to reconsider male subjectivity as my research had become more focused on trying to understand feminine perspectives in Sŏn since my second pilot study in Poland in autumn of 2018. Min's comments forced me to ask if I was trying to generate specifically feminist knowledge and how might my own male subjectivity affect the research process and its outcomes? His comments also forced me to reconsider my methodology.

In the last chapter, I considered the historical nexus between Sŏn patrilineal systems of inheritance, Sŏn androcentric historiography and the function of ecclesiastical Sŏn rhetoric within the gendered state. This chapter begins with a discussion of the research paradigm of this project and its role in the construction of meaning and knowledge claims. The chapter then discusses the methods used and how those methods played out during the research process before concluding with a consideration of my own subjectivity and how it has inevitably shaped this research project.

### **3.2 Research Paradigm – Sŏn/ Zen Constructivism**

This research project changed direction on a number of occasions throughout the course of its undertaking. I had made allowance for a gendered aspect to the spread, practice and pedagogy of non-Korean Sŏn from the beginning but had not predicted in what way it might manifest itself until I encountered a group of Sŏn/ Zen women teachers and students in Poland in Autumn of 2018. From that point until the Hong Kong trip referred to above, I asked myself repeatedly if I was engaging in specifically feminist research. As I proceeded with this research, I realized that a constructivist paradigm best suited my research because super-structural realities in terms of East Asian religious and cultural practices were crossing borders and interacting dialectically with individual social interactions and influencing ‘the human enterprise of constructing reality – in history’ (Berger and Luckmann 1991:344).

Like Berger and Luckmann who define the socially constructed nature of reality (1991:41), Crotty (1998:42) defines constructivism as the view that all knowledge and all meaningful reality ‘is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context.’ Not only does Sŏn/ Zen practice and pedagogy take place in a social context – even the liminal spaces such as mountain-caves and hermitages where intense introspection yields the insight which are eventually brought into contact with and taught to society - it is as a philosophy, explicit about the constructed nature of experience and bases its teachings on that premise. Those forms of Sŏn/ Zen pedagogy which are often non-verbal and non-conceptual, while traditionally spontaneous are still

socially constructed and while seemingly random can be considered to be in dialogue with societies where there is a rigid social etiquette and culture of uniform bodily mannerism. I found it most beneficial to proceed with the paradigm that Sŏn/ Zen rhetorical pedagogy is socially constructed within the society it emerges from.

Guba et al. classify the paradigm of constructivism as ontologically and epistemologically relative as well as methodologically dialectical (Denzin and Lincoln 2011:98). My own subjective ontological position is that historical Korean (at least from the medieval Koryŏ period, 918 CE onwards) and later South Korean society as well as East Asian societies and cultures as a whole from whence the Chán, Sŏn and Zen idioms emerged, were and are patriarchal and I experienced this living and working in South Korea and travelling in Japan to greater and lesser degrees. Ecclesiastical Sŏn as a self-sufficient tradition - if it were even possible to separate it from its social context - is inherently patriarchal. Furthermore, the non-Korean contexts which Sŏn is currently moving into in Asia and in Europe while also patriarchal are culturally different and a constructivist approach allowed me to analyse both South Korean and non-South Korean Sŏn contexts.

While feminism is concerned with the liberation of women from patriarchy, so too are Chán, Sŏn and Zen concerned with liberation. The ‘soteriological’ promise of all schools of Buddhism, to liberate “all beings from suffering,” is what attracts women as much as men to the practice of introspective mind-training. While it is unavoidably somewhat trite to say that feminism is concerned with liberating women *from* patriarchy and Zen is

concerned with liberating women (and “all sentient-beings”) *through* patriarchy, such a statement problematizes the situation. Indeed, the suffering (in Buddhist terms) which motivated many women to seek liberation through Buddhist and Sōn/ Zen vehicles was undoubtedly patriarchal tyranny for many of them. Though she may effect internal change, how liberated from existential suffering and spiritually free is a woman really if the external patriarchal conditions have not changed? Must patriarchal tyranny change in order for women to be spiritually liberated? The same could be said for men. The ultimate promise of Zen constructivism is that one’s external-world or at least one’s perception of it, as a function of the mind and experience, changes positively the more one trains one’s mind.

Constructivism also pertains to the backgrounds of Sōn learners where Sōn and Sōn/ Zen rhetorical pedagogy is not only a symbol-system inherited by the learner throughout their life (especially in the case of most South Korean Buddhists) but is also a form of interaction (Wertsch 1985) even in European countries where that symbol-system is somewhat decontextualized and the cognitive-apprenticeship of the Sōn/ Zen master and disciple is less in keeping with contemporary Western notions of egalitarian individualism. As mentioned in the introduction, it is a Western modernist discourse derived from Protestant Christianity which inheres in the approach of self-reliant individual inquiry into the self and the nature of mind for many Western and European adherents of Zen (McMahan 2008). The background of the learner is not only important but so is cultural context.

Constructivism had a wider meaning for my research and offered a grand-unifying paradigm of sorts as it not only offered a means of theorizing about trans-national South Korean and non-Korean Sŏn in varying social and cultural contexts but also pertains to pedagogy itself. Constructivism in education, is ‘an approach to learning that holds that people actively construct or make their own knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner’(Travers, Elliott, and Kratochwill 1993:256). If Sŏn learners, students and practitioners then actively co-construct their own knowledge and meaning, the standpoint of critical pedagogy goes further and not only rejects the idea that knowledge can be politically neutral but argues that the act of teaching is inherently political (Coté, Day, and Peuter 2007). Not only would ecclesiastical Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy determine the experience of the learner but if we are to take the position of Coté et al., social justice and issues of gender equality cannot be separated from the act of teaching, even in Sŏn, Zen and Chán. In that vein, I hoped to arrive at a gendered perspective of that rhetorical pedagogy through a constructivist approach.

Ecclesiastical Zen rhetoric has always been political (Anderl 2011) and even were it not to deal expressly with the mind which it claims to do, it would still demand being viewed as socio-cultural if we are to take the view of Vygotsky (1980) that environment and community play a vital role in the making of meaning for learners and people generally. Social and cultural constructivism admits the role of other actors, agents, powers and culture at large in the creation of knowledge and meaning. The semiotic power of pedagogy and figures such as ecclesiastical monastic Sŏn, Zen and Chán teachers or ‘masters’ in such contexts cannot be divorced from the politics of authority, power and

gender. The same can be said for the semiotic power of a gendered Buddhist Enlightenment at least in its historiography. Butler (1990:139) theorizes gender as performative and in this sense I use constructivism to enquire to what extent gender plays a role in constructing the semiotic and political power of that performance within ecclesiastical Sōn rhetorical pedagogy.

With specific reference to rhetoric as well as power and influence, Holstein and Gubrium have highlighted the empirical challenges to the rhetorical nature of constructivist inquiry itself (Holstein and Gubrium 2013:8). In so far as this research interrogates - to some extent - hierarchies, power relations and authority both in the research process (Hesse-Biber 2007) in terms of diverting the gaze from traditional Sōn patriarchy to women's lived experience, it can be said to be feminist in sympathy. Feminist research however 'is the search to render visible and to explain patterns of injustice in organizations, behaviour, and normative values that systemically manifest themselves in gender-differentiated ways' according to Ackerly and True (2010:464). To end patriarchy in Sōn would be to end Sōn itself and that is something which I was neither seeking to do myself nor is it something which female practitioners of the Chán, Sōn and Zen traditions or female participants in my research wished to achieve. Rather I wanted to explore the process of how ecclesiastical Sōn patriarchy might have excluded the feminine in order to come into being in the sense meant by Kristeva above.

This research explores previously uncharted territory and therefore it seemed to me that a constructivist approach was the best way to move forward into this field in order to first map it, especially since female participation in Zen is voluntary and I was not sure while



I undertook this project, if there was a specific injustice to overturn. For that reason I do not claim to have undertaken an explicitly feminist research but am more than pleased if feminist epistemologies emerge from this research project. In sum, the governing research paradigm has been constructivist with a feminist ethic.

Locher and Prügl argue that constructivism can be complimentary to feminism through a shared ‘ontology of becoming’ as long as the constructivist doesn’t fail to problematize the research process as a social and therefore political process’ (Locher and Prügl 2001:111). This heraclitean ‘ontology of becoming’ is very much congruent with the general Buddhist Doctrine of Impermanence exposted more fully in the Sautrāntika ‘Doctrine of Momentariness’ by Vasubandhu in early Indian Buddhist thought (Westerhoff 2018:75).<sup>37</sup> For that reason, an ontology of momentariness appealed to my research perspective as according to other related Buddhist ontological teachings, selves male or female are momentary, impermanent and their perception constructed by the senses. ‘Shared ontological commitments lead constructivists and feminists to a shared research focus centring on concepts such as norms, rules, identities, and institutions’ (Locher and Prügl 2001:122). While my second pilot study in Poland revealed a gendered dimension to the expansion of Sōn in non-Korean contexts, my fieldwork trip to Hong Kong revealed that it was required not to essentialize or universalize any gendered category such as ‘women’ or indeed ‘men’ for that matter as all were differently situated

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<sup>37</sup> The Sautrāntika were a group in early Indian Buddhism around 200 CE who were distinguished from their predecessors the Sarvāstivādin school for their own interpretation of Buddhist doctrine. The school is known from the work of the philosopher Vasubandhu (fl. 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century CE).

and there were a myriad of differences within the category of both Sŏn ‘women’ and Sŏn ‘men.’

The subjectivity of a constructivist ontology allowed me to contrast varying and cultural contexts and derive knowledge claims from relative contexts. ‘Methodology focuses on the best means for acquiring knowledge about the world’ (Lincoln 2005:183) and the dialectical nature of constructivist methodology mentioned by Guba allowed me to approach the data gathered, especially in my first and second pilot studies without any preconceived theories or hypotheses. In practice, utilizing grounded theory proved to be the optimum methodology as the project progressed as my own eventual interpretation of the data would be itself a subjective construction. Interviews and participant observation were my primary method.

### **3.3 Interviews and a Qualitative Approach to Research**

This study of the impact of gender on transnational Sŏn pedagogy utilized participant observation, 40 semi-structured in-depth interviews of Sŏn teachers and students in various cultural contexts as well as an online survey of 30 South Korean monastics and lay-Buddhists in order to investigate and reveal the unique perspectives of people involved in non-Korean Sŏn. Qualitative interviews give insight into ‘the meanings people attribute to their experience and their social worlds’ (Silverman 2004:126) and with specific respect to gender in this study, ethnography and interviewing is recognized as one of the key ways to reveal previously eclipsed knowledge concerning women and their experiences (DeVault 1999:30).

I interviewed both men and women and chose semi-structured in-depth interviewing to attempt charting the European and wider non-Korean Sŏn field from a gendered perspective for three principle reasons. The first data on women in Zen generally and especially in Sŏn (both within or beyond South Korea) is meagre at best – I had to generate my own data especially with regard to women’s relationship to Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy. The second reason - related to the first - was that I hoped by diverting the traditional gaze from the male Zen Master or at least, expanding that lens to include female teachers and their voices, it would generate new knowledge about an old topic and expand our understanding of ecclesiastical Sŏn, Zen and Chán rhetoric by taking it beyond the official patriarchal narrative and dominant discourse which is male.

The third reason was that rather than the super-narrative of a teleological spread of “Korean” Buddhism out of Korea at various points in history until eventually its triumphant enlightening of Europe, I have developed a more rhizomatic view of South Korean Buddhism in Europe with an understanding of various centres in Europe as nodes. From the early findings of my research, it seems also that European based monks trained in South Korea, use these centres in this way, as nodes or intersections in a growing network. The various nodes of this network, or of what seemed to be becoming a network, have largely sprung up independently and self-sufficiently. For this reason also I chose an ethnography based on qualitative-interviews as interviewing would allow me to elucidate people’s perspectives and opinions without confining the study into categories through predetermined questionnaires (Patton 2002:21).

### 3.4 The Interviewees, Anonymity and Language

Participants in this research were all either Buddhist monastic teachers or students. Both teachers and students were of Korean and non-Korean ethnicity and the teachers, the majority of them monastic, had been ordained within the South Korean Sōn Buddhist tradition or by someone connected to it. The practitioners interviewed were students of those monastic teachers. While all of the monastic teachers self-identified as Buddhist, not every student identified as a practitioner of South Korean Sōn Buddhism though all were aware of the connection to the group they were a member of or the practice space they attended. That being said, not all students/ practitioners considered themselves as ‘students’ nor did they consider the person they learned from to be their ‘teacher’ or ‘Zen Master.’

It is important to note the difference in meaning of being a “Buddhist” for a South Korean and someone from a non-Buddhist European country. The vast majority of Buddhists I had interviewed who were either South Korean or from Hong Kong had been Buddhist since birth which was an identity which did not necessarily involve the practice of meditation. For most western practitioners of this East Asian introspective mind-training practice, being a “Buddhist” meant being a meditator and was a conscious choice. For some, it was more in the spirit of Buddhist teaching not to call oneself “a Buddhist.”

While I was aware of the identity of some of the South Korean survey respondents, I did not know which completed surveys were theirs. In that sense, as the survey information sheet guaranteed anonymity, all survey responses were anonymous to me. Where

respondents and interviewees wished their identity to remain confidential, I have referred to them as such with a minimum of background detail though the majority of respondents were not averse to their identity being quoted.

Language was potentially an issue here and with regard to data-collection. Most interviews I conducted were in English be it face-to-face or via online video link. In the cases where I interviewed people in Poland who responded in English, I still provided an information sheet and consent form in both Polish and English as I did for my South Korean respondents in Germany. Though all of my respondents in Hong Kong spoke English, I similarly supplied an information sheet and consent form to them in both English and Chinese so that they were fully aware of informed consent, their right to their data and to withdraw at any time as well as the limits of confidentiality. Similarly, I was proceeding into environments where I knew people would speak English as a second-language with varying degrees of proficiency and some of my questions were quite conceptual being related to Sŏn rhetoric and non-conceptual pedagogy. I tried to remain aware of Patton's comments on language, that;

by exercising control over language, and therefore control over the very categories of reality that are opened to consciousness, those in power maintain their power and privilege (Ball, 2013) (Patton 2014:206).

To try and mitigate against a power-imbalance on the basis of respondents participating in a second-language through which they would in turn be negotiating with some academic language with the potential to amplify any power imbalance, I provided translations for my questions in Polish, Germany, Chinese and Korean so that participants

would be sure of my questions and where possible provided the questions in advance. Ultimately this meant that my data-set was in some ways restricted to those who felt comfortable in English however as Hong Kong was a former British Treaty Port, most Hong Kongers at Subong-sa temple spoke English, the language of pedagogy at ZCR was English which had attracted students from various countries including Serbia and Greece as well as German people comfortable in English. Ultimately, I did not find that trying to engage with people through English as a second language was inhibitive, restrictive or compromised the research in any way.

### **3.5 Out in the Sŏn Field – Sampling**

This research benefits from a high-level of access to research participants at both the ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ of the Sŏn hierarchy which was achieved in two principal ways. Firstly I was usually able to build rapport relatively easily due to my background in South Korean Buddhist organizations. Having lived in South Korea for 7.5 years and having worked for a time for the mainstream Buddhist order, the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism and for the lay *Taehan Pulgyo Chinhŭngwŏn* (Korean Buddhism Promotion Foundation) at the Soomdo Cultural Centre in Seoul and at their Zen centre in the south of France, I was familiar with the major figures and organizations as well as having met a small number of the more prominent figures in transnational South Korean Buddhism. In conjunction with being familiar with temple etiquette, this went some way towards removing the ‘stranger’ or ‘outsider’ effect and showing research participants that I would at least not be looking at their practices and way of life as a completely alien curiosity.

Secondly, in relation to the first point of being somewhat positioned to build rapport with Buddhist teachers and practitioners, as the research progressed I availed of the ‘snowballing’ technique in order to locate participants. Following the theoretical sampling model of Strauss and Corbin I let the evolving analysis be my guide and sampling decisions evolved as the research progressed (Corbin and Strauss 2014:156–57). My first pilot study was conducted at Zen Centre Regensburg (ZCR), Germany which was founded and run by the Ven. Hyongak Sūnim whom I had met once in Seoul and at the inauguration of the Zen centre in France which it was my job to organize.

Hyongak Sunim welcomed me to ZCR and informed me of the vibrant and thriving practice surrounding the Wubong-sa temple near Warsaw, Poland which had been founded by his teacher. When I introduced myself to the temple initially and requested a visit in order to conduct fieldwork, it proved helpful to have visited and conducted fieldwork at ZCR. I was afforded an introduction to Subong-sa monastery in Hong Kong by a Zen nun I had met in Poland and while there, I was introduced to a number of key figures in global Zen and in South Korea who were happy to do an interview via Skype. This allowed me to tap into a European and global Sōn/ Zen network through a type of ‘networking’ (Corbin and Strauss 2014:318). Despite experiencing difficulty in contacting and visiting ethnic South Korean temples in Europe, a Buddhist nun with whom I am friends since my time working at the International School of Buddhist Studies near Seoul arranged for me to visit the Hanmaum Zen Centre in Bangkok through a friend of hers which in turn enabled me an unexpected and unplanned visit to the Hanmaum Zen Centre in Yangon, Myanmar.

### **3.6.1 The Interview Process – From Face-to-Face along the Iron-Curtain to Copresence in Cyberia**

The initial working-title of this research project when proposed for admission was *Understanding Transnational Contexts for the Emplantation of Contemporary Korean Buddhism and its Iconography* which was an attempt to broadly conceptualize transnational Korean Buddhism with a view to focusing on Europe within that transnational context and focusing on the Sŏn (Meditation) sect within the wider field of South Korean Buddhism. Preliminary research into which sites seemed to be acting as nodes or hubs within the wider rhizomatic expansion of European Sŏn from Granada and the Spanish island of Majorca to Lithuania and Moscow led to the selection of the two countries which seemed to be acting as the main hubs for Sŏn in Europe; Germany and Poland.

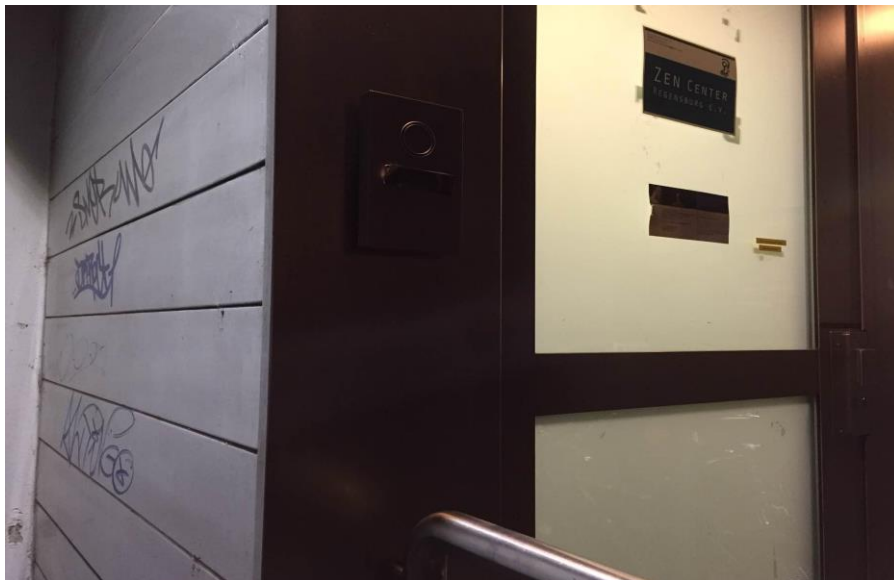
My initial 3 interviews at ZCR took place as a direct result of my own previous contact and experience within South Korean Sŏn Buddhist circles. This led directly to a further 2 Skype interviews and 3 other face-to-face interviews at an ethnic South Korean Buddhist centre in the same town of Regensburg but which is unaffiliated to ZCR. This made my first Pilot Study in January of 2018 quite successful, relatively smooth and gave me momentum as well as credibility traveling to Poland in September of the same year where I stayed at 2 different Buddhist temples, one in the south of Poland and one in Warsaw.

I then spent Autumn and Winter 2018 refining my research questions in preparation for visiting Hong Kong in June of 2019 which I had discovered in Poland, acted as a sort of



hub of sorts for European practitioners, especially women, practicing between Europe and South Korea. Having still not successfully interviewed an ethnic South Korean Buddhist nun and experiencing difficulty doing so in Europe, I travelled to Bangkok and Yangon in early 2020.

### 3.6.2 Pilot Study I – Germany



*Figure 6 Zen Centre Regensburg (ZCR), Germany, Main Entrance*

In *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, Patton (2002:245) argues that in contrast to quantitative studies where sample-size is important, qualitative study samples should be judged for their “purpose and rationale.” As mentioned above, through previous connections and the theoretical ‘snowball technique’ of sampling, I was lucky enough to be able to visit and conduct my first pilot study at ZCR in Germany. However this was not simply a case of convenience as Germany was the logical site for

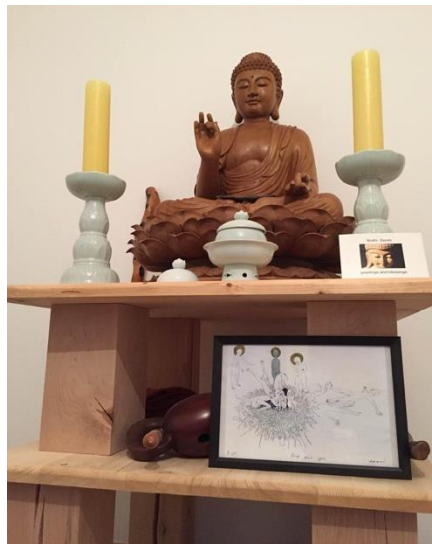
ethnographic research into European Sōn for a number of reasons chiefly among them that unlike other European countries, most of the mainstream orders of South Korean were represented with a presence in Germany. For this reason alone Germany was the most purposeful sample.



*Figure 7 Bust of Socrates at Zen Centre Regensburg*

The Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, the T'aego Order of Korean Buddhism, the Hanmaum Sōnwōn (K. "One Mind Zen Centre," previously independent but now affiliated to the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism), the Kwanum School of Zen and the Korean Won Buddhism movement, all had centres in Germany. In addition to this, the aforementioned Venerable Hyongak who is one of the most high profile South Korean-

trained monastics teaching in Europe, is also based there independently and unaffiliated to any of the above mentioned orders and for the express reason that he had made a decisive break from the mainstream of Korean Buddhism on the grounds that it was overly concerned with national identity rather than Buddhism. Hyongak's independent location in Germany serves as a node which connects a hermitage in Serbia, a Zen Centre in Greece and practice groups in Norway as well as being connected to networks in the U.S.A, South Korea and elsewhere in Asia.



*Figure 8 Zen Centre Regensburg, Monks' Quarters*

Besides their literal functioning as nodes in a European centred global network of Korean Sŏn/ Zen, Germany had until relatively recently been a divided country in the post-war period as is still the case with the Korean peninsula. In fact, the Unification Ministry of the South Korean government models its contingency plan on the German context in the event of a regime collapse in the DPRK or some other eventuality which might bring about a united Korea. In Germany I was reminded that I was researching a specifically

late-capitalist South Korean Buddhism and more specifically a late-capitalist South Korean derived Sōn which was informing a distinctly European Sōn culture.



*Figure 9 Main Meditation Hall - Note the lack of a main Buddha Statue*



*Figure 10 Won Buddhist Temple, Regensburg*

From the starting point of the working-title listed above, I outlined three major areas of identity which I felt transnational adaptations and accommodations might be observed in South Korean Buddhism, namely; Buddhist identity (in terms of religious affiliation), national identity (Buddhism for South Koreans is a question of national identity) and gender identity which is nationalized in androcentric and patriarchal South Korea. Whether or how much of any of these identities would transfer into European contexts and in what way I was unsure but by the time of my first pilot study to Germany in January 2018, my working-title had evolved to the still somewhat general *South Korean Buddhist, National and Gender identities and their Implications for the Spread of Contemporary Korean Sōn in European contexts*.

At ZCR I witnessed what might be described as classic Korean Sōn rhetoric as expounded by the resident male teacher but for the first time observing South Korean Buddhism outside of South Korea, this was characterized by a marked lack of female lay-practitioners in the practice-environment. I began for the first time to conceive of the ritual etiquette (formal seated-meditation posture as well as prostrations and bowing) associated with these ceremonial and religious spaces as somewhat gendered though I was still looking at this from a nationalized South Korean cultural perspective at this time.

### **3.6.3 Pilot Study II - Poland**

Poland was an obvious choice for it is the European country with by far the most adherents if not converts to a Korean style of Zen. Though dominated by the late Seung

Sahn's Kwanum School of Zen, the T'aego Order of Korean Buddhism is also present. Locations in Poland also serve as a node for Korean Zen networks in Eastern Europe which spread into the Czech Republic, Russia, Lithuania and as far as Hong Kong and Korea with Korean monks arriving in Poland to undertake rigorous one-month long solo introspective-meditation retreats which involve upwards of 10 and 12 hours of sitting-meditation per day, a feat which is physically gruelling in itself.

The Polish context was also of interest in political terms because South Korean Buddhist missionary activities in Poland which started with the propagation efforts of Zen Master Seung Sahn in the early 1980s during the Polish Solidarity Movement, ran concurrently to civil rights protests in South Korea (in some cases spear-headed by The People's Buddhism Movement *minjung Pulgyo*) and in some cases, Buddhist purges and the Gwangju Massacre.

How such circumstances and what might be called a post-Catholic context in Poland prepared for the reception of an East Asian religious and introspective practice was deeply interesting especially given the possibility that that practice was adapting and making accommodations to late-capitalist post-war society before it entered European contexts. The austere *kundaehwa* or 'Military Style' of practicing Korean Sŏn in the post-war period, whether mirroring a rhetoric of Japanese Samurai Zen or not, was certainly androcentric as shown above yet was moving into areas where the second-wave of global feminism was under full-swing in non-Korean European cultural contexts at that time.

These links consisted of women who had trained in Hong Kong and now taught in Hong Kong (HK), Poland and Lithuania. Such connections may have in the past been termed 'links' in a tentative sense however due to the ease of intercontinental travel now available, those links seemed to be synergetic and mutually energizing. This was to say nothing as yet of the role of Skype and instant video-calling which was transforming not only the administration of global Sŏn and Zen culture but also its pedagogy.

The possibility of selecting Hong Kong as a location for ethnographic study of Sŏn emerged while visiting Poland where I met a Polish nun who had trained not only in South Korea but also in HK with Zen Master Dae Kwan, a Chinese disciple of Zen Master Seung Sahn. As I learned in Poland, Hong Kong was also connected to Europe via Myong Hae Sunim, a Lithuanian nun who lived and taught in Subong-sa temple in Hong Kong but who travelled regularly between there and Lithuania.

In sum, I had never experienced being around so many non-Korean Buddhist women - some of them nuns - in a South Korean related temple. While there are of course temples resided in solely by Buddhist nuns in South Korea with Western women training in them, it is unusual to have access to them and furthermore, they would not be attended by a large number of men as was the case in Poland. The atmosphere of the temple and the effect of talking to these Polish Sŏn/ Zen women was quite staggering. In the months after returning from my Polish trip, while reading *Zen Buddhist Rhetoric in China, Korea and Japan* (Anderl 2011) and attending a module on methodologies I began to hone in on

a more focused title which was *Gendered Rhetoric in Contemporary European Sŏn*.

However I had not yet refined my research questions which at that time were:

**RQ1.** How do South Korean Sŏn Buddhist rhetorics of identity and gender affect transnational interactions? (Or) In what way are South Korean Sŏn Buddhist rhetorics of identity and gender expressed in transnational contexts (if they are expressed at all)?

**RQ2.** What does the Korean Buddhist interaction in Europe tell us about the contemporary South Korean Buddhist tradition, South Korean gender and national identity?

**RQ3.** Is the South Korean Buddhist tradition affected by the new and varied cultural contexts it finds itself in and is it affected by the varied European imaginaries of Buddhism and ‘mindfulness’ which it seeks to adjust to? What are the implications of this for South Korean Buddhism as a whole which explicitly seeks to ‘Enlighten the World’ with its patented and specifically Korean meditation technique (which is actually originally Chinese)?

**RQ4.** The South Korean Buddhist Church has laid claim to over 1600 years of pan-Korean Buddhist history as a whole. North Korea and North Korean Buddhists naturally are not in a position to contest this appropriation. Is there a concerted and monolithic South Korean Buddhist appeal to a romanticized European imaginary of the mystical East in order to feed into the constant renewal of a counter-North Korean identity or is the spread of South Korean Sŏn in European countries more rhizomatic?

**RQ5.** Why might South Korean Sŏn be considered the legitimate tradition and North Korean Sŏn dismissed? Are the rhetorics of both North and South Korean Sŏn (divided for only 75 years) in any way similar and are they gendered in the same ways? Yet to be decided if North Korea is a viable option to visit in order to observe their Buddhist culture.

**RQ6.** Is the way that Enlightened-Mind (the goal of Buddhist practice) is constructed in the Sŏn-space/ Buddha-Hall through prostrating, chanting and sitting-meditation postures, in some way implicitly associated with maleness or male qualities due to the rhetoric of Sŏn – what are the implications of this in constructing gender roles.



### 3.6.4 Non-Korean Contexts in Asia - Hong Kong, Bangkok and Yangon

By January 2019 I had done two things. Firstly, I had retained almost the same working-title but narrowed my research questions down to three core questions:

**RQ1.** What is the impact of gender on Sŏn interactions in various European contexts, from the perspective of Sŏn teachers?

**RQ2.** What is the impact of gender on Sŏn interactions in various European contexts, from the perspective of Sŏn learners?

**RQ3.** Does South Korean *Sŏn-Rhetoric* undergo any changes or adaptations when transplanted into various European contexts?

Secondly I had moved past the bounded notion of ‘Europe’ as a self-contained territorial/cultural entity and began to conceive of the study of Sŏn in Europe as the study of rhizomatic nodes or hubs which were connected to locations in Asia and in North America. European Sŏn was undoubtedly composed of not only site-specific locations; Sŏn-spaces such as Zen Centres/ Sŏnwŏns and temples but the Sŏn culture in these places was also very much an aggregate of flows which energized and fed into and out of these nodes, rhizomes and site-specific locations.

Ethnic Korean temples in France and Germany seemed to have limited or no networks with other European run centres and temples in Europe and be simply an end-point for flows to and from South Korea. European sites were more multicultural even within Europe and were connected not just to South Korea but to North America, Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong. Hong Kong had been on my radar since it featured prominently as a location for training and intensive practice for the nuns and female practitioners in Poland and it provided the opportunity to observe Chán/ Sŏn/ Zen pedagogy within its

original Chinese culture and, if not exactly similar to South Korea, in a post-colonial context. This I hoped would provide an opportunity to offset any variations, adaptations and accommodations in Europe with those I hoped to observe in Asia but outside of South Korea. Thence, my working-title altered slightly again and took its present form, *Gendered Rhetoric in Contemporary Non-Korean Sŏn* which would include European cultural contexts as well as non-Korean contexts in Asia such as HK. With that title and the above listed questions I arrived in HK in June 2019.

The interview process in HK was what a researcher can only wish for. Though it was a trip which was logistically of pronounced difficulty for a number of reasons, thanks to the benevolence of Min Trahn (quoted above) whom I had never met previously but who sympathized as someone who had just finished his own PhD, I arrived in HK to a pre-arranged schedule of 12 interviews over 4 days. Due to the kindness of another participant in HK, 6 more interviews followed with leading figures and teachers in global Sŏn/ Zen.

In a political sense it was also extremely interesting to research the Sŏn practice of a post-colonial divided nation in the post-colonial autonomous region of another country where Sŏn (Chán) originally came from. On my last day in HK I pushed through the immense crowds on the first day of the HK democracy and anti-extradition protests to try and get back to my space-age capsule motel. From HK I went to Malaysia for a pre-arranged interview with a Zen teacher but his availability suddenly changed when I was in-country and the trip was unfortunately wasted from a research perspective.

Feeling a lack of transnational but ethnic South Korean women in my study but after attempts to contact the Hanmaum (One-Mind) Sŏnwŏn in Germany proved difficult, I availed of a cheap flight to Bangkok, Thailand in February of 2020 to interview the female teacher at the Hanmaum temple there, Hyedan Sŏnim. Unbeknownst to me in advance, she had just opened up a branch temple in Yangon, Myanmar and was traveling there in the days after our Bangkok interview and invited me to join and see the temple there which I was fortunate enough to be able to do.

### **3.6.5 From Face-to-Face to Co-presence on Skype**

Deakin and Wakefield have found that ‘synchronous online interviewing is a useful replacement or supplement to face-to-face interviewing (Deakin and Wakefield 2014:603). Janghorban et al. have found that the medium can be beneficial for qualitative research but with careful attention paid to technical issues (Janghorban, Roudsari, and Taghipour 2014).

While at a rural location in the south of Poland researching at Daewon-sa, a T’aego Order of Korean Buddhism temple, my initial interview with the Rev. Jong-mae Park, Patriarch of the T’aego Order America-Europe Parish was cut short but with the offer of a follow-up interview over Skype at a later date. The resident monk, Hae Mahn who I had met at that time, also expressed his preference for a remote interview due to time constraints related to running the meditation retreat in which I was participating. It was at this time that I conceived of the idea of Skype interviews with Buddhist figures I had previously met and established a rapport with in South Korea as well as in France.

Bon Shim Seon Sa, the resident Sōn/ Zen Teacher at Wubong-sa temple in Warsaw, also described to me how Skype and video-calling was essential to the administration and coordination of a global Zen school such as Kwanum. Researching into Japanese Zen in Ireland during this time, I also learned how Skype was being used as a means to facilitate Zen teaching and to create a virtual space for Dokusan (J. 獨參, the interview between Zen Master and student) and Sanzen (J. 參禪, private and formal meditation instruction from the Zen Master to the student)(Cox and Ó Laoidh, 2021) blurring the lines between what constitutes ‘Europe’ and East Asian Zen temples as well as perhaps influencing the immediacy of Sōn/ Zen pedagogy. At Espace Séoul-Provence, the Zen Centre owned and run by the Korean Buddhism Promotion Foundation in the south of France, Skype was used periodically as a tool to facilitate group meditation instruction from Martine Batchelor to a group of practitioners within the same country but across the expanse of mainland France.

Almost instant video-conversations (making allowance for satellite delay and slow internet connections) proved to be an invaluable way to increase my data set within a relatively short space of time and to help clarify where my research activities would be best directed. Out of 44 interviews conducted, 3 were conducted via email and 13 took place over Skype. Of those 13 Skype interviews, 6 were with people whom I had previously met and had some level of established rapport. The majority of interviews (27) were conducted face to face.

Many of the Skype interviews I conducted were with members of the global Kwanum School of Zen who were used to the medium within their own school for administrative and organizational purposes. Oates (2015) concludes that sensitivity is possible over Skype to varying degrees and can be used to build rapport. Valeria Lo Iacano et al. (2016) identify four main points for the use of Skype for qualitative research; 1) in research involving different cultures and/ or languages, Skype is invaluable as it allows researchers to involve participants wherever they are in the world; 2) video-over-internet protocol also potentially makes research more democratic by reducing resources required to conduct research; 3) the biggest limitations are in the area of rapport and non-verbal cues but new unforeseen opportunities are revealed as some participants feel more comfortable and able to relax and ‘open up’ more easily from a location remote to the interviewer; and finally 4) ethical issues related to data-collection and privacy can be easily addressed.

### **3.6.6 Triangulation - Online Survey of South Korean Monastics and Lay-people**

Triangulation refers to ‘the use of multiple methods or data sources in qualitative research to develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena’ (Carter et al. 2014:545). Uwe Flick (2018:178–79) lists the criticisms of triangulation as the potential for ‘extreme eclecticism’ and for each different approach to constitute the investigated issue in a specific way. However Patton (2014:956) distinguishes between four different types of triangulation amongst which he describes a mixed qualitative–quantitative methods triangulation to check out ‘the consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods.’ This approach is ‘based on the premise that no single method

ever adequately solves the problem of rival explanations’ and I have availed Patton’s approach to this end by conducting an online survey of South Korean Sōn Buddhists both lay and monastic in attempt to juxtapose potentially rival explanations in the parallel congregations within the continuum of Sōn trans-nationalism.

Having originally considered returning to South Korean in order to relate transnational findings back to the superstructure of the domestic South Korean context, I was unable to do so due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead I placed a survey online from September 2020 until January 2021 and gathered 30 responses from 12 Buddhist nuns, 12 Buddhist monks, 3 Buddhist lay-women and 3 Buddhist lay-men. The findings from this survey will be discussed at the end of chapters 4, 5 and 6. Of the 24 monastics surveyed, 18 respondents had been a Buddhist for over 15 years with no respondents being Buddhist for less than 5 years; only 1 respondent had been a Buddhist for between 5~10 years and 5 respondents had been a Buddhist for between 10~15 years.

Of the lay-people who responded to the survey, all were Buddhist since birth and none had been Buddhist for less than 20 years. 20 monastics considered themselves to be practitioners of Sōn meditation and a further 4 respondents answered that they practiced meditation of a different unspecified kind. The last 6 respondents did not define their Buddhist identity in terms of meditation. 30 respondents is not a large sample size by any means but it was enough to give some preliminary indication of contrasting views within South Korean and non-Korean Sōn. Patton says further that ‘quantitative methods and qualitative methods are used in a complementary fashion to answer different questions

that do not easily come together to provide a single, well-integrated picture of the situation' and produce findings that can be 'received with varying degrees of credibility' (Patton 2014:959). However I felt that it would not be a wasted effort if even to simply attempt to 'understand when and why differences appear'(Patton 2014:958).

The online survey was also an expedient means of supplementing data I otherwise had hoped to collect while doing participant observation at a South Korean urban Sŏn centre as well as at a temple. It was extremely unlikely I would have been admitted to Songgwang-sa temple (South Korea's most famous Sŏn-meditation monastery) however I had hoped to at least inquire as to that possibility before the pandemic hit. Eventually I circulated this survey through a number of Buddhist nuns I was in contact with, and one lay-man. Apart from those five nuns, the other seven nuns who responded to the survey are unknown to me – all responses are anonymized.

The male monastics who responded were recruited through two of the aforementioned nuns and none of them were known to me. The lay-man in question forwarded the survey to associates of his in the Taego Order of [South] Korean Buddhism but as I was made aware, the Taego Order monks didn't like the questions and unfortunately did not take the opportunity to disagree with any of the questions (a function provided for within the survey) or leave comments under any of the questions in the survey. In that sense the survey reflects a selection of views of people affiliated with the more dominant Jogye Order though those views are by no means representative of the views of that order or all of South Korean Buddhism or Sŏn for that matter.

### **3.6.7 Reflections on the Interview Process**

Having experienced rapport-building in face to face interviews at varying degrees of what might be termed ‘success,’ I felt that that justified the attempt to utilize Skype. This was borne out in practice as I would not conclude that any Skype interview was characterized by ‘bad rapport.’ To address the points of Lo Iacono et al. above, if there was a time delay or wifi connection problem, which there was on two occasions, participants were kind enough to reschedule to a later date when the problem was mitigated. In response to Lo Iacono’s third point about the limitations of rapport and the potential to miss non-verbal cues, I felt that while that was a valid concern, for many participants familiar with online video-chatting from their work and private lives, it was a way for them to feel comfortable and in control of their own environment (Letherby 2003:108) which seemed to offset any discomfort arising from the use of the remote technology. Skype also offered the opportunity to expand my data-set over a wider area and assess the problematics of my research more quickly and effectively, allowing me to induct participants into my study (such as on the west coast of the United States) whom I simply would not have been able to interview otherwise.

Nevertheless, ‘the internet mediates – and in some way moderates – interactions and the possible outcomes of these interactions at the dyadic, group and cultural levels. Equally, internet technologies have the potential to shift the ways in which qualitative researchers collect, make sense of and represent data’ and have the potential to ‘hide and constrain certain aspects and qualities of interactions’ (Silverman 2004:120). I found the internet helpful to supplement the larger sample of face-to-face interviews but was wary of the



potential to be completely unaware of what I might be missing, since as has been shown by King-O'Riain (2013:141), the medium has the potential to alter expression itself. Even if the technology facilitated a smooth interview in a 'geographically dispersed' (Silverman 2004:120) and 'multi-localized transconnective' space, the effort of maintaining 'copresence' (King-O'Riain 2013:264) always bore with it the risk of missing some vital piece of information and for that reason I would not augment such interviews beyond a supplementary role and was glad that I had been able to do my most important interviews in person.

To reflect on the face-to-face interviews, there was undoubtedly a marked difference between the first interviews of my first pilot study in ZCR Germany in early 2018 compared to my final interview in Yangon, Myanmar almost exactly 2 years later in early 2020. While I was still figuring out my central research questions and allowing the analysis to evolve in Germany and Poland, the most striking difference in my interviews was in HK where I interviewed participants in a café or a tea-house of their choosing, at the temple or in one case at their home where I was treated kindly to dinner. The interviews of the initial pilot studies were more formal in tone (though not in every case) while the interviews in HK and later on Skype were more conversational yet more dense and quite rich.

Overall apart from the traveling involved and the necessity to get myself into position, the interview process itself was mostly straightforward. To be accepted and seen as familiar with temple etiquette and therefore at least sympathetic to Buddhism if not as in

most cases, to be seen as “a Buddhist” was undoubtedly helpful with the interview process and had a knock-on effect in the various places I went as the project progressed. It was in only 3 out of 40 interviews that I felt uncomfortable and felt that the participant had grown slightly uncomfortable with the process though in none of those cases did the participant choose to end the interview.

One was with an ordained nun who felt the need to constantly emphasize that Zen/ Sōn cannot be understood intellectually and make generalizations about “researchers.” That lady was a gatekeeper of sorts and also informed me that she and the school she was a member of had had bad experiences with “researchers” also. Ultimately, while it was immensely beneficial to speak with her, I decided against using her interview in the final analysis. Another incidence was when scheduling meant that the interview probably should not have gone ahead due to time constraints but was engaged in anyway though in somewhat of a rushed fashion. The third was during an interview in which the participant being unfamiliar with research ethics, did not understand informed-consent or the logic behind some of my later questions which led me also to decide against including her interview in the final analysis.

During 2 interviews, participants disclosed experiences of intense psychological abuse at the hands of either their female Zen Master or their fellow female members of the congregation. Both were women and both seemed glad to be able to share their experience and I was not made uncomfortable by the disclosure. I assured them both they

could withdraw their consent and delete their data at any time during the interview or within the specified time period afterwards though neither of them opted to do so.

In a general sense, those in the position of Sŏn/ Zen teachers and pedagogues tended to talk in broader more generalized terms than Sŏn/ Zen students though this was not always the case. Rather than any intuition towards anonymity or unaccountability offered by the use of more generalized language, these were usually quite public figures used to a relatively large amount of exposure or at least in touch with the performative aspect of teaching in front of groups of people. Therefore it seemed that those in teaching positions were more concerned with portraying their group according to their own emic perspective.

### **3.7 Limitations**

Nevertheless there were limitations and this study suffered from somewhat of a homogeneity in that there are not many ethnic South Korean women teaching Sŏn outside of South Korea in Europe. One ethnic South Korean temple run by a Buddhist nun - the Lotus Mind temple in London – shut down during this research project before I could get there for an interview or participant-observation and the Hanmaum Zen Centre in Germany which is South Korean affiliated proved extremely difficult to make contact with through its German gatekeepers such that I was forced to try and contact the head nun there through mutual contacts in South Korea. In so doing, I learned of the possibility of visiting the Hanmaum Zen Centre in Bangkok which proved to be more open to visitors than the centre in Germany. Due to the above factors, a comparative return visit

to South Korea to conduct research was always a potential option throughout this project however with the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020, travel was greatly restricted and I instead formulated an online survey in the hope of generating the data I needed. This also had its limitations in terms of reach and number of participants.

This study has also been constrained by a more thorough comparative analysis of Bikkhunī teaching contexts in South Korea and possibly in the United States. On reflection, though I had witnessed Sōn rhetorical pedagogy many times in South Korea (at one point at least every weekend for a number of years), I was too reliant on that experience at the outset of this research. That experience was also retrospective when I began this research and was in many ways naïve and uncritical. Furthermore, while I witnessed many instances of so-called spontaneous Sōn rhetoric, in hindsight I see that much of that was not in a closed monastic setting and therefore possibly not a true reflection of the culture surrounding that still vibrant teaching tradition even if my experiences did motivate me to undertake this research.

Being a “researcher” also has disadvantages when researching a tradition such as the Meditation School which derives its identity not only as a non-doctrinal school of Buddhism but one in which scriptural study and intellectualization of any kind is proclaimed to be discarded. While my brief background in East Asian Buddhist circles was beneficial in some respects, it was also a disadvantage when speaking with some monastics and prevented me from gaining access to others. Despite South Korea’s “Korean” Buddhism deriving its identity from a so-called fusion of *Sōn* (Introspective

meditative-practice) and *Kyo* (doctrinal scholarship and scriptural study), there is a tangible resistance to analysis or any kind of inquiry that is not about scriptures. Any study, especially sociological that might attempt to deconstruct and be sensed to threaten the image of “Korean” Buddhism, is often dismissed as “un-Buddhist” and therefore invalid. This quite anti-intellectualist attitude is also remarkably sectarian and at times was a rather patronizing defence against reasoned inquiry which in fact it could be argued is antithetical to genuine “Buddhism” if such a monolithic object of study can be said to exist.

With regard to the limitations of the online survey, I attempted to triangulate the online survey data with general qualitative points raised in the interview process, not to claim any statistical representation from such a small sample group. The limitations of the online survey results are referred to in each of the sections in which those results are presented at the end of chapters 4, 5 and 6.

### **3.8 A Man Researching the Generic Male Patriarchal Narrative of Sōn - The Ox Before the Herder?**

Bernard Faure notes a ‘generalized and abstract’ rhetoric of equality latent within Buddhist teaching which ‘never became a collective, social and political equality’ (Faure 2009:4). Both within Buddhist cultures and within scholarship, Rita Gross attributes this failure to realize the express goals of Buddhist teachings to ‘the generic masculine habit of language, thought and research... [which has traditionally] covered the feminine’ (Gross 1993:295) and thus obscured it. How then does a man approach the

researching of Sŏn men and women within an explicitly historical patriarchy which eclipsed the female at the very least as a matter of its historiographical practice if not also as a pre-condition of retaining state-endorsed political power?

“It is not an unproblematic project to try to speak for the other woman, since this is precisely what the ventriloquism of patriarchy has always done: men have constantly spoken for women or in the name of women” (Moi 1985:68) and it is not without a sense of caution that I attempt to decipher the “ventriloquism” of Sŏn patriarchy, to borrow Moi’s phrase, especially with respect to the fact that as Cho Eun-su has shown, Sŏn women while they of course did exist, were essentially written out of androcentric Sŏn history (E. Cho 2012a). Sŏn historiography is gendered and androcentric and that historiography was performed rhetorically every time a male Sŏn master expounded the Dharma from a teaching platform or cushion. Every time a sermon is given in the traditional Zen/ Sŏn rhetorical style it is an invocation of a long historical lineage of patriarchal authority and is a type of historiographic invocation of a gendered Enlightenment in itself. ‘In mainstream research, personal experience is thought to contaminate a project’s objectivity. In feminist research [personal experience] is relevant and repairs the project’s pseudo-objectivity’(Reinharz and Davidman 1992:258) and this researcher’s personal experience will be referred to at times throughout this project.

Until very recently in Zen Studies especially, ‘the male norm and the human norm are collapsed and become identical’ (Gross 1993:294-295). To put it simply, there have been extremely little of what Rita Gross calls ‘androgynous’ approaches to the study of Sŏn or

Korean Buddhism at large and Buddhism generally is still lacking in this area as has been discussed in the previous chapter. However, in order to avoid androcentricism and realize a truly androgynous inquiry, it wasn't enough to simply widen the historiographical lens and bring Sŏn women into the analysis. Patton extends reflexivity in social constructivist research beyond merely understanding how one's background affects the research process to how one's 'acts of inquiry' themselves are affected by 'one's own experiences and background' (Patton 2014:989).

With regard to reflexivity in Buddhist Studies and a sociological approach thereto, Bernard Faure notes, 'even the most reflexive and dialogical account can be as staged and performative as traditional "objective" scholarship' (Faure 1996:5). While calling for a sociological methodology in approaches to the study of Buddhism, Faure warns social scientists about 'the compulsive nature of their search for "scientificity" in their approach to Zen-related subjects wherein they 'downplay the performative or rhetorical nature of their discourse and the semiotic function of their scientific apparatus' (Faure 1996:4, 5). Paul Rabinow discusses James Clifford in similar terms of using self-reflexivity as nothing more than 'a device for establishing ethnographic authority' (Clifford and Marcus 1986:245).

I cannot speculate as to the degree of performative reflexivity in other studies but can only say that keeping a field-research diary was one of the principle ways which enabled me to stay open to the social reality of Sŏn pedagogical contexts during this research. Corbin and Strauss (2014:378) note that 'a diary works well as a means of keeping an

account of self-reflections during the entire research process' as do Glesne and Peshkin (1992:128). The very act of cataloguing my impressions and reactions and noting questions and speculations in a field-diary served as a constant reminder that the social-reality I was experiencing and attempting to process was not only contingent upon my presence but my biographical-presence i.e. the background which I brought to each situation.

Though I had lived and worked in South Korea for many years and been around many Buddhist-spaces, I had never kept a diary and my experiences at that time – though stimulating and rich – were nonetheless in hindsight somewhat uncritical. The act of keeping a field-diary was not only necessary for learning and processing – and my impressions of Zen, Sōn and South Korean Buddhism were quite altered and deepened by doing so - but it acted as a safety-valve of sorts which served to restrict to an extent the influences of my own learned biases and prejudices about the functioning of 'Korean' Buddhism and to retain a provisional sense to my experiences until the final analysis which might otherwise not have occurred if I had simply gone to each site, recorded interviews, departed and transcribed them.

As a male-researcher interrogating a traditionally patrilineal pedagogical hierarchy which has been supported at various times throughout history by serfs, indentured servants but mostly the clandestine labour of generations of women within the present world-system (while excluding them from Inka-transmission, teaching roles and positions of authority in that hierarchy), Sandra Harding's self-reflexive theoretical approach serves as a



navigational tool to ‘foreground how relations of power may be shaping the production of knowledge in different contexts’ (Naples 2007:1-2) which if ignored lead to what Harding calls pseudo or ‘weak objectivity.’

Previous androcentric approaches to Sōn and Zen research as well as historiography have claimed objectivity ‘not on the basis of [their] capacity to speak truthfully, but in terms of a specific capacity to exclude the presence and experience of certain subjectivities’ (Gadamer 1989:290) which in this case would be women’s place in Sōn and in the wider field of Chán and Zen. ‘The result is *alienated knowledge*, a product apparently complete, bearing no apparent trace of the conditions of its production and the social relations that gave rise to this. It is, no more and no less, as much an alienated commodity produced within patriarchal capitalism as any other alienated capitalist commodity’(Stanley 2013:11) . A huge portion of the classical encounter-dialogue literature within the East Asian meditation schools can be considered alienated knowledge if we adopt that perspective.

Therefore, this methodology aims to inquire not what Sōn-Rhetorical pedagogy says about Sōn but what Sōn-Rhetorical pedagogy says about both women and men at a certain point in history and what that, in turn, says about Sōn by implication while ‘unearthing women’s subjugated knowledge and experience’ (Smith 1987). Any research into Sōn, Chán and Zen-Rhetoric, which is essentially research into what Sōn, Chán and Zen men say and which is conducted without investigating if and how women might be silenced by that rhetoric and how that rhetoric potentially takes place in the space created

for it by women's silence, excludes the presence and subjectivities of women and does not give a complete and objective account of male Sŏn-Rhetoric or the tradition as a whole. By ignoring the space and the silence into which male Sŏn, Zen and Ch'an rhetoric has poured fourth, without even considering how and if that space has been created by female eclipsing, the functions and purposes of that rhetoric cannot fully be understood. This has left us not only with an eclipsed female shadow presence in Sŏn/ Zen and Chán but it has also obscured the full picture of the patriarchal narrative which we call Sŏn.

From the Korean perspective, Elaine H. Kim warns against the tendency in 'the West [to] embrace Korean women's victimization by Asian patriarchy as a concrete demonstration of western cultural superiority'(Kim and Choi 2012b:107). Besides guarding against views which might bolster the presumption of a greater gender equality in Western contexts, Korean subjectivities, both male and female, are accounted for by enquiring if the rhetoric and pedagogy which generate the production of Enlightenment and the 'Sudden' approach to such realization, have been traditionally unequal and hierarchical, if not elitist according to Faure (1996:59), and if that lack of inclusion has defined the tone, character and rhetorical nature of that pedagogy. To fail to do so is to view Sŏn and Zen through the same emic and androcentric lens which directly affects the mostly western etic view of Zen which romanticizes and mystifies the Sŏn/ Zen master in the kind of 'secondary Orientalism' which Faure also speaks about (1996:9). It also produces knowledge *about* Sŏn and Zen which, if it is not biased and hierarchical, is at least lopsided in its vision and treatment of the same.

### **3.9 Analysing the Data – Grounded Theory**

Research and its presentation is not an abstract process of communicating an independent a priori ‘truth’ which has been ‘uncovered’ by abstract means which could be repeated identically to uncover the same ‘truths.’ Presenting and conveying the results of one’s research is also a process of construction in which meaning is controlled and in which the analysing of data is informed and shaped by the researcher’s standpoint and perspective (Corbin and Strauss 2014:12).

When analysing the data, I utilized grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1997) and its system of open coding or scanning interview transcripts for themes in order to generate data from the interviews. The grounded theory approach to research is one in which theories and concepts emerge as the research project progresses rather than generating data from theory (Ackerly and True 2010:204) which was the case as I progressed from my first pilot study in Germany to my second pilot study in Poland.

Beginning with the data allowed me to survey the field and left me open to emergent themes and decide upon which themes to focus upon later. As discussed above, if I had gone into my first and second pilot studies in Germany and Poland with predetermined theories, this research project would have been dramatically different. In spite of this, I cannot make any claim to objectivity – my experiences in South Korea interviewing ‘comfort women’ survivors and working with Buddhist nuns was surely a factor which predisposed me to be alerted by and attach to a gendered aspect of Sōn rhetorical pedagogy which I felt to be emerging according to my own conditioned biographical

perception. This was surely a factor also in the process known as coding which is a 'means categorizing segments of data with a short name which simultaneously summarizes and accounts for each piece of data'(Charmaz 2006:43).

Charmaz (2006:45) contends that coding is more than simply a way to get analysis going but is rather 'an analytic frame from which you build the analysis.' Building this analysis depends on engaging in at least two types of coding which will refine the data; initial-coding and focused coding (Charmaz 2006:42). My pilot studies in Germany and Poland were themselves a process of becoming familiar with method and methodology and though I did keep a field-diary at that time, I did not begin coding until after my pilot studies. I began initial and focused coding as I attempted to expand my data set with some difficulty beyond those two principal European sites of my pilot studies. At this point coding did not always proceed neatly and the processes of initial and focused coding overlapped at times.

Certainly the final choice of which themes to follow as well as the general direction of the overall project was influenced by my own subjective view of European and South Korean social worlds and my biographical-presence within the research. As Holstein and Gubrium note, coding is 'guided by constructionist sensitivities and assumptions about language, interaction, and society and by theoretical underpinnings and research questions' (Holstein and Gubrium 2013:418). The general and particular foci of the project and my research questions though they emerged in conjunction with a taught-module on methodology after my second pilot study, were also surely informed by my

having been immersed for a time in South Korean Buddhist social contexts with the ultimate implication that power in the research process rests unavoidably with the researcher. So too the ultimate benefits of carrying out the research also accrue to the researcher who will either secure a job, a more prestigious qualification, publish books and papers or achieve some notoriety by having their name attached to the fulfilment of a larger socio-political objective as a result of the research such as changes in conditions or greater awareness and the like.

The distribution of power in such a research project as this was not always black and white however. While those studying Sŏn/ Zen were sometimes relieved and happy to have an opportunity to express their frustrations and be heard, there was at times a distinct anti-intellectualism to contend with when speaking to monastics, male or female alike. In terms of power imbalances in the research, when ‘intellectualizing’ or conversing about rhetoric of pure experience which Sŏn/ Zen is famous for, I was at a distinct disadvantage when speaking with monastics.

As stated above, despite the rhetorically syncretic aspect of South Korean Sŏn and historical Korean Buddhism which derives its identity from a supposed syncretic fusion of unmediated non-verbal experience of reality gained through meditative introspection and the scholarly study of doctrinal/ scriptural concepts, the presupposition that being a researcher precluded one from being a practitioner and therefore that one was not interested or even incapable of understanding the ‘essence’ or ‘pure’ experience offered by Sŏn/ Zen soteriology certainly served to create a situation in which the researcher was

hierarchically lower than the elevated status of the Sōn/ Zen master which was predicated upon a supposed yet unverified insight into the fundamental nature of reality due to (implied) years of rigorous introspective practice. The rhetorical pedagogy I researched herein is usually the only formal way to gauge any such insight in ecclesiastical circles.

In egalitarian terms then, attempting to mitigate power-imbalances or to make the research process ‘empowering’ for all involved was something which I only even considered with some students during the process of gathering data in the field. Most of those studying Sōn and Zen viewed me as an equal in that I was trying to understand something which they were also pursuing.

While not all monastics or those in teaching positions were concerned with my awareness of their position, some were and even with those who didn’t remind me of their status by emphasizing the inferior nature of intellectual knowledge as opposed to experiential insight, I was still implicitly aware myself that in that current semi-religious and in some cases unequivocally religious context, such teachers were above me in the hierarchy and that I was lucky to be interviewing them at their convenience – an attempt to equalise the research interaction may indeed even have been perceived as disrespectful but was in any case unnecessary for such monastics beyond informed consent.

A final note however, I was aware of my position as somehow mediating between the authority of the Sōn/ Zen master and their students. Some students disclosed information to me without fear of their identity being known while others did so on the express

condition of confidentiality and with the express wish that they did not want their Sōn/ Zen master to know that they had expressed a certain point of view. I was in some senses a conduit which participated in both a certain knowledge and a certain silence; knowledge of issues quite private to the group but yet which people wanted me as a researcher to know and which I was allowed to know not just because I was ‘a researcher’ but because I was viewed as an insider, as ‘a Buddhist’ and I was therefore often trusted quite faithfully to maintain that silence. This put me in a liminal space in the Sōn/ Zen hierarchy which is a hierarchy predicated upon insight gained through spiritual-cultivation.

I was mediating between the authority figure of the (supposedly) relatively more ‘enlightened’ teacher and the hierarchically lower and (in Buddhist terms) ‘less enlightened’ ‘more deluded/ more ignorant’ student which invested me with a certain type of power as I occupied the space between the status of teacher and the student-network, exercising what Corbin and Strauss call this ‘central obligation’ and responsibility to uphold people’s confidentiality (2014:31). While those that confided in me did so with a sense of being equal as Buddhists, that power and attendant responsibility was undoubtedly unequal and distinguished me from other people in attendance at the various locations I visited.

### **3.10 Ethics and Protocol**

‘Every human institution and every human action, including inquiry,’ according to Lincoln and Guba ‘is both profoundly ethical and profoundly political in nature’

(2013:74). It is therefore mandatory for all research involving human participants to follow stringent ethical guidelines in its approach and execution in order to protect participants and the process of the research itself (Flick 2018:36–37). The proposed methods and ethics for the first working title of this research listed above were approved in April 2018 and were approved for the revised and present title of the research by the Research Ethics Committee in February 2019.

With respect to confidentiality and risk faced by participants, perhaps it exposes my own naivety of the process but this research was not initially expected to uncover sensitive material with the potential to harm individuals or any of the Buddhist centres or organisations they belonged to. Nonetheless as mentioned in section 3.6.6 above, in two cases, participants informed me of psychological abuse from a Zen master and tribal-gaslighting experienced in another Buddhist temple. Another participant revealed potentially very compromising insights regarding pedagogical practices in one school and stressed their desire for anonymity while another participant confided their sexual orientation to me in relation to how that affected their relationship with their Zen teacher. However in all but the pedagogical case, the participants waived their right to anonymity.

Informed consent is a benchmark for social research ethics (Denscombe 2002:183).

Before commencing the interviews and where possible I emailed the consent forms and questions to the participants in advance though in some locations there were participants who agreed to an interview spontaneously and had not known of my research-visit in advance. I read through the consent forms with all participants before commencing the



interview whether they had had the opportunity to read it in advance of the interview or not. Participants were informed of the potential risks involved and made aware of the limits of confidentiality as well as the usage of data from the research in the public domain. My own and my academic supervisor's contact details as well as the university Ethics Committee contact details were also given to participants who provided me with an email address if they wished to receive a copy of their interview transcript.

All interviewees were given a copy of the consent form though some chose to simply take a screenshot of it on their mobile phones. Participants were in all cases informed of their right to withdraw from the research process at any time during or after the interview within a specified period and that they could withdraw any or all data provided. All consent forms, questionnaires, transcripts, notes, memos and digital sound files related to the interview process were stored securely in locked drawers on campus. Digital sound-files were stored on an encrypted portable hard-drives which was also locked away with the paper-based data above and to which I alone had access.

### **3.11 Conclusion**

Gaining access to, interviewing and assessing the impact of gender on an emerging and fluid concept such as European Sön Rhetoric, called for a very targeted and well-thought through methodology. Ease of access to and frank discussions with European Sön teachers both male and female was not always necessarily indicative of a greater gender equality but simply cultural familiarity and in some cases, a desire on the part of women for their practice to be known. Conversely at times, a more difficult process of gaining

access to ethnic Korean female Sŏn teachers in Korea or in Europe did not necessarily signal female subjugation or excessive patriarchal control but simply a fear of being understood across the linguistic and cultural divide. Attempting this as a white male was difficult but my past experience in South Korea also helped to build such bridges.

Regardless of my inevitable male subjectivity and my Caucasian otherness (at least where South Korean nuns might be concerned), I believe that the use of a feminist methodology provides the most effective theoretical framework for this research to uncover the issues raised. I was never trying to ‘experience’ what Sŏn-women experience in Korea or elsewhere but to simply generate data that had been eclipsed and had hitherto remained un-generated. To repeat, my main purpose in this chapter has been to remove the cloak of false-objectivity which has obscured the complete picture of both Sŏn-men and Sŏn-women.

Feminist methodologies, more explicitly than any other approach have overturned this androcentric and at times colonizing notion of it being possible to be rationally objective. I do not make any claims to objectivity in this dissertation which is intrinsically linked and shaped to my experiences in South Korea and working for South Korean Buddhists in France. Those experiences have defined the man I am today so much so that, claims to objectivity and impartiality would not only be futile but might even undermine any credibility that this research has. My multiple subjectivities resulting from being an Irish male Buddhist who was a medium-term resident of South Korea and all the experiences that entails both professionally and privately, as well as having a Chinese Chán teacher,

have had a deep influence on the conception, design, interview process and analysis of this research.

Utilizing an ethnographic approach with semi-structured qualitative interviews executed from within a feminist-standpoint theoretical framework has been the most effective method of liberating women's views about Sŏn (and indeed, Sŏn views about women) from a universalist and often ideological rhetoric of non-duality and non-discrimination which ultimately tells us more about Sŏn generally, if there is something which 'Sŏn' refers to. Interviews have given a voice to women (and men) in my research but detractors might well counter that these experiences or thoughts do not speak for or reflect the totality of South Korean Sŏn or how it is experienced and practiced in South Korea.

## Chapter Four

### Re-Localizing non-Korean Sŏn - Adaptations, Accommodations and Emerging Pedagogies

**Retreat Participant (RP):** *“Have you heard of Tommy Robinson in the UK? He’s not afraid to say what everyone is thinking, say it like it is.”<sup>38</sup>*

**Me:** *What’s that.....?*

**RP:** *He talks about immigration, the “refugee crisis” ... you know, that Europe is turning into a caliphate...*

**Me:** *...I see refugees looking for a safe place to run to.*

**RP:** *But you know what I **mean** right? They’re taking over.”*

Daewon-sa Taego Order of Korean Buddhism temple,

Młodnik, near Opole, southern Poland,

2018.

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<sup>38</sup> Tommy Robinson (b.1982, real name: Stephen Christopher Yaxley-Lennon), neo-fascist and white-nationalist founder of the far-right anti-Islam English Defense League (EDL) who has been banned from Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Snapchat for violating hate-speech rules.

## 4.1 Introduction

Before moving on to a more focused inquiry into Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy itself, this chapter attempts to put in perspective some of the wider adaptations and accommodations made by non-Korean Sŏn amidst the ‘transnational flows’ of Buddhist information, culture and people that traverse - for the most part - the Global North between South Korea and Europe (Wallerstein 1987)(Cox 2013). *P’ogyo* (K. propagation) brought Sŏn rhetoric into a variety of new linguistic and cultural contexts elsewhere in Asia, America and in Europe.

In order to do so, ecclesiastical Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy in some cases had to become standardized, formalized and ritualized to an extent. Mark Andrew Nathan (2010) has shown that it is propagation – which we may interpret not only as the act of dissemination but which I would add, is the act of *occupying* new places and contexts on a continued basis – which is the overwhelming characteristic of modern Korean and South Korean Buddhism. More than KHS or any kind of Sŏn ritual etiquette or NCPs, propagation as ‘being’ (or occupying) takes precedence over pedagogy as method or practice. *P’ogyo* as a state of ‘being’ in transnational context necessarily involves mimetic change, adaptation and accommodation.

This chapter surveys some of the wider structural adaptations of non-Korean Sŏn which for example is often found co-existing with Yoga and various yogic-and generic ‘mindfulness’ practices while still rhetorically laying claim to Sudden Teaching and therefore superior methodologies for spiritual fulfilment and realization. The chapter

considers the observations of some respondents who suggest a significant proportion of young men practicing non-Korean Sŏn and Zen are attracted to the practice through martial arts training. At times Sŏn-rhetoric is at pains to distance itself from Japanese Zen while at other times it is content to align itself with rhetoric of Japanese “Samurai style” Zen which has been shown by Benesch (2016) to have influenced right-wing neo-nationalist terrorism on European soil. This chapter discusses how this reveals a plurality of *sŏns* rather than a timeless essentialized Sŏn and shows how the fluidity of even official ecclesiastic Sŏn-rhetoric and pedagogy in these contexts displays the subjective, expedient nature of the sect’s rhetorical pedagogy and the plurality and multifaceted nature of the sect’s pedagogies which belie the official rhetoric.

Sub-Questions which I had originally formulated during my first pilot studies were:

1. Does the European Sŏn-space communicate a specifically Korean-imaginary of Enlightenment and how does Sŏn function in such a space with other practices like yoga or other styles of meditation?
2. What is the function of the Korean Sŏn-space in European contexts and how does the Western imaginary of Buddhism interpret the Sŏn-space (if it can do so)?
3. Can the marketing of spiritual capital be considered part of the Sŏn rhetoric of a globalizing tradition and how might they be related?

The accommodations and adaptations which mostly ecclesiastical South Korean Sŏn had to make when it arrived into a second-wave feminism European dominated by Japanese

Zen will be discussed here below. Ultimately, Sŏn, or rather *sŏns* plural emerged as they attuned to both.

#### **4.2 Purity in Korean Buddhist Laicization and South Korean Transnationalism**

South Korean Buddhism and more specifically Sŏn, began a process of laicization in conjunction with the internationalization of the tradition. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sŏn monks such as Kyŏnghŏ and Paek Yongsŏng began to make Sŏn practice available to lay-people (H. Kim 2017)(Park 2006). Walraven (2011) speaks of the ‘confucianization’ of Buddhism at this time as does Seong-uk Kim who speaks of it in terms of a ‘reinvention’ Sŏn in the late nineteenth-century (S.-U. Kim 2016;2017).

Walraven notes the similarities between Christian and Pure Land Buddhist forms of worship at the end of the nineteenth-century, where women had been the intended audience for Buddhist *kasa* songs (Walraven 2011:18) – a point of gender specificity noted by Lee Young-hee (2006). The appeal and indeed the threat of missionary Christianity as well as the threat posed by an influx of Japanese Buddhist missions before and during the colonial period (1910 – 1945) had changed the way in which Korean Buddhism and Sŏn approached propagation at home before it ever went abroad.

Women becoming the target of a laicizing Buddhism (though perhaps not explicitly of Sŏn at this time) coincided with the internationalization of Sŏn at the end of the Chosŏn Dynasty. Reformist figures such as Han Yongun and Kim Iryŏp were becoming ‘internationalized’ in Japan (though with differing views about the role of women) at a time when the ‘modern monastic family’ was being created (J. Park 2019). As mentioned

earlier, women's liberation was largely co-opted into the struggle for national liberation, as was Buddhism.

Boudewijn Walraven cautions that in the Korean context, 'the nouns shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism et cetera hide a variety of meanings and create an illusion of consistency' where none exists and that it is therefore profitable not 'to confine oneself within the bounds of one single religion' (Walraven 2011:16). This approach can be applied to trans-national South Korean religion also. When discussing gendered aspects of non-Korean (or "de-Koreanizing") Sŏn, it is beneficial to widen the analysis to include other strands within Korean religion such as Shamanism since what we call "modern" Sŏn was in fact being purged (or "purified") of its ritual elements through late Chosŏn and throughout the twentieth-century along with the process of its laicization by Koreans and later South Koreans themselves.

In chapter two I briefly discussed the movement culminating in the state-endorsed split of the Sŏn sect in South Korea between the Jogye and Taego orders in 1970 which has been labelled as a 'purification' of "Japanized" non-celibate Buddhist-elements from the supposedly originally pure 'Korean' form. I suggested that in line with the discourse on Scientific-Rationalism inherent within Buddhist modernism (McMahan 2008), the Jogye Order for the first time in Korean Buddhist history became the custodians of a supposedly pure Sŏn practice, free from the accretions and distractions of ritual which had hitherto been as much a part of Korean Sŏn as the now gendered ritual of meditation it is now sole champion off (Heine and Wright 2007). In essence, by 1970, Sŏn was still attempting to



modernize and was dividing the Buddhist sangha along sublimated gender lines in accordance with Chosŏn Korean discourses of ‘chaste women.’

The Taego Order on the other hand were branded as Japanized despite as Hwansoo Kim (2013) has shown there being a historical precedent of married Buddhist monks within “Korean” Buddhism. There is also a historical un-Japanized example of married Buddhist monks within “Korean” Buddhism north of the DMZ where the *Chosŏn-bulgyodo-ryŏnmaeng* (North Korean Buddhist Federation) require or at least permit all Buddhist priests to marry as a matter of policy without undermining their national-identity though this practice is nationalized and branded as ‘Japanized’ Buddhism in South Korea. The Taego Order of [South] Korean Buddhism inherited not only the temple-wives of their ‘Japanized’ priests but also the emotive ritual tradition which until the modern period had been inseparable from the other Sŏn rituals of meditation and rhetorical immediacy.

Here we note our first and most striking adaptation in transnational Sŏn (and for this reason I consider South Korean Buddhism to be trans-national even at home on the peninsula); that the Taego Order of [South] Korean Buddhism allows female priests in its America-Europe parish to marry and have partners while forbidding their South Korean nuns from doing so. What then is the difference between the wife of a North Korean Buddhist Federation priest, the wife of a Taego Order monk in South Korea and a married Taego Order nun in the United States? Taego Order nuns who are in no way distinguishable from their Jogye Order counterparts are considered to be practitioners of a

‘Japanized’ form of Buddhism on the basis that the male monks of the order relinquish their own ritual purity.

What then is the difference between the sacrifice of a Taego (or Jogye) Order nun who sacrifices her motherhood for her vocation and a Taego Order nun in the order’s America-Europe parish who can marry, have children and be a nun of that order? The ritual purity and cult of ‘chaste’ South Korean women is what was necessary for a nationalist Buddhism that was participating in the process of what Jin-kyung Lee calls ‘re-masculinizing the nation’(Lee 2010). Gregory N. Evon (2001:21) summarizes the issue;

sexual purity is thus paired with Korean Buddhist national identity and the inverse is true as well; sexual impurity is paired with collaboration with the Japanese, or acts against the nation.

Laurel Kendall (1987) observed a ‘gendered division of ritual-labour’ in Korean religious life and I suggest the same; there has been a gendered division of institutional South Korean Sŏn Buddhist trans-nationalism which took place as Sŏn was crossing borders for the first during the Vietnam War on its way back to the neo-colonial metropole i.e. the United States. I suggest that this gendered division was used to construct the Jogye Order as rational, scientific, non-ritualistic, masculine and most of all, “Korean.” The Taego Order is an indispensable parallel part of this dialectic, providing the counterpoint by which the Jogye can define themselves though undoubtedly this division has had a lasting impact on not only the national but also the trans-national field of South Korean Buddhism which can never escape the gendered nationalism of a nation divided. Only in

deploying female sexuality in the service of the divided nation can mainstream ecclesiastical South Korean Buddhism elide the partitioned political reality of the peninsula and make its uncontested (by North Korean Buddhism) claims to a universal and timeless “Korean” Buddhism. I believe this to be crucial to the understanding of South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism.

### **4.3 Public and Private Rhetoric of Propagation**

While Buswell’s (2010) point that we must ‘abandon simplistic nationalist shibboleths’ in relation to the study of Buddhism certainly helps to de-couple the study of Buddhism itself from the concerns of the nation-state, Walraven highlights the ‘inevitable localization’ which occurred as buddhisms spread in East Asia; ‘in a very real sense Buddhism was local rather than universal’ (Walraven 2011:19–20). When approaching the study of Sōn in Europe or elsewhere in Asia, we can reverse Walraven’s subsequent question (“Does this imply a “Koreanization” of Buddhism?”)(Walraven 2011:20) and ask, does the localization of Sōn in various trans-national contexts inevitably imply a “*de-Koreanization*” and imply a non-Korean Sōn?

If sharing Buswell’s concern for a focus on Buddhism as a whole, it might be useful to shed an overemphasis on “Korean-ness” to the extent that a contemporary understanding of [South] Korea’s “Korean-ness” can inhibit our understanding of historical aspects of the tradition. However, when focusing on trans-national Sōn it may be more advisable to follow Walraven and at least keep “Korean-ness” in mind (*ibid*). This is most pertinent to the consideration of ‘heritage’ or ethnic South Korean Buddhist communities in contrast

to ‘convert’ Buddhist communities that incorporate Sŏn into their practice, often with little care for its Korean-ness.

With respect to trans-national and non-Korean Sŏn versus domestic South Korean Sŏn, I consider what I have proposed above – the institutional division of Sŏn along gender lines – through the framework of ‘public versus private’ (Walraven 2019).

The ‘symbolic distance’ between state-policy and local practices hinged on the construction of spheres of public or *kong* (C.公) and private *sa* (C.私) during the Chosŏn Dynasty (Walraven 2019:331).<sup>39</sup> A similar symbolic distance occurred not only between Buddhism and Shamanism as both modernized but as I have described above, occurred within Buddhism itself and Sŏn in particular but also between domestic/national Sŏn and trans-national Sŏn. I argue that South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism is a function of a similar construction of public and private spheres. The private/ domestic/ national parallel – and the pockets of ethnic-South Korean Buddhism abroad - is generally constituted or at least dominated officially by the re-masculinizing *namsŏng Pulgyo* (“masculine Buddhism”) of the Jogye Order and the ultimate authority of (“Korean”) Buddhism to unify the *minjok*, the ethno-nation.

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<sup>39</sup> While the Yangban elite were obliged to dissociate themselves from the heterodox practices of both Buddhism and Shamanism in public, the truth was that ‘generally, an equilibrium was reached in the relationship between the elite ideology of Confucianism and the shamans in the sixteenth century’ exemplified by the purity of official ritual space maintained within the city walls of Seoul while ‘the city outside the walls was surrounded by a host of Buddhist temples and several communities of shamans’(B. C. A. Walraven 2019:331).

The public/ trans-national sphere generally extends across international contexts with some pockets such as Hwagye-sa temple, Musang-sa temple and the Temple Stay Program (TSP) embedded in the domestic private sphere. South Korean Buddhists are aware of the reality of their own tradition from within yet collaborate and participate in projecting a certain image of it in the public sphere. Please note that most non-Korean practitioners/ converts will be unaware of any symbolic division of public and private spheres in Korean religion so this schema is put forward as an unarticulated characteristic of Korean religions and by extension, of Buddhism.

Though I do not claim to speak for South Korean people, I do believe it is possible to expand on Walraven’s idea mentioned above for the purposes of conceptualizing trans-national Sŏn and its relationship to domestic Sŏn. The below table is therefore both theoretical and hypothetical, to help understand parallel but not necessarily overlapping congregations in contemporary South Korean Sŏn. As an imperfect schema, there are of course instances and pockets of the private within the public and vice versa.

<b>Theoretical Public-Private Schema of Symbolic Distance applied to South Korean Sŏn Congregations</b>	
<b>Private</b>	<b>Public</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National/ Domestic</li> <li>• [South] “Korean”</li> <li>• ‘Genuine’ introspective meditation practiced according to ‘traditional’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trans-national</li> <li>• less “Korean” or even non-Korean</li> </ul>

<p>‘Korean’ methods, more sophisticated, sense of the spiritual authority of the Korean peninsular homeland/ core.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnocentric</li> <li>• Linguistically and culturally bound</li> <li>• Institutional, patriarchal, conservative, military associations (Jogye Order capitulating to Vietnam Veterans’ group, Taego Order requiring women to remain celibate while men do not, numerous sex-scandals in recent years).</li> <li>• Concerned with essentialized and timeless notions of ‘Buddhism’ and it’s “Korean-ness.”</li> <li>• Masculine, ‘manly’ Sŏn Buddhism; <i>kundaehwa, namsŏng pulgyo</i>.</li> <li>• Still firmly ecclesiastical but increasingly laicized</li> <li>• Ritualized, ceremonial &amp; non-spontaneous Sŏn rhetoric. Spontaneous</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propagation, missionary activities which involve basic teachings on the periphery of the ‘traditional’ East Asian homeland.</li> <li>• Multi-ethnic</li> <li>• Multi-lingual, multi-cultural, less concern for what is Korean or Japanese.</li> <li>• Less affiliated, more liberal, ideas of social justice and feminism prevalent (although predominantly appealing to middle class white people)</li> <li>• Also concerned with essentialized and timeless notions of Buddhism but not in terms of national-identity.</li> <li>• ‘Feminized’/ emasculated or at least (from the Korean perspective) un-rigorous Sŏn practice (from the [South] Korean perspective, Buddhism for ‘foreigners’</li> <li>• Increasingly laicized but without the ecclesiastical monastic infrastructure and institutions</li> </ul>
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<p>Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy presumably takes place in the privacy of monasteries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ritualized, ceremonial &amp; non-spontaneous Sŏn rhetoric but with women in prominent roles</li> </ul>
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**Please note:** traditionally in East Asia, as in pre-modern Europe, the domestic-private sphere was considered the domain of women. According to traditional values, women were introverted and men extroverted, passive versus active. While I believe there is a gendered dimension to the public-private schema, the traditional Confucian position is not the binary which I am aiming to replicate here.

#### 4.4 Universal Rhetoric - Branding Sŏn Practice

As mentioned earlier, the Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism is responsible for most of the formalized rhetoric surrounding the practice of *kanhwasŏn* meditation - and the identification of that technique with a distinctly and essentialized “Korean” way of practicing Sŏn/ Zen which one scholar has called ‘Hwadu Absolutism’(Senécal 2011:75). This universalist rhetoric displays all the characteristics of how Erica Baffelli (2016) defines a ‘New Religion’ in the Japanese context listed below with examples.

1) Increasing the profile of the religion – the Temple Stay Program or the International Zen Centre in Seoul; 2) making charisma in the media and the making of religious and symbolic capital – the Buddhist Broadcasting Network; 3) an impact on practices, ritual and spectacle (Purification Movement split, changing the colour of age-old monastic robes, promotion of KHS; 4) branding narratives in the media and conversion stories – the highly publicized story of Hyongak Sunim, an Irish-American monk who converted to Korean Buddhism; 5) an importance of ‘the New,’ repackaging and regeneration – the Jogye Order’s campaign to ‘Enlighten the World.’

Following Baffelli, the branding of Sŏn pedagogy by the Jogye Order puts forward an etic vision of South Korean Buddhist practice at odds with the emic reality. The Rev. Jongmae Park who is Patriarch and Abbot of the joint America-Europe Parish of the Taego Order of Korean Buddhism says that;

Because times have changed, many kahnwasŏn monks say that they sit kahnwasŏn but they sit Vipāśyanā or something because about half of the Zen monks now have a big doubt if Hwadu [meditation] really works (interviewed at Daewon-sa temple in southern Poland, September 2018).

Rev. Park's doubts as to the universal practice of KHS even within the Jogye Order are echoed by Senécal and also Cho Sungtaek. The identification of the KHS technique with a distinctly Korean way of Sŏn, has allowed the Jogye Order to do three things, namely; 1) emphasize their position as a pure repository of East Asian Buddhism; 2) equip themselves with a convenient spiritual and religious counter-identity to Japanese Zen in the postliberation period and; 3) related to both of the above, present a united front as South Korean Buddhism spreads in transnational contexts.

Cho Sungtaek acknowledges the Jogye Order's nationalist tendencies but frames their response to Japanese colonialism which provided the opportunity for Chosŏn Buddhism to modernize, in the context of a dilemma rather than a binary reaction (Cho Sungtaek 2012).

While the Jogye Order claims that *hwadu* Sŏn is the unsurpassed, if not the only, authentic way of achieving enlightenment, there is increasing doubt about this claim in contemporary society (Cho Sungtaek 2002a:133).



What is especially interesting is that Cho (2002a:122), Rev. Park (above), Senécal (ibid) and a number of South Korean respondents to the online survey I conducted, mention the Vipassanā meditation technique specifically as a practice popular amongst South Korean Buddhists and monks which subverts the mainstream rhetoric of the Jogye Order.<sup>40</sup> In answer to the question why the Jogye Order promote KHS exclusively, Rev. Park stated that;

They would completely lose their identity, that's why they never drop their tradition. But! Nevertheless, most of the Jogye Zen monks, they don't understand why they have to do this.

A few of the bhikkhunīs (nuns) at the International School of Buddhist Studies at Hwaun-sa Temple near Seoul mentioned by Uri Kaplan in his monograph *Monastic Education in Korea* (2020:107-108), told me in 2014 that at least *hwadu* practice gave Korean Buddhism a distinct identity abroad seeming that there was an awareness of the public (transnational) perception of the 'tradition' while the private (domestic) reality is quite different and certainly more varied.<sup>41</sup> Yet, non-Korean Sōn, sometimes indistinguishable from Global Zen is also characterized by a variety of techniques. Wonhyang Sunim in the KSZ Poland comments somewhat on the identity of the style of Buddhism she practices;

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<sup>40</sup> As Hóngzhì Zhēngjué described 'in his *Mòzhào Míng* ("Inscription on Silent Illumination"), silence (mò) seems to correlate roughly with calmness (Ch. Zhi, S. Śamatha) and illumination (zhào) with insight (C. guan, S. Vipāśyanā (Vipassana) (Buswell 2003:2282). Not only are many South Korean Buddhist monks now turning to other forms of meditation, the Vipāśyanā which seems the most popular alternative is the very 'heretical' practice which Dàhuì Zōnggāo campaigned so vehemently against.

<sup>41</sup> Fortunately for South Korean Buddhism, there are quite an amount of unorthodox teachers and practitioners prevailing on the peninsula. There are monks operating outside of the established Buddhist Orders in South Korea and in Europe, who do not teach in anything close to the formal style of the Jogye Order and with whom it should be possible to contrast teaching styles. For a brief discussion on the diversity of de facto non-Sōn practices within South Korean Buddhism and in South Korean monasteries, see; Sungtaek, C., 2002. Buddhism and society: On Buddhist engagement with society. *Korea Journal*, 42(4), pp.119-119. p. 122. Cho discusses the increasing prevalence of South-East Asian meditation techniques in South Korean monasteries due to Korean monks returning from studying in those countries.

I don't practice in the Jogye Order. I practice in international school, the Kwanum School of Zen, which is already - let's call it "Modernized Korean Zen for Foreigners." For Korean people this is something new.... [ ] ...our teacher [Zen Master Seung Sahn], he taught Korean Buddhism- he comes from very orthodox temples and stuff. So he got this like traditional thing and said 'OK how can we modernize it?' 'How can we change it so foreigners can understand?'

A major part of how Zen Master Seung Sahn adapted Korean Sŏn for non-Koreans was by laicizing the practice in such a way that lay women could be Zen Masters and could also give Dharma Transmission.

#### **4.5 The Role of Gender in a Universalized Sŏn Rhetoric**

In Germany, Zen Master Hyŏngak speaks about the opinion of his teacher Zen Master Seung Sahn held by the mainstream of South Korean monks;

"He didn't even get Enlightenment" they were saying. "Ahh, he got it chanting! Pfff, that's for Posalnims, that's for women! You have to sit, only sit with this Hwadu"... its fundamentalist and its wrong.

In these recollected opinions of Zen Master Seung Sahn we can see a clearly gendered perception amongst South Korean monks of the practice of chanting & prostrating (feminine) and the ritual-etiquette of sitting (masculine), the very 'hwadu absolutism' identified by Senéçal (2011:94). The roots of this fundamentalist branding of ecclesiastical Sŏn/ Zen practice are quite new. Chong Ko Sunim, a monk of the Hanmaum school and male-student of Zen Master Daehaeng – arguably twentieth-century South Korea's most famous female master – informed me in a Skype interview that many of the older monks lament this new emphasis on rigor termed as *kundaehwa*

*Sŏn* – ‘military-style *Sŏn*’ which he informed me only became prevalent after the Korean and Vietnam Wars, the same period Jin-kyung Lee ascribes a ‘re-masculinizing’ of the nation to have been taking place.

Rev. Park who oversees nine Taego Order monks in Europe which after the Kwanum School of Zen, makes the non-celibate Taego Order more numerous than the Jogye Order on European soil, is expressly *against* hwadu-meditation and teaches Śamatha-Vipaśyanā (C. 止-觀) to students, Dharma-Teachers and monks in Europe. He commented;

The shout, the pounding; this is nothing to do with Buddhism but they adopted that during the early Song Dynasty, Chinese monks adopted such mysticism from Taoism so they translated it into Zen Buddhism- all the way to Korea. So those kind of strange things, shouting, pounding, slapping, those things are ...very Taoistic stuff.<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, judging by the growth of *kundaehwa Sŏn* along with a re-masculinization of the South Korean state, I began to ask myself if *Sŏn* hadn’t masculinized in order to integrate with the Global Zen field pre-established in large part by the Japanese *Sōtō* sect.

#### **4.6.1 Transnational Rhetoric of Celibacy in *Sŏn***

I was unable to interview any Taego Order nuns or wives of Taego Order priests, but following from above in section 4.2, I was asking what is the comparative status of the wife of a South Korean Taego Order/ North Korean Buddhist Federation priest (or indeed the Japanese *bōmori* researched by Jessica Starling (2012, 2013, 2019) ) and a

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<sup>42</sup> Interestingly however, despite availing of numerous early Buddhist Pālī terms, and explicitly identifying non-conceptual pedagogies as being ‘Taoist mysticism,’ he still, seemingly paradoxically availed of non-conceptual pedagogy (in this case, sudden non-contextualized shouting) during a Dharma-lecture I observed in Poland!

South Korean Jogye or Taego Order nun? The Italian Taego Order priest Maximillian Froso, married himself comments that;

the T'aego Order, more than Jogye Order, has the characteristic of lots of little temples guided by single monks, maybe with a wife – 50% is little temples. So it means there are a lot of little Sanghas. And the same thing happens in the west (interview September 2018, Poland).

To attempt to put this in perspective, when we take into account that since the Vietnam War, Jogye Order military chaplain monks were allowed to have wives up until 2009 and Taego Order nuns in the A-E Parish – unlike their ethnic Korean counterparts - are allowed to marry (Tikhonov 2017a:168). As mentioned above and in the case of military chaplaincy, this was not generally viewed as “Japanese” or “Japanized” but rather as a *privilege* for monks serving in the armed forces (though what the South Korean view of Western Taego nuns being allowed to marry is an insight which this dissertation lacks).

Jessica Starling (2019:113) notes how in the Japanese context that it was precisely *because of militarism* that ‘sacerdotal authority passed to temple-wives’ as Jōdo Shin women filled the absence left by their Buddhist husbands in time of war but that this seemingly paradoxically led to a sort of ‘feminized propagation of hospitality’ (Starling 2019:61) which could as easily be applied to the collaborative interaction with Sōn teachers of *posalnim* (lay-Buddhist women) in the South Korean Sōn-space found not just in South Korea but remarked upon by non-Koreans at ZCR and in Thessaloniki Greece and observed by myself in South Korea, France, Thailand and Burma.

Viewed in this way, Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy can be viewed as a way of connecting the ‘liminal space’ of the ‘backstage’ which Starling mentions, bridging the gap between the performative front-stage and the backstage; sacred and the profane, the domestic and the religious; the public and private spheres also mentioned by Walraven. The ritual significance of this clandestine *posalnim*-labour will be discussed further in the following chapter. In transnational Sŏn-spaces and contexts, NCPs or Sŏn-rhetoric did not always bridge the liminal space between front-stage and back-stage but the Sŏn master her/himself as ‘vector between domains’ and his/her very sexuality bridging the gap between public and private (Lucia 2018:957).

Amanda Lucia calls this the ‘haptic logics of proxemic desire’ in the master-disciple relationship itself (Lucia 2018:954). The Jogye Order monk Samu Sunim married quite soon after his arrival in the United States in 1967 which is not to suggest misconduct or defame his master-disciple relationship in any way but to say that his mission became non-celibate and more similar to the status of a Taego Order priest than that of a Jogye Order monk. His Buddhist Society for Compassionate Wisdom does not require celibacy but being outside of Korea, is not regarded as “Japanized.”

While it has not been the purpose of this dissertation to re-examine historical examples within the KSZ, it would be simply incomplete not to mention here that the school had their own recalibrations with celibacy and sexuality in the past which are well enough known. Zen Master Seung Sahn’s extra-celibate relationships are known to have been consensual and genuine, committed love-based relationships rather than ‘sex-scandals’

per sé. Though it is uncertain how this is characterized within the KSZ - Lucia (2018:982) notes that ‘in contemporary discourse, guru sex-scandals continue to be mis-characterized as moral-failings’ – it is worth noting that Zen Master Seung Sahn not only resisted the urge to side-step the matter with masculinizing *upāya* – the ‘skilful means’ and spontaneous rhetoric of Buddhist pedagogy which would have been reverse-orientalizing in such a situation. Instead he went to each of his centres and prostrated before his students in apology rather than indulge the ‘traditional’ excuse made for Buddhist monks throughout Korean Buddhist history as Jin Y. Park shows in the case of Kyōnghō (J. Y. Park 2019). In that sense his forthright taking of responsibility could be said to be truly concerned with propagating Sōn rather than abusing a cult of personality as other teachers have done in their journey to the west.

#### **4.6.2 Transnational and National Sexuality in Sōn**

This is the point where the tension between the emic and etic, public and private, domestic and transnational image of ecclesiastical Sōn are evident. Bernard Faure (1998:3) quotes Jack Kornfield’s 1985 study of the master-disciple relationship amongst Buddhists, Hindus and Jains in the United States which found that out of fifty-four cases studied, thirty-four were found to have had sexual-relations with students. Kornfield’s study did not focus solely on Buddhists or South Korean affiliated Buddhists for that matter but the study raises relevant questions, most notably what is the reality of Sōn-spaces and communities with respect to the branded image that is projected about them both by Buddhists in South Korea and in transnational contexts?

‘One of the emblems of post-liberation Korean Buddhist academic discourse is the talking of heterosexual sex’ according to Gregory N. Evon (Evon 2001:15) and the ritual panic within post-liberation South Korean Buddhism over heterosexual purity and ‘chaste women’ manifested in the ritual division of the Sŏn-sect itself along gender lines as I have discussed above. On sexual purity having become the essentialized attribute of [South] Korea’s national Buddhism, Evon highlights the pitfalls of such an emphasis in saying; ‘it reduces the whole [South] Korean Buddhist tradition to nothing more than... heterosexual intercourse’ and by stressing a ‘historically inaccurate association between celibacy and patriotism... it erases the complex negotiation over identity within Korean Buddhism itself’ (Evon 2001:21).

This focus on (or obsession with) heterosexual purity, both Evon (ibid) and Faure (1998:228) also note, erases the evidence for homosexuality within historical Korean and contemporary South Korean Buddhism, a topic which is studiously avoided while the heterosexual transgressions of eminent monks with women – quite a few in recent years in the domestic South Korean context - are explained as moral failings as mentioned by Lucia or in Sŏn terms, as carrying on a long tradition of antinomianism within Sŏn Buddhism.

The dominant Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism has been rocked by scandals of a sexual nature in the last couple of years with allegations of executive-level monks within the order fathering children and accusations of sexual-assault against others. The issue of

sexual-transgression by those professing celibacy is clearly both a domestic and transnational issue for Sŏn and is neither “Japanized” nor “Korean” for that matter.

Hyŏngak Sunim, a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn, founder and resident teacher at Zen Centre Regensburg (ZCR) speaks about South Korean monastic training in the context of training monks to go abroad;

When [South Korean trained monks] they come to a western country to teach “Buddhism” and they see two guys holding hands on the street or something... they still look a little bit askance if there’s something going on (January 2018, ZCR, Germany).

The above mentioned Taego Order priest from Italy, Maximillian Froso speaks of heteronormativity not only in Buddhist but in cultural terms;

Because the original T’aego Order in Korea discriminates against homosexual[s] until now. Gays, lesbians cannot become a fully-ordained monk. Not only T’aego Order, it’s Korean culture.

How does this play out in transnational Sŏn contexts however? Heteronormativity when combined with the ‘haptic-logic’ of proxemic-desire mentioned by Lucia above, has real-life consequences for the practice of Sŏn in transnational-contexts. What is apparent is a bearing out of what Rita Gross observes; men traditionally being allowed ‘to wear what is comfortable, rather than what is modest, even if such attire might be sexually alluring to women or distracting to them. Once again, we see how sexuality is projected onto women by androcentric commentators, who do not own or take responsibility for their own sexuality’(Gross 1993:248). This matter is discussed further in the following chapter.



#### 4.7.1 Indian Yoga, Korean Buddhism or just Zen?

While setting out to survey rhetorical pedagogy in the European Sōn field, I had considered in advance the colonial influence of Japanese Zen on Korean Buddhist transnationalism but admittedly had given no thought to the practice of yoga which I began to find in almost every European Sōn-site which I had contact with. Yoga is offered as part of the South Korean TSP in some temples and one Buddhist monk even teaches yoga on the South Korean Buddhist television network, BBS. Martine Batchelor told me that “the West encountered both [yoga and Sōn] at the same time.” All but one of the practitioners I interviewed at ZCR practiced Ashtanga Yoga and the large Dharma-Hall at the KSZ Wubong-sa temple near Warsaw was given over to yoga at least once per week. Okwang Sunim in Serbia was originally engaged to teach by yoga practitioners and the KSZ in Thessaloniki – connected to ZCR – is originally a Yoga school which integrated Sōn/Zen introspective meditation into their yoga practice post-fact.

Yoga could be added to the various meanings connoted by the term ‘Buddha couture’ which was coined by Caroline Starkey to refer not only to ‘dress’ but the wider aesthetic which monastic robes contribute to along with shaven-heads, accoutrements such as bowls and wooden-bells, ordination incense-scares and which she extends to the Dharma or Buddhist-names given to monastics on ordination (Starkey 2019:105). I would add to this ‘Buddha couture’ – though Starkey has done so by implication – the Korean notion of bodily-aesthetic or *ye* (K. 예) which is generally translated as ritual propriety or decorum. The Dharma-Hall or Sōn-space is now a place where ‘Buddha couture’ not only includes the tonsured head and loose-fitting ash-grey monastic robes of traditional

Korean Buddhism but the sometimes ponytailed (male or female) head over colourful yoga apparel. As Martine Batchelor pointed out to me, Yoga came to the West around the same time as Korean Sŏn and Maximillian observes a constant crossover of people into meditation from yoga;

As I have seen also in these years. I see this, also this characteristic. Ehmm.... People following Buddhism are more.. simple people, people that also like, coming from Yoga.... exercise like this...

In these Sŏn-spaces, introspective Sŏn practice was being used to balance and supplement the dynamism of yoga-practice. In other Sŏn-spaces, yoga-practice was being used to counter-balance the sedentary inertia of long hours of motionless introspective meditation practice.

Apart from the widening of Starkey's notion of 'Buddha couture' to include 'de-traditionalized' elements, yoga-practice in the Sŏn-space also has implications for the subitism of Sŏn-rhetoric because according to the internal-logic of ecclesiastic Sŏn-rhetoric, yoga as a gradualist practice is antithetical to the rhetoric of immediacy inherent in Sŏn. Nevertheless, in European Sŏn-spaces at least, the practice of yoga and Sŏn were shown to be surprisingly (to this researcher at least) intertwined and in many cases almost inseparable. One respondent in Germany was led to Sŏn-practice directly through yoga;

It was pretty accidental. From my Yoga practice, I somehow kind of stumbled into a meditational state one time and that made me curious so I looked around and thought, 'what could I do?... the first time we visited as a whole group of yoga people including our yoga teacher. We came to visit here" [Interview A].

The ‘here’ referred to by the above respondent was ZCR where Hyöngak Sunim had fully integrated what he calls the ‘technology’ of yoga into the ‘technology’ of Sön-practice, using both to compliment each other and not differentiating between the two. Hyedan Sunim of the Hanmaum Sönwön in Bangkok and Yangon practices Yoga herself though it is not taught at the temple. Zen Master Dae Bong of Musang-sa in South Korea told me that;

Well its body-mind unity you know. And I think it would be sort of interesting do research about this. What did Buddha actually do for six years? I'm not sure that he *sat* in meditation for six years - I think possibly Buddha did yoga practices of various kinds. You know the story is he went and stayed with two different teachers and accomplished their teaching but had a deeper question so left. So, you know if you're really exploring, “what is this I?” then you have to include body. And so, he could have been doing all kinds of things.

It is worth noting also that the foundations of Chán practice and the foundational exercises of what was to become Shaolin Kungfu at the Shaolin Temple where Chán, Sön and Zen began, were yogic-like exercises taught to the monks by Bodhidharma. A contradiction between an official branded Sudden-Teaching and a gradual style of Sön practice only exists if one technique or style of practice is emphasized in a fundamentalist way.

#### **4.7.2 The European Sön-Space as Yoga Shala**

Yoga was instrumental in the establishment of Okwang Sunim’s core group of students and teaching activities in Serbia who mentions that in the beginning;

...it wasn't like hundreds of people but it was you know some individuals who had an interest and so forth and then at one point they started inviting me to yoga clubs, mostly

yoga like centres. Like, ‘Oh, why don't you come here to give a talk.’ I went and spent another year in Serbia, with you know, relative success in teaching going to the universities to teach and to the yoga centres” (Okwang Sunim from Serbia, at ZCR - Germany, January 2018).

At ZCR, a distinct effort had been made to “de-Koreanize” the Sŏn-space (though this had been done in a markedly ‘Korean’ way) by replacing the traditional Buddha-stature or image with a gold-framed mirror over the altar to reflect the practitioner’s Buddha-Nature.<sup>43</sup> It was almost uncanny how this matched how the (unaffiliated) Won Buddhism centre at the other side of Regensburg had de-traditionalized their practice space in an almost identical manner with a consummate golden-circle (*won*) replacing the Buddha-stature above the altar.

This ‘de-Korean-ization’ in ZCR was accompanied by a change in the ‘Buddha couture’ of the Sŏn-space and an alteration to the role of the pedagogue within it as well as the rhetoric s/he used. De-Koreanization at ZCR meant a multiplicity of pedagogies and, to use Hyongak Sunim’s terminology, a diversity of ‘technologies.’ In Regensburg, at times the Sŏn-space and the Yoga Shala were indistinguishable. The head monk practiced yoga and travelled to teach Sŏn meditation in various yoga studios in Germany and in Greece. The yoga-teacher (in this case a Greek male) had also lived in ZCR for over one year and still performed duties in the Sŏn Hall, especially during meditation sessions.

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<sup>43</sup> Some Buddha Halls in South Korea do not even have a Buddha statue upon the altar such as T’ongdo-sa (K. 통도사, C. 通度寺) while other Buddha-Halls are built into caves such as the famous *Sŏkguram* grotto near Gyeongju or the Buddha-Hall at *Kyejo-am* (hermitage) on Mount Sŏrak. The Meditation Hall of the Taehan Pulgyo Chinhŭngwŏn near Aix-en-Provence in the south of France, has no iconography, images, statues or paintings whatsoever – just bare white walls. Some Dharma-Halls are so large that a *Goebul Taenghwa* painting (devotional paintings of massive proportions) can be unfurled within the hall. Some Sŏn-spaces host the practice of Buddhist martial arts while others are little larger than a shrine to the Mountain God.

The yoga-teacher was given the authority to perform candle and incense-lighting rituals and distributing and collecting texts for chanting in a formalized way as students sat cross-legged and silent on their meditation cushions and the Sōn-Master looked on. The traditional Buddha-stature was removed but full prostrations were required to be performed on the floor in front of the Sōn-Master upon first entering the Sōn-space, instituting the Sōn-Master as 'living-Buddha' (the only other images in the hall are paintings of past patriarchs).

The practice of yoga in the Sōn-space gave the Sōn-Master authority not just over Sudden Teaching but over gradualist pedagogies also and could be viewed as a way to universalize the teacher's authority in a European Sōn-field wherein yoga plays a significant role. As the patriarchal authority of the teacher (as natural inheritor of teaching-authority in this case rather than in a political sense) was actually reinforced by the presence of yoga, it could be asked if the presence of yoga was as much an appeal to Western imaginaries of Eastern introspective practices as a nod to Western notions of gender-equality which may or may not have existed. All the pictures in the ZCR were of men.

#### **4.7.3 The Burmese Sōn-Space**

As the European Sōn-space becomes a Yoga Shala at times, the Burmese Sōn-space (unlike the Sōn-space at the Hanmaum Sōnwōn in Thailand which displays a Korean-style Buddha statue, see Fig. 10) display a Burmese Buddha (Fig. 9). This is nothing very unusual within Buddhist traditions as Buddhists from any national tradition will tend to

hold a Buddha-image or statue from another country in high regard simply because it is The Buddha. What is interesting to note in the Burmese case is not only that the Hanmaum Sōnwōn were accommodated within the temple compound of a much larger Burmese temple compound – that of the Kalaywa Monastery which is a monastic school for some 1400 orphans – but that it would be impossible to be located within the compound of a temple in Thailand according to Hyedan Sunim, the guiding teacher and abbot of both centres in Bangkok and in Yangon.



*Figure 9 Altar with Burmese Buddha at the Hanmaum Sōnwōn, Yangon, Burma.*

The Hanmaum congregation in Yangon ranged from 6 to 15 persons depending on the day and all are South Korean ex-patriots resident for the short, medium or long-term in Burma.



*Figure 10 Korean-style Buddha on the Altar in the Main-Hall, Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn, Bangkok, Thailand.*

Hyedan Sunim informed me how it came about that the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn would come to be located within the grounds of a Burmese temple in Yangon;

We told them that we wanted to serve Buddha in a Korean temple here, and they offered this place for us. This center was originally small, we asked their permission for expansion afterward. They gave us the “ok” and now you know the rest of the story. [ ] In a nutshell, we told them we needed a Dharma-Hall for Koreans here in Myanmar and they gave us the “ok,” that’s simply all there was to it.



*Figure 11 Kalaywa Monastery entrance on the grounds of which is the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn, Yangon, Burma.*





*Figure 12 Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn Yangon entrance on the upper-floor of a building within the Burmese Kalaywa Monastery compound in the Swae Taw district of Yangon.*

The reader will note from Hyedan Sunim's comments above that when the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn Dharma-Hall was proposed to the Burmese Kalaywa Monastery originally, the purpose was to cater for the not insignificant number of South Koreans resident in Yangon. When I visited the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn Dharma-Hall in Yangon, there were 11 people in attendance and where Korean food was served after the Dharma-Talk.



*Figure 13 The Altar and Lectern at Hanmaum Sönwön, Yangon, Burma.*

There were a number of young South Korean students undertaking master's degrees in Nikāya Buddhism in Burmese universities, four older South Korean males involved in business of various types and a number of lay Buddhist women who took care of the Dharma-Hall and prepared the food.

Well, as I told you, they say Korean Buddhism, that is, Mahayāna Buddhism will not be tolerated in Thailand to protect Thai Buddhism, that is, Theravada Buddhism. On the other hand, I think they have more flexible thinking about Korean Buddhism in Myanmar. [ ] They have many female monastics here in Myanmar, whereas not many in Thailand, though. [ ] Accordingly, there are many [South] Korean female Buddhist novices who stay and study in Myanmar,

whereas few in Thailand. And in Thailand there is no such a thing as this case here in Myanmar that they provide us a Dharma-Hall in the temple.

#### **4.7.4 Rhetorics of Empowerment I: Yoga Gurus and Sōn-Masters**

‘The presence of female gurus, which currently is the major piece still missing from post-patriarchal androgynous Buddhism, will be a most radical development for Buddhism. Previously, female gurus have been rare, and may well have been male-identified, rather than androgynous in their consciousness’ (Gross 1993:252). Whether successful female Sōn teachers were or are male-identified in the Korean context (as opposed to de-feminized), ritual-labour in Korean life, according to Laurel Kendall (1987) is divided along gender lines. Most practitioners and teachers of yoga in the West are female which is according to Mangiarotti, a practice of gendered corporeality (Mangiarotti 2019).

Dimitra Manavopoulou is the Dharma-Teacher with the Kwanum School of Zen in Thessaloniki, Greece where yoga forms the main link or bridge between the KSZ there and ZCR. Dimitra’s practice-centre in Thessaloniki, Greece was a Yoga-Shala first before it was a Sōnwōn where she taught Ashtanga Yoga for 6 years prior to becoming a teacher with the KSZ.

Coming from what she describes as the ‘anarchist-communist’ background of her parents and being opposed to any form of religion she was never interested in meditation or Buddhism. She came to Korean Zen through her compatriot and fellow yoga-practitioner and friend who lived at ZCR, Germany where she went to join the winter retreat in 2016. She then invited the guiding teacher Zen Master Hyōngak to teach at the yoga studio in

Thessaloniki where he has been to teach on a number of occasions. She schedules two Zen-sittings per day at her Yoga Shala and has never been to South Korea though some members of the Korean Zen Circle in Thessaloniki have translated *The Compass of Zen* by Zen Master Seung Sahn (1997) into Greek which is awaiting publication. I asked Dimitra if she experienced any challenges in teaching Korean Sŏn/ Zen in Greece;<sup>44</sup>

The difficulty in spreading Korean Zen is that it's too formal; the chanting, the clothes, the bows. It's too Korean. It's too Korean. It's **really** nice (I don't want to be rude) - I have passed through this training and I understand the importance of this training, of the formality of the bows and the clothes.... But... I see it here in Thessaloniki in my Shala [yoga studio] - the students can't get in touch with all this Korean culture, they cannot get in touch with all these Korean things. They can't get in touch with the practice! My question marks are – if they can't connect with the practice, why not just do the practice as it is...? Just sitting in silence with small guidance. But all this, formality is “churchy” on the one hand and on the other hand we can't get connected to it because we are not Koreans. We are not Koreans.

On this point of liturgy and chanting in particular, one interviewee in Poland made the following observation;

Yeah there's another thing; maybe in Korea it makes more sense for example to sing [chant] in Korea because they do understand the words - I think. Is it like the Korean that is like old Korean not understood to anyone, or these kinds of songs we are chanting, is it the Korean that people know? [Interview E].

Chanting in a foreign language can of course make a practice seem even more alien though on that point, in ZCR and in Daewon-sa Temple in Poland, chanting was done both in

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<sup>44</sup> Note that like most westerners and other members of the Kwanum School of Zen Dimitra refers to the practice as 'Zen' which for her, does not necessarily have national connotations

Korean and in German and Polish respectively. However, Venerable Wonhyang, interviewed at Wubong-sa temple, near Warsaw in Poland stressed that;

You know Polish practitioners, Buddhist practitioners; I think we are a little bit different than let's say Lithuanian or Russians. We do like ceremonies [smiles]. So that's probably because as children, in Catholicism, there's these nice robes. People love that stuff in Poland! And they hate it in the States; American Buddhists, they *hate* that.

In Greece, Dimitra makes a distinction between the introspective-technique of the practice itself and the 'formality' or ritual propriety which for many South Korean Buddhists not only is a devotional aspect of practice which they do not necessarily distinguish from sitting but makes their Buddhist practice Korean. This demonstrates that for many westerners, meditation is not necessarily seen as 'ritualistic' and that for South Koreans they form an organic whole. Sitting-Zen is integrated with bodily form through the practice of Yoga in a way that is not seen as 'ritualistic' for the European or at least Greek practitioner. Dimitra comments on this synthesis;

Yoga and Zen compliment each other one hundred percent – one needs the other to be complete...Yoga needs to be a little bit calmer and more observational while Zen needs a little bit more emotion somehow, to feel balanced.

Unlike the Indian context where most gurus are male, Western Yoga is female-dominated with most teachers and practitioners being female. Whether deliberately or unintentionally, Dimitra's experience shows that yoga as 'gendered corporeality' is a means to de-Koreanize a patriarchal Sōn and pierce through the gendered bodily-etiquette of 'Korean couture' to arrive at the core-practice of introspection in European Sōn-spaces.

#### 4.8.1 Rhetorics of Empowerment II: European Martial Sōn – Far-Right ‘Couture’ or Triple-Cultivation?

If yoga is a way of de-Koreanizing Sōn in Europe or at least de-masculinizing or androgynizing the practice, the unpurged masculine etiquette of Sōn is also a vehicle for masculinizing everyday life in European contexts. There is a precedent within South Korean and traditional Korean Buddhism of an integrated martial arts-based practice of Sōn in the form of the indigenous Korean martial art of *Sōnmudo* 禪武道 (K. 선무도). *Sōnmudo* or ‘Zen Martial Way,’ though not mainstream is a not insignificant element of Korean Buddhist practice with its own dedicated temple in South Korea, numerous training-halls around the peninsula and schools in France (Strasbourg) and Spain (Majorca and Barcelona where there is also a KSZ centre).<sup>45</sup>

It is also worthy of note that some of the TSPs offer this martial art as an experience of Korean Buddhism. Other types of Chinese-derived martial arts practices including Five-Animals Kungfu as found in the curriculum of the Korean Buddhist Martial Arts Association (KBMA).<sup>46, 47</sup> Martial arts practice of course became fundamental to Chán practice in the birthplace of Chán/ Zen, the Shaolin Temple on Mount Sōng (C. 嵩山) and later at other Buddhist mountains in China such as Wǔtái Shān 五臺山 and amongst the Taoist practice-communities on Wǔdāng Shān 武當山.

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<sup>45</sup> <https://www.sonmudo.org/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.buddhistmartialarts.org/>

<sup>47</sup> On a point of interest, the introspective mind-training aspect of *Sōnmudo* practiced at the *Kolgul-sa* temple near Gyeongju in South Korea is more closely related to the body-scanning techniques of Vipassanā meditation rather than Kanhwasōn.

Though to my knowledge he was not teaching martial arts, the first instance or at least representative of martial Sŏn in Europe was Sŏn Master Hyunoong who taught Korean Sŏn in Genève, Switzerland from 1985. Sŏn Master Hyunoong (b. 1946) is a master of a branch of Chinese Taoism as well as Chinese Kung Fu and various Korean martial arts. He is also the abbot of the [Sixth Patriarch Zen Temple](#) in Los Angeles, California and a temple of the same name in Seoul, South Korea. Like Martine & Stephen Batchelor, Robert Buswell and Rev. Dr. Jongmae Park (abbot of the Taego Order's America-Europe Parish), Hyunoong Sunim is also a student of Sŏn Master Kusan (1909 – 1983). Other monastics such as Okwang Sunim in Serbia had been an instructor-level karate exponent in his pre-monastic life before he met his teacher Seung Sahn. Kim Chang-sik gained his 'Mind Sword Enlightenment' as a student of Seung Sahn when the art of [Shim Gum Do](#) ('Mind Sword Way') was revealed to him after which he was invited to the United States by Seung Sahn to teach Sŏn and martial arts.

#### **4.8.2 Integrating Sŏn towards a non-Korean Triple-Cultivation - the Apotheosis of Shaolin Chán**

As it emerged when conversing with Dimitra mentioned above who incidentally plans to stage a conceptual art piece about gendered silence in Regensburg Zen Center, she also trains in Chinese Five-Animals Kungfu at her Yoga Shala (studio) where she teaches Korean Zen. Dimitra commented on her integration of yoga, Zen and Kungfu;

They (Zen) don't use their body at all! But... last year I started to practice Kungfu and I realized that Yoga and Zen make you very observative but they (Yoga and Zen) never teach you how to manage your feelings. Ok Zen teaches that feelings are 'just phenomena' but we **have** them [feelings]... So for me, these three tools

are ‘tools’ for being here and now. I would never do only Zen, no. At that time I was sure I couldn’t continue Ashtanga as just Ashtanga without meditation but now with Kungfu inside [integrated] I feel like I am very stable. The practice is something common, without labels. If you do the practice, something is opened.

The distinction must be made at this point between ‘military’ and ‘martial.’ Military forces as we know can act as peace-keepers. The martial might inhere or be subsumed by the military but the reverse is not necessarily the case. Practitioners such as Dimitra or Hyunoong Sunim integrate a martial element to amplify their introspection – in Dimitra’s case instinctively developing her own Triple-Cultivation (C. 三修) of form, energy and mind (the goal of Shaolin Chán) via her integration of Sitting-Zen, Yoga and Kungfu to achieve a more complete and balanced practice. The following section below is not in any way a reflection on her or Hyunoong Sunim but is to demonstrate that even within a paradigm of ‘martial Sŏn’ there are a plurality of interpretations in doctrine and practice. Dimitra’s Triple-Cultivation is an organic, non-nationalized, non-ideological synthesis aimed at inner-awareness while the interpretation of martial Sŏn below is quite the opposite and shows that Sŏn-rhetoric can be interpreted and applied in a variety of ways.

#### **4.8.3 Martial Rhetoric and Far-Right Sŏn?**

As quoted in the epigraph to this chapter, I encountered extremist right-wing views at a Taego Order of Korean Buddhism temple in the south of Poland. Though deeply disturbing and causing me to be preoccupied with leaving that remote location, I was not sure at the time how it was relevant to my research— after all, I had been researching the impact of gender on Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy and left that location to go to Warsaw where I arrived in a markedly different Zen environment dominated by female teachers



which caused me to focus on women in Sŏn for some time after that as I continued on to Hong Kong the following year.

I did not begin to integrate my experience until I encountered the work of Oleg Benesch in his “*Reconsidering Zen, Samurai, and the martial arts*” (2016) and his other work (Benesch 2011, 2014) wherein he cites the chilling example of the Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik (b.1979) who massacred innocents in 2011 and cited the Zen-inspired Bushido Code as one of his core beliefs and practices. Even putting aside the historical examples of Sŏsahn Hyujŏng’s monk-armies which helped repel the samurai invasions of Korea 1592 – 1598, the military and martial associations with modern and contemporary Sŏn became too numerous to ignore. South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism in the post-partition and post-Korean War period began with Buddhist chaplaincy in Vietnam during the war (Tikhonov 2017a).

In fact, the South Korean monk Samu Sunim’s arrival in the United States was a function of him avoiding military service which may have very well have sent him to Vietnam when he left South Korea for Japan in 1965. Samu Sunim arrived stateside in 1967, Seungsahn after him (having served in the ROK military during the Korean War) in 1972 and the martial artist Hyunoong Sunim to Europe in 1985 just over a decade after South Korean Sŏn monks in Vietnam had been urging their soldiers to become ‘Buddhist warriors’ and rush into battle with no thought of death much as Japanese Zen had done during WWII.

Jin-kyung Lee speaks of South Korean military-dictator and Buddhist Park Chung-hee's 'ethno-nationalizing of developmentalism,' 'masculinizing of modernity' and the role of the South Korean government 'in the mobilization of working-class male sexuality as military labour in Vietnam'(Lee 2010:23–39). Contemporaneous to the Purification Movement in South Korean Buddhism which saw the gendered division of Sŏn itself (the Jogye Order remaining celibate, male, masculine and de-ritualized versus the Taego Order becoming 'Japanized,' non-celibate, feminine and the repository of Sŏn ritual), South Korean Sŏn became an agent of the state's 'necropolitical power' in an effort to 're-masculinize the nation'(Lee 2010:38–40).

Whether as an attempt to recruit the Victorian-era construction of Japan's 'ancient' chivalric warrior code Bushīdo (Benesch 2014) and its exaggerated and essentialized associations with Zen in order to 're-masculinize' themselves or their nations in the face of perceived threats from outside as in the epigraph above, some male practitioners are attracted to ecclesiastical Sŏn and Zen rhetoric precisely for its uncompromising pedagogy which resonates with militaristic overtones.

Another practitioner and Taego Order teacher present at Daewon-sa Temple in the south of Poland came to attend the retreat from Germany where he runs a martial arts school out of his 'Bodhidharma Temple' in Nürnberg though I must stress that this person did not express far-right views and I was not able to interview him. Nevertheless, Wonhyang Sunim, a Buddhist nun I interviewed in Warsaw stated that martial arts continue to draw young men to Zen practice. Also at Daewon-sa Temple, I overheard a 'joke' in which the

punchline was the ‘n-word’ spoken openly though I must state that the abbot was not present at that time. This was in the context of the extreme anti-Islam “Europe is turning into a caliphate” remark and the mentioning of Tommy Robinson of the English Defence League quoted in the epigraph above.

Extreme, racist and discriminatory views should not reflect on any martial art *or* martial Sōn for that matter but what should be considered is if Zen and Sōn are used as what Starkey (2019) calls ‘couture’ (albeit in a slightly different context) for the empowerment “paramilitary culture” (Gibson 1989) of the far-right, a disturbing combination of what Stortini (2020) calls “spiritual racism” in the Italian Buddhist context and the use of Zen as a form of ‘*distinction*’ such as mentioned by Cristina Rocha (2006) in the Brazilian context in order to give extremist views a veneer of informed cultural superiority. Stortini’s use of the motif of in “The Buddha as an Aryan Samurai” captures perfectly what would be a paradox if there wasn’t a precedent for it in imperial Japanese Zen Buddhism. I had also overheard anti-Chinese sentiment from South Korean monastics in Korea before as well as anti-semitic conspiracy theories in South Korean Buddhist contexts.

#### **4.9.1 “Mindfulness” and Other Accommodations; Technology, Sects, Childcare, Marriages**

Mindfulness has exerted an influence on Sōn and vice versa attracting students to the practice and with the interest in cognitive-therapy possibly exerting a gradualizing effect on subitism in East Asia. ‘Mindfulness’ which in Sōn or Zen terms would be termed a

‘gradualist’ approach and therefore contradictory or antithetical, was mentioned in all of the locations I visited in Europe as well as in Hong Kong. At ZCR students were instructed at breakfast to eat with ‘full mindfulness’ (despite there not being enough time to be as mindful as one would have liked).

In *Transcultural psychiatry*, Sharf (2015) asks “Is mindfulness Buddhist?” and traces its emergence in Western Buddhist and secular discourse to Burmese Buddhism. In terms of Zen and Sōn rhetorical pedagogy, “mindfulness” would be considered a ‘gradual’ method towards spiritual insight, therefore excluding it by definition from Sōn/ Zen at least on rhetorical terms. Whether this signifies a ‘gradualizing’ of Sudden-Teaching rhetoric however has not been commented much upon despite there being a long-running Sudden – Gradual debate within Sōn/ Zen.<sup>48</sup>

Most recently the Korean monk Sōngch’ōl (1912 – 1993) adamantly and consistently condemned Chinul’s Sōn as unorthodox (Sōngch’ōl 1981, 157–214). As early as 1966, Sōngch’ōl sparked the ongoing Korean Sudden-Gradual Debate that contradicts the claim that Korean Kanhwa Sōn tradition is homogeneous (Sōngch’ōl 1987). This question is all the more relevant since the teaching of Kusan 九山 (1909–1983), the very influential Sōn Master of Songgwang-sa whose lineage many transnational Sōn practitioners are in, conformed to the teachings of Pojo Chinul (Pak Chōnggwan, 2000).

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<sup>48</sup> In contrast to the universalist ‘Hwadu Absolutism’ of mainstream South Korean Sōn, the torch of the great Sudden-Gradual debate which has been carried from from Héshang Mófēyǎn (C. 和尚摩訶衍) at the Council of Lhasa in 793 to T’oeng Sōngch’ōl (K. 성철, C. 退翁性徹) who re-ignited the Sudden-Gradual debate in South Korea since the 1960s.

Remote online video-technology plays an important role in the running of contemporary practice communities. Preliminary findings for a journal article “Japanese Buddhism and Ireland” have revealed the interesting case of one Zen teacher, Myozan Kodo (Ian Kilroy) based in Dublin, who interacted with his Zen Master in Japan for one hour at least once a week, every week for 5 years.<sup>49</sup> This eventually culminated in him being promoted to the rank of Zen teacher. Skype is also being used in South Korean Sŏn spaces in Europe such as at the meditation hall in the south of France run by the *Taehan Pulgyo Chinhŭngwŏn* where Martine Batchelor has taught in person and remotely via Skype from time to time though the centre is not currently active on a full-time basis. If the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn in Kaarst, Germany is anything similar to its affiliated Sŏnwŏns in Bangkok and Yangon, then most of the liturgy takes places through an interactive screen.

#### **4.9.2 Changing Affiliations**

A further notable trend in Europe is the loose formation of sects and schools. Dimitra Manavopoulou mentioned above became interested in Sŏn/ Zen after practicing at Zen Centre Regensburg (unaffiliated to any order) where she was encouraged and facilitated in making contact with the Kwanum School of Zen who she now teaches as part of. Hae Mahn Sunim of the Taego Order in southern Poland had practiced for many years in the Kwanum School of Zen in Warsaw before he joined the Taego Order of Korean Buddhism and moved to southern Poland. This happens in South Korea also but perhaps to a lesser extent or at least less obviously. There is also considerable crossing over between European nuns of the Kwanum School of Zen and the Jogye Order, many going

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<sup>49</sup> Cox and Ó Laoidh, *Journal of Religion in Japan*, 2021.

to South Korea to ordain and become a nun of the Jogye Order after having been introduced and immersed themselves in the practice of the KSZ.

#### **4.9.3 Laicized Scheduling, Childcare and Marriage**

Adjustments to the age-old temple schedule show that it has been an ecclesiastical monastic Sŏn/ Zen which has needed to adapt.

(I don't know about Japanese but) with Kwanum it happened that they are easier to accommodate the local customs, like waking up early or not so early. I remember in [name omitted] Zen Center we were waking up at **four**-thirty and the practice started for 04:45. So it was the first Zen Center that that woke up in the morning in Europe right. And here in Warsaw, it was five. ....now it is six because you know it's easier for people to... you know... go to work, to make it easier for people who might change the rules. So for example no morning bell-chant [Interview E].

The Dharma-Halls of ethnic South Korean temples in London (now closed), Paris, Bangkok and Yangon function also as places for South Korean ex-patriots to gather, eat food and for the hosting of children's activities. The quite extensive yard of the Hanmaum *Sŏnwŏn* or Zen Centre in Bangkok in a prime area of the city, was almost entirely converted into a playground and doubled as a day-care facility for the children of ex-pat South Koreans resident in Bangkok.

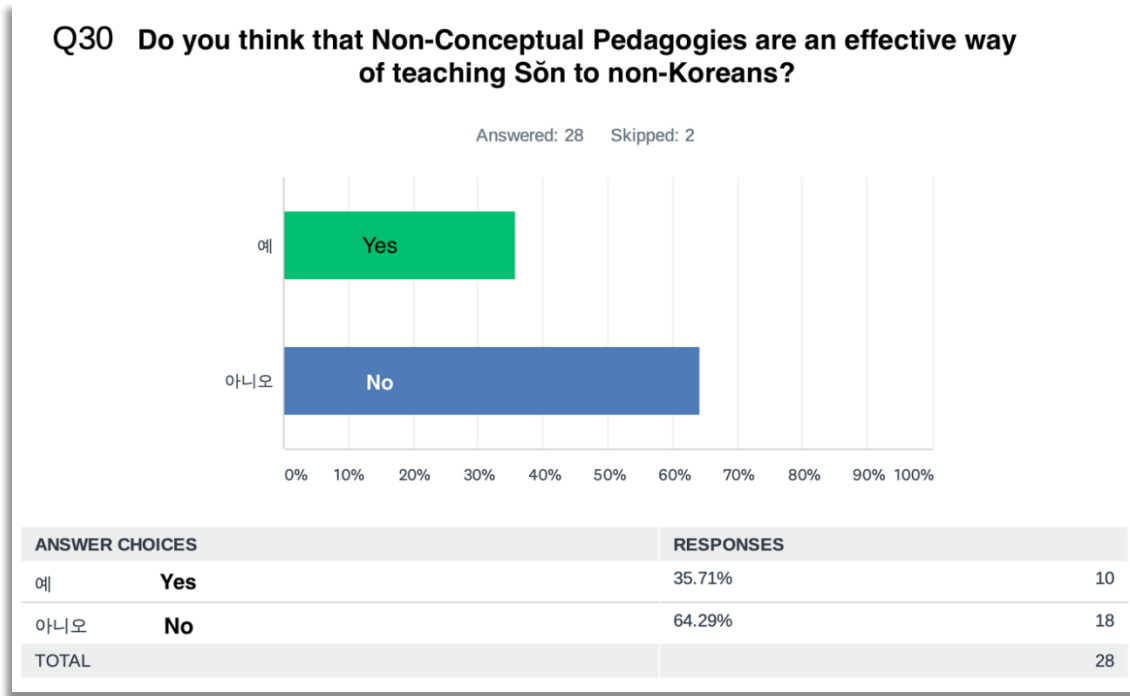
Reverse-orientalisms of vegetarianism and “temple-food” (many South Korean monastics are not vegetarian and most lay-Buddhists in South Korea eat meat) and a rhetoric of mindfulness related to the Tea Ceremony also indicate the cross-pollinations characteristic of the Western construction of Buddhism. Though not a Sŏnwŏn, the Wŏn

Buddhism site in Regensburg facilitated non-Christian marriage-ceremonies for local Germans who wanted to get married outside of the Christian churches. Meanwhile it should be noted that that Wŏn Buddhism site was the only ethnic-South Korean site I gained access to in Europe.

#### **4.10 Online Survey Responses**

With regard to non-Koreans practicing Sŏn, the online survey of South Korean Buddhists showed that 13 out of 22 respondents felt that the characteristic which distinguishes [South] Korean Sŏn from Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan Buddhisms is it's pedagogy and its historical lineage. It should be repeated here that this is not put forward as statistically representative but it speaks to qualitative points mentioned throughout the dissertation and opens up avenues for further study. 6/22 answered that the distinguishing characteristic was Korean Buddhist history on its own and 3/22 answered that it was Korean Buddhist teaching methods.

Regarding those methods however, 19/29 of respondents felt that those teaching methods should be changed when teaching non-Koreans outside of South Korea – 10/29 felt that those pedagogies should not be changed outside of South Korea. A similar 18/28 felt that NCPs are not an effective way to teach non-Koreans. However when asked if non-Korean westerners can understand NCPs, 15/27 answered that they could while 12/27 answered that they would not be able to.



*Figure 11 Survey Question 30*

17/29 answered that westerners cannot understand [South] Korean Buddhism without understanding [South] Korean culture while 12/29 answered that they could. With regard to South Korea’s most comprehensive experiment in transnationalism which has been domestic, the Temple Stay Program (TSP) which proposes to host foreign-visitors in South Korean temples so that they may learn about [South] Korean Buddhism, of 30 respondents an even 90% or 27/30 respondents felt that the program had affected Sōn pedagogy either directly or indirectly.





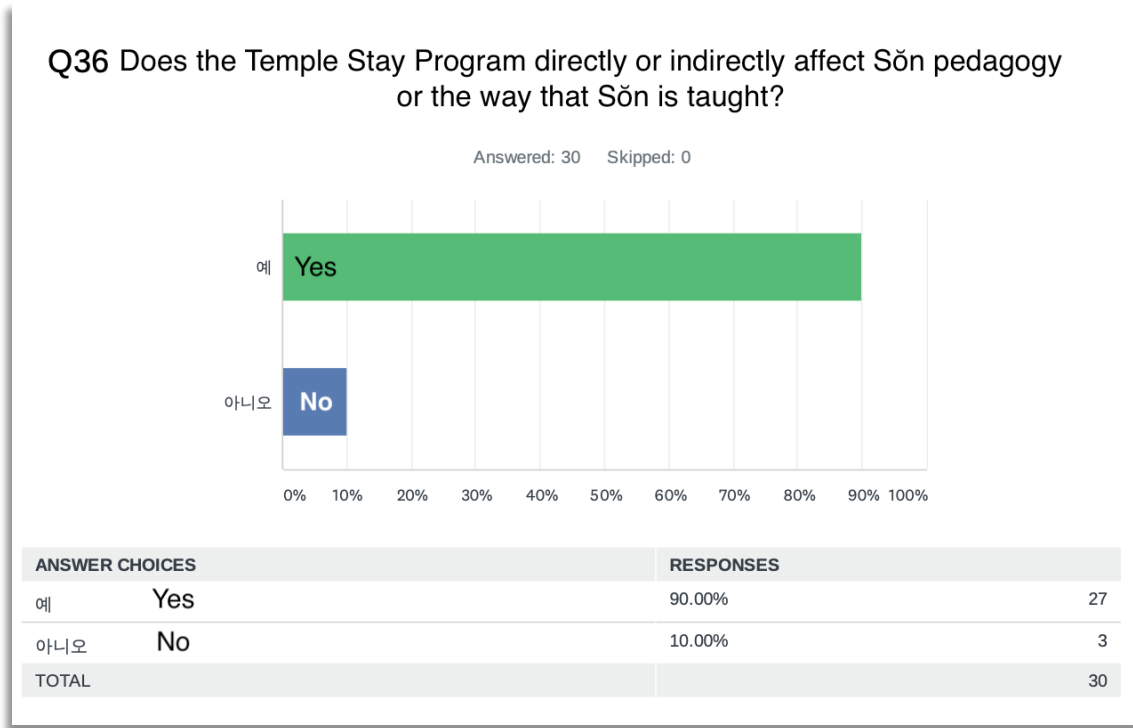
*Figure 12 Survey Question 32*

#### **4.11.1 Conclusion - Parallel Congregations, Diverging Pedagogies**

Though just over half of the South Korean respondents answered that foreigners could understand NCPs, approximately 65% believed that those NCPs are not an effective way to teach Sŏn to non-Koreans and should be changed outside of South Korea. 44.44% of respondents answered that non-Koreans are not capable of understanding Sudden-Teaching and this number rose to almost 60% when understanding [South] Korean culture became a pre-condition for understanding [South] Korean Buddhism.

Nevertheless, a resounding 90% of respondents felt that the TSP had had an effect on Sŏn pedagogy implying that whether non-Koreans are capable of understanding it or not, the pedagogical methods of “traditional” [South] Korean Sŏn had adjusted, changed or adapted in some way directly or indirectly whether in response to the foreigners attending

the TSP, the organization of the programme itself or the programme itself being symptomatic of Buddhist modernism. While not conclusive, well over half of respondents believing that NCPs are not effective for non-Korean people and almost half believing that non-Korean people are incapable of understanding NCPs, speaks to the understanding of SKSB put forward earlier on the basis of Walraven’s public versus private dichotomy. This suggests a tension between what I have theorized as the domestic ‘private’ landscape of SKSB and the ‘public’ face of SKSB i.e trans-national SKSB/ non-Korean Sŏn. With 90% of respondents feeling that Sŏn pedagogy had fundamentally changed in some way, it also points towards tensions within domestic SKSB which may account for why the international and domestic congregations do not overlap a great deal.



From the Sōn-infused yoga mentioned above to the female and family-dominated context of the ethnic South Korean temples, to the glimpses of a Sōn-informed far-right neo-nationalism based on ‘Samurai Zen,’ what we see on a macro-level in non-Korean Sōn is what Numrich called, albeit in specific context, ‘parallel congregations’ (Numrich 1999:77). I would go a step further and say that we not only see ‘parallel congregations’ of the same Sōn but we see parallel congregations of a plurality of Sōns. At ZCR (Germany), Wubong-sa, Daewon-sa (Poland) and Subong-sa (HK), a certain rigour of practice is maintained in all places irrespective of masculinities or femininities or any performative aspect of Sōn rhetoric.

The Hanmaum centres in Bangkok and Yangon offer the televised Sōn-rhetoric of their founder Daehaeng Sunim - now deceased – hagiography in digital format on touch screens or with remote-control and though communication to the Hanmaum site in Germany was difficult, it seems safe to suggest things are similar there. Along with the other ethnic-Korean temples in Europe (Gilsang-sa Paris, Younhwa-sa and Lotus Mind in London [now closed]) they cater mostly to ex-patriot South Koreans and in the case of Thailand and Burma, exclusively so. Despite having been used to being in South Korean Buddhist environments, I can say while I didn’t feel so uncomfortable in Bangkok, my presence as an outsider there made others uncomfortable. My presence in the centre in Yangon made one member distinctly uncomfortable though I must add that Hyedan Sunim welcomed me very warmly and graciously.

The locations in Poland and Germany maintain links with practice centres and temples in South Korea but have students from multiple countries and other areas of Europe and also offer live-streaming of online meditation. Such pedagogical innovations align themselves with the idea inherent in Buddhist modernism that the Dharma or in this case Sŏn, is universal, timeless and transcendent (McMahan 2008:124). While this could in fact be good news for the ecclesiastical Chán, Sŏn and Zen traditions who would have to invent the Sudden-Gradual Debate if it did not already exist in order to construct Zen as timeless, it may however be bad news for the spiritual authority of the South Korean Buddhist homeland as it's cosmological place as the central locus of Sŏn is eroded and a plurality of non-Korean Sŏns begin to emerge.

#### **4.11.2 Sŏn Yoga and Martial Sŏn**

Yoga-practice, as a form of bodily-etiquette, ritual-propriety and 'gendered corporeality' in the Zen Hall, can act as a bridge between the seemingly gendered polarities of the impassive sitting-meditation pose and the supposedly more emotive prostration, returning Sŏn perhaps even to its Shaolin roots though in Sŏn.<sup>50</sup> Yoga practice at times seems to correlate with a de-Koreanization if not a de-masculinization of the *kundaehwa* style of ritual-etiquette in Sŏn practice, other times not. Parallel to the Yogic-Sŏn congregations, we saw a glimpse of martial Sŏn in Europe, giving rise to a form of Sŏn reminiscent of Japanese imperial Zen, the 'religion of the samurai' promoted so much by Suzuki, Kaiten and others. We see that these parallel congregations can be quite polarized in gender

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<sup>50</sup> For a description of Buddhist and Yogic soteriology see O'Brien-Kop, K. (2018). *Seed and Cloud as Metaphors of Liberation in Buddhist and Pātañjala Yoga: An Intertextual Study*

terms than the adumbrated yet often collaborative actuality of ethnic-South Korean Sŏn rhetoric that is ‘shaped by particular cultural psychologies, conceptualizations of self and philosophies of natural and cosmic order’ in South Korea (Hoffman 1995:131).

The pedagogies in Hong Kong and Singapore are firmly rooted in the traditional pedagogical styles of the Chán and Sŏn schools and there seems to be far less rhetoric of Japanese Zen running through Sŏn in Asia, a recognition that Kwanum has Korean roots but yet an ability to blend with Chán and appeal to Chinese communities in Hong Kong and Singapore. What is striking about the case of the KSZ Dharma-Teacher Dimitra interviewed above is that, free from the constraints of the masculinized ritual-propriety in ecclesiastical South Korean Sŏn, Dimitra’s personal practice as it integrates Zen, Yoga and martial arts spontaneously returned in the direction of the Triple-Cultivation associated with Chinese martial-spiritual traditions including if not derived from the ‘original’ Shaolin Chán, namely; the cultivation of form, energy and mind.

#### **4.11.3 Non-Korean Sŏn or Global Zen?**

What then is the difference between non-Korean Sŏn and Global Zen in Europe? Non-Korean Sŏn seems at times to enable its appropriation by those inclined towards a Samurai Zen and other times, as the fluidity of practice in the KSZ shows, does not. Non-Korean Sŏn in both Asia and Europe is rhizomatically correlated with the ethnic-background of its teachers in Germany, Serbia, Greece, Hong Kong, Poland and the UK. The more organized spread of the KSZ though not concerned with the explicit ‘Korean-ness’ of Sŏn can avail of established networks in Asia. Although *Woori Pulgyo* (‘Our

Buddhism’) provides a stability in the fluctuating social world of South Korean ex-pats in parallel congregations in London and Paris, South Koreans themselves, unlike their European counterparts, do not come to Europe or European Sŏn-spaces in order to practice Buddhism and their engagement with transnational Sŏn seems to remain mostly ritualistic if services like childcare offered in various temples is any indication. However this also begs the question; might there also be parallel congregations within the ‘convert’ non-Korean parallel? It is very worth noting that non-Korean Sŏn in its least ritualistic format (in Thessaloniki, Greece) was being returned to the ‘fluid and intuitive’ approach of early Chán mentioned by Crystal Goh, re-localizing Sŏn the way that all Chán was originally local. Where it was most ritualistic i.e. enacting the rhetoric of immediacy and spontaneity in the Ascending the Dharma Hall ritual in Poland, that ritualistic ‘couture’ showed hints of or at least the potential for appropriation by those with extreme views.

## Chapter Five

# The Impact of Gender on Students' Reception of Sŏn Rhetorical Teaching

*"I could identify that Korean Zen seems, how to say...  
...more relaxed; more... let's say, more user-friendly"*

(Interview E, Poland, October 2018).

*"So I'm just trying to think, who is Zen really addressing? Is it addressing everybody? Is it addressing specific groups of people to do with your sex, your gender, your wallet, your nationality, to do with your free-time? Who is Zen for?"*

(Female Zen-practitioner, mid-30s, former resident at ZCR)

### 5.1 Introduction

The defining lines between 'European' and 'Korean' in terms of distinct territorially bounded places of teaching and practice become blurred as students and teachers criss-cross the space between Asia and Europe, with South Korea acting as a Northeast Asian 'Buddhist crossroads' or hub for teaching & student networks which link Hong Kong with Lithuania and Singapore and link Germany, the United States and London with the

mountainous spine of the Korean peninsula. Furthermore, links established between Poland and the U.S also serve to create nodes of teaching and practice which straddle the enclosed notion of Buddhism synonymous with nation-state borders. Instead we see inter-fusional currents and networks with, in some cases, surprisingly little allegiance to a Buddhism defined by nation-state and more allegiance to the social world it is in and the teachers acting within it.

The previous chapter discussed the general accommodations and adaptations taking place within non-Korean Sŏn contexts in Europe and elsewhere in Asia. This chapter looks at the specific experience of students and practitioners of Sŏn in those contexts and examines the impact that gender may have on their reception of Sŏn teaching. However, Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy was not observed much outside of a ritualized formalism adopted by the various teachers of Sŏn whom I encountered. In spite of this Sŏn students had a clear sense of purpose and identity that they were practicing Sŏn or a more generalized Zen.

The chapter begins with a background of laicized Sŏn before moving on to the [South] Korean imaginary of Sŏn which is proposed to be taught in transnational contexts and whether ‘conversion’ to that pedagogical-rhetoric based belief is a matter of ethnicity or necessity or – as we saw in the previous chapter – empowerment for non-Koreans. The chapter uses non-Korean contexts to frame a theory of South Korean lay-collaboration in the Sŏn-sacrifice through contrast but brings the analysis back to non-Korean contexts in order to assess and gauge non-Korean participation in and experience of Sŏn’s ‘Sudden-



Teaching.’ The chapter then closes with a more focused look at the rhetorics of empowerment in yoga and martial arts integrated into Sōn outside of Korea.

## **5.2 Pre-Laicized Sōn as Private, Domestic, Familial and Local**

As shown in the previous chapter with reference to Walraven’s public-private dichotomy in Korean religion, Sōn became a public practice again at a time when the influence of missionary Christianity, Japanese missionary Buddhism and laicization began to effect the tradition. Chapter two discussed the familial aspect of monastic Sōn in East Asian context and at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the monastic family was redefined in law (J. Park 2019). Not only did this re-calibrated coalescing of peninsular Sōn Buddhisms become defined necessarily by *p’ogyo* or propagation (Nathan 2010) but it also became trans-national at this time, becoming part of a wider Northeast Asian ‘Buddhist crossroads’ (Turner et al. 2013) both on home-soil, on the local archipelago and on the continent.

As this coalescence of modern Sōn was occurring, imperial Japanese Zen was beginning to construct the early formations of a ‘global Zen’ through Shaku Soen and his disciple Suzuki which when Korean Buddhism became nationalized in the early twentieth-century, lent its essentialized, universal and imperialist vision to the South Korean Buddhism which would eventually emerge in the post-liberation period. It was therefore necessary to expunge overtly ‘Japanized’ elements from its liturgy and couture by separating the non-celibate and (supposedly more) ritualistic side from itself. After this split, South Korean Buddhism now with this global awareness and international self-

consciousness received from imperial Japanese missionary Buddhism, would publicly trans-nationalize but retain a domestic peninsular privacy where collaborative group dynamics between the laity in a monastic-centered Buddhism (Kim 2018) would not extrapolate to non-Korean contexts. In sum, while South Korean Buddhism remains quite familial in the privacy of the peninsula, it has laicized more abroad. Moreover, it is in the “West” that South Korean Sŏn, ‘as a symptom of secularization’ has become “spiritualized” (Borup and Fibiger 2017:5). Laicizations within domestic SKSB such as the now fairly widespread practice in South Korea of lay-Buddhists wearing robes or vests within the temple were originally innovations introduced by Zen Master Seung Sahn in trans-national context.

### **5.3.1 The [South] Korean Imaginary of Global Zen**

The influence of introspective Protestantism, one of McMahan’s discourses of Buddhist modernism (McMahan 2008) profoundly influenced not only “Western” conceptions of Buddhist Enlightenment but also exerted a considerable influence on “Eastern” imaginaries of the meaning and ontology of an “Enlightened” state-of-being through what Jørn Borup has called the ‘easternization of the East’(Borup 2015). In the South Korean context, Cho Sungtaek (2002a) contrasts the ‘enlightenment-essentialist’ view of mainstream clerical South Korean Buddhism with the social-activist engagements of movements within South Korean Buddhism such as *minjung Pulgyo* and other lay groups. It is difficult to say how individuals in these socially-engaged movements conceptualize Buddhist Enlightenment if they do at all. It is equally difficult to say to what extent an enlightenment-essentialist view promulgated by monastic groups such as

the Jogye Order might be constituted by an ‘easternization of the East’ since historically, the laity in East Asia did not traditionally practice meditation and even within ecclesiastic East Asian monasticism, meditation was practiced intensively by a minority of monks and nuns.

What is fairly uniform across both South Korean groups - lay and ordained – is a resistance against the use of the word ‘Zen’ because of its Japanese origins. Any ‘Sōnicity’ within global Zen outside of South Korea however remains to be seen also. Ethnic South Korean temples and practice centres in Europe don’t seem to emphasize Sōn or Zen practice in any meaningful way beyond the individual practice of whatever monastic happens to be in residence. However when it came to the use of the word ‘Zen,’ I can say from my own experience in the south of France, that even though the word was suggested as part of proposed names for the centre, this word was deliberately not used because of its Japanese origins which – if my own experience or bias can surface in the analysis at this time – is perfectly understandable from a South Korean perspective given historical colonial experience.

With regard to Sōn practice in trans-national context it is interesting to note the comments of some of the South Korean online survey respondents at this point. One lay respondent (male, Buddhist from birth) commented that;

I’m afraid that Hwadu Sōn, the basic method of practice in Korean Buddhism almost remains as a mere formality with little value in the meditation-halls these days. I think it’s fair to say that we can inherit and develop Hwadu Sōn in a more reasonable way finding its value from a new viewpoint of Westerners, if it has any traditional value.

The same respondent was a vipassana practitioner though he elaborated that he regarded his practice as falling within a more general category of “Sŏn” practice rather than the meditation which the Jogye Order restricts to Hwadu Sŏn practice only. Another survey respondent (female, monastic) felt that in order to teach [South] Korean Buddhism abroad;

The tradition of text-oriented and Chinese [characters]-oriented pedagogies should be broken.... [ ] Gender discrimination between the monastic communities of bhikkus [monks] and those of bhikkunis [nuns] should be wiped out completely; only then can you propagate Korean Buddhism worldwide. How can you influence foreigners without achieving gender equality in the Orders themselves in Korea?

Another female South Korean respondent (monastic) commented that;

when Koreans struggle to understand NCP how can foreigners hope to understand it?

### **5.3.2 The European Reception of a “Korean” Sŏn or Zen Enlightenment**

The term “Europe” in this study has been open to multiple interpretations even within a territorial and geographical definition alone and “European Sŏn/ Zen student” can be open to even more interpretation. In Germany, where Hyongak Sunim established his base in order to distance himself from a ethnonation-centred emphasis within [South] Korean Buddhism, he speaks of his students’ approach to the practice in this respect:

No, no, no. They want to learn Zen. We never... actually we never really advertise that we’re practicing *Korean Zen*... per sé. But it is said that it’s in the lineage of Zen Master Seung Sahn which when people google it, it comes up that he’s Korean. So it’s kind of like an afterthought. It’s not hidden but it’s not put out there.

Hyongak Sunim does not underscore the national-identity or origins of the practice itself, preferring to emphasize the practice. Martine Batchelor answering the same point acknowledges the source of the emphasis on introspective meditative-questioning as coming from Korea in order to highlight the distinguishing feature of the practice she teaches in contradistinction to other forms of meditation but not as an end to any claims of superiority, saying;

I would emphasise Korea as the source of the practice of questioning.

From a Sōn/ Zen student's perspective in Germany, the Korean origins were quite irrelevant;

I mean there is.. of course there is this level that we say 'This is *Korean* Buddhism,' 'This is *Tibetan* Buddhism,' but I mean that's all garbage. There is no *Korean* Buddha and no *Korean Buddhism*, it doesn't make sense [Interview A].

With specific regard to the identity of Sōn, one student in Poland stated;

So maybe if they didn't meet Kwanum (KSZ) or another Korean school, they would never know that there is a *not-Japanese* Zen... They think "Oh Zen - it means Japan" (Interview E).

This is the same student from the epigraph above who says that, in terms of actual introspective Sōn/ Zen meditative practice;

I would say that, as far as I know the difference between Korean and Japanese Zen, so far... I could identify that Korean Zen seems, how to say... more relaxed; more... let's say, more user-friendly.

The respondent in Interview E acknowledged that he was required to refer to KSZ teachers by their ordination-names which are in Korean but admitted that he found them

difficult to remember. This was something also mentioned in my interview with Zen Master Soeng Hyang (Barbara Rhodes), the head of the global KSZ in the next chapter. The respondent to Interview F who had lived in ZCR in Germany but was from a different European country mentioned that;

if you don't know a lot of things then I mean you can't... you can't... you can't really compare and say “Oh this is *Korean* Zen compared to *Japanese* or whatever..”

One South Korean respondent to the online survey (male, monastic) stated that ‘the essence of Buddhism is one, there is nothing that can be called “Korean” Buddhism.’

### **5.3.3 Non-Korean Imaginaries in Asia**

The mythopoeic aspects of Sōn in its native context and its emphasis on patriarchal lineages establishes spiritual authority and gives legitimacy to the Sōn school over other forms of Buddhism (McRae 2003:xix). However, what John McRae calls the mythopoeic aspects of Sōn in its native context are shared by all the East Asian Meditation Schools in their native contexts as well as when they go abroad. What is interesting about the Hong Kong case of Subong-sa (temple), none of the eleven students I interviewed had any problem referring to their practice as ‘Zen’ in English as for them the “Korean-ness” did not really matter as “Zen” or “Sōn” both derived from Chinese Chán anyway. The Korean identity of their immediate lineage predecessors whose portraits hang in the Dharma-Hall at Subong-sa Temple and any “Korean-ness” associated with the school was in a sense intermediary, a bridge between the Chán past and the global Zen present.

This is not to trivialize this bridge however. As one interviewee informed me, Interview G, *kongan* practice and *kongan* interview (J. *dokusan*) had died out in Hong Kong and was not practiced in other Chán or Zen schools there before Zen Master Dae Kwan re-established it. Zen Master Dae Kwan told me herself that she makes a point of always acknowledging the Korean roots of the practice and of her teacher Zen Master Seung Sahn.

The same respondent above (Interview G, female, mid-to-late thirties) cited the Chinese Cultural Revolution for the loss of the practice in China and while there was no Cultural Revolution in colonial Hong Kong, the 1967 Hong Kong riots which escalated from a labour-dispute into a protest against the British colonial government, like the Cultural Revolution on the mainland, were part of the wider ‘global 1968’ (Mohandesi et al. 2018).

As I pushed through the first day of the Hong Kong Protests 2019 on the last day of my fieldwork-trip, it was striking to consider that post-liberation post-colonial South Korean Buddhist trans-nationalism starting around the same time as Hong Kong’s 1967 riots was responsible for the classical Chán practice of *kongan* interview returning to China via the colonial treaty port which was now protesting the re-integration it had called for in 1967.

This interviewee also informed me that in Hong Kong, no other Chán/ Zen teachers laid claim to the title of ‘Zen Master’ and that while Subong-sa is now well established after a period of having to work for acceptance from the HK Buddhist community, they are not

‘traditional’ Chinese compared to other monasteries and temples in HK, not only in practice terms but in terms of allowing both genders to practice together side by side (segregation is still the norm). This respondent noted that in Musang-sa, the KSZ’s headquarters temple in South Korea, men and women must enter the Dharma-Hall by separate entrances which is not what the founder of the KSZ Zen Master Seungsahn intended. In answer to the question of what is distinctive about Zen practice in the Kwanum School in HK, Catherine Chan answered specifically that;

It’s localized... [it’s a] blend with HK style and daily life, not only on the cushion [but also the] way of practice (chanting, bowing and retreat).

One example of this ‘localization’ which I observed was that all the students and monastics at Subong-sa referred to Zen Master Dae Kwan as *Sifu* 師父, the Cantonese pronunciation of the Chinese characters above. ‘Sifu’ means ‘Teacher-Father’ and is a term used to address one’s teacher in diverse areas of Chinese culture as well as in Kungfu. The title is obviously gendered if translated literally but it seems redundant to mention that of course the students neither regard their teacher as a man nor their master of Zen as masculine or male in any way.

Beata Grant’s (2008:210) work does question the rhetoric of heroism surrounding what I call the Sōn – or in Grant’s analysis, the Chán – “sacrifice,” the archetypal hero’s journey of the Sōn/ Chán/ Zen master but ultimately determines that a fluid notion of gender as performative doesn’t conflict with Mahayāna Buddhist doctrines of non-self and ‘an absent doer’ who performs Sōn or Chán rhetorical pedagogy. In answer to the question of



whether there might be a difference in the way that men and women use rhetorical pedagogy to teach, another respondent in HK, Interview H mentioned that;

Sifu [Zen Master Dae Kwan] is the first Asian woman Zen master in the Kwanum School - I don't know if in any other school - but the funny thing is if you come from that *perspective*, you see *that*. But for us... it's [shrugs] like, it's normal right? Oh, “she's a woman” – “Oh okay.” [ ] That kind of reminds me of many years ago and I was working for an American company. I was the human-resources manager for the Asia Pacific. [ ] I am totally Chinese, Asian; when you are a fish in that water you don't see that water right? And then people come and say “Hey we want to bring some programs to Asia so that we can promote equality between men and women.” Everything was very well, people were respecting each other. I had counterparts in Korea; he was a man. And a Japanese counterpart. We had all Asia right? And we... we love each other like friends and communicate and sometimes with jokes and all that. But I *know* for these two men especially the Korean one; yes I think he said to somebody before... before I came - if he would have to report to a woman he would resign (Interview H).

The respondent in Interview H who as a Hong Kong Chinese woman was in upper management for a multinational corporation shows that at least in Subong-sa if not in HK generally, thinking about gender was not an issue and students at the temple did not fixate on Zen Master Dae Kwan being a woman. She does express awareness of differing attitudes to women in South Korea which she gained from her professional experience before practicing Sŏn/ Zen in a South Korean affiliated temple however. The story of Interview H's South Korean colleague in her company ties in with the testimony of Zen Master Bon Shim in Poland discussed in the next chapter who recounts how a South Korean Buddhist monk was ‘uncomfortable’ with her acting in the capacity of a Sŏn teacher and Interview H's thoughts seems to bear out or suggest a correlation at least between her experience and Kim Hyun Mee's contention that citizenship in the South

Korean military-industrial complex is gendered and Sheila Miyoshi Jager's point that the worker is a masculinized patriot in the service of the nation.

Crystal Goh is a long time student of Buddhism and as a friend and associate of Trudy Goodman, Jack Kornfield and John Kabat-Zinn, also teaches mindfulness and has done so at corporate level. She lived and practiced in Chán monasteries in China and spent 2 years at a Sōn temple in South Korea with the intent to eventually ordain as a Buddhist nun. Speaking of her substantial experience of South Korean Sōn which she can contrast with her experience of Chinese Chán, Crystal comments that;

[ ] you have first the Korean cultural filter of Buddhism and then you have the Western culture that assimilated that Korean culture. [ ] ...when I went to China, I learned that the way that I was taught Zen in Korea is not really the full picture... because when you read the Platform Sūtra and the Diamond Sūtra, and you learn about how Zen was practiced from you know, the patriarchs, it's not how Zen is taught in Korea. It's [Zen] actually much, more free and mostly it's way more organic and fluid, intuitive... And it's very natural. That's the merge of Taoism with Buddhism. And that merge with Confucianism... actually *if you study* Confucianism according to the way that we *think* it is and the way that it was actually presented by Confucius, it's not the same. So there have been a lot of people who take parts of the Confucian teaching and use it for their self-interest to justify their ideology. [ ] I'm Chinese you know I actually have a great passion for Zen in China because I find that the culture is so rich and I think Taoism is a really beautiful teaching.

She then went on to describe her time living in a South Korean Sōn temple;

[The abbot] he, he literally said to me [*descending gestures at each word with her hand*] "Monks, nuns, lay-men, lay-women," ...it wasn't in an aggressive way. He was saying it so that I could understand my place in the temple. And when I first stayed in the temple, I had things said to me - "you're too pretty," "your sexual energy is too strong" from Western monks [in South Korea]. [ ] I've seen how nuns have been, have been like kind

of squeezed out of it because of that. [ ] I think that the Sangha is important but what's more important is practicing the Dharma. I mean, I was mainly very welcomed and because I practiced, I just kind of stuck my head down and practiced [meditated] and learned. [ ] ... and then by the end of the two years I decided that I wanted to ordain but I was told that I would never survive in the Korean system because I'm too individualistic or I have strong opinions. And it's like, it's a kind of you know, it's almost communist I guess because they don't want you to have a voice. They want to suppress your voice... And they use it in... in a way that's like well, "this is your practice, *your practice is to not have a voice*" and I think that there's also a suppression of intellect. They don't encourage people to be smart. I can't speak for the whole [of South Korean Buddhism] but I have definitely witnessed... emotional bullying.

Crystal's comments show that patriarchy and androcentric-ism is certainly not unique to Korean culture as per her experiences interacting with Western monastics within the hierarchical South Korean monastic system. Nevertheless she was informed that this was a system in which she would not "survive," in which she felt "your practice is to not have a voice" and where her sexuality and her gender were weaponized against her in the Sōn-space. Of course the function of a monastic environment is to facilitate monastics in introspective practice so there must be a prioritization but if monasticism has been explicitly redefined to include laicized forms of practice in the modern period then what Crystal experienced was simply discrimination. Crystal's experience of patriarchy at the interface of monasticism and laicization suggests a system that has yet to come to terms with an egalitarian laity, if not by extension suggesting a system that has yet some way to go to modernize. This is to say nothing of the racial undertones to her experience as a Chinese woman in South Korea.

Though I was unable to acquire interviews with South Korean attendees in those places, I also conducted participant-observation fieldwork in Bangkok and Yangon. While I observed what could possibly have been the gender hierarchy identified by Crystal above, there were no male-monks in those Hanmaum temples to see such a hierarchy in action though lay South Korean women exclusively prepared the food offered in both places. Impressions of those related situations were more of a network of South Korean ex-pats which could not be classified as ‘students’ of Sōn/ Zen in the European sense. One man in attendance in Bangkok told me he was Christian and came to the temple every Sunday with his wife who availed of the childcare offered at the temple during the week. The group in Yangon ranged from older South Korean men working overseas to a couple of young students studying Nikaya Buddhism at third-level in Yangon.

However while making allowance for South Korean Buddhist women’s agency such as mentioned by Salgado (2013) it would seem that at least the agency of female monastics is dependent on suppressing their opinions and conforming to the status quo which begs the question as to what range of Sōn rhetorical pedagogy is available if they even decide to teach within a system which “squeezes out” more individualistic female teachers. Yet it must be said that South Korea is one of the few places where women can be fully ordained as nuns in Buddhist Asia. For example in Thailand where full ordination is not recognized for women, it is still possible by law for a Buddhist nun to be arrested for impersonating a monk. Both monks and nuns of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism participated in assisting Sakyadita International Association of Buddhist Women in reviving the full ordination of nuns in Sri Lanka beginning in 1996 (Kawanami 2007).

Nevertheless, Crystal knows ‘nuns who have disrobed because of how they were treated by their male peers and even their female peers.’

Bon Sun Sunim is a Buddhist nun from the Chinese diaspora in Malaysia and ended up as a student of Zen Master Dae Kwan in Hong Kong via South Korea where she went to ordain. Bon Sun Sunim told me she chose Zen Master Dae Kwan and Subong-sa temple ‘because of Zen practice, not because of any culture. I’m a nun because I just want to practice [meditation].’ Bon Sun Sunim explains the practical aspect of a gender divide in monastic practice within the close Teacher-Student relationship in Zen especially in the early years of a monastic’s training;

Actually inside I completely have no problem if the teacher is a man or woman. But later, after some years and what I experience and what I see in the younger people and now understand – for women to follow the woman teacher and men follow the male teacher has some benefits because men understand men well. They have the empathy and when inside, you... have some problem. For women they understand women’s mind, like... more... refined. So when I have some problem inside and the woman teacher is in front of me she can help me right? But I don’t think she can help a man as well, if a man he is her student right. You know...? This is a good idea; a woman go to a woman and a man go to a man but later on after you already finish your training period. You can choose to follow and any teacher men and women...

So if the situation is more tight for a woman then... then [a] woman makes more effort to do... achieve what she wanted to right? I think if somebody really practices so no matter men and women doesn’t matter if they do this [rhetorical] style of teaching.

For Bon Sun Sunim as a Chinese-Malaysian who, inspired by the writings of Zen Master Seung Sahn went to South Korea to ordain as a Buddhist nun and then ended up in Hong Kong, practice and purpose are a very simple choice. She says;

I know that some Western nuns I lived together and worked together in [South Korean temple]. They are not so happy about men have a higher level like, what they, what they get is a much better position or something. But for me, completely no problem because I'm not coming for that. Whatever you want... you can take it. I don't care. I just come for a practice and if I'm sure what I want, what I want to do then have faith, everything is not a problem.

Bon Sun Sunim alludes to a gendered-cultural difference also referenced by Crystal who is also Chinese but having made the choice to ordain, engages with it in a different way. That same cultural difference discouraged Crystal from ordaining and caused other acquaintances of hers to disrobe. Bon Sun Sunim's dedication and steadfast devotion to her vocation are palpable, as is Crystal's reverence for the Dharma and her own dedication to Buddhist practice. Crystal's personality, labelled "too individualistic" in the South Korean temple, was part of her devotion as much as Bon Sun Sunim's dedication was part of her own but in the final analysis, both were living in Hong Kong with a female Chinese Zen master.

#### **5.3.4 Balancing Pedagogies Between "Conversion" and Ethnicity, Lay and Monastic**

At ZCR, Hyongak Sunim speaks about Zen students;

And actually they, in some ways, in some sense they have more of a sense of Buddhism than Koreans do. That's a really dangerous statement to make because we're talking about "they're" more ... than "them" which is already a mistake because people are varied and nuanced but... there is... they're well-read and they get a sense of what Buddhism's about and they're usually choosing it. In Korea, a lot of the people you're dealing with were raised Buddhist. So they're coming at it like I was raised Catholic, I didn't choose it. I would never choose it if I had the choice because of all the problems and people enslaved by the Church.

Despite the majority – if not all - of European students’ not coming from a Buddhist background, Hyongak Sunim still used NCPs. One student at ZCR explains their experience of NCP;

I mean for a European person just to see someone who taps you on your back or, or just slaps the floor suddenly or shouts or whatever it might feel strange or... I don't know. So if there was some [NCP] most of the time there was following an explanation or an example or Sunim was mentioning his teacher or there was always something that helped you to understand why is this happening. [ ] For example one time Hyongak Sunim just shouted, just for like two or three seconds. [ ] ...at the time it was a big shock for some people just you know, just sitting there and you're practicing [meditating] and suddenly you just hear a shout and so... but you know at the end [of the meditation-session] he was always explaining (Interview F).

The experience of the respondent in Interview F, who had no prior experience of Zen or Buddhism before attending ZCR, shows how NCP is effectively used and simply followed later with a contextualizing explanation. This frames the responses of some of the South Korean respondents of the online survey who felt that non-Koreans would not be able to understand NCP. The same interviewee’s impressions (F) were very positive about the experience and mentioned also that the sudden shout aided concentration and ‘helped to focus’ when lethargy crept in during meditation practice. If we consider NCPs as exclusively “monastic” – which is debatable – then such monastic Sōn/ Zen pedagogies seem operable in lay transnational non-Korean contexts if they are simply followed by an explanation.

In Hong Kong, differences in rhetorical pedagogies was expressed by the respondent in Interview G;

A simple comparison between the two teachers is that [name of male teacher once resident at Subong-sa] is more like... systematic. Like he used a lot of the wording from the school, so it's very systematic. [ ] But for Sifu her style is not the same, it's kind of... very different; it's more flexible. And so I think sometimes Sifu will use the environment to give the teaching spontaneously. So... and also because of her background... [name of male teacher] is more like straightforward. He sticks to the Korean Zen all his life in the same school. But for Sifu, her exposure to the Buddhist teaching is, is wider. She received traditional Chinese teaching before she ordained as a nun, and she went to the Thailand, Chiang Mai for 10 years. You know the system is very different from the Korean Zen. So her exposure to Buddhism is wider and so... she liked to teach less in... I wouldn't say it is less formal but is more flexible, more adaptive.

Whether there is anything inherently male about a rhetorical teaching style as described in Interview G above is difficult to say if we consider gender as performative. Yet, in an androcentric state, the performance of Sōn rhetorical pedagogy could perhaps be said to be 'masculinizing' and the *kundaehwa*-style of practice and pedagogy, an expression of the increasingly masculinizing military-industrial complex in post-war and late twentieth-century South Korea. Crystal Goh identifies a masculinized male style of practice as South Korean Sōn first spread to the West;

[ ] ... he [Zen master Seung Sahn] comes from Korea, he's ex-military, he's a man and so he was teaching a very strong like masculine style. And as a result it attracted a lot of men and attracted women who were also... tough and were able to be physically tough. Not that the teaching *itself* is tough but the *practice* can be very tough; like the sitting, not moving, following the schedule. But I would say that like I have seen a lot in the... in the monastic community - whether in China, Southern China, Middle China or in Korea or in the West - that it attracts a lot of people looking for Buddhism as a way to heal emotional wounds or to find a life-direction and I think that when it's presented really well; it works. But when there's a failure to recognize that people have emotional wounds, that could



even become a hindrance to their practice... then that kind of “hard” Korean Zen style becomes very counter-productive. The Satipatthana Sūtra - where mindfulness comes from - it's beyond you know, Hinayana or Mahayana Buddhism. It's one of the first sūtras that the Buddha teaches. [ ] And that is actually really not taught in how we are now taught Zen in Korea - at least in my experience I actually was never taught that. That gave me a clear understanding of how what is presented is cultural and what is actually teaching.

Another student in Hong Kong, Debbie makes the same comparison between teachers as in Interview G above but is unsure if the male teacher's more prevalent use of rhetorical pedagogy is more to do with personality rather than gender. Either way, she notes that both students and teachers, Zen masters and Guiding-Teachers at Subong-sa monastery hit the floor each time they ask or answer a *kongan*.

To what extent the “hard” Sōn/ Zen rhetorical pedagogy that Crystal describes above was symptomatic of a masculinizing and indeed militarizing state Buddhism in the late twentieth-century is also hard to say. Certainly post-war South Korean Buddhism was drastically different to what Buddhist culture had existed on the Korean peninsula at the end of the nineteenth-century. Chong Ko Sunim suggests from the laments of older monastics that such “hard” *kundaehwa* pedagogy and practice is an anachronism and I suggest possibly found its way into South Korean Sōn through Japanese Zen transnationalism which of course began on the Korean peninsula shortly before and during the colonial period.

For Bon Sun Sunim as a female monastic in Hong Kong, the pedagogical style was in a sense somewhat irrelevant as the effectiveness of any teaching depends on the student's

dedication – ‘if you *really* practice then I think even any kind of teaching way... is no problem.’ However as Crystal makes clear above, pedagogy and practice are cultural.

#### **5.4.1 Millenials and the Non-Korean Imaginary of Sōn and Zen Teaching**

The most exemplary student of Chán, if not Bodhidharma himself who took his practice into his own hands and sat intensively for 9 years, must surely be his student and the Second Patriarch Huikě who sacrificed his own body to be accepted as a student and receive the Teachings from his master;

Finally, in a surge of zealous desperation and with thoughts of the trials of former enlightened ones, Huikě took a knife and cut off his left arm and placed it in front of Bodhidharma. Permitted at last, through this extraordinary demonstration of self-sacrifice to receive the teaching, Huikě asked Bodhidharma; “My mind is not at peace; please pacify it for me (McRae 1986:16).

Huikě’s single-minded dedication and resolve to be instructed on how to gain insight into the fundamental nature of reality are something far more difficult to emulate outside the walls of a closed monastic community. Even within a community established for nothing but that purpose, the level of the Second Patriarch’s zeal would be almost impossible to match and for that reason have become legend and part of the mythopoeic aspect of Zen, most of which have been produced inside the temple walls. In the contemporary world of global Zen of which Sōn is a significant constituent, most students are lay-people and many of them are young people.

The *Millennial Dharma Report* of the Kwan Um School of Zen (KSZ 2017) is one of the most comprehensive surveys of Zen teaching and practice from the perspective of

western students ever undertaken. While the report surveys the views of Zen students on education, diversity, values, technology and even indebtedness and underemployment. The diversity section of the paper mentions the LGBTQ community and the lack of racial diversity in the white-dominated school, gender in male-female terms is not a feature of the survey probably for the simple reason that the KSZ is so diverse with a woman as the global head of the school and many female teachers placed in their temples and centres around the world.

In terms of Zen/ Sōn practice, one student stated that the emphasis on sitting-meditation (to the exclusion of other practices) was ‘rigid’ and identified a ‘phobia’ for scriptural study while another student mentioned that ‘the undifferentiated nature of our teaching can be off-putting’(KSZ 2017:8). Echoing Hyongak Sunim’s observations of his own European students - that they are well-educated and come to Zen practice with a critical mind – in terms of non-conceptual and undifferentiated rhetoric, the report concluded that;

in the area of education, respondents noted that although Zen is not about conceptual thinking, younger generations are now more oriented toward conceptual thinking due to an increased number of years in school. Respondents thought the teaching could be adapted to address this change (KSZ 2017:26).

One student also noted that;

the ‘quasi-monastic rigor is largely unproductive and creates an atmosphere of resentment and paternalism’(KSZ 2017:13).

In the area of diversity however, the report while also noting the need to tone down rhetoric of superiority and sectarianism inherent within ecclesiastic Zen and be ‘less disparaging toward other traditions’ noted that ‘the 6<sup>th</sup> patriarch famously calls people from other traditions “blasphemers”’ (KSZ 2017:26). Ecclesiastic Zen exceptionalism which is not unique to the KSZ as evidenced by their own inclusion of a quote from the 6<sup>th</sup> patriarch (7<sup>th</sup> to early 8<sup>th</sup> century CE) alienates not only people of ‘other traditions,’ lay versus monastic and women versus men but also – as the report acknowledges – ‘people of colour’ (POC) though suggestions from survey respondents (not the recommendation of the report itself) for what seems to be POC sitting-meditation groups and bizarrely ‘white affinity groups’ within the school seem likely only to perpetuate any lack of integration (at the very least). Nevertheless, it begs the question if the sectarian and masculinized aspect of Zen rhetoric reinforces the power dynamics of the dominant ethnic group, especially when – as was the case elsewhere in Poland – rhetorics of Japanese imperial inspired ecclesiastic-Zen couture seemed to inform a white-supremacist “spiritual racism” (Stortini 2020).

#### **5.4.2 The International Zen Temple, Berlin, Germany**

The Ven. Zen Master Young San Seong Do Snim is a South Korean Zen master who has taught at the [International Zen Temple](#) in Berlin for over 20 years until the present where more than 50 lay students attend the weekly, monthly and biannual meditation practices with a higher number attending during Buddhist festivals. The International Zen Temple is aptly named as it seems to be more international than many of the South Korean heritage temples and centres located in Europe. Germans make up the majority of the

congregation with a significant number of students South Korean ex-patriots. There are also a significant proportion of students from Eastern Europe countries such as Poland or Romania, and Western European countries such as Spain and the Netherlands as well as from a scattering of other countries around the world. Ven. Zen Master Seong Do Snim most often teaches in English though he will teach in German and sometimes in Korean which is translated.

Despite being unable to travel due to the pandemic, I was fortunate enough to have a correspondence with two of Ven. Zen Master Young San Seong Do Snim's German disciples Dae Hyun and Haein Seong (Dharma/ Buddhist names). With respect to Sōn pedagogy and NCPs, Dae Hyun and Haein Seong told me that;

From our point of view, the overall conduct or 'the whole life and existence' of an enlightened Zen master has to be considered as "teaching," or, in other words, as helping or saving sentient beings. Everything in the conduct of a Zen master is, as we understand it, destined to leading the students on the path of practice towards finding their own true self. To us, this seems to be true for formal teaching situations (such as a Kōan interview), but as well as for informal situations. So, when talking about the teaching of a Zen master, we reckon that no essential difference can be made between teaching with words (e.g. in a Dharma Talk), with peculiar gestures (such as hitting a stick on a Dharma table), with other behaviour (such as raising an eyebrow or laughing) or with non-action (such as remaining silent or leaving the room). It is all just one single teaching.

Dae Hyun and Haein Seong added that Ven. Zen Master Seong Do used both verbal and non-verbal teaching but due to the contingent nature of their use the extent to which they were used was of course hard to quantify but they did add that [both verbal and NCP] were ‘an inseparable part of his one living teaching.’ Both students stressed the fluidity and relative situational nature of Sōn/ Zen pedagogy;

the methods of teaching used by a Zen Master will vary naturally and freely. Whether one method or the other method is chosen, might depend on, inter alia, factors such as the degree of spiritual faculties of the student and... [ ] are not subject to generalization according to notions such as “Asian/European.” This corresponds to our practical experience: We have observed that when there are two students, one erudite and one uneducated, the Ven. Zen Master Yeong San Song Do Snim might at one occasion teach both students in a different way, but at another occasion in the same way, depending on what is best for them in that very moment.

### **5.5.1 Collaboration in the Sōn Sacrifice**

After exposure to Buddhism in South Korea, it is almost shocking if not discomfiting to be in a Sōn-space without a large presence of *posalnims* (Buddhist lay-women). There were no *posalnims* in ZCR or in Poland though I met just one at the Won Buddhist Centre in Regensburg. Having spent years in South Korean Buddhist circles and environments, the first thing that one notices in Europe especially, is the relatively equal number of men and women compared to South Korea. However I spoke to European students who were living at the centre when groups of South Koreans, mostly women, were present;

So yeah it was a great thing. For me it always felt like that... I felt a lot more connected with South Korean people than I felt with German people. And I'm sure that one of the reasons is that it has to do with the fact that the role for women is quite similar between Korea and [country withheld]. I mean the lady has to be a good daughter, a good wife, a great mother and I was able to see that in South Korean women because I grew up like that - not because my mother *wanted* me to be like that but she was and she is in that position though it is something that is starting to change I think especially with the second wave of feminism in the early 60s which I think has affected all the world. And so I was able to connect with, especially with Korean women because of my background so I could see that they were playing a specific role in the Zen Centre and it was all about caring and helping but never be in the front line. [ ] It was always supporting, you know? (Interview F).

The thoughts of the interview in the excerpt above are echoed by Dimitra in the following section 5.5.2. Sōn/ Zen rhetoric is the process and performance of *hasan-hada* (K. 하산하다), the colloquial Korean term which literally means to ‘descend from the mountain [where introspective-training took place].’<sup>51</sup> Sōn insight comes into contact with the outside world, becomes real and is ‘socialized, moulded and modified’ through Sōn-rhetorical pedagogy, the expression and performance of the masculinized ascetic purity valued by society (Goffman 2002:44,46). The gendered/ masculinized ‘skillful means’ mentioned by Powers is the bridging of this liminal-space between the mountain where the sacrifice took place and society, the process of *hasan-hada* itself which informs if not constructs the charisma of the Sōn Master and his/ her command of the

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<sup>51</sup> Figuratively, *hasan-hada* means to finish one’s training, to be ready to teach and to have something – some level of insight dearly paid for with rigorous and solitary practice – to teach. Being a colloquial term, even if one were to do all of one’s intensive meditation-training in an urban temple, one would say *hasan-hada* when someone finishes their training.

Sŏn/ Zen idiom which pours forth spontaneously yet contingent on a deep knowledge of doctrine and classical Chinese.

Sŏn/ Zen rhetoric however, does not fall into a vacuum and though as Anderl (2011) states, Zen rhetoric is not concerned with persuasion, it is concerned with certainty and decisiveness. A large proportion of the Sŏn/ Zen master's charisma is derived from his/her certainty (regardless of whether that certainty is justified or bonified). In Dharma-combat or preaching, s/he gives 'an instantaneous' response 'so that the audience will be sure that s/he is sure of his or her judgement' (Goffman 2002:40).

Robert Sharf's chapter on ritual in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism* (Lopez Jr 2009) shows how not only Zen and Sŏn rhetoric of spontaneity, Dharma-combat interviews, preaching and even the act of sitting-meditation, can be considered as ritual (Lopez Jr 2009:260). Sharf comments, 'many moderns have come to believe that the *summum bonum* of the Buddhist path is not the appreciation of the significance of Buddhist ritual or doctrine, however profound such an understanding may be, but rather the personal and transformative experience of awakening [through meditation]' (ibid).

As I have theorized in the previous chapter, the Purification Movement in South Korean Sŏn Buddhism which precipitated post-liberation transnationalism, was a gendered bifurcation along this modernist dichotomy which posits ritual as 'the antithesis of meditation' (ibid). Ritual was separated from Sŏn meditation and left with the Taego Order and its non-celibate monks while the supposedly more ritualistically 'pure'



celibate monks of the Jogye Order took sole responsibility for the practice of *kongan* or *hwadu* meditation.

We have taken into account the way in which *upāya* – the implied pedagogy of ‘skilful-means’ predicated upon spiritual-insight, was associated with virility and was masculinized (Powers 2009), in effect gendering Buddhist-Enlightenment itself which, as Sharf argues ‘is constituted in ritual performance’(Lopez Jr 2009:267).

Is what Buswell calls the ‘illocutionary’ sometimes non-verbal act of ritualistic ecclesiastic Sōn-rhetoric, the ritualized expression, performance and ‘reaffirmation of the moral values of the community’ (Goffman 2002:45) or in this case, the anxieties behind those values i.e. what Jager calls Northeast Asian society’s ‘primordial anxiety about paternity’? Viewed in this way, we can say that Sōn-rhetoric is not only gendered on the basis of its institutional division (late-capitalist re-masculinization) but also as the expression of this sublimated primordial anxiety which has eclipsed women throughout historical ecclesiastic Sōn.

As a pedagogy which Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick - in the same volume -suggests is a way of ‘dramatizing and perhaps exhausting the impossibility of methodical learning’ (Lopez Jr 2009:179), it can be considered a way of re-generating the types of masculinities which contribute to South Korean Buddhism as a form of potential androcentric necropolitical bio-power, the ritual of Sōn-rhetoric as not only gendered purity but in the necropolitical service of the state, a rhetoric of coercive sexualized celibacy.

Diane Hoffman (1995) demonstrates that what initially looks like polarized gender roles in South Korea are rather co-operative and co-constructive which I have taken as a standpoint to view ecclesiastic Sŏn and Zen rhetoric as a collaborative act in some senses similar to what Goffman suggests - ‘the inferior may be tactfully attempting to put the superior at ease by simulating the kind of world the superior is thought to take for granted’ (Goffman 2002:30) – but more dialogical and reciprocal.

Where does this leave us with Sŏn-rhetoric in South Korea and non-Korean Sŏn-rhetoric in Europe or elsewhere in Asia? It might be tempting to suggest that “Western” Sŏn is spiritualized through the individual and therefore the semiotic function of NCPs and how they are experienced – and ultimately the Enlightenment they are attempting to activate - are different because they are participated in differently which would seem to be in keeping with the ultimate implication of the collaboration which is Buddhist-Enlightenment not just as revelatory insight but as learned-behaviour. However, my research has shown that Sŏn-rhetoric seems to be collaborative in both “East” and “West” but in different ways. Unlike in South Korea - or at least in the ethnic-South Korean context which can also be beyond the peninsula - where the student collaborates in constructing the Sŏn Master’s often gendered Enlightenment, in the European context, the Sŏn master participates and collaborates in the student’s empowerment.

### **5.5.2 The Gendered Ritual of Ascending the Dharma Hall**

Diane Hoffman argues that ‘gender-opposition theory provides an incomplete explanation of actual patterns of cultural and social life’ in South Korea and that ‘the

radically gender-differentiated social-structure co-exists with a cultural psychology and indeed ‘cosmology’ which emphasize ‘the essential equality and undifferentiated nature of male and female’(Hoffman 1995:112–13). Hoffman’s theory of the psychological blurring of male-female categories in South Korean life is however a very difficult thing to apprehend when one first begins to encounter the performance of South Korean gender roles in social and ritual setting. Dimitra Manavapoulou who practiced Sōn at ZCR and went on to teach it at her yoga-studio in Thessaloniki, Greece observed that;

When I met Koreans in the Zen centre, the women and men - I'm always surprised about the inequality between the two genders. And all these things I can see also in the Dharma-Hall. I can see how the women, Korean women, treat Sunim [Hyongak]. They treat him like they are slaves in a way, very..... you know, “*I want to serve, I want to serve,*” and for me this is just awful. Awful because, it's boys... and men who are waiting for women to react like that... [ ] The difficulty of spreading Korean Zen - you know what it is? It's too formal, the chanting, the clothes, the way, the bows... it's too Korean.... it's *too* Korean. It's *really* nice! I think... I don't want to be rude. I have passed through this training and I understand the importance of this training and of this formality; of the bows, of the clothes, but I see it here in Thessaloniki in my Sala [yoga studio]. They cannot get in touch with all this Korean culture, they cannot get in touch with all these Korean “*some things*.” And if they can't get in touch with the practice... my question marks are if they can't connect with the practice, why not just do the practice as it is? Just sitting in silence, you know with small guidance. Contemporary Zen for me must pass through a procedure... it's not that we are not respecting where this tradition is coming from but we cannot bring it *as it is* in [to] the West.

There were no South Koreans at ZCR when I was there in January of 2018 but I knew what Dimitra meant immediately as she explained it. I had not simply witnessed it but had been surrounded by such devotion and ritual veneration for higher-ranking Buddhist monks and nuns in South Korea many times and have bowed to Buddha statues and

monastics many times. At ZCR in Germany, it felt distinctly strange to be in a Korean-type Sŏn-space and not to experience that collective ritual propriety however that very sense of absence in a new non-Korean environment was what led me to question the gendered nature of the ritual-etiquette for the first time.

However, was it Buddhist, specifically Sŏn, gendered or simply Korean culture? Having come to Germany from South Korea in order to distance himself from nationalist sentiments within South Korean Buddhism, Hyongak Sunim had removed the beautifully carved Buddha-stature from the Dharma-Hall and placed it in the monks' quarters as a way of de-Koreanizing the Dharma-Hall. In its stead over the narrow mantle serving as an altar he had placed a mirror framed in gold. However, this was not simply a removal of material-culture or a re-arrangement of décor but a recalibration of liturgy and ritual.

On the first day of entering the Dharma-Hall it was required to perform the prostrations normally performed in front of the Buddha-stature or image but in front of the monks guiding the Winter retreat while the other retreat participants sat around the edges of the hall. That meant kneeling down from a standing position and touching one's forehead to the floor with palms facing heavenward in the downward extremity of the position. This had to be done three times. Robert Sharf explains the roots of this ritual-practice, not in de-Koreanization but in Sòng Dynasty Chán;

The abbot's enlightenment was not some nebulous quality abiding in the inner recesses of his mind; it was constituted through complex communal ritual procedures, procedures that instantiated fundamental Mahāyāna doctrines concerning the constructed nature of all phenomena, the identity of form and emptiness, and the original enlightenment of all sentient beings (Lopez Jr 2009:261).

Both in public and in the ritualized formal interviews mentioned in the previous section, the Sōn master ‘literally took the place of a consecrated buddha icon and accepted the offerings and worship of the supplicant(s). Participants in such rites approached the abbot as if they were coming face-to-face with a living buddha. The icon of wood, stone, or metal has been replaced with a living icon of flesh and blood’(Foulk and Sharf 1993).



*Figure 13 Ascending the Dharma-Hall at Daewon-sa Korean Zen Temple, Młodnik near Opole, Poland.*

Sharf also describes the ‘Ascending the Dharma-Hall’ ritual - a complex performance in which the abbot ascended the altar, assumed the physical posture of a buddha image, and spoke with the authority of an enlightened patriarch...a meeting with a living icon. The veneration once directed at the Buddha-image in a conventional Buddha-Hall, ‘is now directed toward a flesh-and-blood abbot. The abbot’s “script,” wherein he lectures the

audience and responds to their queries, was, as we will see below, modelled on the patriarchal transmissions depicted in Chán lineage texts’(Lopez Jr 2009:263–65).



*Figure 14 Ascending the Dharma-Hall at Daewon-sa Korean Zen Temple, Poland*

The ‘de-Koreanization’ of the Dharma-Hall at ZCR had transpired in a very Korean way and the golden-circle mirror over the altar was almost identical to the ‘Consummate Circle’ emblem of the Won Buddhist Order across town on the other side of the Danube, a sect of South Korean modern Buddhism. Or it could be said the Dharma-Hall was de-Korean-ized in a very Chán way. It is worth noting here however that at the Hanmaum Zen Centre in Yangon Burma, the lay-South Koreans entering the Hanmaum centre which was on the grounds of a much larger and older Burmese temple complex, all bowed in front of the Abbess, the Ven. Hyedan Sunim an older ordained nun.

Dimitra reminded me that yoga or any other practice is not feminine in and of itself, and the same can be said of prostrations. However in the South Korean Sŏn and Buddhist-

space, the vast majority of times, it is women prostrating during their devotions or in front of a preaching monastic. Put quite simply, if most of the people sitting like a surrogate Buddha-icon are male and most of the people bowing before that archetype are female, the practice begins to take on a gendered quality. However, that is not to portray South Korean women as suffering from false-consciousness. Hoffman's blurring of South Korean gender categories makes more sense in a South Korean Buddhist context when considered in conjunction with Nirmla Salgado's (2013) ideas about agency.



*Figure 15 Ordination in a somewhat traditional style, incense scars once left on the front of the head above hair-line are now burned into the inside forearm.*

## 5.6 Form and Content in Sōn Rhetorical Pedagogy: the Ritual of Spontaneity

As both Foulk (1993) and Sharf (Lopez Jr 2009:262) observe, even the seemingly spontaneous ‘Dharma-Combat’ interviews (K. *tokch’am*, J. *dokusan*, C. 獨參) in which a student’s knowledge and understanding are tested, are highly ritualistic and have been so for over one thousand years. It should be no real surprise then that a student of the KSZ notes that the answers in such *kongan* interviews are not only prescribed and very specific to each *kongan* but easily found out in advance of the interview either through overhearing other students or being around the practice-environment for some time. One respondent in Warsaw specifically mentioned the formalization of the *kongan* interview which is supposed to test the student’s insight through spontaneous answers;

So I think it might be a little bit too easy you know? When... when you are in the personal interview and you... you are let's say even explained [told] what you should do, why you do it - you know? [ ] I once had this conversation with one Zen Master that I gave the answer to what for me was the same but in another way. I expressed it in another way and he answered ‘No -this is a Kwanum school so we don’t do like that.’ Like we have the alphabet you know, the alphabet of answers to koāns. It’s formalized and how to say... hmmm... I think formalized, it's not the word. It's like you have the alphabet of letters and you have to say, ‘A’. You cannot say other sounds. Even if you have this kind of mind. ...yes you think ‘A’ but you want to express in another way...if you know the answer maybe the way how you present it should be open - you know - to the situation. ... so it’s like, ...it’s very fixed.

[Interview E, Poland]

Sharf states his contention that ‘the Ascending the Hall ceremony is not a sham or a lifeless substitute for the “real thing” but rather a recognition and affirmation that form and content are inseparable... monastic life may be play, but without such play there



would be no transmission of the Dharma’ (Lopez Jr 2009:267). While recognizing Sharf’s point from the perspective of the long-established East Asian rubric for all types of practice and public-performance – ‘enter through the form’ (K. *hyōng*, J. *katachi de hairu* 形で入る, C. 形) which is an approach adopted not only in Sōn, Zen and Chán ritual but in martial arts, the tea-ceremony and other arts, I would disagree that form and content are inseparable. There are many areas of contemporary life in which an over-emphasis on ‘form’ or outward appearance is indicative of injustice or structural discrimination, patriarchy or control.



*Figure 16 Beautiful Appearance, Beautiful Soul*

The photos in Fig. 14 and Fig. 15 of a South Korean plastic-surgery subway advertisement might seem unrelated at first glance but a closer reading of the caption will give an indication of the cultural relationship between form and content – “beautiful appearance, beautiful soul.” Though the massive uptake of plastic-surgery in South Korea is usually blamed on “Western” cultural imperialism, there is a traditional belief within

South Korean society probably stemming from Buddhism that physical beauty is a result of good actions in past lives (good karma). By that logic, people who are viewed as ‘ugly’ according to this limited standard are often stigmatized and literally viewed as bad, morally inferior or debauched in some way due to their physical appearance and such people struggle to get jobs in South Korea, many of them availing of plastic surgery simply to gain employment.



*Figure 17 Beautiful Appearance, Beautiful Soul*

As South Korean women in a country where the uptake for plastic surgery is amongst the highest in the world, many Buddhist nuns in South Korea, have had the double-eyelid surgery done in their lay life before becoming a renunciant. Ieshia Smith bridges the gap ‘between Nation-Branding and Personal Branding’ and the need to have an attractive face in the workforce and labour markets in her research into plastic surgery culture in South Korea where Kim Hyun Mee contends citizenship itself is gendered (Smith 2014:35-40).

While form must be observed first and foremost and is paramount in South Korean culture, a type of ‘pretense is the path to realization,’ it is negligible if the content ever catches up with the form. Recent clerical sex-scandals at the highest levels of the South Korean Buddhist church demonstrate that a focus on form is as much a smokescreen in South Korean Buddhism as it is in Irish Catholicism. Furthermore, a focus on form in the case of the supportive labour of Buddhist lay-women obscures its devotional, ritualistic and spiritual content and deprives South Korean Buddhist lay-women of agency.

### **5.7 Agency and Empowerment; From Buddhist Lay-women to Buddhist**

#### **Islamophobia**

In the parallel congregations within the continuum of transnational Sōn, agency and empowerment have different meanings for non-Korean Sōn students in Global Zen contexts and for Sōn affiliates within ethnic South Korean Sōn Buddhist-spaces. It was Crystal Goh in Hong Kong who drew my attention to the place of South Korean Buddhism within the generally white-dominated nature of North American Buddhism in relation to which McNicholl states;

studies that give greater consideration to the role of race, ethnicity and embodiment open up interpretations of Buddhism and Buddhist history’ and that ‘Buddhist Studies scholars must now begin the task of addressing the construction of racialized, ethnicized, and gendered Buddhist identities as transnational and international processes (Lum and Harvey 2018).

Jessica Starling cites Veena Das and Renu Addlakha (2001:259) to describe an understanding of the self in the context of Asian Buddhist lay-women which ‘clearly does not align with “the fetishized autonomous subject of liberal political discourse;” instead,

they seek to overcome attachment to their individual selves through the disciplined cultivation of morality (*sila*)’ (Starling 2019:131). Uri Kaplan’s (2017) research on South Korean Buddhist educational programmes for laity bears out this point – though there is institutional exclusion and the discriminatory view that “skirt-Buddhism” is inferior to a philosophically superior *namsŏng Pulgyo* or male-Buddhism as discussed in chapter two, South Korean women’s agency and active participation in becoming better Buddhists for themselves and each other is not compromised by this climate.

A common thread between these parallel congregations then is the enactment of Sŏn empowerment albeit in different ways. Buddhist agency enacted by South Korean women in Sŏn-spaces contradicts a Western liberal position that ‘effectively places the subjects in a feminist narrative in which their thoughts and actions are considered to be deficient with reference to what they *should* be’ (Salgado 2013:21). In Hong Kong we saw how non-Korean Sŏn empowered members of the LGBT community in a socio-economic environment which one Sŏn/ Chán student Amanda notes – echoing the thoughts of the respondent in Interview H in section 5.3.3 who was the Asia Pacific HR manager in an American multinational - has many powerful successful women and in which Buddhist nuns are highly respected if not more respected than their male-counterparts in quite a few cases.

As much as a yoga-informed Sŏn practice is an empowerment practice in the sense that it can be an attempt to take autonomous independent control of one’s own re-enchantment, communal temple-labour carried out and co-ordinated predominantly by women in ethnic

South Korean temples on the peninsula or elsewhere in the Global North in parallel-congregations expresses a devotional-agency that participates in the Sōn-sacrifice or at least in Sōn practice by directly supporting the Sōn-sacrifice. Asad's (2003:67-100) discussion of agency in terms of action and pain theorizing that 'pain is not simply a cause of action but can also itself be a kind of action'(Asad 2003:69).

In Europe, Sōn empowerment and agency manifests in divergent ways. In "Buddhist Islamophobia; Actors, Tropes, Contexts," Iselin Frydenlund shows how in the Burmese context, Buddhist ideology is used to justify Islamophobic sentiment; 'the tale of the corruption of the world needs villains; its rectification needs heroes. The villains in contemporary Buddhist protectionist ideology are Muslims; its heroes are Buddhist monks who with all means will fight 'islamisation' and protect Buddhism (Frydenlund 2018:280). Frydenlund shows how Buddhism is used to construct difference and as a way to achieve an anti-Islam identity (Jerryson and Frydenlund 2020) and elsewhere shows how 'Buddhist implicit militarism' manifests in 'monastic-military ritual interaction' in the Sri Lankan context (Frydenlund 2017).

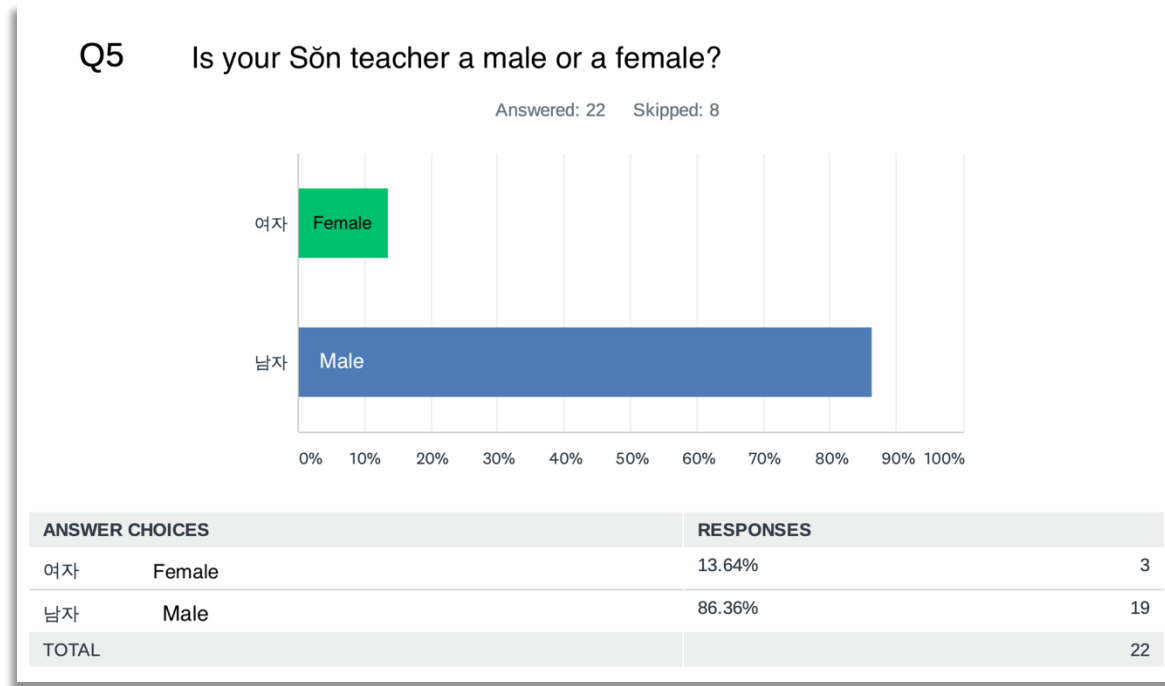
As I have shown above, 'monastic-military ritual interaction' is also not only a feature of South Korean Sōn but was in a sense the very genesis of South Korean Sōn trans-nationalism and the gendered Sōn-sacrifice and narrative of the 'hero's journey' implicit within Sōn Buddhism with its Zen 'courage' provides an ideology of 'rectification' and 'justified defence' for the far-right in certain European contexts by participating in the

Sōn/ Zen sacrifice. In other areas European Sōn acts as an amplifier for corporeal based notions of spirituality based on Yoga practice.

In tracing institutional Buddhism's complicity in the imperial Japanese war-effort, Bruce Grover (2020:2-3) shows the origins of a 'highly nationalistic interpretation of Zen' and how 'the message of self-cultivation produced by these reworked Zen and neo-Confucian concepts provided a sense of self-empowerment, agency and meaning.' This 'ideology of empowerment' in turn 'deeply impacted the reception of, and reaction to, biological deterministic concepts of race and racial improvement'(ibid:3,8).

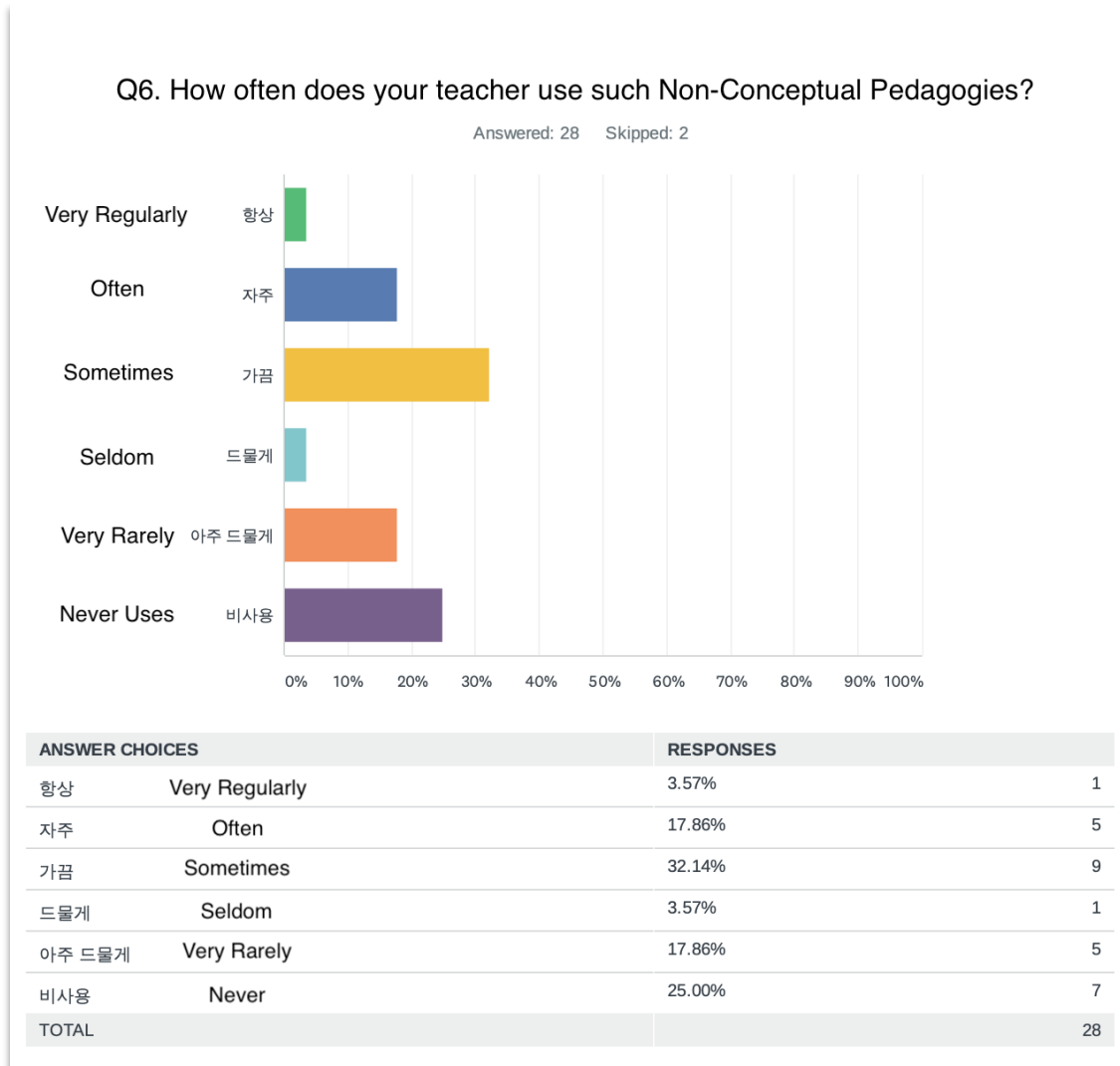
Paride Stortini (2021:21) demonstrates one of the routes through which such ideas were appropriated in Europe through the 'divisive' figure of Julius Evola (1898–1974) writing in late 1950s post-fascist Italy and Stortini also suggests how an inclination towards themes of progressive self-realization can attract some right-leaning people to various Buddhist movements rather than the movements themselves (ibid). Peter Romaskiewicz (2020) demonstrates themes of a 'religious xenophobia of Buddhism' in the early twentieth-century media in the United States where in more recent times Adeana McNicholl notes the emergence of an R-Alt Buddhism expressly 'tailored to the fascist Western man'(McNicholl 2020).

## 5.8 Online Survey – Perception of Teachers from Students’ Perspectives



*Figure 18 Response to Survey Question 5*

The survey of South Korean monastics and lay-people showed that 19 out of 22 respondents (86.36%) had a male Sŏn teacher. A different sample of greater size might show a more even spread however this is nothing terribly unusual in the South Korean context in that the guiding meditation-teacher for an individual monk or nun is often different from the monk or nun from whom they received their monastic precepts and ordination.



*Figure 19 Response to Survey Question 6*

25% or 7 out of 28 South Korean Buddhist survey participants responded that their teachers never used NCPs while 17.86% (5/28) responded that their teachers often used NCPs. 9/28 respondents (32.14%) said that their teachers sometimes used Non-conceptual pedagogy. Whether there is a direct correlation between the pedagogy of male Sŏn masters and the frequency of their use of NCPs is also hard to say but a similar



percentage of respondents also observed that they observed other teachers apart from their own used NCPs only sometimes as seen in Fig. 18 below.

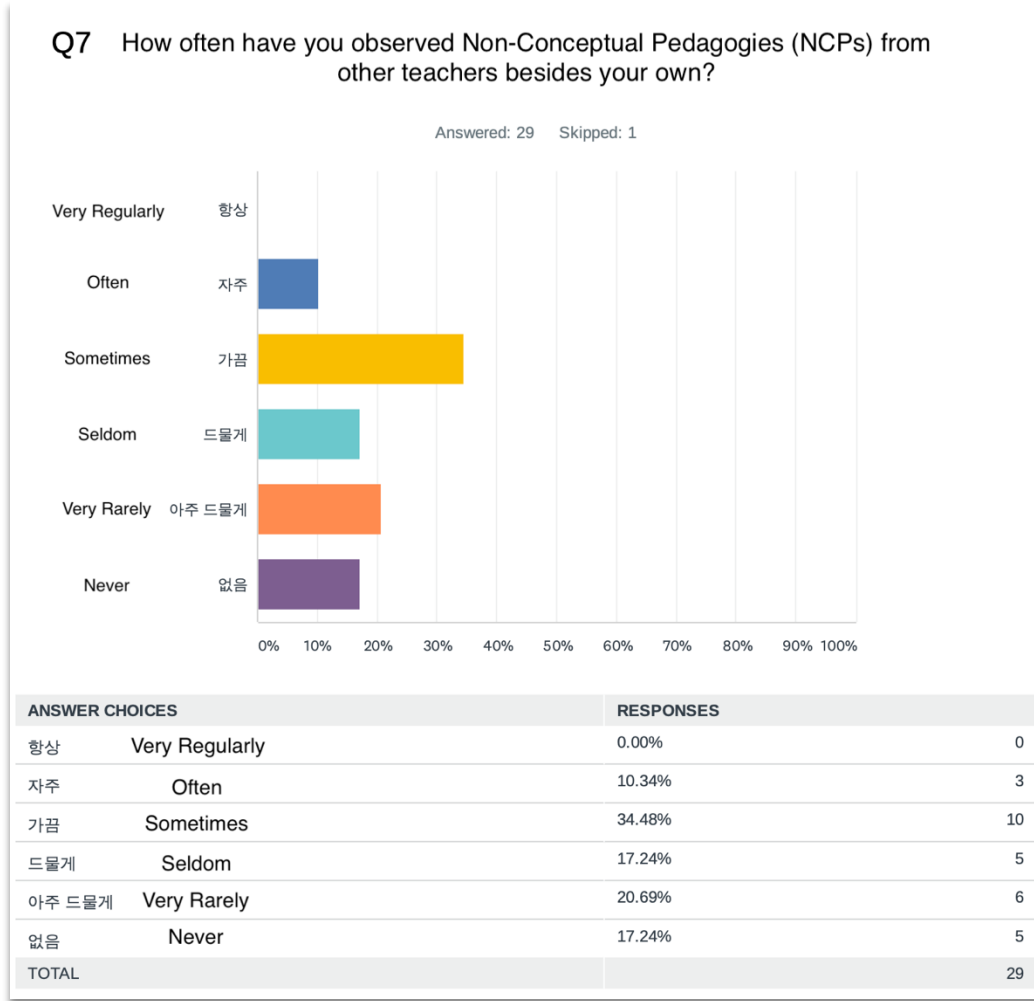


Figure 20 Response to Survey Question 7

In response to the question as to how often NCPs are effective in Sŏn teaching, the following results in the table in Fig. 19 showed that 10/28 or almost 36% of respondents believed that NCPs were effective between 20 - 49% of the time.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
전부 Always Effective	3.57%	1
80 – 99% of the time	17.85%	5
50 – 79% of the time	3.57%	1
20 – 49% of the time	35.72%	10
1 – 19% of the time	25%	7
효과 없음 Never Effective	14.29%	4
Total		28

Figure 21 Response to Survey Question 8

As was shown in the previous chapter, while Polish practitioners might possibly be less averse to robe & ritual due to a post-Catholic context, Dimitra in Greece stated that the liturgical and ceremonial aspect was too “churchy” and tied up with Korean identity making it hard for Greek practitioners to connect with the core practice of meditation as well as pointing to differences in congregations. As was also shown in the previous chapter, well over half (58.62% or 17/29) of South Koreans respondents felt that westerners could not understand [South] Korean Buddhism without an understanding of Korean culture of which bowing, etiquette, liturgy and ceremony are a part. A further 18/28 (64.29%) of respondents felt that NCPs were not effective for teaching non-Korean students.

Even given the limitations of the sample-size, this is suggestive in Chán, Sōn and Zen terms because NCPs are by their nature gestural and very often non-verbal, “not relying on words or letters,” to quote classical Chán (C. 不立文字, K. *pulibmuncha*). Yet the data seems to suggest some kind of ethno-linguistic or cultural component to understanding

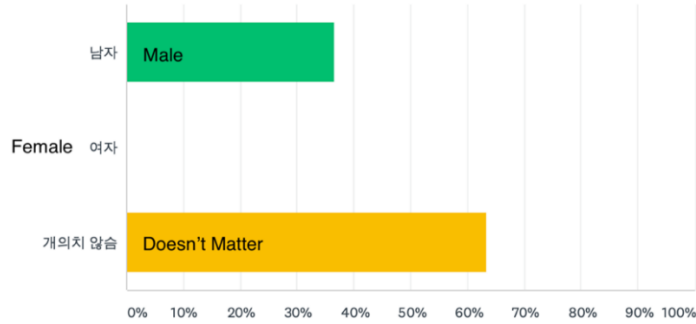
NCPs is perceived by South Koreans which itself resonates with the idea of parallel-congregations and a public-private dichotomy.

The table above shows in a general sense that with 10/28 feeling that NCPs were only effective between 20% ~ 49% of the time, a quarter of respondents feeling that NCPs were effective less than 20% of the time and 4/28 feeling that NCPs were essentially useless pedagogically - the majority of respondents (approx. 75%) felt that NCPs were only effective less than half of the time they were used. This is also not so unusual in that the Sŏn/ Chán canon is full of anecdotes about disciples who took repetitive instances of NCPs before they attained their spiritual realization.

There are also stories of students such as the Sixth Patriarch of Chán who got Enlightenment instantly without any prior Chán Buddhist training and before he even entered a monastery as an illiterate lay-man selling firewood. This accounts perhaps for the 1 respondent whose opinion it was that NCPs are always effective while simultaneously contradicting the large proportion of respondents who felt that a knowledge of Korean culture was necessary and that NCPs are ineffective for non-Korean students of Sŏn.

**Q14** As a Buddhist or a Buddhist monastic, would you prefer to learn Sŏn from an eminent male teacher or an eminent female teacher or it doesn't matter to you?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 0

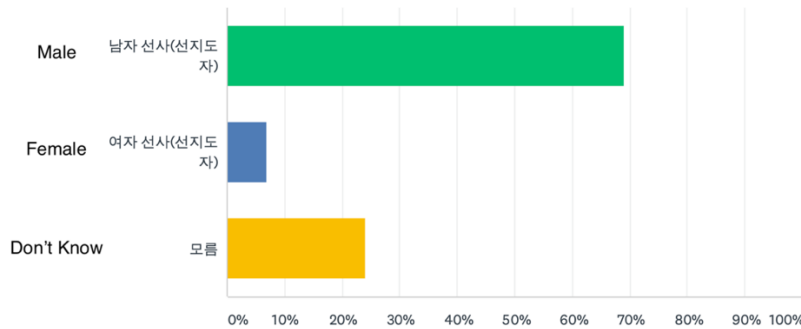


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
남자	Male	36.67%	11
여자	Female	0.00%	0
개워치 않습	Doesn't Matter	63.33%	19
TOTAL			30

Figure 22 Response to Survey Question 14

**Q9** In your experience, do male or female Sŏn teachers use NCPs more often?

Answered: 29 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
남자 선사(선지도자)	Male	68.97%	20
여자 선사(선지도자)	Female	6.90%	2
모름	Don't Know	24.14%	7
TOTAL			29

Figure 23 Response to Survey Question 9

In Fig. 20 above, 11 out of 30 respondents said they would prefer to learn Sŏn from an eminent male teacher. While 19/30 said that the gender of the teacher didn't matter, it is interesting to note however that no respondents whatsoever answered that they would actually prefer to learn from a female teacher. In Fig. 21 above, 20/29 South Korean respondents answered that according to their experience, male teachers use non-conceptual Sŏn pedagogy more often than female teachers.

Just 2 respondents answered that female teachers use NCPs more often and 7/29 answered that they didn't know. To be fair, as we saw in Fig. 20, 63.33% of respondents (19/30) answered that it didn't matter to them if they learn from an eminent male teacher or an eminent female teacher yet it is noteworthy that zero percent explicitly stated that they would prefer to learn from a female teacher and male teachers are perceived as using NCPs far more often.

Whatever the ultimate reason why well over half of respondents felt that westerners could not understand NCPs without understanding Korean culture, it seems to at least suggest that in the relative 'privacy' of domestic Buddhist culture in South Korea, there is a keen sense of difference separating the domestic and trans-national congregations and it is very possible that this difference is gendered given that while 63.3% of respondents said it didn't matter to them whether they learned Sŏn from a male or a female master, 36.6% of respondents answered that they'd prefer a male teacher. Zero percent of respondents answered that they'd prefer a female teacher.

## 5.9 Conclusion

I expanded my data-set to take in temples and spaces beyond the territorially bounded notion of a fixed “Europe” which I would rather view as following some of the transnational flows involved in transnational Sŏn rather than focusing on the rhizomes themselves. Using the snow-balling technique of interviewing, I was able to connect with Subong-sa temple in Hong Kong via a Buddhist nun I interviewed in Poland and I was also able to attend Sŏn-spaces in Bangkok and Yangon, interview Zen masters in Singapore and in South Korea as well as conduct an online survey of South Korean Buddhists.

In attempting to assess the impact of gender on Sŏn pedagogy from the perspective of students, I formulated an expanded version of Numrich’s parallel congregations and noticed that students of Sŏn are impacted by gender sometimes in different ways but sometimes in quite similar ways within each of these parallel congregations. For a male student in Germany who was a practitioner of yoga, the practice was intensely physical and ‘tough’ while for another student in Poland a certain masculinized post-liberation *kundaehwa*-style of Sŏn practice and latent rhetoric of blood sacrifice and heroism within it seemed to appeal to his sense of crisis and of Europe being in need of defence while at the very same temple Sŏn practice for a female-practitioner was an aspect of her yoga-based mindfulness practice as it was for students in Germany.

Sor-ching Low (2010:280) notes ‘a disjunction between the Asian reception of the [Sŏn] Zen master’s image and the Western one’ where in Asia, the relationship between master

and student itself is far more ritualized. By observing the absence of South Korean lay-women in European Sōn spaces, I theorized Sōn-rhetorical pedagogy not just as communal but as a collaborative act wherein entrenched normative gender roles can help to construct the Sōn-master's masculinized 'skilful means' and spiritual insight in ritual Sōn settings. However, as Low observes above that the relationship between master and student in Asia is more ritualized, it seems nonetheless to be as collaborative in European contexts as the Sōn-master not only participates in his students' empowerment but the Sōn-master's sacrifice and ritual rhetoric of heroism in European context can be appropriated by the right-wing fringes or the yogic-mindfulness mainstream.

The results of the online survey seem to suggest that, with respect to Low's disjunction in the reception of the Sōn/ Zen master's image between South Korea and Western countries, a large proportion of South Koreans feel that "Westerners" are at least incapable of interacting with a South Korean Sōn master in a way for Sōn teaching to be effective whether this is on the basis of a lack of knowledge of Korean culture as a prerequisite or a simple inability to comprehend NCPs. While Anderl (2011) states that Meditation School rhetoric is not concerned with being persuasive and while the ecclesiastical Sōn/ Zen master's skilful means might be non-reciprocal, the agency of Sōn students both male and female means that the master's spiritual/blood sacrifice and its ritual performance can be collaborated in and appropriated in parallel congregations for different purposes. That is to say that trans-national Sōn is still pronouncedly ritualistic and that that ritualism can be appropriated for different ends.

Put another way, while Sōn rhetorical pedagogy became increasingly available to non-monastics throughout the twentieth-century, it is questionable to what extent it has laicized if at all and ritual pedagogy signifies different things in different congregations where there are different degrees of reciprocity relative to the ritual-laicized dynamic of student-teacher relations in Sōn. Zen Master Dae Bong who is Seung Sahn's disciple says of him, 'he learned from his students. He was affected by us. He was the best student, that's why he was the Zen master'(ibid:282). Skilful-means, Sōn/ Zen pedagogy and NCP's depend on the ability to discern, adapt to and learn from one's student's which will be explored in the following chapter.



## Chapter Six

### The Impact of Gender on Sōn Pedagogy from the Perspective of Teachers



Figure 24 The Second Patriarch of Chán Huikē in Contemplation by Shí Kè 石恪 c. 10th century

*Finally, in a surge of zealous desperation and with thoughts of the trials of former enlightened ones, Huikē took a knife and cut off his left arm and placed it in front of Bodhidharma. Permitted at last, through this extraordinary demonstration of self-sacrifice to receive the teaching, Huikē asked Bodhidharma; “My mind is not at peace; please pacify it for me.” Bodhidharma answered, “Bring out your mind and I will pacify it for you.” Huikē said, “Although I’ve sought it, I cannot find it.” “There,” Bodhidharma replied, “I have pacified your mind.”*

Shaolin Temple, Mt. Song, Henan Province, China, early 6<sup>th</sup> Century  
(McRae 1986:16).

**Zen Master Dae Kwan:** Bring out your shell and show it to me.

Post-meditation practice communal Question and Answer time  
Subong-sa Temple, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, June 2019

## 6.1 Introduction

The question as to how Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy might engage with a non-Korean learner set and if feminine etiquette serves the purpose of making male rhetorical pedagogy appear more sudden was presented in the findings in the previous chapter where I suggested that in the South Korean context, NCPs are co-constructed. This chapter considers the impact of gender on ecclesiastic Sŏn pedagogy from the perspective of teachers as due to the rigidly defined gender roles in South Korean society (though as Hoffman shows, not necessarily polarized), gender seemed to offer the best chance of observing variations in Sŏn pedagogy and the rhetoric within it which was often of an egalitarian tone.

The aim of this research has been to assess the impact of gender on Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy and how Sŏn and indeed Zen might adapt expediently in new European contexts and I began this research with such questions as; could a woman, due to the differing demands placed upon her in terms of etiquette and language, avail of radical or even moderate subitist rhetoric in the same way as her male counterparts? Due to rigidly defined gender roles in Korean society, might a Buddhist nun only be able to engage in gradualist rhetoric? I also began with a number of sub-questions which were;

1. To what extent will ethnic Korean teachers adapt their teaching style (if at all) and deviate from traditional Sŏn rhetoric when interacting with learners in various European cultural contexts?
2. Does a female Sŏn teacher have access to the modes of expression necessary to engage in radical-subitist rhetoric i.e. the ability to switch between the honorific and vulgar forms

of speech at will (or is she perhaps limited to gradualist Sŏn-rhetoric and pedagogy due to the limitations imposed on her by the Korean language or even that rhetoric itself)?

Where the last chapter explored the impact of gender on ecclesiastical Sŏn pedagogy from the perspective of students and the reception of that teaching by students, this chapter asks how what the impact of gender is on Sŏn pedagogy from the perspective of teachers and if the semiotic function of ecclesiastic Sŏn pedagogy is the same in national and transnational contexts.

### **6.2.1 *Kundaehwa* Military-Style Sŏn**

This section attempts to trace the post-war *kundaehwa* or ‘militarized’ Sŏn found in South Korea in the post-Vietnam War period. Chong-ko Sunim, an ordained monastic-scholar of the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn and disciple of Sŏn Master Daechaeng whom along with Kim Iryŏp was and remains one of twentieth-century South Korea’s most famous female Sŏn masters, speaks of impact and debate around monastic-militaristic interaction in South Korea;

...one of the complaints among the ordained world here in Korea is, well.. what I guess would translate as a *militarization* of Buddhism, right? In Korean they call it a *kundaehwa*. ....and it’s an artifact of the Korean War and mandatory military service. This is with the men, the men are bringing attitudes and a little bit of harshness. It’s not Buddhism; it’s stuff they picked up in the army...And they’re bringing it to Buddhist training now.

While Chong-ko Sunim mentions the Korean War, given the level of military-chaplaincy within the South Korean army during the Vietnam War, it seems safe to trace the

militarizing influence on contemporary Sŏn of which Chong-ko speaks of, to that war also. Indeed, the militarizing influence of modern Japanese Zen in relation to which I have argued that twentieth-century Korean Sŏn helped to construct (see appendix), exerted an influence beyond the Pacific War/ WWII and into the Vietnam War.

Hyongak Sunim in ZCR also mentions a certain militarization;

[South] Korean monks get this rigidity about their thinking, a kind of militarily-trained orthodoxy...about the genders, about sexuality, about government, about things, so they get this kind of - you know - a kind of ‘lock-step’ way of thinking (January 2018, ZCR, Germany).

As mentioned in the introduction, Charles Armstrong (2007:299) has demonstrated the legacy of the Japanese imperial army within the South Korean armed forces after independence through the Korean War and through those active in Vietnam from 1964 to 1973, the year before the eminent scholar of Korean Buddhism Robert Buswell arrived in South Korea. Buswell (1993:19,70) who wrote the first western account of his years as an ordained monk in South Korea’s most prestigious Sŏn monastery Songgwang-sa temple from 1974 onwards, describes being ‘truly astonished’ at the number of monks he encountered who had spent time on the front-lines during the Vietnam War. For many of those monks, Buswell comments that, the monastery offered refuge from the uncertainties of post-war civilian life and similarly provided an environment that was ‘organized... disciplined and structured (rather like the army)’(Buswell 1993:71).

Many of the older officers amongst the 325,517 South Korean troops in Vietnam, like then President of South Korea (and professed Buddhist) Park Chung-hee (1917 – 1979, in

office 1962-1979), had been officers in the Japanese military before independence and received their training in Japanese colonial military units. Most of the ROK infantry units were made up of men who had witnessed the brutality of the Korean War first-hand as children. Later South Korean presidents Chun Doo-hwan (b.1931, in office 1980-1988) and Roh Tae Woo (b.1932, in office 1988-1993) were also battle hardened Vietnam veterans as were the ROK troops who ‘led the bloody suppression of the Kwangju Uprising in South Korea in May 1980’(ibid:298).

It is here we not only see the intersection between the martial-ethic of *bushido* constructed in Japan during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Benesch 2011, 2014) but the enduring effect of it in the later armies of Japan’s former colony. The powerful effect of that ethic which had been the impetus behind Japan’s militarized imperial expansion in the first half of the twentieth-century was also to transfuse from Japan in the second-half of the twentieth-century, now a neo-colony of its former enemy the United States. Recollecting his tour of duty in Vietnam 1968-1969, Karl Marlantes testifies to working with a U.S. Marine Corps jeep driver who ‘had gone immediately after high school to Japan to study martial arts in a Zen monastery. After several years he joined the Marine Corps as an enlisted man. He was *fiercely Zen* [emphasis added], into not only the technical aspects of the martial arts but the spiritual as well. He would take notes of mistakes he made during the day and review them at night’(Marlantes 2011:125). That was circa 1968 and that Marine jeep-driver’s Zen was almost certainly inculcated by Japanese nationalist scholars writing through the early twentieth-century and after Japanese surrender in 1945 which

deliberately conflated *bushido* with Zen Buddhism (Nitobe 1900; Nukariya 1913; Suzuki 1941, 1959).

It is worth noting that that martial-ethic of *bushido* persists in popular culture today within the field of contemporary mixed-martial arts competition which is heavily infused with orientalist and Japanized rhetoric of Samurai culture; the UFC fighter Dustin Poirier has the Japanese characters for *bushido* tattooed on his chest and Canadian UFC champion Georges St. Pierre sometimes wore an Imperial flag of Japan-bandana into the octagon for his competitive bouts throughout his career. It is also worth noting that as Japan continues to re-militarize, they had wanted to use the same Imperial flag during the Tokyo Olympics. It is hard for Western consumers of Japanese pop-culture to appreciate the dismay of South Koreans and Chinese who might protest the use of such a flag when the rhetoric of *bushido* is uncontested and quite socially acceptable in Western culture having been appropriated into that culture throughout the twentieth-century through the works of Japanese nationalist scholars such as Suzuki and Kaiten.

Zen Master Dae Kwang (not to be confused with Zen Master Dae Kwan in Hong Kong) is the abbot of the Kwan Yin Chan Lin monastery in Singapore. He refers to Japanese Zen specifically as ‘Samurai Style’;

because there's this - Japanese particularly - the idea that you know, only twenty five year old guys can do this [practice]. So in the Kwanum School we call it “Samurai style.” [ ] ...you know the *Kwanum* School of Zen leans a little bit more towards the Japanese end of the deal than towards the Chinese style on that dimension. [ ] But definitely Zen Master Seung Sahn didn't like Japanese “Samurai style” though he obviously borrowed a lot of stuff. If you look at Kwanum School of Zen teaching closely you'll notice that it's

basically Hakuin 白隠 (1686 – 1769) [Japanese Zen revivalist and innovative teacher]. I mean he [Zen Master Seung Sahn] lived in Japan for six years but aside from that Hakuin’s teaching is so clear. Maybe what they have in common is just clarity but he [Zen Master Seung Sahn] definitely borrowed some techniques we use from the Japanese and then he does all kinds of things that are *not* Japanese. I think that the fluidity then and to have a “great question” seems more Korean. That's more Korean. So he hasn’t a hint, he's not prejudiced about it, about something – he just took and borrowed whatever worked which is real Zen I suppose. It's... I mean obviously probably what the sixth patriarch or whoever, actually did at the time; borrowed the whole idea of the *kongan* from the Taoists.

Zen Master Dae Kwang’s comments show that Zen Master Seung Sahn was averse to the rigorous and austere “Samurai style” associated with Japanese Zen practice and he borrowed Japanese teaching methodologies as well as elsewhere if they worked however Zen Master Seung Sahn was criticized from within SKSB during his life-time and was, like Taego Order priests, subjected to the same accusations of being “Japan-ized” from circles within the Jogye Order. It is significant that Zen Master Seung Sahn’s eclectic teaching methodology and pedagogy was enabled by being outside South Korea which further highlights the schism between the domestic/heritage and trans-national/convert congregations. Zen Master Seung Sahn’s approach was not only pejoratively demeaned through recourse to a nationalist anti-identity but the classically Sŏn/ Zen Buddhist aspect of his pedagogy in the sense of the established Buddhist term ‘expedient [teaching] means’ which is said to define enlightened teaching, was conveniently ignored.

Domestic *kundaehwa* Sŏn practice which has been influenced by postulants’ time spent in the South Korean compulsory military service tells us more about the gendered South

Korean military-industrial complex and it's very *South Korean* Sōn Buddhism than it does about the pre-Korean War, pre-liberation, Chosōn or Koryō Dynasty Sōn Buddhism which South Korean Sōn constructs by laying claim to. Criticisms of Zen Master Seung Sahn's pedagogy and domestic Taego Order non-celibacy as being "Japan-ized" - but no similar charge of "Japan-ized" being levelled against Taego Order priests in trans-national context – are a function of the same post- colonial militarization on the south of the peninsula. Referring then to Korean-identity discourses on chastity discussed in section 2.4, military-style Sōn is almost never viewed as a "Japan-ized" compared to the way the 'impure' practice of priests taking wives is because serving the ethno-nation is the greatest thing an ethnic [South] Korean, Buddhist or otherwise, can do.

By extension, this can be viewed as a process by which female monastics and perhaps South Korean women in general are socialized by providing an archetype of [South] Korean femininity in Buddhist form and by associating anything but a state of chaste purity with the threat of losing claim to one's [South] Korean-ness in a similar move to the way in which first-wave feminism in Korea was co-opted by nationalism in the early twentieth century.<sup>52</sup> The distant martial roots of Sōn at the Shaolin Temple and the precedent of monk-militias throughout pre-South Korean and East Asian history provide a pseudo historical-basis upon which to construct male monastics as defenders of the ethno-nation. The case of the Taego Order's celibacy for women could be viewed as

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<sup>52</sup> The notion of "Korean-ness" is highly contested in post-colonial South Korea with Buddhism defending itself against often extreme Protestant Christianity with claims of legitimate, traditional and true Korean-ness in contrast to supposedly less-Korean, westernized Christians.



female monastics being co-opted into legitimating the South Korean military-industrial ethno-nation and the gender order within it.

### **6.2.2 Ritual Etiquette, *Aegyo* and the anti-ritual of Divination**

My second Pilot Study which consisted of a stay at a Korean Buddhist temple in Poland (October 2018) revealed how Korean monks and nuns are taught to ‘perform’ being a monk or a nun, right down to how to walk and how to hold themselves during their noviciate training. This caused me to consider a well-known ritual of female South Korean behaviour known as *aegyo* 愛嬌 and use it simply to theorize the performative aspect of gender in South Korea.

While it would be viewed as inappropriate for a South Korean Buddhist nun to behave in the manner of *aegyo*, – the seemingly spontaneous though often rehearsed display of coquettishness - following Powers (2009), a Buddhist monk can be viewed as having more ‘skilful means,’ being more ‘enlightened’ the more he adopts an uncompromising *kundaehwa*-informed masculinity which is to say, Buddhahood accentuates his masculinity while a nun must suppress her culturally constructed femininity in order to imply insight or even just pedagogical authority. That is to say rather that insight and pedagogical authority are implied through social-constructions associated with masculinity. In a contrast made quite stark or perhaps created by this mode of ritual masculinity (and vice versa), *aegyo* can be viewed as a ritualistic performance of femininity purely for the Korean male and is in that sense dialectical, helping to construct his masculinity.

South Korean Buddhist sensitivities will surely rebel at the juxtaposition of *kundaehwa* Sŏn-rhetoric and *aegyo* but as two polarized examples of South Korean ritual propriety they will serve the purpose of demonstrating not only the ritual division but also the gendered division of social interaction in South Korea. ‘Confucian texts for women’s education in the Chosŏn dynasty seek to teach women ‘how to behave properly in a feminine way’ (Koh 2008:356). The educational purpose is based on the Confucian concept of *ye* 禮.

‘Codes of conduct regarding the relationship between men and women are based on the concept of *pyŏl* 別. Generally speaking, according to *ye*, men should behave in a masculine way and women should behave in a feminine way’ (Koh 2008:356). Kim Taeyeon goes on to show how these divisions and roles are politicized (Kim 2003:98).

The dramaturgical aspect of Sŏn as a consequence of Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy is also a performance which is collaborated in by students, a notion which was introduced in the previous chapter. As noted, the most conspicuous absence in the Dharma-Hall of European Sŏn sites, is that of the *posalnim*. From the perspective of women networking and performing pastoral work and helping to accentuate the male-rhetoric, we can ask how much of learning in ecclesiastical Sŏn, Chán and Zen settings is also collaborative?

Students collaborate in the teaching and pedagogy of the Sŏn Master but is that also a form of auto-didacticism, learning through the socialization of ritual propriety and the ‘patterning’ mentioned by McRae (McRae 2003:47–48). Is that collaboration which could be read as a veneration of the pedagogy (ritual of the master), the veneration of the

master themselves and thus the long hallowed hall of the Patriarchs – to what extent does that collaboration constitute the learning of Sōn (which is obviously supplemented with the rituals of meditation and sutra chanting)?

Dale S. Wright frames it thus - ‘defiance of ritual is almost as traditional a Zen gesture as the ritual itself – an “anti-ritual ritual” that has been modelled for them in the classic texts’ (Heine and Wright 2007:5).<sup>53</sup> Wright quotes Emile Durkheim’s notion that ritual is a society’s communal means of communicating the culture’s beliefs and ideas to individual members. Besides the ritualistic act of meditation itself as a way of ‘enacting’ the Buddha’s Enlightenment, other more overtly ritualistic acts (at least to western eyes) such as chanting or bowing, is ‘a way to internalize these constraints, altering the way they understood themselves and the way they lived in the world’ (Heine and Wright 2007:7-11).

Kate Crosby (King and Brockington 2005:243) has shown in the Theravāda context that devotion can play a key-role in meditative practice so we should not be so quick to dismiss the ritual devotions of South Korean women in Europe or in their native context.

Such a devotional aspect can also be found elsewhere in South Korea in the divination

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<sup>53</sup> Taken from the website of the Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism; “*If one is enlightened, one... becomes a person of great freedom who is independent and free... The enlightened are like space, nothing at all can confine them. The enlightened are not shackled... as they are free whenever and wherever. In this way, enlightenment, being an ever so great freedom, is not restricted by any realm at all. The enlightened rest the mind.... And so people of the Way must not be thought of as akin to leisurely strolling immortals outside of this world with nothing to do... This is because the enlightened correctly handle all things ceaselessly with a mind that has nothing to do, a mind that is at leisure*” (koreanbuddhism.net 2014). The tautological rhetoric of ‘a person of great freedom who is independent and free’ notwithstanding, there is an implicit aspiration for a life of aristocratic leisure. One begins to wonder if the practice of rigid ritual-propriety over many years also constructs this ‘freedom’ by instituting a point of departure for it.

and mediumship of female Shamans who in terms of gender performance could be said to occupy a space between a hyper-masculinized Sŏn and *aegyo*. Lehrer (2019) has described how piety is gendered in the Sri Lankan Buddhist context and in this sense, Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy can be viewed as a form of socialization.

I was unable to answer such questions as; might a Korean Buddhist (female) teacher have greater access to radical-subitist rhetoric outside of Korea and would a female Sŏn teacher attempt to teach Sŏn differently outside South Korea compared to in Korea (if she could even teach at home)? At the beginning of this research, I had hoped to interview South Korean nuns at the Lotus Mind Temple in London but the temple closed during this research. I had also hoped to interview a South Korean Zen teacher in Germany but she was unavailable for interview when I made contact.

### **6.3 The Idiomatic and Gendered Performance of Androcentric Historiography**

Sociology of religion and indeed Buddhism is inseparable from history. Any study of Sŏn, Chán and Zen is simultaneously sociological and historical even when those studies are textual, philological or theological. The colligation of Sŏn/ Zen Patriarchs can be thus considered as a metaphysics of androcentric history. Historiographic grouping and colligation becomes indistinguishable from agnatic veneration and rhetorical Sŏn monastic pedagogy is thus an alternate Confucian derived way to perform ritually appropriate veneration of ancestors and be endorsed by history in the process.

In each generation, the Sŏn school's present was defined by a looking back through both a ritualistic veneration and patterning of past masters. This was achieved by formalizing the performance of their pedagogies. It should be no surprise then that the 'unbroken' lineage of Korean Sŏn masters was reconstructed and the gaps filled in conveniently circumventing time and space. Monastic Sŏn pedagogy therefore, concerned for the most part with its sectarian identity and political hegemony is an 'idealist and spiritualized universal history'(Hall 2007:174).

In identifying intergenerational contestations in the Korean context, Jager is correct to say that underlying both North and South Korean State national discourse is a primordial anxiety about paternity (Jager 2016:xiv). This claim could also be extended to Sŏn; that orthodox monastic Sŏn Rhetoric is an expression of a primordial anxiety about paternity. That notwithstanding, such anxiety has its culmination in what I call the 'Eschatology of re-Unification.' As all religion in Korea is politicized, including Buddhism and Sŏn, contested claims to represent the true Korean people or culture are not only a ritual panic about paternity but point towards the eventuality of a political reunification of the Korean peninsula – the androcentric crisis of *minjok*.

The sublimation of the androcentric state's eschatological fears over re-unification is also a primordial anxiety about empowering women and relinquishing male hegemony over 'patriarchal capitalism' in the South Korean military-industrial complex. Sectarian conflict and competition between religions in Korea since the ongoing spatio-temporal, conceptual and latent process that is the Korean War (in that sense, the first postmodern

war), are the various religiously sectarian expressions of the same ongoing battle for rights over the peninsula, true Korean-ness and the religious soul of the *minjok* itself (singular). The Korean imaginary or conceptualization of a universal infinite Enlightenment, layered on Hwaōm (Huayen/ Avatamsaka Sūtra) notions of infinite interconnectedness and ‘interfusion’ (K. 원융, C. 圓融) which itself paved the way for an emphasis on Confucian principles of relations and collectivity, is the zeitgeist of the *minjok* itself, the eternal present of Korean historicity. Korean Buddhist Enlightenment is not apolitical.

#### **6.4 Group Pedagogy, Leadership and a Rhetoric of Power in South Korean Sōn**

Within a Korean temple or Sōnwōn, gender defines the power structure and relations of people therein. South Korean *posalnim* (lay-female adherents), unless in a Bikhsuni temple, do not generally hold formal positions of power in male temples unless in the administrative wings of larger temples. However, as Belinda Robnett observes in the context of the American civil rights movement, South Korean *posalnim* hold ‘positions of power based on their community work or their extraordinary activism’ and it is the case in many South Korean temples and Sōnwōn that, as Robnett also observes of women civil rights activists, these women or networks of Korean women act as gate-keepers or stepping stones between the liminal and private space of the temple (the domain of the Sōn Master) and the public-space of the Dharma-Hall where Sōn pedagogy takes place, not only facilitating the teaching but helping to construct it (Robnett 2000:19).

A further referral to Robnett's study also reveals similarities with women's organization in the South Korean context – 'this gendered power structure also served to strengthen the informal tier of leadership, thus providing a strong mobilizing force within the grassroots sector' (in this case, informal temple and Sŏnwŏn organization as well as communal work which are cultural signifiers in the Korean context i.e. it is seen as 'Korean culture' to pitch in collectively and sweep floors, clean, arrange cushions and perform all the menial tasks necessary to facilitate a morning or day-long teaching event)(Robnett 2000:20).

The seemingly spontaneous mobilization of group-work in a temple or Sŏnwŏn in relation to the planned teaching/ lecture event gives such informal work the appearance of being somewhat unrelated or detached from the main event which is the monk (usually male) taking the cushion to expound the Dharma. There is perhaps a false binary here however in terms of appearance as informal and seemingly spontaneous work often overlaps with the more formal and scheduled *ullyŏk* 運力 (K. 운력) which is variously translated as 'collective/ united/ combined effort or work' i.e. communal work.

When the monastic Sŏn or indeed Zen, Master arrives from backstage to charismatically point directly at the Mind itself in the silent Dharma-Hall, we begin to see that a large amount of the work has already been done for him. In this sense it is helpful to recall Weber who held that 'charisma' is not a personalistic or psychological characteristic of an individual; rather it is a phenomenon based on meaningful patterns of action and social relationships, played out in a community (Weber 1978:1111–20).

## 6.5 A Laicized Sōn future: Zen Master Kusan's Lineage in Non-Korean Contexts

As mentioned, there are two main South Korean teaching lineages in Europe and outside of South Korea which consist of those teachers internationally who learned from and trace their lineage back through Zen Master Seung Sahn and those who learned from and trace their lineage back through Zen Master Kusan. Martine Batchelor is of the latter lineage and is a well-known teacher within Western Buddhism generally having done her initial 10 years of Buddhist training in South Korea with Zen Master Kusan. Martine Batchelor was kind enough to agree to an interview with me via email wherein, with specific reference to the rhetorical style of Sōn pedagogy she answered;

As I am European and French, this style does not make sense to me in my environment. As Master Kusan said to young Westerners who were trying to use the style on him: Before you shout, before you raise your fist "What is it?" It is easy to imitate the style. I do not feel the need and I do not present myself as a Sōn mistress, so no need to use the style.

Martine continues;

It depends what you are trying to do. If you are trying to represent the tradition in full you might feel the need to use the style. If you are thinking - like myself - that the technique of the *hwadu* is useful but do not necessarily need the rest of the tradition to be shared with modern Europeans, then you might not use the style. Personally I feel the practice is about questioning. Immediacy can be explored in many different ways... Master Kusan was in part a traditional Korean Sōn master and taught regardless of where he was in that style. He taught in Paris, Geneva and Copenhagen... Although part of his talks were in the traditional Sōn form, he always added explanatory material which was very useful; he called it adding feet to the snake. This is where he talked about *song song jok jok* (Korean) which for me came to describe *samatha* and *vipassana* [meditations] and thus I could make the connection... What is special about Korean Sōn is the emphasis on



questioning and developing a sensation of doubt/perplexity [through meditation]. It is a very specific way of cultivating *vipassana* - as in looking deeply. I think it helps us to be with uncertainty, helps us to be more flexible and define less and open to possibility.

It is clear from Martine's comments that the depth of her experience of Sōn rhetorical pedagogy while in South Korea, informed her approach to Buddhist practice which she also uses Pālī terms to describe. This in no way detracts from what she views as the essence of Korean Sōn practice which is bringing the introspective-practice to a pitch or level of intensity where it has generated an almost physical sensation of questioning within the body which is regarded as a necessary prelude to an awakening or spiritual-insight (see Appendix on Sōn pedagogy). This sensation is referred to as the "Doubt-mass" in Korean. Martine focuses on this essence in her practice and teaching and dispenses with the ritualized aspect of Sōn pedagogy in European contexts because as she says, 'this style does not make sense to me in my environment.' Martine also notes in the same interview with her that Zen Master Kusan 'was traditional in the first part of his dharma talks and creative in the second part of his talks.'

Some of Zen Master Kusan's Dharma-Talks or sermons are reproduced in his book *The Way of Korean Zen* (1985), where it can be seen that this explanatory part of his sermon is preceded by the traditional more ritualistic aspect of Sōn pedagogy. From Zen Master Kusan's sermon on the occasion of a Winter meditation retreat;

...when the mind from which defilements and false thinking flow is completely cut off, the high and the low disappear. Common and accomplished beings vanish. Originally, all is equal. Therefore, the pure original face cannot be assailed. (*The master strikes his staff on the base of his seat and then holds it before the assembly.*) The pure original nature

that is able to hear this sound and see this staff cannot be assailed... [ ] All the affairs of the world are just like dreams. With a single stroke of a knife completely sever all concerns! Only search for awakening (Kusan 1985:144).

In this quotation from Kusan Sunim we see with the use of the master's ceremonial stick and the knife image, classical Meditation School rhetoric of immediacy, power and impending threat. While it is hard to tell exactly from the transcription, it would appear that the use of the stick was pre-planned or ceremonial though I would like to mention that that by no means diminishes the effect of such rhetoric if one is not expecting it. I had organized a lecture from an American Sŏn monk called Daejin Sunim at a Buddhist cultural centre in Seoul on 6 September 2011 where the use of the stick was clearly planned but highly effective. After settling himself on a table above the audience who sat on meditation-cushions on the floor, Daejin Sunim suddenly pounded the table beside his folded knee with great and sudden force. Into the stunned silence which followed he said in English to a mostly non-Korean audience, "Right now in this very moment, both our minds are the same."

The effect of such rhetoric is obviously highly subjective and while I personally found it extremely effective and found the Dharma-talk/ sermon which followed to be riveting - due to the careful balancing of lecturing style with such rhetorical strikes - the same effect may of course not be felt by everyone in the same way. Nevertheless, as Martine mentioned above, she does not use that rhetorical style at all in her teaching as she feels it does not make sense in her environment. I had seen Martine teach at the Seoul Buddhist Library on 19 November 2009 and she did not use the rhetorical Sŏn style then either and

her Dharma-Talk was no less riveting which again is a subjective position. Suffice it to say however that one of the few times I saw a woman teach Sōn in South Korea, the rhetorical style was rarely used.

I asked Martine, “*based on your experience, are there any general differences between how women teach Korean Sōn (or Zen generally) and how men teach Sōn/ Zen?*” and “*do you notice many pedagogical/ stylistic differences between male and female teachers from East Asian Zen teachers generally (Korean, Chinese, Japanese) and other schools of say, South East Asian Buddhist meditation?*” To both questions Martine answered that perhaps women might tend to teach in a more practical and personal manner at times however she qualifies this by saying that Haemin Sunim (a male South Korean Sōn monk active in the United States) also teaches in this way and Martine adds that it may rather be the difference between ‘ancient and modern,’ between classical pedagogy and contemporary.

In Éspace-Séoul Provence which is a *Sōnwōn/ Zen* centre near Aix-en-Provence run by the lay South Korean *Taehan Pulgyo Chinhŭngwōn* foundation, Martine teaches to a meditation-group there occasionally via video-link. Having resided there for 1.5 years before Martine taught there, I interviewed the new project-manager Kevin Quirke who told me that the guiding-teacher at the *Sōnwōn* is Sophie Boyer who is in Martine’s Batchelor’s teaching-lineage. Sophie has a background in Burmese Buddhism and teaches a range of different meditation techniques to members when she visits the centre on average four times per year. Kevin informed me that the approach at the centre is;

not specifically Korean Sōn but is a general approach to Buddhism which is in fact the will of the [South Korean] Buddhist foundation who initiated the project. Obviously the Korean Zen is a part of it but the idea is that each individual chooses a form of meditation which best suits them and so when we meditate as a group, you don't necessarily have two people who are meditating in the same way.

It is interesting to note here also that the head of the Taego Order America-Europe parish, Rev. Dr. Jongmae Park – who is also a student of Zen Master Kusan - uses Palī terms in his teaching which are more associated with the Theravāda Buddhist teaching of South East Asia rather than the Buddhism of North East Asia and Rev. Park stated during an interview on my second Pilot Study in southern Poland, that he does not teach KHS or any type of Sōn not to his disciples and is furthermore, against it. He teaches vipassāna-meditation to students, Dharma-Teachers and monks. Interestingly however, despite availing of numerous early Buddhist Palī terms, and explicitly identifying non-conceptual pedagogies as not being male (or indeed Buddhist) but being specifically (he stated) ‘Taoist mysticism,’ he still availed of non-conceptual pedagogy (in this case, sudden non-contextualized shouting) during a Dharma-Talk/ lecture in Poland. It must be added also that just at that moment, Rev. Jongmae's seemingly paradoxical use of non-conceptual pedagogy was not out of place and was to my mind, very effective.

### **6.6.1 Egalitarian Pedagogies; Laity and Gender in Non-Korean Contexts**

Of the main lineages which comprise transnational Sōn it is interesting to note that Zen Master Seung Sahn's is the most successful in terms of numbers and spread yet his Kwanum School of Zen (KSZ) and his own practice and teaching are not generally viewed as “Korean” from the ethnonationalist perspective of South Korean Buddhism. It

is interesting and also vital to note here that Zen Master Seung Sahn's Enlightenment experience itself has been gendered from that same perspective. As Hyongak Sunim recounted at ZCR;

He (Zen Master Seung Sahn) was kind of black-listed a bit, in a way, in the 80s and 90s in Korea - kind of informally blacklisted - certainly by the mainstream of Korean monks. "He didn't even get Enlightenment" they were saying. "Ahh, he got it chanting! Pfff, that's for posalnims, that's for women. You have to sit, only sit with this Hwadu" (January, 2018, ZCR, Germany).

The last sentence in Hyongak Sunim's quote above, "You have to sit, only sit with this Hwadu" is hyper-masculinized *Kundaehwa Sŏn* in action – what Bernard Senécal calls "Hwadu Absolutism"(Senécal 2011). Zen Master Seung Sahn attained Enlightenment while chanting the Diamond Sūtra 金剛經 and was also visited by Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara during the same retreat (the Kwanum School of Zen is named after the Sino-Korean name of the same figure, *Kwanum* 觀音, pronounced *Guanyin* in Chinese). That Zen Master Seung Sahn attained Enlightenment in this manner and not in the seated – and I would argue, gendered – pose of ritual-meditation, his Enlightenment was dismissed by some in South Korean Buddhism as either a low-level realization or simply false based on chanting being a practice identified with women. We can see from Hyongak Sunim's statement that there is an implicit gendering and feminization of any practice that is not masculinized seated-Hwadu meditation in accordance with ritual-etiquette.

While Zen Master Seung Sahn's practice was feminized by monastics in his native Korea, his Teaching was also viewed as de-Koreanized if not "Japanized". Hyongak Sunim mentions earlier in the same interview;

Korean monks, when he was teaching in America, would come to America and in front of his western students - in the front of the assembly when he would have open question and answers - would stand up and say, 'You have betrayed *Korean* Buddhism! You are not teaching *true Korean Buddhism!*' - from his own home temple of Sudeok-sa actually. Similar to Japanese Rinzai Zen, Zen Master Seung Sahn taught using the Ten Gates or *kongans* (Zen riddles designed to cut off conceptualized thinking) instead of a more standardized ecclesiastical Korean style of using just one *kongan*. Nevertheless, Zen Master Seung Sahn considers himself to have taught 'only Korean style Buddhism' (Primary Point Mag. 1989), the liturgy of the KSZ is markedly Korean and his biography is 'heavily imbricated with references to Korean resistance to Japanese colonization' (Schippert 2020).

In the collection *Zen Masters* edited by Heine and Wright, Sor-Ching Low (Low 2010) describes the inter-textuality between Zen master and the historical hagiographical texts of the *yǔlù* genre discussed earlier in chapter two where Zen Master Seung Sahn's Sōn and Zen training as well as his Enlightenment experience follows prescribed Meditation School norms. Following the patterned rhetoric of the Meditation School (Anderl 2011) with its use of impending threats and rhetoric of power, Zen Master Seung Sahn's rhetorical challenge to his students - "*I'll hit you one thousand times*" – has been much recorded in KSZ literature. While there is no record to my knowledge of Zen Master Seung Sahn having hit a student in the past as recorded in the *yǔlù* records, he availed of

this rhetoric regularly and inevitably – he was after all an exponent of ecclesiastical Sŏn/  
Zen.

In all of the transnational schools of teachers in the lineage of Zen Master Seung Sahn which I visited in Europe and Asia, the same inter-textuality between the living body of the resident Zen master and portraits of past masters is seen. In the Kwanum schools in Poland or in Hong Kong, can be seen portraits of the Korean patriarchs stretching back to Sŏn Master Kyŏnghŏ. In Hyongak Sunim's centre in ZCR-Germany, as mentioned in chapter four, the same portraits are also accompanied by a large portrait of Zen Master Seung Sahn and the customary Buddha statue is not in the Dharma-Hall (meditation hall). In the following sections I wish to contrast two approaches to Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy by two different unaffiliated Dharma-Heirs of Zen Master Seung Sahn who are both renowned teachers in their own right; Hyongak Sunim in Germany and Zen Master Dae Kwan in Hong Kong.

Zen Master Dae Kwang in Singapore whom I was also able to interview via online video (male, ordained) told me that;

teaching Zen here is no different than teaching in the United States. Because they're all... here mostly they're religious Buddhists So they don't even know about it [NCP]. In terms of teaching so the women, the women might actually be able to use it even better because you'd be less expecting it.

As mentioned I had hopes of returning to South Korea before the 2020 coronavirus pandemic to conduct some interviews but those plans were scuppered by the coronavirus pandemic. I interviewed Zen Master Dae Bong of the Kwanum School of Zen online via

video-link. Zen Master Dae Bong is also the abbot of Musang-sa Temple, the regional head temple for the Kwantum School of Zen in Asia and has almost 40 years of experience teaching Buddhism. Musang-sa Temple can be considered as a context of transnational Korean Buddhism as it is home to mostly non-Korean monks albeit within South Korea's borders. Zen Master Dae Bong mentions Zen Master Bon Shim (female, lay-teacher) whom I interviewed in Poland;

...there was *one* other temple with one Korean monk who liked our style and he would invite her there but I would imagine there's no other Korean temple that would invite a female Zen master to give a talk.

I then asked Zen Master Dae Bong how women who teach using rhetorical pedagogy are received in Korea;

Most men wouldn't listen. So it just depends on who's willing to listen and who appreciates that as a teaching... If a monk does it - whether you like it or not - people tend to think "yeah okay right, that's what monks do," but if a nun does it; the ones who respect her and that like her will find it to be a good teaching... but a lot of people will just write it off because "a nun's doing it." And a *lay woman*?! Even worse! Even *more* difficult to digest for many people.

However Zen Master Dae Bong is careful to highlight that that is structural rather than something that is inherently "Korean" and he mentions that western monks who come to practice at Musang-sa temple are not immune to adopting a certain hierarchy of gender when they come to South Korea;

And you know, even some of the Westerners who come here and become monks pick up some of that Asian sensibility which was also very surprising to me so it really often depends on your personal character right? And... and how willing you are to really keep an openness beyond what you're used to socially - that's not easy to do - and then it comes out even more strongly when you go into a way different culture. You know, you



have the opportunity to see your own conditioning but if some of the your conditioning is reinforced by some of the negative things in the foreign conditioning, that may give you license to keep it, so that can be a problem...

With regard to a lay-gender hierarchy in Buddhist contexts, Zen Master Dae Bong informed me;

[ ] ...traditionally monks don't bow to nuns in Korea. Also sunims [monks or nuns] don't bow to laypeople but in our school everybody bows to a teacher who could be a lay-man, a lay-woman, a monk or a nun. So before a Korean monk or nun lives here for a retreat, we have them spend some time and explain you know that they would have to be willing to follow this style and... some are and some aren't and that's no problem. So there very much is that difference. And also there is a difference - that will probably come out as we talk about this - in the orientation of the Kwanum School of Zen and and what's being taught now as "*Korean Buddhism*." We come *out of* Korean Buddhism but because of the different social environment of the West and Asia which as you know are both rapidly changing anyway... Seung Sahn Sunim kind of made a more international style that didn't distinguish between genders right? And which also distinguishes much less than Mahayāna Buddhism does between the ordained and the laypeople. Definitely the rules are different, the behaviour can be different but... I think two of the biggest things in Buddhism coming to the West is the equality of gender and the equality in terms of practicing and abilities between the ordained and the lay, and Seung Sahn Sunim just levelled that.

Zen Master Dae Kwang in Singapore mentions that;

And so like at Musang-sa [temple in South Korea] they're always modifying stuff - I think they go a little overboard - to kind of placate the Koreans. Inside their head they don't agree with what's going on right? So that would go for treatment of nuns. So nuns are you know, they're separated and they have to sit over there separately and everything right. The Western monks I talk to think you know they all know that that's just to pander to the Koreans.

Zen Master Dae Kwang also mentions that Zen Master Seung Sahn always discouraged his students from speaking the Korean language, something also mentioned by Hyongak Sunim, Zen Master Soeng Hyang and Zen Master Dae Bong. Zen Master Dae Kwang comments on speaking Korean that;

Because you know you're straight into all of this hierarchical Confucian stuff when you speak Korean its a hindrance to Buddhist practice obviously so Seung Sahn always discouraged us from learning Korean so you don't get sucked into all the Korean social stuff which is essentially Confucian and hierarchy.

On the subject of NCPs however, Zen Master Dae Kwang suggests that;

women might actually be able to use it [NCP] even better because you'd be less expecting it.

This statement seems to echo Zen Master Dae Bong's point above that NCPs are 'what monks do' and almost expected from male Sōn and Zen monks. Zen Master Dae Bong's comments demonstrate the way in which Zen Master Seung Sahn took the opportunity to revolutionize not only the lay-monastic dichotomized hierarchy of traditional East Asian Buddhism but the gender hierarchy when he first arrived in the United States in the early 1970s (see also Zen Master Soeng Hyang's comments below).

In some sense, Zen Master Seung Sahn's egalitarianism could be called didactic and pedagogical in its own right but as Zen Master Dae Bong's comments demonstrate above, such egalitarianism between male and female monastics as well as between the ordained and the laity is not yet a prevalent feature of domestic Buddhism in South Korea where, even in the Taego Order where monks are allowed to marry, Buddhist nuns must still remain celibate. Zen Master Dae Bong's adds that some western monastics based in South Korea can take advantage of the gender hierarchy and that it is extremely rare for a

female Zen master to be invited to teach in a male monastery let alone be taken seriously if she uses rhetorical pedagogy. His comments further suggest that there is a generally acceptance of rhetorical pedagogy being at least identified with male monastics.

Zen Master Dae Bong's insights suggest that within the structure or indeed the continuum of South Korean Sŏn, there are parallel congregations for which Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy may have different meanings. At the time I didn't think to ask Zen Master Dae Bong how non-Korean males are received by South Korean males when they engage in Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy in South Korea but the use of Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy within each of those parallels - one of which can be theorized as masculinizing in line with *kundaehwa Pulgyo* - if those congregations are to be divided along the lines of the semiotic function of rhetorical pedagogy and ability to engage in it with credibility, that might even put South Korean Buddhist nuns in the same congregation as non-Korean males and females alike. The only way for her to remain in her ethnic congregation and retain her Korean-ness is to maintain her ritual purity and remain celibate - whether she is a member of the Jogye (celibate) or the Taego Order (non-celibate for men only) - and to refrain from appropriating the gestures of rhetorical pedagogy in the masculinized state.

### **6.6.2 Sŏn Rhetoric at Zen Centre Regensburg; Hyongak Sunim**

I spent a portion of the Winter Retreat, January 2018 at Zen Centre Regensburg where I had the opportunity for participant-observation. For the majority of the time I was there participating in the retreat schedule, any of what I call pedagogy or didacticism took place in conversation over the communal breakfast and lunch for residents at the centre.

Otherwise, while students and participants took part in a rigorous meditation schedule run along monastic lines, Hyongak Sunim did not interrupt the meditation schedule for Dharma-Talks. It was not until a group of about 40~50 visiting students from the Faculty of Business at the local Universität Regensburg attended the Zen Centre in order to learn mind-training for burnout prevention and quick decision making in their future careers that I had the chance to witness Hyongak Sunim teaching Sŏn in what might be called the classical rhetorical style.

I participated with the students as they experienced walking-meditation and sitting-meditation in ritual form followed by a Dharma-Talk by Hyongak Sunim. It is here that the subjective nature and reception of Zen teaching must be mentioned for it bears mentioning that I am quite accustomed to ecclesiastical Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy and therefore the rhetoric of immediacy loses effect after some time. However, I would not say that Hyongak Sunim was trying to engage in such rhetoric or in the classic “Ascending the Dharma-Hall” ritual as described in chapter four though there were elements of it present inevitably and most likely subconsciously due to operating within the idiom of Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy.

Hyongak Sunim sat on a cushion on the same level as the students and spoke directly to the nature of mind itself and the importance of how we keep our mind from moment to moment which is the goal of Sŏn practice. I had seen Hyongak Sunim teach before in South Korea and at the *Sŏnwŏn* in the south of France and would say that his teaching was different on all three occasions. At his sermon in France in May 2016, there was no

rhetoric of immediacy however the sermon quietly recounted an encounter of his with the philosopher Jacque Derrida and the importance again of how we keep our minds from moment to moment. There were no NCPs yet the anecdote pointed to the importance of our mind state in any particular moment and was very well-received.



*Figure 25 Inauguration Event Poster for the South Korean Zen Centre in the South of France, 28 May 2016.*

I would say that Hyongak Sunim's lecture on "Zen and the Brain" in Seoul on 17 November 2011 to a South Korean audience was far more rhetorical in the classical "Ascending the Dharma-Hall" sense seated above the audience on a table and far more charged with rhetoric of immediacy. When one young South Korean man stood up to ask

a question about his life-direction, Hyongak Sunim interrogated him with the question, “Who are you!?” The young man gave his name to which Hyongak Sunim shouted across the assembly, “No! Who are you before you were born!? Who are you?” After a stunned pause, the young man answered hesitatingly, “I don’t know...” to which Hyongak Sunim leaned out over the assembly towards the young man pointing and said, “*That* is your true nature. Only don’t know. Keep *that* don’t-know mind.”

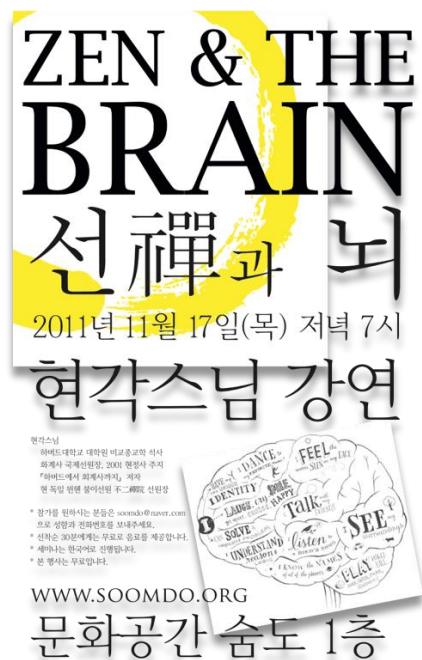


Figure 26 Zen & the Brain Lecture by Hyongak Sunim in Seoul, 17 November 2011.

The pedagogical point here with Zen Master Seung Sahn’s “Only Don’t Know” or Shunryu Suzuki Roshi’s “Keep a Beginner’s Mind” or any other ways of expressing it is to point on behalf of the student at his or her mental state wherein the mind is clear of all thoughts. The business students from Universität Regensburg in January 2018 received the same message - “Only Don’t Know” – but far more gently in contrast to in South

Korea where a Buddhist audience accommodates and expects the full formality of performative Sŏn rhetoric. It was nonetheless extremely interesting to observe the same rhetorical message aimed directly at the minds of the audience in the same way but in a more softened form and in a way that the young German students coming from a non-Buddhist background could absorb it. Again, the reception of Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy is subjective and I was unable to interview any of the business students as they left immediately after the lecture and meditation practice. While I myself had experienced NCPs and Sŏn rhetoric quite a number of times previously and become relatively accustomed to it as a pedagogical style, I would say that the students enjoyed the lecture and it was probably not what they were expecting.

As in the case of Daejin Sunim mentioned above, preparing the delivery of NCPs in advance doesn't preclude them from having their desired effect. In addition, it must be noted that spending time in the presence of high-level practitioners and teachers of Zen such as Hyongak Sunim is didactic in itself, observing how they live their lives and live their religion from day to day.

### **6.6.3 Sŏn or Chán Rhetoric at Subong-sa Hong Kong; Zen Master Dae Kwan**

Another of Zen Master Seung Sahn's students who has gone on to teach outside of South Korea is Zen Master Dae Kwan, a Buddhist nun who teaches at Subong-sa temple in Hong Kong. It was on my research trip to Poland in Sept./ Oct. of 2018 that I learned of the transnational flows and links between Poland, Lithuania, Hong Kong and South

Korea. Having been introduced to Subong-sa temple by the nun Wonhyang in Warsaw, I received approval to visit Subong-sa in June of 2019.

It was at Subong-sa that I witnessed Zen Master Dae Kwan's teaching. As per the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, I recognized Zen Master Dae Kwan's response to the young North American girl as an adaptation of Bodhidharma's imperative to the Second Patriarch of Chán Huikē, in this case, "bring out your shell and show it to me" which was no less effective or immediate given the obvious pattern of which McRae speaks of in Chán pedagogy (McRae 2003:47–48). Despite my recognition of the reference I was no less surprised at the instantaneous and spontaneous response of the Zen master. In addition, the young girl who did not seem to have much experience in Buddhist environments or with Zen may not have recognized the reference but the effect of the immediate response on her was plainly a positive one. Again, the purpose of such pedagogy is to arrest the compulsive intellectualization and conceptualizing thought-patterns of the student and to clear the mind of all thoughts.

This was also my experience when during a solemn walking-meditation break during a sitting-meditation session at Subong-sa, the Dharma-Hall was silent and there were some intent faces including perhaps my own. Suddenly and clearly Zen Master Dae Kwan's voice rang in the silence, "Just smile." As I have stated, the effect of Sōn and Zen rhetoric of immediacy is subjective. What is experienced by one person as sudden, immediate or revelatory may not trigger the same reaction in another student however from my own personal experience of being used to a more austere approach in such environments, I



experienced Zen Master Dae Kwan's "Just Smile" as not only rhetorically immediate but as – in Buddhist terms - skilful means.

Concerned as she was with the mind-set of her students and those in attendance during a meditation i.e. mind-training practice session, she discerned that certain students were perhaps too intent to gain the benefits of their meditation practice and immediately her voice rang clearly in the room releasing any tension. A number of people did visibly smile including myself. This is similar to the NCP guidance mentioned in Interview F in the previous chapter, section 5.3.4.

Interviewing Zen Master Dae Kwan after this experience, she spoke with respect and reverence for Zen Master Seung Sahn and the Korean tradition. Strikingly, she also commented on NCPs from the perspective of Theravāda Buddhism, the dominant tradition of Buddhism found in South East Asia. Zen Master Dae Kwan spent 10 years in the Thai forest tradition of Buddhism through the nineteen eighties studying under Phra Ajahn Pongsak Tejadhammo (also known as Luang Por) himself a student of Ajahn Buddhādāsa a hugely influential figure in twentieth-century Thai Buddhism whom she also encountered during her time spent in the north of Thailand. Describing her Thai teacher Phra Ajahn Pongsak she mentioned;

His mind was like Zen, even though he didn't call himself a "Zen Master." He also, you know when he was younger, we asked him many questions and his answer didn't come from thinking [conceptualization, anathema in Zen Buddhism]. So maybe he didn't use certain words, he was you know, he was a Theravāda monk... with the style of talking about [Pāli terms] samādhi [meditative concentration]; paññā [wisdom/ understanding]; ānāpānasati [mindful breathing]; vipassanā [meditation technique], those that the

approach would be. But my teacher always said, “take away Zen, take away Theravāda, take away Mahayāna – just practice. For that reason, Zen and his teaching is very similar. Also my teachers also said *nibbāna* is not to be found after we die or before we die, *nibbāna* is right here, right now. So *nibbāna* is when all your suffering, all your karma is extinguished... That’s *nibbāna* but that’s *also* our True Nature.<sup>54</sup>

[ ] Zen also teaches “Don’t think good or Bad” - when I was in Thailand when I met my Ajahn teacher, Ajahn Buddhadasa, the first conversation we had he asked me to look at the tree, the tree has no good, no bad. So this was very “Zen.” Zen also calls on people to wake up right here right now. I’m very grateful - because of that when I studied Zen, it was very easy for me because of his teaching. So actually all the traditions are from the Buddha. We shouldn’t say this is better than that one because all traditions help different people at different times. But Zen of course has it’s own special way and is very applicable, I would say so applicable to our everyday life, we can practice from moment to moment.

Zen Master Dae Kwan’s description of her significant decade-long experience in a different Buddhist tradition speaks to the similarities in all of the traditions she mentions. The quality of immanence to the teaching of her Thai Buddhist teachers who emphasized that ‘*nibbāna* is right here, right now’ could easily be a prime example of Zen or Sōn rhetorical pedagogy but for the absence of NCP gestures or striking the floor with the palm of one’s hand or with the Dharma-Staff of the Zen master. The South Korean survey respondent in chapter 5 commented that NCPs and Sōn rhetorical pedagogy is no more than ‘a mere formality’ these days and Zen Master Dae Kwan shows that there is

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<sup>54</sup> *nibbāna* is another Pāli term referring to the goal of Buddhist practice, more commonly recognizable in its Sanskrit form *nirvāṇa*. Buddhist teachers of all traditions are known to emphasize that nirvana is not some heavenly dream-like or blissful state “out there” to be acquired but rather is the removal of mental and emotional obscurations and obstructions acquired through past actions (karma) which prevent us from seeing reality as it really is. Seeing reality as it really is in the here and now is the soteriological promise of Buddhism and accounts for a certain immanence in Zen and as we see here, also in Theravādan teaching. Here Zen Master Dae Kwan is utilizing terms from different Buddhist traditions interchangeably – ‘True Nature’ is a term common to Mahayāna Buddhism and Zen but not used in Theravāda Buddhism in the vast majority of cases.

little difference in the core of the teaching expounded by a genuine master irrespective of tradition. Then the question remains what is the semiotic function of NCPs in different contexts and how is Sōn and Zen rhetorical pedagogy much different from a Korean style of bowing or from Buddhist monks at the Sera Monastery in Tibet slapping their hands during debating practice?

### **6.7.1 Global Zen Matriarchs and Transnational Pedagogies**

Though I was unable to observe their Zen/ Sōn pedagogy, I was able to conduct interviews with the following female Zen teachers; the head of the global Kwanum School of Zen Barbara Rhodes, Zen Master Bon Shim, Zen Master Hyon Ja and Guiding Teacher Elizabeth Coombs all of the KSZ. I was also able to interview Haejin Sunim and Haedan Sunim of the Hanmaum Zen Centre founded by South Korea's most famous 20<sup>th</sup> century female Sōn teacher, Sōn master Daehaeng (now deceased) and I also interviewed Trudy Goodman who is unaffiliated but formerly a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn.

Zen Master Barbara Rhodes – Korean Dharma/ Buddhist name Soeng Hyang – who lives in California, told me that it's not about gendered pedagogy or even about "Zen" which she said can become "a dirty word." She sums up Zen pedagogy simply describing it as "How may I help you? How are you doing? It's got to boil down to that" and demonstrates the point by referring to Jesus;

he wasn't doing what the rabbis and the priests were doing. He got down and he bathed people's feet. That's not about male or female – his heart was right there. The whole thing is about what's skilful. It's got to be about skilful means.

Zen Master Soeng Hyang described how people who come to the KSZ after long periods of practice in Japanese Zen schools find the practice much softer and she told me she had trained with five Japanese Zen teachers herself and found the practice rigid;

It's just much more rigid. I would use the word rigid. They would say it's stronger or whatever and they get more students than we [KSZ] do, they're more successful number wise. People think Zen is difficult and that it's got to look like that....

It is interesting to note that the KSZ are not as strictly bound to the ritual meditation posture as some of the Japanese schools mentioned by Zen Master Soeng Hyang above and allow their students to practice standing-meditation if they feel more comfortable. Like the renowned French teacher Martine Batchelor from Zen Master Kusan's lineage who stresses the practice of introspective-questioning as the essence of Sōn practice, Zen Master Bon Shim in Wubong-sa Temple near Warsaw similarly stressed to me that the introspective-practice of questioning was 'the key-element' along with perseverance in practice. I asked Zen Master Hyon Ja, also of the Kwanum School of Zen, if there is a difference in male and female pedagogies in the KSZ. She told me;

if you asked me if there is a difference between the male teachers and the female teachers in the Kwanum School of Zen, I would say not how they teach openly. There's not a big difference. There might be some differences for sure. Where the big difference comes in is in the interview room.

Zen Master Hyon Ja attests to there being little difference between how male and female teachers in the KSZ teach openly. The formal and performative ritual of Sōn and Zen rhetoric made in *inka* or Dharma Transmission speeches - the occasion of being recognized as a Zen Master and inheriting 'the bloodline of the Patriarchs' (see chapter two) show no performative difference within the KSZ.



*Figure 27 Zen Master Hyon Ja of the Kwanum School of Zen Making Her Inka Speech*

A still photograph from Zen Master Hyon Ja's Dharma Transmission speech can be seen in Fig. 25 where she engages in the same ritual described in Zen Master Kusan's Ascending the Dharma Hall ritual (Kusan 1985). In the first minute of her *inka* speech which can be viewed [here](#), Zen Master Hyon Ja uses the traditional ritual performative pedagogy adhered to by all KSZ teachers irrespective of whether they are male or female. The *inka* speeches of all of the Kwanum School of Zen teachers can be read or viewed online [here](#) but adhere to the same pattern as in Zen Master Hyon Ja's; the raising of the Zen master's stick, a quotation of some lines from the Zen canon followed by the non-conceptual shout.

In the opening lines of her *inka* speech, Zen Master Hyon Ja underscores the importance of having matriarchs as well as patriarchs which underscores one of the key differences between the KSZ and South Korean Sŏn where, though *inka* ceremonies are not a prominent feature of the tradition, women still cannot confer *inka* or Dharma Transmission – as women, they have no power to alter the ‘bloodline of the Patriarchs.’

Zen Master Hyon Ja states that the

The female students that come to visit or to come to our interview with me, well we have a very different relationship than they do to the male teachers. They just feel that they can tell me a lot more about their personal problems their relationships to their husbands or their boyfriends or with their children to the terrible things that happen to them. They feel they can tell me this.

Elizabeth Coombs of the Kwanum School of Zen in England is a Guiding Teacher of York Zen and The Peak Zen Groups as well as being the Buddhist Chaplain at the University of Durham. Before she moved back to the U.K she practiced Zen for almost 20 years in the United States mostly at the original Kwanum School of Zen in Providence, Rhode Island where she remarks in answer to the possibly gendered nature of Zen pedagogy;

I was seeing men and women, monks, nuns, lay-people, lay-women teachers, ex-nuns, ex-monks, you know, want-to-be monks & nuns and just lay people in general just pretty much mixing it up and I think I got used to that. [ ] ...all of the teachers that I've had male or female have just been very, very particular people. [Zen pedagogy] ...becomes very personal or intimate because of course you're also dealing with personality types. [ ] each teacher and each student is just using whatever seems appropriate at the time. I think the

fact that Bobby [Zen Master Soeng Hyang, female] was my first teacher you know - I really got into Kongan practice with her before I did with anyone else.

Having experienced some feelings of exclusion from male networks around certain ordained Zen Masters when she was a student herself, she hesitates from saying conclusively if that was a gender issue due to the possibility of it having been more a lay-monastic divide. Elizabeth did not feel that binary categories of masculine and feminine necessarily apply in how Zen is taught – she does mention that ‘men could be as tender and as open as the women actually’ – however she suggests that there could be some gendered aspect to how students and practitioners are attracted to Zen;

I do remember the days when it just seemed rather strange to have all this ehm... male... almost like... militaristic association - you know the form of using sticks in different ways and shouts and you know that [Zen] hit - and I can't remember at what point it started to not be an issue. [ ] I don't know, I mean you *could* say that you see an awful lot of women doing yoga or not so many men doing yoga. [ ] And you see a lot of men doing martial arts and things.

For Elizabeth it is more an inevitable outcome of the co-existence of lay and monastic hierarchies which may not even be Buddhist. As with Japanese Buddhism and Ireland where William Johnston has noted the role of Zen in restoring the Christian contemplative tradition, a specific form of Japanese Sōtō Zen garners more followers;

In York there's a Sōtō Zen group that's become very popular it's actually run by one of the canons at Yorkminster. And he's a minister himself, right? They get a lot of people even though they're more ‘religious.’

In contrast and somewhat triangulating with the point made by Zen Master Hyon Ja, Elizabeth Coombs notices that, ‘I have more women coming to practice with me than I would have thought likely. It's more women than men.’

### **6.7.2 Buddha Couture in Transnational Sōn and Zen**

Referring to Caroline Starkey’s (2019) notion of ‘Buddha Couture’ Zen Master Soeng Hyang acknowledges that aesthetic does play a part in how students are attracted to Zen. In reference to Japanese Zen schools attracting more numbers she notes that prospective students ‘love the Japanese aesthetic, the black robes.’ Zen Master Bon Shim told me that;

For 40 years... the discussion is already going on like, ‘*Why* do we need these robes?’ ‘Why do we have... these long robes?’ Short robes maybe ok because, because the purpose is quite, you know, reasonable? [ ] ...you know... everybody is equal. You don't show off with your good maybe beautiful clothes, expensive clothes, because it might happen, right? ‘Oh so-and-so has these very very nice clothes.’ And so, in this way everybody wears this grey robe so there is no comparison, no... evaluating who is rich, who is poor.

Wonhyang Sunim who is a Buddhist nun in the same temple near Warsaw even notes that the wearing of robes within the school is certainly an attraction for Polish people in post-Catholic context who are predisposed to liturgy due to their Catholic upbringings. As Starkey (2019:128) points out ‘dress (including robes, hair and a *dharma* name) takes a prominent role in shaping the disciplinary life of an ordained Buddhist woman in Britain. Korean Buddhist or “Dharma Names” can also be considered as a form of Buddha Couture though Zen Master Soeng Hyang mentions that;

these names are just driving people crazy, there are too many Korean names



The reader will note that I have chosen to refer to her as Zen Master Soeng Hyang while writing this dissertation. She herself told me I could simply call her Bobby which is short for Barbara.

### **6.7.3 The Intersection of Gender, Lay-Monastic and National-Transnational Hierarchies**

Zen Master Soeng Hyang speaks to me of gender equality in the Kwanum School of Zen – the school itself named after a female Buddhist deity/ saint;

[Zen Master Seung Sahn] ...was so much more rounded than the Japanese teachers who came to North America in the 1970s, he was a kind person and such an egalitarian with his students.

Gender hierarchies certainly do not ever seem to have been a feature of the KSZ with its prevalence of women teachers, female Zen masters and matriarchs. Zen Master Soeng Hyang identifies hierarchies between ordained and lay people, national and transnational Zen when she recounts an experience of interacting with Chinese Buddhist nuns in Singapore one of whom refused to accept food when it was offered to her by Zen Master Soeng Hyang because she was a lay teacher.

Zen Master Bon Shim whom I interviewed at Wubong-sa temple near Warsaw Poland relates how the transnational connections with South Korea are somewhat 'weak' and cites the example of a South Korean monk of high rank at a temple in South Korea who told her he was 'uncomfortable with a woman teacher' though she qualifies this by

adding that some South Korean men approached her after a sermon saying they were 'happy to see her giving a talk.'

Trudy Goodman who was once a student of Zen Master Seung Sahn in the United States but who is now unaffiliated and teaches independently much like Martine Batchelor - with her background in Zen Master Kusan's lineage - does in Europe, emphasized that while it was understandable for a monastic Zen master to;

privilege monastic practice... [ ], at the same time if you couldn't live in the Zen Center or be a monastic you were a little bit of a second class citizen.

Such lay-monastic hierarchies are entirely natural as Trudy told me herself, where the culture within a group is based on who is more dedicated to its raison d'être, in this case meditation practice. What is striking is that Trudy, who never taught in affiliation with any group or institution, does not teach using NCPs or rhetorical pedagogy citing its masculine nature;

On the whole I came to feel that the whole Dharma-Combat frame was not anything... it wasn't conducive for me to thrive. Building the confidence and having the confidence to come back and having that kind of repartee with him [Zen Master Seung Sahn] was great but it is a very masculine kind of form and I didn't feel like using a teaching stick [Zen staff] or shouting. None of that would ever be my style.

Martine Batchelor who teaches globally but mostly in Europe – as mentioned – is also unaffiliated, does not call herself a Sōn master, wear robes nor teach in rhetorical style using NCPs. Moreover, Trudy Goodman - who told me she was a feminist before she was ever a Buddhist - has remained secular and non-ecclesiastical in her style of practice and

teaching throughout her career, has been a prominent figure in the growth of non-sectarian mindfulness meditation practice and mindfulness-based therapies on the West coast of the United States along with her husband Jack Kornfield. She informed me that;

I used to teach women in Buddhism and women and Buddhism retreats because I felt like there was such a huge need for women to have some female role models. [ ] ...a lot of the women; their teachings were not recorded historically. I think there's been a huge need for women. In fact in the early days [of Buddhism in America, c.1970s], I remember contributing to a journal - it doesn't exist anymore - it came out of Aiken Roshi's Zendo in Maui [ ]...simply because I was just starved for stories about women and [ ] ...because I was really hungry for that and for seeing you know, seeing enlightenment and then seeing the Dharma in a form that I felt related to my life... [ ] women were just not visible and that felt like a terrible lack. And then also there was no attention paid to what life was like for lay-women who were mothers! We all sought out women in the Dharma, women teachers, and I practiced with a Western woman Rinzai Zen Teacher. When I found her I just practiced with her till she died and I didn't see Seon Sa Nim [Zen Master Seung Sahn] again or other male teachers again.

While in Crystal Goh's case above as a young woman she was tribally gaslit and harassed into adjusting her appearance while in South Korea, Wonhyang Sunim from KSZ Poland highlights the differing gender roles between transnational and national (native South Korean) contexts and also points towards parallel congregations in transnational contexts;

many of the Western Sunims [nuns] ...have a problem when they go to a Korean temple and they see how the monks are treated and how the nuns are treated.. [ ] It's not a Buddhist teaching, that's just a culture... [ ] ...when the Korean Buddhism goes abroad, unfortunately those cultural patterns do go abroad *as well*. And that is more striking because here in Europe certain things just don't go well... [ ] I want the essence of Buddhism. I don't care if we speak sūtras in Korean or, I don't know... Sanskrit? I don't know Korean monks' history either; I don't care. I want to understand what's in those books. But for Koreans they're

more like... they just inherit certain things. So... the temples, the Korean temples in the States or in Europe, are either for the Koreans or for westerners. I don't see those two groups mixing.

Those [temples] that are ethnic; all the *shindo* (K. congregation) are Koreans that live abroad. They don't really go to other temples. They don't want to mix with foreigners much. They have their traditional thing with ceremonies and Dharma-Talks in Korean. They have to have a Korean Sunim living there... [ ] ... And we have those that cater for, you know Polish Sangha, Russian Sangha or they're Lithuanian *but*.... Koreans don't go there.

I was unaware at that time that Wonhyang Sunim's observation during my second pilot study in September-October 2018 in Poland that the two groups (South Koreans and non-Koreans in transnational contexts) not mixing, would be a feature of this project until I went on. Wonhyang Sunim had revealed to me the connections between Poland, Lithuania, Hong Kong and South Korea which began to break apart the notion of a bounded "Korean" Buddhism in "Europe." However at that time I still had intended to do most of my research in European countries without travelling to any Asian country apart from South Korea.

#### **6.7.4 Parallel Congregations within Transnational South Korean Sŏn**

Attempting to gain access to ethnic South Korean Sŏn sites in Europe proved difficult. There was a Jogye Order temple in London, England when I began this project but it shut down before I could arrange a visit and I was unable to gain an interview with the nun who had been stationed there. From what I could see [online](#), the Lotus Mind temple in London had catered mostly to expat South Koreans living in London and besides offering

classes for children, also offered yoga and tea-ceremony classes. I contacted a nun from the temple in the hopes of gaining at least an email-interview regarding the workings of the temple but could not secure an interview.

Younhwa-sa Temple - for website click [here](#) - is another South Korean temple in London where the congregation is majority South Korean diaspora. The temple is affiliated with the Jogye Order but run by the congregation and resident monk with a total of approximately 150 people associated or at one time registered with the temple. 20-40 attend regular Dharma Talks/ sermons which increases to 70-80 around the traditional Korean harvest festival of Ch'usök in the Autumn and Lunar New Year's in late Winter/ early Spring. Out of the total congregation of 150, about 10 are local British people.

I was able to get a brief email response from Hyewon Sunim at Kilsang-sa Temple in Paris founded in 1993, who told me that approximately 30 South Korean ex-pats including the partners of some 'French-South Korean international-marriages' attend the temples 2 monthly services which occur on the second and fourth Sunday of every month. At the annual Buddha's Birthday celebration in May, numbers swell to between 70 and 100. From researching online [here](#) and [here](#), Wonhyang Sunim's observation in Poland seems to bear out as most of the people pictured seem to be ex-pat South Koreans. Hyewon Sunim mentions that;

The introduction of Korean Sön Buddhism is insufficient to locals as of yet, and Kanhwason meditation is inevitably unfamiliar to them, too. It's not easy to introduce Korean Buddhism in the present situation when infrastructure is lacking far away from South Korea, but if we do our best to do our job making a mid-to-long term plan, I think, there will be much progress.

Hyewon Sunim's comments to me echo similar comments he made in 2011;

in reality, most of the monks of the Chogye Order, whether they live in Korea or abroad, have no idea how to relate to a foreigner and almost never do. As an exception let us take the case of Hyewon Sunim... [ ] ... who is in charge of Kilsang-sa Temple ... [ ] in a suburb of Paris. Hyewon confesses that he is deeply embarrassed by the questions asked to him by the French people to whom he tries to teach Kanhwa Sŏn. He also realizes that it will take him much time and much effort, dedicated to an in-depth discovery and understanding of Western culture, before he becomes able to answer those questions satisfactorily (Senécal 2011:92).

As mentioned, while it may not have as many adherents as in Poland, Germany is the country in Europe where most sects of contemporary South Korean Buddhism have a presence; the Taego Order, the Kwanum School of Zen, the Won Buddhist Order and the the Jogye Order through the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn by which that sect has been subsumed in recent years. Also in Germany is the International Zen Temple which Similarly as with Hyewon Sunim in Paris, I was only able to conduct an email interview with Haejin Sunim a Buddhist nun of the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn despite being prepared to visit the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn centre in Kaarst, western Germany between Düsseldorf and the Dutch panhandle. In fact I found it easier to reach her through contacts in South Korea than through contacting the centre in Germany.

The Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn is an interesting case because their pedagogy is markedly different compared to that of the Jogye Order who identify themselves as a Sŏn order and exclusively with the Kanhwasŏn (KHS) technique. Haejin Sunim who is the head of the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn centre in Kaarst told me she does not use NCP's in her teaching to the

approximately 40~50 congregation members who come to the centre on a Sunday. Extended membership amounts to about 100 people whom she says are a mix of South Koreans and Germans. The meditation technique within the Hanmaum School is Chuingong-Kwan or Observing the Fundamental Mind.

Questioner 2 (male): I have listened to your Dharma talks numerous times, but I still do not understand many aspects of your teachings. I want to ask one question. It is said that there was a Buddhist monk called Chi-tong among the disciples of Huineng (638-713 A.D.), the sixth patriarch of Seon [Sŏn] Buddhism in China. After attaining the truth, Chi-tong wrote a verse that said, “To attain intrinsic nature by practicing is to take a wrong course, and to ‘dwell in’, or ‘confine’ it is also to go against the Path.” Please teach me the stage of mind to which he is referring.

Daehaeng Sunim: Please come over here. I will teach you. [*She motions to him to approach her*] Come here, closer; I'll let you know. Please give me your hand. [*When the questioner holds out his hand, she slaps it with her right hand. After that, the questioner bows to her with his palms pressed together, and she returns the bow.*] Now, I have given you the teaching. Do you have any other questions?

Questioner 2: No, I don't, right now. Thank you very much (Zen Master Daehaeng 1991)

During the fieldwork portion of my research, it was not possible to visit the Hanmaum centre in Germany yet I wanted to observe women teaching Sŏn in transnational context outside of South Korea. As in the case of the KSZ for whom centres and temples in Asia (HK, Singapore and Malaysia) formed part of a rhizomatic network between the Korean peninsula and Europe, I looked towards Asia and learned of the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn in Bangkok, Thailand and Yangon, Burma both of which I visited in February 2020. Both centres were overseen by Hyedan Sunim, a Buddhist nun of the Hanmaum school

resident in Bangkok for 20 years from where she runs the centre in Yangon, visiting there from Thailand at least once per month.



*Figure 28 Entrance to the Hanmaum Sönwön in Bangkok, Thailand.*

Hyedan Sunim informed me that the congregation in Bangkok numbered from at least 20 up to 50 people who were all South Korean ex-patriots. I asked Hyedan Sunim if she ever used or observed NCP much in her career as a Buddhist nun and teacher to which she answered;

Only a practitioner of Buddhism whose level is quite high can understand so-called non conceptual pedagogy such as beating, shouting, striking and what not. Otherwise, such pedagogy won't work even though it might be used once or twice, because s/he could



hardly understand it. Once a great Buddhist abbot in a Dharma-Talk struck a Dharma-Staff on the floor several times without saying anything at all. People wondered what he meant by that? Few people understood him. If I had to hazard a guess I'd say around 1,800 people among 2,000 could understand a verbal Dharma talk, while only about 20 people in 2000 could apprehend a non-verbal one such as striking a Dharma-Staff. Therefore, non-conceptual pedagogy is not used frequently, but sometimes it is used to enlighten the persons of superior faculties only.

I was fortunate enough to participate in Hyedan Sunim's Dharma-Talk both in Bangkok and in Yangon. In both cases, after the initial chanting of sūtras and some seated-meditation, what was striking in both cases was what at first glance appeared to be a reliance on video-technology. In the pictures of both Hanmaum Dharma-Halls in Bangkok (Fig. 32) and in Yangon (Fig. 36) can be glimpsed a television screen to the right of the main altar. The Dharma-Talks in both Bangkok and Yangon consisted of watching a recording of the founding teacher Zen Master Daehaeng conducting a sermon upon which her student and Dharma-Heir Hyedan Sunim elaborated afterwards.

At first, this format struck me as 'too modern' or 'overly reliant on modern technology' however it was not until I followed Hyedan Sunim to Yangon and observed her teach there that I realized her use of the video-recording of Zen Master Daehaeng actually followed the Ascending the Dharma-Hall format described by Martine Batchelor in the case of Zen Master Kusan very closely and adhered too by both the Zen matriarchs and patriarchs of the Kwanum School of Zen. The difference in Hyedan Sunim's case was that instead of quoting from the Sōn canon and striking the Dharma-Staff in order to embody the text and invoke the 'bloodline of the patriarchs' in the first half of her

Dharma-Talk, she displayed a recording of her own master and matriarch, Zen Master Daehaeng. In this adaptation of the traditionally formal part of the Ascending the Dharma-Hall ritual, the Sŏn/ Zen master still invokes the revered enlightened text in an act of performative auto-hagiography however it is simply televised after which the more informal segment of the Ascending the Dharma-Hall ritual follows. Otherwise, the ritual remained intact bearing in mind that the rhetoric of spontaneity and performance of spontaneity have been ritualized and performed in this way since the Koryŏ and Sŏng Dynasties.



*Figure 29 Main-gate of the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn, Bangkok, Thailand with Korean and Classical Chinese Signage.*

It is also worth noting before taking recourse to analyses based on Baudrillard's (1994) notion of simulacrum and so-called simulations of ritual or for that matter, enlightened sermonizing, the Meditation School in East Asia has laid claim to a timeless universality for most of its institutionalized existence spanning the past millennium. From the emic perspective, there is no conflict between the replication or repetition of the Zen matriarch

or patriarchs enlightened speech because it has always been held to be timeless anyway; the constant renewal of the ecclesiastic Sōn/ Zen School's position in an eternal present through rhetorical and mythopoeic 'ritualization' caused the past to 'lose its historical dimension'(Faure 1996:192).

Hyedan Sunim observed the traditional form of a ritualized invocation of the past-masters except that she did this through video. What is also striking is that the video of Zen Master Daehaeng a woman, both affirms and subverts the yǔlù genre and its 'ventriloquism of patriarchy' depending on one's perspective (Moi 1985:68). If a concept such as multiphrenia can be applied to the enlightened non-self of the Zen master, it is a concept which can be used to view the master's auto-hagiography in intertextual relationship with the yǔlù texts long before video was added as a vehicle to the 'records of the sayings' of past masters.



*Figure 30 Side-gable of Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn, Bangkok, Thailand Facing the Main Street with Signage in Korean.*

On the point of Sŏn pedagogy, Hyedan Sunim commented;

I think Kanhwasŏn (KHS) practice in Korean Buddhism is not well adapted to short-tempered modern people, because they fail to get rapid answers when they are looking for answers through Hwadu Sŏn. You cannot find answers with Hwadu shortly. The Vipassana meditation technique adopted by Theravada Buddhism also has been proven to be excellent and useful for such a long time, and it doesn't differ markedly from Chuingong-Kwan. Nevertheless, Chuingong-Kwan is far easier to practice than any other religious disciplines including those in Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, and so on. You can easily as well as enthusiastically practice it in daily life, while inquiring into truth and holding your ground firmly. With Chuingong-Kwan, it's easy for you to examine whether you're right or wrong. I think Chuingong-Kwan will be increasingly relevant in today's world because all things start from Hanmaum [One Mind]. Well, Vipassana, KHS, and the like might have been effective fifty or one hundred years ago, but people today are trying to find answers immediately on the computer in this Age of the Computer. Incidentally, with Chuingong-Kwan, you can find answers easily.

While it was subsumed by the Jogye Order later, the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn – though autonomous within the order – is a part of the Jogye Order. It's Chuigong-Kwan meditation technique which was developed by its founder, the female Zen Master Daehaeng, and the fact that most of it's transnational centres seem to be headed by women, call into question the charge of 'Hwadu Absolutism' levelled at the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism by scholars such as Bernard Senécal, at least in transnational context. Hyedan Sunim's comments on Sŏn practice and pedagogy speak to a diversity of approach within the mainstream of [South] Korean Buddhism even if that approach seems subject to the traditional ritual division of labour within Korean culture.



*Figure 31 Main-Gate of Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn, Bangkok, Thailand with Bottom 2 characters in Classical Chinese Reading "Sŏnwŏn" or "Zen Centre."*

Regarding women teaching Sŏn, Hyedan Sunim mentioned that;

Many people don't remark about being taught Sŏn by a male teacher, but if a female teaches Sŏn, they would wonder how much she practiced and how much she knew. As a

result, a female monk will have to work harder to make them get used to her teaching. You see, only a person with a highly cultivated mind can say, “Ah, she is right.” When I came to visit Thailand 20 years ago, I saw a layman who didn’t make a bow to a nun. He told me that he didn’t bow to her because she was a younger female monk. There are some people like that, they would say, “I doubt if she can teach us.” On the other hand, they accept a great female master’s teaching, when considering her lifelong efforts and high level of practice. They can regard her as if she was their mother. It might be disadvantageous for you to teach lay people if you were a female monk or a young one. They would wonder and say, “Has she practiced so much at all?” [ ] I suppose female monks teaching Korean Buddhism abroad far outnumber male monks, maybe. Why is that? Well, actually there are more women who go to temple than men, even though the same teachings are given. More women go to temple than men, because they have more free time than men. Men have lots of work to do.

Hyedan Sunim’s comments echo those of the student of Zen, Min Trahn in Hong Kong who heard some nuns mention that they have to be ‘tougher’ in teaching compared to men. Hyedan Sunim’s observations are at the point where the Korean cultural hierarchies of gender, seniority and lay/ monastic status intersect. It is interesting to note that the older lay man does not feel he must observe the ritual etiquette of bowing to a Buddhist nun because she is a younger female whose gender precludes her from having gained any deep insight from her introspective practice and which is a basis to assume that she has not done any introspective meditative practice at all.



*Figure 32 Main Dharma-Hall at Hanmaum Sönwön, Bangkok, Thailand.*

Nevertheless, as female lay-adherents outnumber men in South Korea, Hyedan Sunim's perception is that women also outnumber men in transnational teaching contexts which certainly seems to be true in the context of the Hanmaum school. What it does suggest is not so much a 'Hwadu Absolutism' in Sön but rather a gendered division of Sön pedagogies along public and private lines where the more 'masculinized' (from a South Korean perspective) rhetorical pedagogy is dominant in national (private) context and a more fluid and less strict adherence to the rhetoric of Sön practice being solely and fundamentally identified with Hwadu practice and KHS can flourish more easily in transnational (public) context.

I was unable to interview the Ven. Zen Master Young San Seong Do Snim at the International Zen Temple in Berlin due to his living in seclusion unless he is teaching.

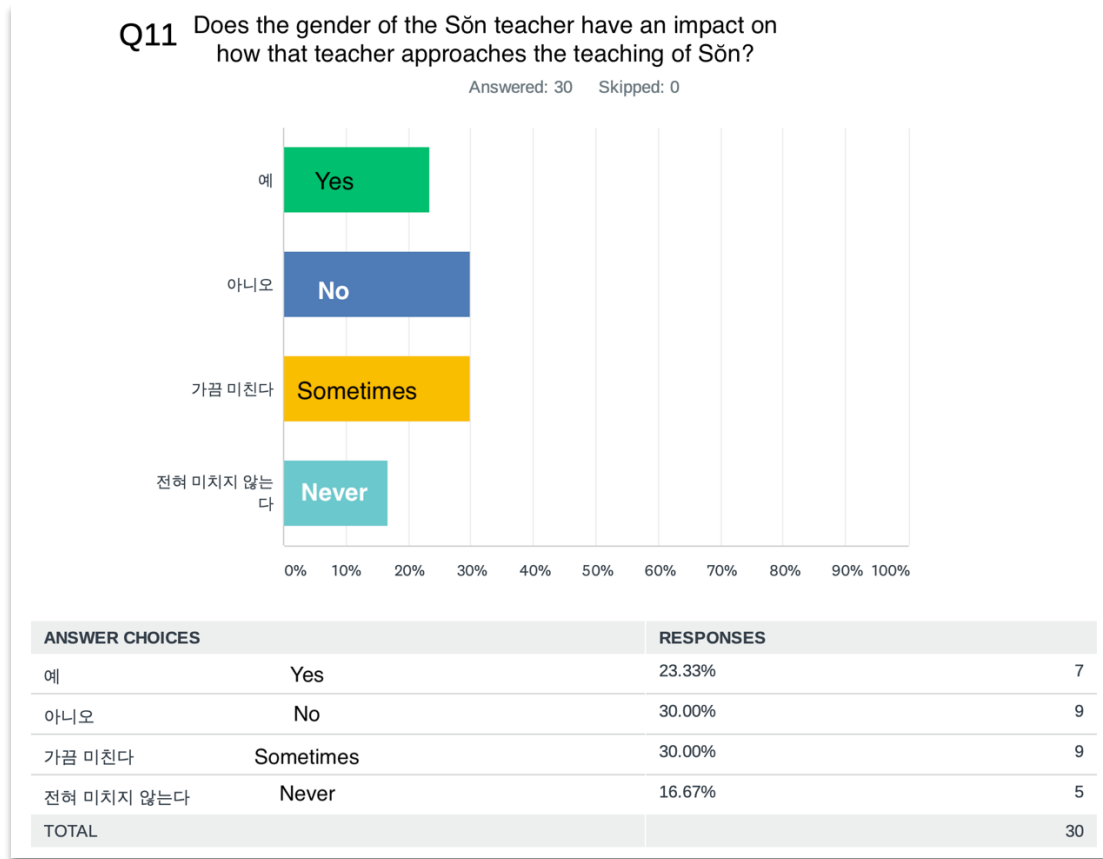


However as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, the International Zen Temple seems from a distance at least to be truly international with a congregation made up of a variety of nationalities.



*Figure 36 Zen Master Daehaeng Ascending the Dharma-Hall posthumously, the Rhetoric of Immediacy via Video.*

## 6.8 Survey of South Korean Monastics – the Perspective of Teachers



*Figure 28 Response to Survey Question 11*

As stated in the previous chapters, no definitive conclusions can be drawn from this survey data however it serves to highlight general themes within this research project. Respondents were fairly evenly divided as to whether the gender of the Sŏn teacher has an effect on how that teacher approaches Sŏn teaching. We saw in the last chapter that male teachers were generally seen as using NCPs more often than female teachers (20/29 respondents compared to 2/29 respectively). The table above in Fig. 23 would seem to suggest that for 23.33% (7/30) of respondents, the gender of the teacher is a factor in how they engage with students and perform NCPs. For 9/30 respondents gender influenced

Sŏn teachers only sometimes while 9/30 and 5/30 respondents answered no and never respectively. We can see that for approximately half of respondents that the gender of the teacher is at least sometimes a factor in their teaching.

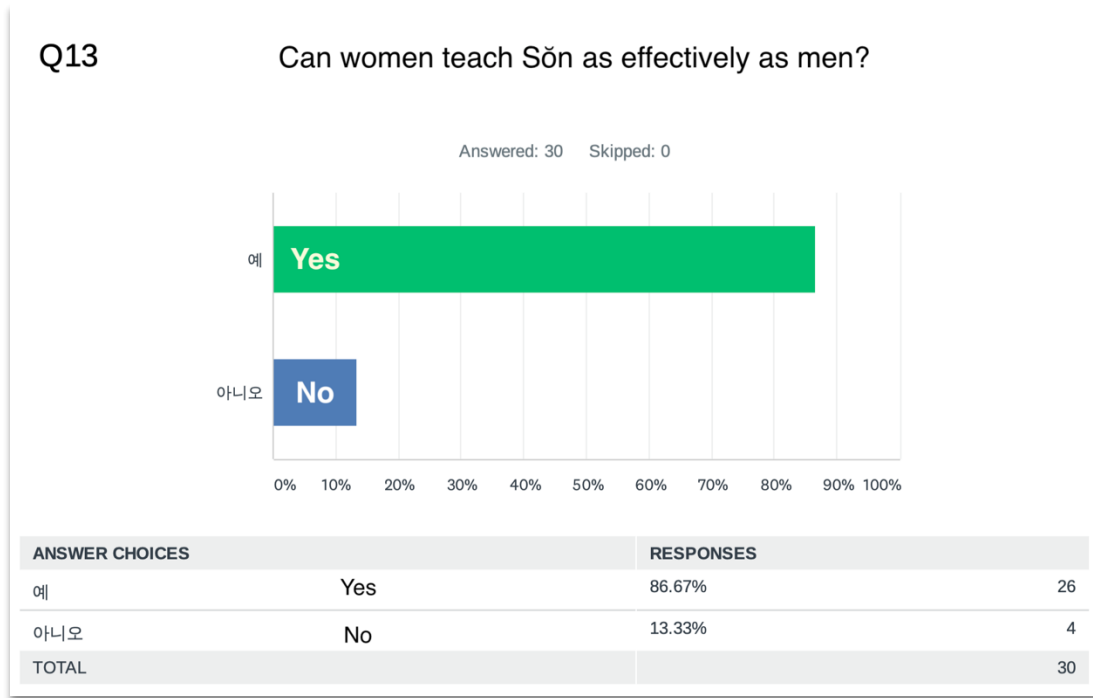


Figure 29 Response to Survey Question 13

This does not seem to influence the capability of women to teach Sŏn with a resounding yes constituted from 26/30 respondents in response to the direct question as to whether women can teach Sŏn as effectively as men. In comparison to the number of respondents mentioned in chapter five who said they would *prefer* to learn Sŏn from a female teacher (0%), it deserves mention that 4 out of 30 or 13.33% of respondents answered that women *cannot* teach Sŏn as effectively as men.

Participants were fairly evenly split as to the question whether a Sŏn teacher’s gender should be suppressed or allowed to manifest naturally. As can be seen in the table below, just over 50% were in favour of a Sŏn teacher expressing their gender freely while 14/30 thought it should be suppressed.

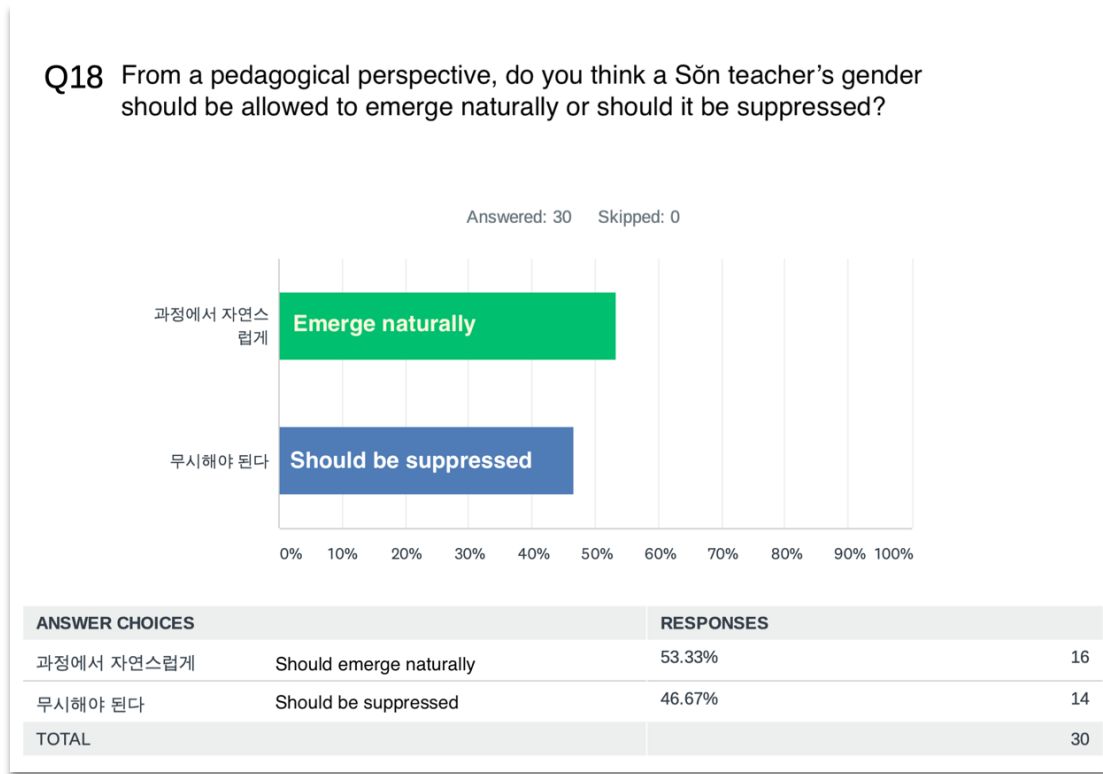


Figure 30 Response to Survey Question 18

I did ask survey-participants to what extent they agreed that a Korean male monk can more freely express his masculinity when he attempts Sudden-Teaching compared to female monastics who must suppress their femininity. In Fig. 26 below, 5/29 respondents or just over 17% completely agreed that a South Korean monk could more freely express his masculinity when engaging in Sudden-Teaching while almost 50% of respondents at

14/29 somewhat agreed with this statement. 9/29 disagreed completely and 1 respondent somewhat disagreed with this statement.

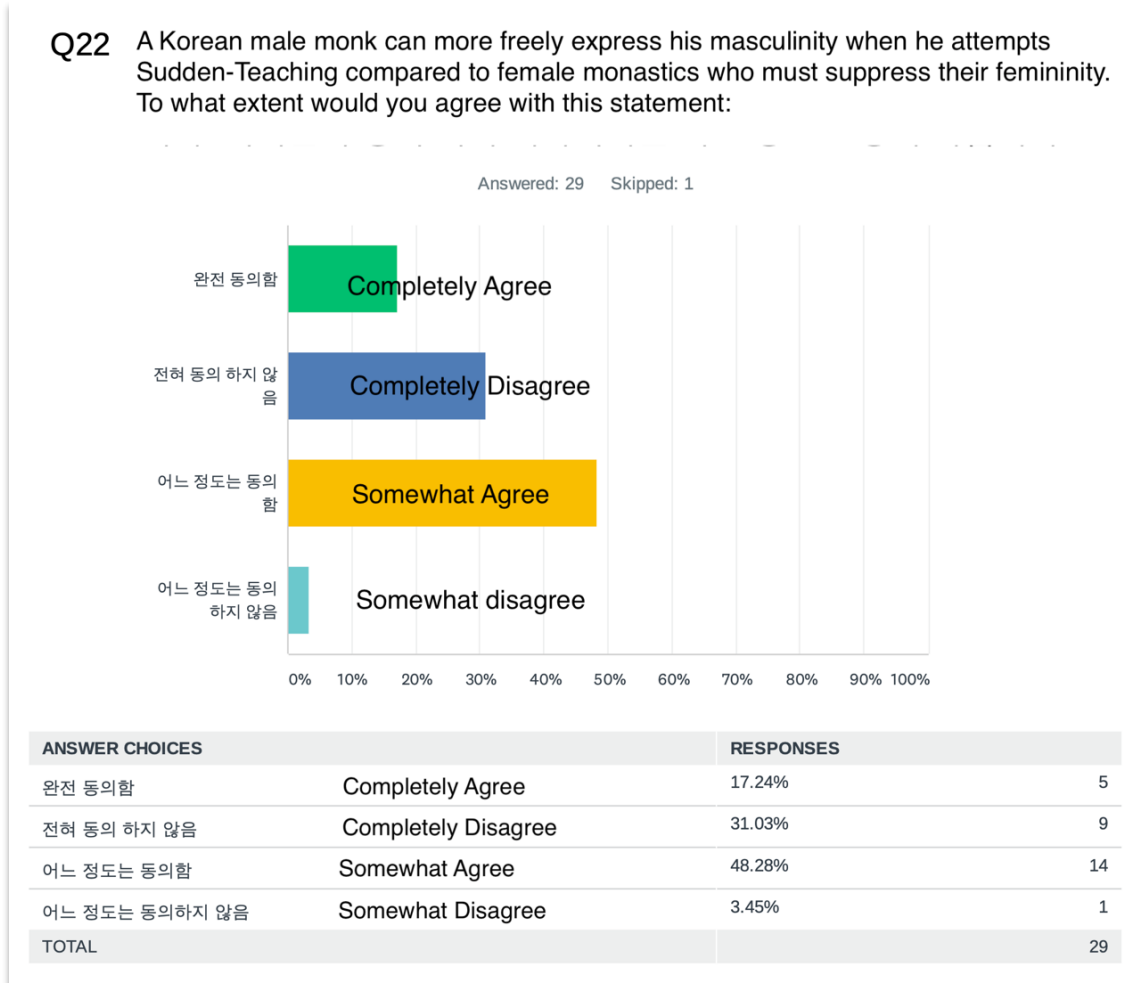


Figure 31 Response to Survey Question 22

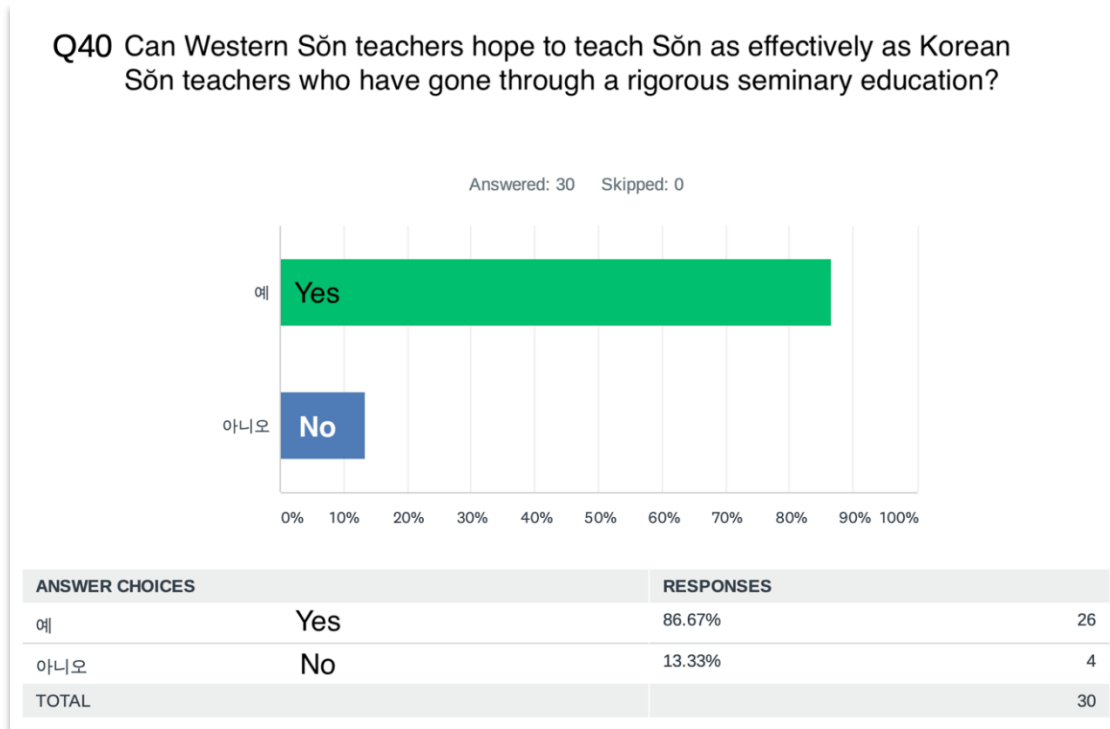
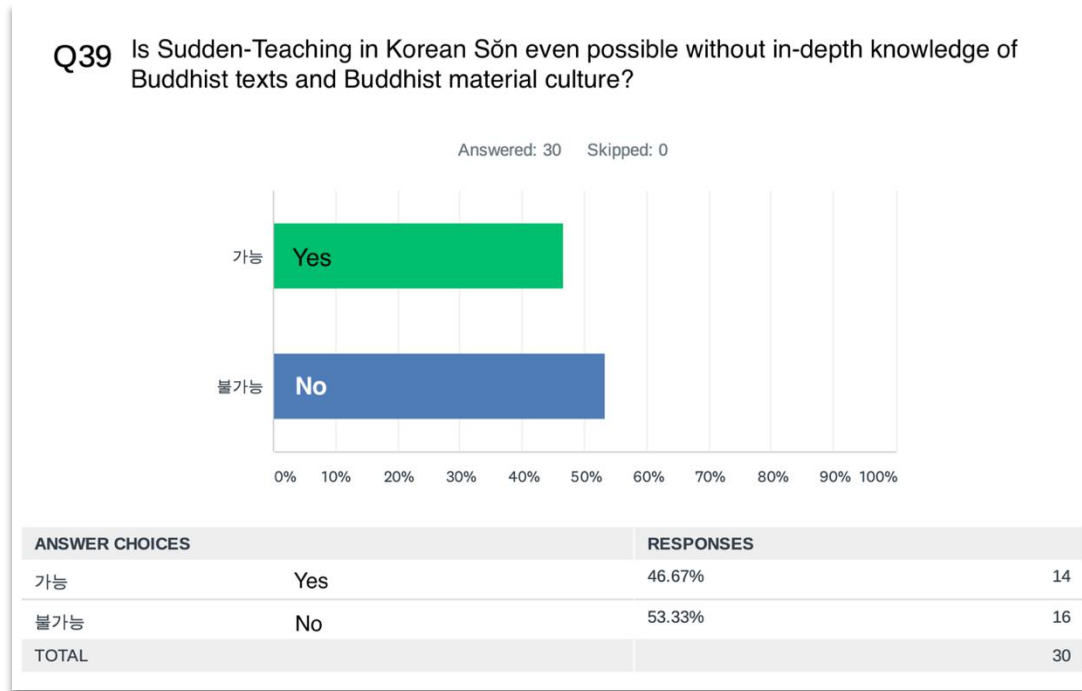


Figure 32 Response to Survey Question 40

In response to Q.40 above in Fig. 27, though 26/30 (over 85%) of respondents answered that Western teachers of Sŏn can hope to teach Sŏn effectively despite not having the rigorous seminary education of South Korean monks, 17/29 or almost 60% of participants mentioned earlier in the part of the survey covered in chapter five that westerners could not understand [South] Korean Buddhism without an understanding of Korean culture and almost 65% (18/28) of respondents felt that NCPs were not effective for teaching non-Korean students. This 26/30 in Fig. 27 is interesting also in light of Uri Kaplan’s (2020) finding that [South] Korean “traditional” Buddhist seminary training has changed drastically compared to the past and is more in line with the discourses of global Buddhist modernism. In that sense perhaps it is a truly *South* Korean curriculum than an essentialized and timeless “Korean” one.



*Figure 33 Response to Survey Question 39*

As in the responses to Q. 39 above, respondents were fairly evenly split as to whether it's even possible to implement Sŏn pedagogy without an in-depth knowledge of Buddhist texts and material culture. Despite gender balance amongst the survey respondents which of course is still not an even reflection of wider South Korean Buddhist or Sŏn culture for that matter, it is difficult to draw conclusions about gender or an ethno-centric Sŏn culture from a sample-size so small. However within the survey itself there seems to be inconsistencies between responses concerning non-Korean involvement in Sŏn pedagogy & practice versus that of South Koreans. There at least seems to be enough inconsistency around matters as to whether westerners can teach Sŏn or even understand its pedagogy to suggest what Tyler Lehrer (2019:118) has noted - along with Thomas Borchet (2007) - that 'contemporary Buddhism is increasingly marked by tensions between the national and the trans-national.' Lehrer (2019:99) does also identify a discourse of gendered and

xenophobic Buddhist nationalism in the Sri Lankan context which I hesitate to apply to the South Korean context beyond a certain ethno-centric inclination.

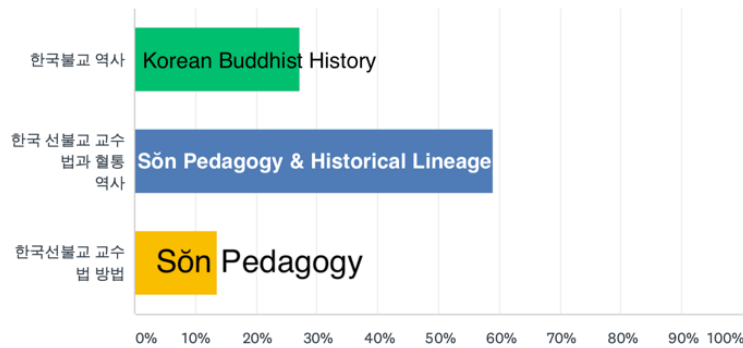
However that in itself is not to be underestimated. Sŏn by definition is heavily tied up with rhetoric of lineage, inheritance and bloodlines. When asked what was distinctive about Korean Sŏn's Sudden-Teaching compared to other Meditation Schools in East Asia, the historical lineage was what distinguished the sect more than general Korean Buddhist history or even Sŏn pedagogy on its own (see table for Q. 25 below in Fig. 29).

In fact, Sŏn pedagogy on its own showed as the *least* distinguishing characteristic which throws light on the other responses that cited; 1) knowledge of Korean culture as a prerequisite for understanding [South] Korean Buddhism and 2) that westerners were unable to understand NCPs. Of course, the rhetoric of bloodline and lineage of patriarchs has implicit connotations of gendered ethnicity and points at ritualized Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy being inseparable from the rhetoric of lineage, paternity and bloodline. Implicit within this also is that that bloodline and lineage, while not absent outside of South Korea, is more tenuous in trans-national contexts, marking the fault lines between the parallel national and the trans-national congregations, the private and the public faces of SKSB.



Q25 What is distinctive about Korean Sudden-Teaching compared to Chinese, Japanese or Vietnamese Sudden-Teaching?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
한국불교 역사	Korean Buddhist History 27.27% 6
한국 선불교 교수법과 혈통 역사	Sŏn Pedagogy & Historical Lineage 59.09% 13
한국선불교 교수법 방법	Sŏn Pedagogy 13.64% 3
TOTAL	22

Figure 34 Response to Survey Question 25

## 6.9 Conclusion

Ultimately, very little of the Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy I observed in transnational contexts could be classified as spontaneous NCP or Sudden Teaching. Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy was mostly observable only in the ritualized form of the ecclesiastical Ascending the Hall ritual of ZCR and Daewon-sa Temple and echoed in the *inka* speeches of the KSZ. The most spontaneous and genuine NCP which I observed - in Zen Master Dae Kwan’s monastery in Hong Kong and in Hyongak Sunims ZCR were patterned according to the idiom of the Meditation School but effective nonetheless on the basis of what Zen Master Dae Bong emphasized, Sudden-Teaching is student-centred; it is the realization that

makes it sudden rather than the pedagogy or the rhetoric; just because Sŏn rhetoric is repeated does not mean it is ineffective.

That distinctive patterned pedagogy can be as easily appropriated in laicized as well as ecclesiastic Sŏn/ Zen contexts and signify different things in the parallel congregations of public and private. As with the case of Zen Master Hyon Ja who calls for matriarchs in her *inka* speech or in the examples of South Korean patriarchs such as Zen Master Kusan, to what extent Sŏn rhetoric is itself gendered depends on who uses it. It seems tempting to conclude that Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy is more ritualized in the private South Korean heritage congregation however as I observed, non-Korean Sŏn and Global Zen pedagogies are equally ritualized but in different ways which appeal the western imaginaries of Sŏn and Zen. There is nothing un-Sŏn about invoking the bloodline of the patriarchs (or the matriarchs) in Hyedan Sunim's case in Bangkok and Yangon, she just happened to use technology to do it. Neither was the teaching of KSZ matriarchs such as Zen Master Dae Kwan, Zen Master Bon Shim or Zen Master Hyon Ja any less traditionally rhetorical than that of Hyongak Sunim, Zen Master Dae Bong or Zen Master Dae Kwang. To use Crystal Goh's description of genuine Sŏn/ Zen teaching, all were 'fluid and intuitive' in their own way and most of all concerned with their students.

This chapter has shown that while non-Korean Sŏn/ Global Zen rhetorical pedagogies and South Korean heritage pedagogies are equally ritualized and patterned in their own ways, there are not only a plurality of pedagogies within transnational Sŏn but there are a plurality of teachings within domestic Sŏn in spite of the official line of the Jogye Order.

Though the Jogye Order is the dominant order and places an emphasis on Hwadu meditation which is possibly a *kundaehwa Sŏn* state-Buddhism concerned with re-masculinization, I can only conclude now that after having taken a gendered perspective of Sŏn pedagogy in national and transnational context, that Senécal's charge of "absolutism" is not the full picture. Taking the example of the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn's Chuingong Kwan meditation, we can observe parallel pedagogies even within the mainstream of SKSB in both national and trans-national contexts which reflect Kendall's 'gendered division of ritual labour' and Walraven's public and private spheres in South Korean religious life, parallel congregations where ritual pedagogy can signify non-duality in one and masculinity in the other.

## Chapter Seven



### Conclusion - Ecclesiastic Sŏn History and the Future

#### 7.1 Introduction

This dissertation has aimed to widen our understanding of ecclesiastic Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy by taking a gender-perspective on how Sŏn is taught and how that teaching is received beyond South Korea. In so doing, this dissertation documents one of the most comprehensive studies so far of non-Korean Sŏn in Europe as well as South Korean-derived Buddhism elsewhere in Asia and has applied a general theory of ‘parallel congregations’ to the continuum of transnational Sŏn. These largely non-overlapping Sŏn congregations are ones in which Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy is applied, received and signified differently.

Using constructivist grounded-theory based on semi-structured qualitative interviews, participant observation, online videos and surveys, it was argued that a hitherto androcentric and restricted focus prevents a deeper understanding of Sŏn/ Zen and who it is for. In uncovering this wider narrative of ecclesiastical Sŏn pedagogy, it was also revealed how religious identities are constructed and negotiated in relation to the gendered superstructure of domestic Sŏn and how this plays out in transnational contexts, namely how – contrary to a possible presumption of greater ‘gender equality’ in “the West,” gender can be more polarized within non-Korean Sŏn than in South Korean Sŏn wherein Sŏn rhetoric in female-dominated Sŏn-spaces is more collaborative with lay women (*posalnim*) participating in the sacrifice of the Sŏn master. Added to that, as this research has shown, Western monks active in South Korea are also inclined to adhere to the dominant gender order and benefit from it.

Precisely by adopting this gendered approach, the study has shown that rather than being monolithic and universal, Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy adapts and changes as it becomes embedded in new cultural contexts which are as different from each other as they are different from the native South Korean context. Rather than a timeless, unchanging and essentialized Sŏn, instead we see a plurality of re-localizing non-Korean Sŏns amongst which is South Korea’s “Korean” Sŏn. The pedagogy of each is put forward and received differently and real spontaneous Sudden Teaching is probably as rare in these contexts as it has always been. Below I will outline and discuss the major themes of this research project.

## 7.2 Parallel Congregations

I have suggested that the Korean peninsula south of the DMZ acts as a terminal or rhizome within the continuum of transnational Sŏn. This is in no way meant to trivialize or minimize contemporary South Korean Buddhist culture or historical Korean Buddhist heritage but rather to simply theorize towards a better understanding of Sŏn in transnational context. Within what I call the continuum of transnational Sŏn I have observed what seem to be ‘parallel congregations’ which largely do not overlap and for which I suggest rhetorical pedagogy might be similarly ritualized but are semiotically different. I must also readily state that this theory is possibly incomplete by virtue of not having extended my ethnography to elsewhere in the Global North i.e. North America and this theory also has some limitations in that it can portray a factionalism which is not present in reality. Nevertheless, theorizing parallel congregations has helped me to inquire deeper into the function of ecclesiastical Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy in different contexts.

In broad terms, building on my suggestion that native South Korean Sŏn on the peninsula be included in the transnational continuum, I put forward two parallel congregations. The first is an ethnic heritage congregation extending from South Korea to other countries where Sŏn Buddhist temples, centres and contexts are largely constituted by ethnic diaspora South Koreans and do not overlap with Sŏn derived contexts frequented by the people in that non-Korean country. This ‘heritage congregation’ is ethnic South Korean, conducts services, festivals and sermons in the Korean language and is not massively open to propagating in the language of the country it is in. It is mostly ceremonial and

Sŏn rhetoric in this congregation is collaborated in and co-constructed by the congregation. This ‘heritage congregation’ is sometimes at pains to distinguish itself from Japanese Zen and despite being diasporic, is ethno-centric and always looks back to the geographic and spiritual location of the Korean peninsula which has been mandalized throughout history in Buddhist terms. In this sense, this congregation is private.

The other ‘convert congregation’ is mostly made up of non-Koreans with a majority of ‘converts’ or practitioners present in its centres and temples being from that respective non-Korean country be it Germany, Poland, France, Hong Kong, Singapore etc. I should say briefly here that ‘convert’ is a term used very loosely and which applies less uncomfortably in Western contexts where many people coming to Sŏn were not previously Buddhist. It is a more difficult term to apply in places like Hong Kong or Singapore where many of the people attending were born into Buddhist families and since there are still some South Koreans in this parallel congregation, I felt it would be misleading to term it a non-Korean congregation.

This ‘convert congregation’ accesses Sŏn sometimes through a more Korean rhetoric and sometimes through a rhetoric of Japanese Zen found within Global Zen. Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy in this congregation, though similarly ritualized seems to have at times a different function. Though at times quite collaborative, this congregation rather ‘appropriates’ the Sŏn master’s spiritual sacrifice (yoga) or his blood sacrifice (martial arts). Being a part of the Global Zen field, I have theorized this ‘convert congregation’ as public (from the standpoint of Buddhism within South Korea). .

I have also suggested that the Purification Movement in South Korean Buddhism was rather a gendered division of Korean Sŏn in accordance with the discourses of Buddhist modernism which was essentially the genesis of South Korean Sŏn. In that sense, as South Korea's "Korean" Buddhism has always been divided from its northern counterpart, I trace these parallel congregations back to 1970 and the Purification Movement which had slight echoes of the Chosŏn cult of chaste women while expanding abroad during the Vietnam War and the second wave of global feminism. Within South Korean Sŏn besides this gendered division of meditation and ritual, I have also noted a gendered separation of pedagogies with reference to the Jogye Order's KHS and the Hanmaum Sŏnwŏn's Chuingong Kwan. If we have to use the term "Korean" Buddhism, then the Buddhist priests of North Korea and their wives might also be as easily termed a parallel congregation.

### **7.3 An Eschatology of Re-Unification and Utopian Pedagogy**

In thinking about the end game for ecclesiastical Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy within each congregation I took into consideration Beata Grants notion of a gendered rhetoric of heroism and Nancy Jay's idea of blood-sacrifice as well as crisis mentioned above. What was the ultimate meaning of ecclesiastical Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy in the heritage congregation and did it have any political implications? That is, could Sŏn rhetoric be linked to the state? The crisis of the androcentric gender order in South Korea is the existential threat, not so much of North Korea itself but, of a further outbreak of hostilities on the peninsula - and Northeast Asia at large - which might threaten South Korea's place in the Global North.



The androcentric South Korean state with its gendered citizenship linked to soldiering, is endorsed through its close links with the Jogye Order of [South] Korean Buddhism and its re-masculinizing *kundaehwa Sŏn* rhetoric. The Jogye Order co-operates with the Ministry of Tourism in running the TSP and it backs away from ‘anti-state’ accusations from the VVAK. In the spirit of the traditional *hoguk pulgyo* (K. State Protectionist Buddhism), the Jogye Order wants to be seen as a unifying force within South Korea if not for the peninsula as a whole. The *Woori Pulgyo* (‘Our Buddhism’) of the *minjok* (the ethno-nation) is ethno-centric and always concerned with Korean unification and I have linked the gesture of *kundaehwa Sŏn* rhetorical pedagogy to the state through what I call an ‘eschatology of re-unification.’<sup>55</sup> As long as the peninsula remains divided, androcentric Sŏn like any patriarchy within a patrilineal state justifies its presence through sacrifice and a masculinizing rhetoric of defence. Partition of the peninsula is what sustains compulsory military-service for young men and perpetuates the gender hierarchy of the South Korean military-industrial complex as a whole. I wish to state clearly here that it is not my intention to criticize the very legitimate ideal of Korean unification here.

The South Korean military-industrial complex is, to use Jager’s term ‘agnatic’ or patrilineal. An eschatology of re-unification keeps Enlightenment rare and patrilineal while it maintains and upholds the status quo of the military-industrial complex’s

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<sup>55</sup> South Korean society and office culture, being already hierarchical, is constructed along military lines and this is the status quo that the Jogye Order of South Korean Buddhism seeks to uphold. Women are promoted more slowly than their male counterparts for whom office culture hierarchy makes allowance when they return from compulsory military service. The offices of some corporations in South Korea are organized according to the former military units of its male employees.

patriarchal male ascendancy. Within the heritage congregation then, Sŏn rhetorical pedagogy can be said to be utopian pedagogy in the sense that it always looks forward though it sees itself resolving the crisis of re-unification by unifying the peninsula with an androcentric post-war capitalist South Korean *kundaehwa Sŏn* disguised as a kind of Buddhist *pibo sat'ap sŏl* geomantic unifying of the peninsula as discussed with regard to the Sŏn monk Tosŏn in section 1.3.1 at the beginning of this dissertation.

#### **7.4 Right-Wing Sŏn and Zen in Europe**

Before elaborating, I should be careful to state that *kundaehwa Sŏn* is not all of South Korean Buddhism and as Chong-ko Sunim was careful to point out, is lamented by many of the older sunims. It is neither an accurate picture of older forms of Sŏn practice nor the complete picture of the variety of contemporary Sŏn practices. Nevertheless, it is a strand within Sŏn and a significant one. It is of further significance when we consider how Sŏn might be appropriated by fringe right-wing elements in Europe and the rhetoric of the Sŏn master as an embodiment of a gendered sacrifice has the potential to be collaborated in by a minority who view the patriarchal state as being in crisis and in need of defence. The potential for Sŏn and Zen rhetoric to be appropriated in this way throughout history has been shown above and is not simply a by-product of transnationalism or laicization.

#### **7.5 Laicized or Gendered? Sŏn Rhetoric and the Social Need for Ritual**

This research found that both the practice of yoga and a rhetoric of power latent within Sŏn which appeals to martial artists is in both cases symptomatic of the wider laicization and (re?) ritualization of Sŏn rhetoric itself. The non-conceptual pedagogies upon which

the Sōn rhetoric of immediacy and spontaneity are based, have always been by their very nature rare. This laicization of rhetorical non-conceptual pedagogies has coincided with a laicization of yoga and a laicization of martial arts (which in their laicized form we might call ‘combat sports’) which form an amalgamative practice or rather, which Sōn facilitates an intersection of. These laicized strands co-exist within Sōn on the micro-level as much as parallel congregations co-exist within transnational Sōn at the macro-level and reveal differing rhetoric which appeals to disenchanting people who have a sense of loss; that is, the well-being based gendered-corporeality of yogic re-enchantment concerned with body & mind unity as an antidote for modern life and the appeal of Sōn to a martial ethic with far-right leanings which seeks to re-enchant, reclaim or defend a homeland/ “Europe” from external threats.

In both cases - the rhetoric of relaxation and calm, of yogic-control of the body, ritual propriety and ritualistic-piety - as well as the unwavering and unhesitating martial courage which draws male adherents, there is a connection to Western fitness-culture through what Slavoj Žižek calls ‘spiritual hedonism.’ The once austere almost Hinayana-type of Zen asceticism is compromised or in some cases deliberately adapted to what Hugh Urban terms ‘the spiritual-logic of late-capitalism,’ in what could be argued as a subtle rapprochement between Zen and Tantric Buddhism (Urban 2000:270).

There are two things worth noting about this. The first is that the end-goal or ideal state of Yogic Enlightenment is rarely if ever articulated in Western yogic contexts and the integration of Sōn and Zen into this system is more in line with Western imaginaries of

Sŏn and Zen as a mood rather than a vehicle for transcendence. In this case, the integration of Sŏn into a bodily-based practice is a type of epicurean ‘re-enchantment.’ In the case of integrating Sŏn into a secular religiosity of the nation, it is ‘re’ or at least *neo* nationalizing – re-enchanting the nation. In both cases Sŏn serves as a focal point or a point of intersection with which to unite divergent martial-based masculinities (and femininities) and yogic-based corporeal femininities (and masculinities) to reclaim a sense of loss speaking more to capitalist forces of alienation rather than a spiritual vocation to transcend.

The audience of domestic South Korean Sŏn Rhetoric on the peninsula is inherently female and it is a female “un-Enlightened” audience that brings Sŏn rhetoric of immediacy into contact with the outside world. In this way, I drew on the work of Hoffman (1995) as a way to view the male Sŏn Master as almost incidental in a South Korean Sŏn rhetoric which speaks primarily to women as the rhetoric of the male Sŏn Master connects the front-stage of the Sŏn-space with the back-stage of the mountains and his sacrifice is collaborated in via the ritual-quality of devotional temple labour. This type of rhetorical collaboration I believe is a function of the early twentieth-century co-opting of Korean feminism by Korean patriotism which has persisted in South Korea. South Korean Buddhist lay-women are in many ways happy to support the centre-stage role of male Sŏn teachers if it elevates the status of [South] “Korean” Buddhism internationally.

## 7.6 The Zen of Sōn Transnationalism and the Crisis of Sōn Postmodernity

All Zen Masters are concerned with history and transpersonal transmitted experience; the lineage of patriarchs is what has united the tradition trans-historically; simultaneously transcending time and grounding it in history. History is a constantly re-written narrative in South Korea and East Asia, especially where women are concerned. The *Korean Zen* which never actually existed until its twentieth-century construction, similarly is a product of the twentieth-century nation-state and therefore embedded in history and speaks for history.

The notion that there is even something which the word “Sōn” refers to is inherently problematic and the expansion of Sōn in Europe (and in America) is perhaps a way of constructing a Sōn that did not ever really exist or does not really exist even on the south of the Korean peninsula. In the sense that I mentioned post-liberation, post-Purification Movement Sōn as a New Religion, it is a way therefore, of constructing Sōn for both Europeans *and* for South Koreans in the sense that Walraven applies the concept of ‘bricolage’ – South Korean Sōn is still being constructed or “Korean” Buddhism has not yet modernized fully depending on what way one wants to look at it (Walraven 2011:15).

Traditional interlocutors such as D. T. Suzuki who in helping to construct a Japanese samurai derived Bushīdo-Zen such that his name has been added as an epithet for it, forever changed the field with which transnational Sōn would interact. Suzuki’s identification of Zen with what ultimately become Japanese imperialist militarism may

have been anachronistic but the pre-liberation fever-pitch of Japanese militarist-inspired colonizing-Zen during the first half of the twentieth century, constructed the global Zen field and in so doing already fundamentally altered Sŏn by mimesis.

[South] Korean Buddhist presence in Europe and elsewhere in Asia is always mediated by this Global Zen-field which it could be argued was at least partially constructed in colonial Korea in the early twentieth-century. Sŏn in the field of Zen transnationalism is never looking outwards but always back to a united peninsula which is why [South] Korean Sŏn transnationalism is ultimately about the domestic, the pursuit of modernity and metropolitanism in reverse, by first becoming cosmopolitan. This is the crisis of [South] Korean Sŏn as a new religion, like the androcentric military-industrial complex it upholds, to have skipped modernism and to have gone straight to postmodernism. In this sense, [South] Korean Sŏn among the emerging congregations of non-Korean Sŏn is truly a postmodern religion though undoubtedly ‘rooted in the socio-political and religio-spiritual concerns of contending groups and historical circumstances’ (Van Schaik 2015:49).

### **7.7 Sŏn Orthopraxis and Sŏn Spontaneity - Towards New Pedagogies of Sŏn, Zen and Chán**

If there is no universal essentialized and eternal “Sŏn” (or Zen and Chán for that matter) in an ecclesiastical sense, then what has been a constant unifying factor in institutional ecclesiastic Sŏn in East Asia has been at least the rhetoric if not also the Sudden-Teaching pedagogy. Sudden-Teaching in Sŏn cannot be both an expedient means suited

to a specific student's needs at a particular time and place while also simultaneously being the only universal way to achieve the highest Enlightenment. The fact that laicizing Sōn rhetoric adapts and changes in new contexts or in the hands of women while ecclesiastic Sōn rhetoric remains staunchly universal, androcentric and concerned with an eschatology of re-unification perhaps reveals Shénhuì's sectarian and materialist will to state sponsorship. The multiplicity of Sōns in European contexts are distinct from the plurality of Sōns on the Korean peninsula; Sōn in North Korea, and the various types of Sōn in South Korea. Sam Van Schaik reminds us in his work on Tibetan Zen, that 'all Zen schools are local' (Van Schaik 2015:49). In that sense, research conducted in Hong Kong, Germany and Poland bears Van Schaik's point out as the teaching of Zen Master Dae Kwan, Zen Master Bon Shim or Hyongak Sunim adapts fluidly to local context.

Jin Y. Park 'suggests the necessity of changing the Zen language' and questions the continued relevance of what she calls 'patriarchal faith' as a foundation for the 'Zen pedagogy of one-to-one relation' (wherein the learner in ecclesiastic context meets for private interviews with the Sōn/ Zen teacher) (Park 2005b:94–95). Though Park goes on to conclude with a call for hwadu practice to change as a sociohistorical necessity, I would say not only does it seem likely that this is beginning to happen due to transnational interactions and the contexts that Sōn introspective-technology is now operating within but that hwadu Sōn may perhaps reveal the shortcomings or one-dimensional approach of ecclesiastic Sōn, Zen or Chán teaching methodology.

To be clear, I am not criticizing the method but its suitability to the context which is outside the protective walls of a monastery. The necessity to change the Zen language is to my mind, more a case of matching it to the secular-context that Sudden-Teaching finds itself in. A self-sufficient walled-in mountain-temple removed from society is a great place to stress oneself out and devote oneself utterly to hwadu practice however the universalist rhetoric of ecclesiastic Sŏn not only contradicts itself in its universality as an expedient means but also conveniently ignores that the secular-world in contemporary society is already stressful enough without the added pressure of walking around “keeping the hwadu” as if one’s life depended on it.

The increasing presence of Zen and Sŏn matriarchs in Europe and elsewhere in Asia teaching Sŏn already indicates a drift towards a non-monastic Sŏn with tenuous connections to South Korean-ness. Whether [South] Korean Buddhists like it or not, Western or European or German Zen/ Sŏn exists, is decidedly intellectual in places and in few cases is concerned with the South Korean-ness of the practice. While the aristocratic leanings of a tradition which dreams of reclaiming the glory days of Koryŏ Sŏn amidst cultural expressions of Jager’s ‘primordial anxiety about paternity,’ the instituting of a rarely attained ‘Enlightenment’ as a learning goal seems to obscure yet also confirm the elitism of the ecclesiastic Sŏn school. While this is as yet purely hypothetical and would be extremely difficult to generate data on, a further review of the practicalities of attempting to implement a formalized orthodox monastic-derived Sŏn/ Zen Practice in lay Sŏn and Zen centres such as has been undertaken by Jin Y. Park deserves more attention (Park 2005b). While Park argues for a reconsideration of the language used in



Hwadu based Sŏn/ Zen pedagogy, I would go further and suggest that a complete overhaul of pedagogical approach suited to contemporary lay-life should be entirely doable for any Sŏn or Zen master worthy of the title though this seems to be happening as Sŏn localizes transnationally.

The ultimate implication is that, despite claiming to do so, even Sŏn and Zen can't liberate women from patriarchy. The social co-construction of Enlightenment has served some groups while disserving others. Ecclesiastical Sŏn non-conceptual pedagogy as a social process, is how Enlightenment is co-constructed in a patriarchal society of rigid etiquette-normativity and conformity. Ecclesiastical Sŏn non-conceptual pedagogies may very well simply be the social process of constructing Enlightenment in a seemingly random, spontaneous but quite ritualistic/ formal way or they may have been the critical pedagogies we now reify after they have become orthodox and formalized. This disjunction seems to be becoming apparent in the parallel congregations I have described above.

### **7.8 Concluding Thoughts**

Sŏn / Zen is as often accreted onto and incorporated into yoga or martial-arts as it is practiced for its own sake and even then, the "Korean-ness" of it, while in some cases acknowledged, does not figure prominently for most practitioners outside of [South] Korea. The difference between a non-Korean Sŏn and a contemporary Global Zen are negligible and the only really Korean aspect of practice and instruction which I found

was the emphasis on the practice of questioning which was mentioned many teachers I interviewed.

A prevailing theme throughout this dissertation was to differentiate between ecclesiastical, monastic and lay forms of Sŏn/ Zen practice. I have emphasized ecclesiastical South Korean Sŏn throughout because it seeks to uphold different things especially when compared to the private lay-practice of some forms of Chinese Chán or South Korean Sŏn for that matter. The unarticulated and silent presence of North Korean Sŏn should give us pause before we make any generalized over-arching statements about a universal “Korean” Buddhism or institute that “Korean” Buddhism as a category.

Similarly, institutional Sŏn/ Zen rhetoric of which women are too often a casualty by virtue of being omitted from the historical record and eclipsed should be careful not to create a corresponding monolithic category of ‘women.’ Women in South Korean, China, Japan and Vietnam experience and interpret Sŏn/ Zen rhetoric in different ways and respond according to their own individual situations as do their male counterparts. The fluidity and intuitive quality of genuine Sŏn/ Zen pedagogy was emphasized by all interviewees female and male alike.

As orthodox ecclesiastical Sŏn rhetoric undergoes adaptations and accommodations in the process of its journey into Europe and beyond Korean shores, new links, currents of communication and flows of people are formed. The effects of this have already been felt back on the peninsular ‘home’ of Sŏn, creating subtle shifts in the native perception of

Sŏn as well as affording South Korean monks and nuns new opportunities to travel and spread Buddhism, mostly in the global North and mostly in the United States.

The spread of South Korean Sŏn in Europe is largely rhizomatic and conveyed there by mostly non-Korean monks returning to the west after having practiced in South Korea for many years. What little ethnic South Korean Buddhism exists in Europe (France, Germany and England) usually caters to ex-patriot South Korean communities in those countries where unlike western oriented centres and temples, meditation is not a staple of activities at the centre. Sŏn rhetoric of directness, decisiveness, equality and the highest Enlightenment often seem to obscure an uncertainty as to how to deliver even more modest learning outcomes such as improved concentration or mental clarity and appeal to a hierarchical support-base at home that extols the gendered performance of Sŏn.

Though rhetoric of equality prevalent in Mahāyāna Buddhism was never realized fully in East Asia, the adoption of Sŏn by some people in Western European countries has informed a wider drive for egalitarianism, re-enchantment and self-empowerment – this drive was not initiated but participated in by [South] Korean Sŏn Buddhism. This research has revealed a laicized and ritualistic rhetorical pedagogy - if one can even be said to exist – but it also reveals a question arising from the gendered approach to non-Korean Sŏn adopted herein which is; is there is a transnational Sŏn at all?

Differentiated from its international counterparts by a non-traditional and gendered eschatology of re-unification, mainstream South Korean Sŏn's collaborative domestic

rhetoric is placed along a continuum within which there are parallel-congregations and is just one of a plurality of Sōns. It's transnational and domestic rhetoric often does not overlap even within South Korea (or on the Korean peninsula at large) and it could even be argued, gives it the status of a New Religion as different from its European and other Asian manifestations as the Japanese Zen it defines itself against.

Therein lies the paradox of contemporary ecclesiastic Sōn from its emic domestic perspective – its congregational non-uniformity excludes it from being truly transnational and prevents it from attaining the universality it claims. From the etic or ultimate perspective, Sōn – like its colleague Zen on the archipelago and its continental forebear Chán – continues to do what it has always done, which is localize. Though it might cause rancour amongst a minority of South Korean Buddhist nationalists, while the eschatology of re-unification has absorbed its attention at home, Sōn has transcended the peninsula and is no longer “Korean.” Even on the Korean peninsula, while the infrastructure is Korean, Buddhist culture is now part of wider transnational flows where the separation between ‘domestic’ and ‘foreign’ becomes increasingly superficial and pedagogy is ritualized in both contexts.

We saw reference to Western monks resident in South Korea who were happy to perpetuate the gender order. As Sōn, Zen and Chán practice appeals to the ‘fetishized independent subject of Western liberal discourse’ who takes control of their own re-enchantment through an integration of yoga into Sōn, we have seen Sōn as it is embedded in Global Zen appeal to far-right appropriations of East Asian rhetorics of sacrifice and

masculine-based defence. With all that said, we see ethnic South Korean teachers such as Ven. Zen Master Young San Seong Do Sunim teaching in Germany to a majority of German students in German. Ultimately, where 'skilful means' is incompatible with an ethnocentric [South] Korean Buddhism which by definition is androcentric, there will continue to be - if not the tensions between the national and the transnational observed by Borchet - parallel congregations within the transnational continuum of Sŏn where the rhetorical pedagogy of the patriarchs and their pedagogy has become de-coupled from a bloodline solely dominated by men.

## Appendix I

### Chronology of Major Shifts in Sōn Buddhism

Major shifts in Sōn and Earlier Chán History	
<p><b>c. First Centuries CE</b> (during the Chinese Han Dynasty, 202 BCE – 220 CE)</p>	<p>Around 500 ~ 450 BCE, the figure Mahā Kāśyapa becomes the first heir to the Buddha’s dispensation and the First Patriarch of the Chán and later Sōn (as well as other) schools of Buddhism in a successive lineage of 28 Patriarchs in Indian Buddhism (the historical figure known as “The Buddha,” Siddhārtha Gautama, born c.563 or 480 CE, emerged as a spiritual-teacher from the mendicant <i>śramaṇa</i> culture of wandering ascetics in northern India, present-day Nepal).</p> <p>Some 500 years later, Buddhist doctrines make their way into China overland eastwards through Central Asia (the ‘northern route’ from India along the silk routes buoyed by Eurasian trade) and the ‘southern route’ by sea from India via Southeast Asia. The first dedicated Buddhist temple in China is built in 68 CE. Translation of Buddhist scripture into Chinese starts in 148 CE and by the time of famous translator Kumārajīva (334–413 CE) who worked in the Chinese capital with teams of translators, various schools of Buddhism become established based on scriptural interpretation, carrying on the tradition of scholasticism valued in Chinese culture since antiquity.</p>
<p><b>Proto-Chán Period (c.500 – 600 CE)</b> Following John McRae’s (2003) cautious division of Chán into phases of development.</p>	<p>Teaching at the Shaolin Temple in Henan China, Indian monk Bodhidharma, 28<sup>th</sup> generation patriarch after the Buddha, becomes the First Patriarch of the Chán School of Buddhism. Huikē becomes his Dharma-Heir and the Second Patriarch of Chán (Buddhism had begun arriving on what is now the Korean peninsula a century earlier). Chán, like other Buddhist sects was still mostly based around particular Buddhist scriptures however the person later credited as the First Patriarch, Bodhidharma starts to stress the importance of direct experiential insight rather than just doctrinal study to achieve spiritual insight. First four (of a famous Six) Patriarchs of Chinese Chán:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bodhidharma 菩提達摩 (c. 440 – c. 528)</li> <li>2. Dàzǔ Huìkě 大祖慧可 (487–593)</li> <li>3. Sēngcàn 僧燦 (?–606)</li> <li>4. Dàyi Dào xìn 道信 (580–651)</li> </ol> <p>The mythical figure of Pōmnang 法朗 (fl. 632 – 646 CE) is often quoted as being the first to have brought Chán teachings back to the Korean peninsula but his existence is unprovable as is the claim that he studied under the Fourth Patriarch Dào xìn.</p>
<p><b>Early Chán (c. 600 – 900 CE,</b> corresponding roughly with Tang Dynasty China 618 – 907 and Unified Silla Dynasty Korea 668 – 935 CE)</p>	<p>Chán pedagogy and the sect’s identity becomes more distinct and defined by the time of the Fifth and Sixth Patriarchs;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Daman Hóngrěn 弘忍 (601–674)</li> <li>6. Huìnéng 惠能 (638–713)</li> </ol> <p>Despite the monk Xuánzàng (602 – 664 CE) bringing back hundreds of scriptures from India to an imperial welcome in China after a heroic journey on foot to India through Central Asia, a dramatic shift occurs during this period. Amidst the long established culture of belles-lettres amongst the mandarin class of Chinese bureaucrats and officials, the Chán sect - building on Bodhidharma’s earlier teaching - is by now making a radical and iconoclastic departure away from the scripture-based doctrinal mainstream of Chinese Buddhism and beginning to slowly acquire political influence in the process. The illiterate Huìnéng is not only recognized as the Sixth Patriarch of Chán but his recorded teachings are given the honour of being called a sūtra which is a term usually reserved for holy texts. This is a somewhat rhetorical but no less dramatic break away from cultural values of literary authority within Chinese culture and a further break away from the authority of Indian Buddhist texts, essentially establishing Huìnéng as a Chinese Buddha and cutting the umbilical from India as the place of authority in the process.</p> <p>Chán doesn’t arrive on the Korean peninsula after a monolithic spread eastwards. Silla-Koreans are key players in the major schools of continental Chinese Buddhism and contribute to their development before those schools even</p>

	<p>arrive in Korea. The Korean Kim Musang (684 – 762 CE) is a prominent teaching figure in Chinese Chán culture active in western China and responsible for one of the main streams of Chán entering Tibet at this time. The Korean disciple of Xuánzàng mentioned above, Wonchŭk (613 – 696 CE) though not of the Chán school is also a prominent figure in Chinese Buddhism at the time and no stranger to an imperial audience himself.</p>
<p><b>Middle Chán (c.750 – 1000 CE) in China</b></p>	<p>The Chán school is by now well established and distinct from all other schools of Chinese Buddhism. The rejection of intellectual understanding, written scripture and convention which the school espouses and the recording of which leads to a new genre and innovations in literary Chinese, appeals to the literati and elite which the school is by now well supported by. Innovative and increasingly subitist pedagogies begin to emerge from figures such as Mǎzū Dào'yī 馬祖道一 (c. 709 - 788) and his Dharma-Heirs;</p> <p>Bǎizhàng Huáihái 百丈懷海 (720 – 814)  Huángbò Xīyùn 黃檗希運 (d. 850 CE)  Línjì Yìxuán 臨濟義玄 (d. 866 CE)</p> <p>Chán begins to gain traction in Silla-Korea at this time with many monks journeying to the Chinese continent to study and returning eastwards to the the Silla-Korean capital of Kyōngju, a thriving silk-road city with the tallest free-standing structure in East Asia at the time (a Buddhist pagoda) and counting Buddhist queens amongst its lineage of rulers. Itinerant mendicant Buddhist monks convey not only doctrinal knowledge in oral and written form but also knowledge of architecture, geomancy, astronomy as well as other systems of thought such as Taoism and Confucianism.</p>
<p><b>Early Sōn in Korea (c. 750 – 1000 CE)</b></p>	<p>Concrete sources on temple stele inscriptions attest to a Silla-Korean connection from this time. Silla-Korean monk Ch'ingam Hyeso 眞鑑慧昭 (774–850) studied at the Shaolin Temple in 810 CE, contemporaneous with Bǎizhàng mentioned above as did Hyeso's</p>



	<p>compatriot Toŭi Wŏnjŏk 道義元寂 (d. 825) who also studied at Shaolin amongst other temples.</p> <p>Toŭi is credited as the First Patriarch of Korean Sŏn and founded one of what would become the “Nine Mountain” Schools of Sŏn on the Korean Peninsula, 8 of which trace their lineage back to Mǎzū Dàoyī mentioned above and his famous unconventional non-verbal pedagogies. The remnants of these schools would by the time of the Koryŏ Dynasty (918 – 1392 CE) come to be loosely grouped together as a “Jogye” school (named after the mountain where the Sixth Patriarch taught in China) but apart from the name, the early strands grouped under the Jogye umbrella-term bear little resemblance to the dominant Jogye Order of today founded during Japanese Occupation in 1938 and reformed again almost 10 years after the Korean War unofficially ended in 1953.</p>
<p><b>Koryŏ Dynasty Sŏn (918 – 1392 CE)</b> (Corresponding roughly to McRae’s category of Sòng Dynasty Chán c.950 – 1300 CE in China)</p>	<p>Monastic Chán becomes increasingly ecclesiastical, ritualized and orthodox the further it spreads from Shaolin Temple. In Koryŏ-Korea the Sŏn school gains ascendancy and political power, its clandestine and very real political power due to close connections with the higher strata of society including the military. Buddhist and State interests are merged and Sŏn is militarized with monks being recruited into the army during the one hundred year period from 1170 until Mongol suzerainty in 1270.</p> <p>Notable and influential figures in Koryŏ-Sŏn include Taego Pou 太古普愚 (1301 – 1383), Gyeonghan Baeg'un 景閑白雲 (1298–1374) and Naong Hyegeun 懶翁慧勤 (1320–1376) all of whom travelled to China to bring back Línjì’s (see section above on Middle-Chán) direct, confrontational style of subitist pedagogy. However the towering figure of Koryŏ-Sŏn is Bojo Chinul 普照知訥 (1158 – 1210). In a similar shift to the dramatic example of Huìnéng mentioned above (see Early Chán) who changes the orbit of Chinese Buddhism from deferring to the Buddhist authority of the Indian homeland, the well-connected Chinul – unlike many of his predecessors – never goes to China and institutes a style of Sŏn practice based on the</p>

	<p>interrogative meditation style formulated by the Sòng Chinese descendant of Línjì, Dahui Zonggao 大慧宗杲 (1089 – 1163) a generation before him and integrates it with scriptural study. In fact, Chinul’s awakenings and Enlightenment took place in Koryŏ while reading scriptures.</p> <p>During Koryŏ Korea (as well as in Sòng China), ordinations are approved by the secular powers upon whom the Sŏn school depend for financial support as well the laity i.e the school is no longer a marginal sect subsisting in the mountains but is urbanized and embedded with the elite. Towards the end of the dynasty in 1392, a sophisticated nationwide system of official state-examinations for Buddhist monks is in place and has been a route to social advancement (though much criticized by political opponents for reasons of decadence and corruption). Military officials and civilian bureaucrats jointly support temples and pay for liturgical ceremonies by prominent ecclesiasts. Some temples acquire serfs along with large tracts of land and amass substantial wealth. Towards the end of the dynasty, a Buddhist monk, Shin Don (1322 – 1371 CE) is even appointed something close to regent in place of the Koryŏ King Kongmin while Tibetan Buddhism is the state-religion in Beijing.</p>
<p><b>Chosŏn Dynasty Sŏn (1392 ~ 1897)</b></p>	<p>A major shift in the fortunes of institutionalized ecclesiastical Sŏn on the Korean peninsula with far-reaching effects is the ushering in of the Chosŏn Dynasty in 1392. In many ways, contemporary South Korean Sŏn and Buddhism generally is still defined by what can only be described as a major loss of ground to the Neo-Confucian state-ideology of the new Chosŏn Dynasty and the state-level bureaucracy which had been put in place is now the territory of Neo-Confucians often quite opposed to what they saw as the decadence and corruption of Buddhism during Koryŏ. Buddhism generally which included the Sŏn school specifically, is not exactly purged but loses the favour of the state which installs mostly secular Neo-Confucians in place of Buddhist advisers. By no means moribund and still popular amongst the elite, Buddhism nevertheless becomes strictly suppressed early in the dynasty and is a matter of private worship and banished from public political life. This is ground that institutionalized Sŏn Buddhism is still</p>



	<p>Institutional Sōn was faced with a dilemma – avail of assistance from Japanese Buddhist sects already present in Korea or be left behind. Global Japanese Zen was being formed at this time and the Korean Peninsula was very much a testing ground. Isobe Hōsen 磯部峰仙 (1878 – 19?) who would later go on to found Japanese Zen temples in the USA including Shoboji temple in Hawai’i (1913), Zenshūji temple 禪宗寺 in Los Angeles (1922) and Sokoji temple in San Francisco (1934) which would become the famous San Francisco Zen Centre. Before any of this activity Isobe was a missionary first in Korea arriving there in 1908 where he founded Hwaōm-sa at Incheon near Seoul in 1911.</p> <p>Shaku Sōen 釈宗演 (1860 – 1919) of the Japanese Rinzai Zen sect and his protégé D. T. Suzuki (1894 - 1966) who was largely responsible for the spread of Japanese Zen in the West and the construction of Global Zen, were in Korea in 1912 for Shaku Sōen’s lectures to the colonial administration on the Yamato Race and both endorse colonialism. Kaiten Nukariya, author of the influential (for the Western imaginary of Zen) <i>Religion of the Samurai</i> (1913) and at one time president of the Japanese Sōtō Zen sect’s Komazawa University in Tokyo (whose students would later teach at Zen Centres across the USA), sponsors the travels of Japanese Zen monks in Colonial Era Korea. Korea is not only a training ground for globalizing Japanese Zen but is a location for the formation of later Global Zen. This proves to be a massive shift for domestic Sōn which henceforth becomes defined by propagation where it had not been before. Korean Sōn Buddhism internalizes the discourses of colonialism and becomes defined by missionary work of its own.</p> <p>After being forcibly opened up by Japan in 1876, the Korean Peninsula becomes a ‘Buddhist Crossroads’ in Northeast Asia at the turn of the twentieth-century. In the early twentieth-century Korean Sōn adherents and figures such as Toh Chinho (1889 – 1979) go abroad for first time to Japan, Manchuria, China and the USA. In a short space of time, “Korean Sōn” is drastically different to the Chosōn Sōn</p>
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	which preceded it and would never be the same again.
<b>Korean War c. 1948 - 1953</b>	
<b>Later Twentieth-Century Sōn &amp; Global Zen: From the Global South to the Global North</b>	<p>Despite serving as a training-ground for Global Zen, Chosōn Sōn and colonial-era Korean Buddhism did not have the domestic stability or the resources to expand trans-nationally as imperial Japanese Zen had done in the early twentieth-century. Liberation from Japanese Occupation was the pressing matter for Koreans in the early twentieth-century. The Pacific War and Japanese surrender in 1945 was followed by the Korean War and when some degree of relative stability had been achieved albeit now on a divided peninsula, the resolution of colonial-era tensions resulted in a schism in South Korean Sōn on the grounds of a non-celibate racialized impurity associated with Japan. South Korean Sōn Buddhism (SKSB) began to expand abroad as the schism resulted in Sōn meditation becoming divorced from Sōn ritual for the first time in Korean Buddhist history.</p> <p>In the immediate post-Korean War period, South Korea was still part of the Global South. The story of SKSB trans-nationalism is the story of South Korea's induction into the Global North; the first examples of SKSB trans-nationalism in the post-Korean War period see SKSB appear in field temples on South Korean military bases during the Vietnam War where South Korea provided the largest contingent of troops after the United States from 1964 – 1973. Meanwhile the Buddhist monk Samu Sunim was the first South Korean monastic to start teaching in the United States from c.1967 after he dodged conscription into the South Korean military and went to the U.S. Zen Master Seung Sahn started teaching in the United States from 1972 and in Europe from the early 1980s.</p> <p>Zen Master Kusan also began teaching non-Korean students in South Korea and visited the United States and Europe for teaching in the early 1980s.</p>
<b>21<sup>st</sup> Century SKSB Transnationalism</b>	South Korea's Sōn Buddhism is now one of many Global Buddhisms. As the immediate post-war generation of teachers such as Seung

	<p>Sahn passed away who had been part of a pre-Purification Movement, pre-partition peninsular Buddhist culture, and as North Korea got left behind in the Global South, a truly South Korean Sŏn Buddhism formed. From 2002 a Temple Stay Program was inaugurated in cooperation with the South Korean government ministry of tourism opening up South Korean Buddhist temples to visitors and in the opinion of some monastics, changing the practice and pedagogy of Sŏn. Uri Kaplan has shown how the centuries old (and what had been a distinctively Korean) Buddhist seminary curriculum for monastics has changed in line with discourses on Buddhist modernism. South Korea's "Korean" Sŏn Buddhism is firmly a South Korean construction and deeply embedded with the South Korean military-industrial complex. Traditional "Sudden-Teaching" and the rhetoric of Sŏn Buddhism is heavily ritualized in trans-national context and borders on a fundamentalist emphasis on hwadu meditation in domestic context. In fact, taking both domestic and trans-national contexts together it could be said that both form part of a trans-national continuum which also exists in South Korea but one in which there are parallel-congregations that do not necessarily overlap. One congregation is non-Korean and cares little about nationalist narratives or whether the practice is called Sŏn or Zen Buddhism. The other is an ethno-centric congregation for which Sŏn Buddhist rhetoric reinforces cultural values and has historical significance while for the other it is largely ceremonial.</p>
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## Appendix II

### Language-Based Sōn and Entering Chán Through the Gate of the Bodily-Form

The language of orthodox formalized ecclesiastic Chán, Sōn and Zen contemporary discourse remains pronouncedly archaic and largely undeveloped, not just the rubric of the Three Gates but the use of classical linguistically and culturally bound *hwadu* and *kong'an*. As Pennycook (2010) shows, all language is localized, not just geographically but also temporally. Van Schaik (2015) states that all Zen is localized. Practicing a liturgical Sōtō Zen or Jogye Order Sōn would seem to be a contradiction in terms then especially when mediated by an idiom of NCPs from Sòng Dynasty China that are simultaneously a performance of East Asian masculinities and an exchange of symbols. That such pedagogies claim superiority and exclude other so-called inferior approaches demonstrates an imperialism contrary to the genuine 'skilful means' soteriology of the Meditation School.

A juxtaposition in different - though still Chán - language can help to understand the overall trajectory of ecclesiastical Chán and Sōn (and indeed Zen) pedagogy and orthodox praxis more clearly. In Shaolin Chán and most martial traditions of Chán, Sōn and Zen, the emphasis is on the cultivation and gradual accumulation of Internal-Force (C. 內功, *neigōng*) within the body which holds a similar level of importance as the accumulation of the Doubt-Mass (*ūidan*) in Hwadu Meditation in that its accumulation is held to be necessary for spiritual insight to occur. Internal-force is acquired by two means; through the art of Chi Kung 氣功 – body movements synchronized with the breath not unlike yoga – and through the art of genuine Shaolin Kung Fu, the martial art

whose exponents hold Bodhidharma to have founded. Both Chi Kung and Kung Fu build up intrinsic energy or chi 氣 until the internal-energy of the practitioner reaches a point of forcefulness. Like the Doubt-Mass in KHS practice, Internal-Force is vital for spiritual cultivation in Shaolin Chán. Spiritual awakening or Enlightenment is held to be virtually unobtainable without it. According to this logic, past masters such as the Sixth Patriarch Huìnéng would have been blessed with, amongst other fortuitous factors, a tremendous amount of internal-force at birth which it would take the average person years of gradual spiritual-cultivation to acquire. Even within South Korean Sŏn, a look at the martial-based Sŏn practice of the art of Sŏnmudo (K. “Sŏn Martial Way”/ “Zen Martial Way”) shows a diversity of pedagogical approach that is obscured by the emphasis on KHS. While South Korean Sŏnmudo is markedly different in style to traditional Shaolin Kungfu in style and combat-application, there is a similar emphasis on the cultivation of intrinsic energy and the introspective aspect of Sŏnmudo bears more similarity to the body scanning practices found in vipassāna meditation than any type of Second or Third Gate Sŏn practice.<sup>56</sup>

For our purposes, it is sufficient to note a correlation between the cultivation of Hwadu Meditation and the cultivation of Internal-Force (*neigōng*) as one example of an alternative means towards Chán and Sŏn cultivation. The example of Shaolin is a relevant

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<sup>56</sup> If this sounds esoteric in the extreme, it is also worth remembering that one of the most fundamental debates in Chosŏn Korea was about the relationship and dichotomy between *chi* and *li* (K. 리, C. 理) – ‘Truth’ or the ‘Principle of Heaven,’ similar to how we conceive of the Universe in terms of modern Physics today. *Li* referred to both substance and the laws/ principles which governed it) which can only be attained through self-cultivation. As the ‘doctrinal foundation of Neo-Confucianism that sought to explain nature, man and society’ this debate defined the dynasty in many ways and influenced everything from ideas of good governance to social ethics to socioeconomic reform (Young-jin 2003:61–63).



one because it helps to frame later orthodoxy which developed in Chán and Sōn after the teaching spread from the Shaolin Monastery, ended up becoming divided between the Northern and South Schools and becoming political, increasingly factional and orthodox as it did so. This factionalism based on pedagogy has translated into a somewhat fundamentalist identification with one pedagogy and if not imperialist is certainly exclusive in that it promotes a monolithic timeless global “Zen” which persists today within Buddhist modernism and [South] Korean Sōn transnationalism.

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## Glossary of Terms

*Chodang chip* (C. 祖堂集) *Collection from the Patriarch's Hall* compiled in 952 CE

Bǎizhàng 百丈懷海 (720 – 814) – a Chinese Chán master famous for formulating the rules of monastic discipline

Bhikkhunī – an ordained Buddhist nun

Bhikkhu – an ordained Buddhist monk

Bìquān 壁觀 (J. hekikan; K. pyökkwan) ‘wall-gazing’ a type of Chán meditation

Blue Cliff Record 碧巖錄 (K. *Byökamrok*) Collection of C.12<sup>th</sup> kongan compiled in China

Buddhist Broadcasting System (BBS) – see *Pulgyobangsong*

Buddhist Coalition for Economic Justice (BCEJ) – see *Kyōngbullyōn*

Buddhist Solidarity for Reform (BSR) - see *Chamyōpulgyo chaega yōndae*

Bushīdo – 武士道 (Japanese) the ‘Way of the Warrior’ martial ethic/ code

*Chaegasūng* – married Buddhist monks from Hamgyōng Province, present day North Korea

*Chamyōpulgyo chaega yōndae* - Buddhist Solidarity for Reform (BSR), a South Korean socially engaged lay-Buddhist organization

Chán 禪 - the Chinese Meditation School founded by Bodhidharma at the Shaolin

Temple in Henan

*Ch'ejunghyōn* (C. 體中玄) – Mystery in the Essence, first stage of the Three Mysterious

Gates see below

Cheontae Order of Korean Buddhism – South Korean Tiantai Buddhist Order founded on the Lotus Sūtra

Chi Kung – Qi Gong, Kikung, an art of cultivating intrinsic energy synchronizing bodily movements and the breath.

*ch'in-il* – Pro-Japanese Koreans, a pejorative term denoting a collaborator with the colonial government or someone who remains ‘Japanized’ after colonization ended.

*ch'oesangsŭng Sŏn* – see Supreme-Vehicle Zen

Chogye – see Jogye

*Chŏngtohoe* – Join Together Society (JTS), a Pure Land Buddhist society in South Korea

Chosŏn Dynasty – 1392 - 1897

*Chosŏn Minjuju-ŭi Inmin Konghwaguk* See DPRK

*Chosŏn Nodongdang* 朝鮮勞動黨 (Chosŏn [North Korean] Worker’s Party)

*Chosŏn Pulgyodo Ryŏnmaeng* or *Chobulyŏn* - Korean Buddhist Federation

*Daehan Minguk* (“Country of the Great Han People”) the endonym of South Korea. See also ROK.

Dàhuì Zōngǎo 大慧宗杲 (1089 – 1163), innovator of the *Kànhuà Chán* 看話禪 method of *Huàtóu* 話頭 practice.

De-Militarized Zone – DMZ, dividing the Korean peninsula.

Dharma – a term with multiple applications, The Dharma (with a capital ‘D’) can apply to the immutable universal truth pointed to by the Buddha’s Teaching synonymous with Buddhism.

Dhyāna 𑖀𑖃𑖫𑖞 – the Sanskrit rendering of the Chinese word ‘Chán.’

Diamond Sūtra – a Buddhist scripture or sūtra much prized in East Asia and especially in the Zen schools

Doubt-Mass - *ŭidan/ ŭimun tŏngŏri* (C. 疑團 / 疑問 덩어리)

DPRK – Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) *Chosŏn Minjuju-ŭi Inmin Konghwaguk*.

Encounter Dialogues – ‘Recorded Sayings,’ see; Yŭlŭ

Engaku-ji temple in Kamakura – Shaku Soen’s Rinzai sect temple in Japan.

‘Five Periods and Eight Teachings’ 五時八教, wǔ shí bā jiào – Zhìyǐ’s pedagogical rubric.

Fuke-shū 普化宗 – a Japanese Zen sect noted for their practice of Zen through the playing of the bamboo flute or ‘shakuhachi.’

Gewai Chán 格外禪 (K. kyōgoe Sŏn) – Unconventional Chán

Golgul-sa – Buddhist temple near the city of Gyeongju where martial arts are practiced

Hamgyōng Province - present day North Korea

Hangeul – the Korean alphabet referred to as Chosŏngŭl in North Korea

Hanmaŭm Sŏnwŏn – School of Contemporary South Korean Buddhism

Higashi Hongan-ji – Branch of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism

Hoguk Pulgyo – ‘State Protectionist Buddhism’

Huayen – a doctrinal school of Buddhism in East Asia often at odds or referred to as a counterpoint to the Meditation (Zen) Schools.

*Huà yí* 化儀 – Chinese, distinction between pedagogies

*Huà tóu* 話頭 – ‘key-word’ or phrase found in a *kongan*, used for meditative practice

*haibutsu kishaku* 廃仏毀釈 – ‘Exterminate Buddhism, Destroy Śākyamuni,’ a movement which occurred after 1868 in Japan during which an estimated 40,000 temples were destroyed

Hwadu – see *Huà tóu*

Hwaŏm – the Korean branch of Huayen Buddhism based on the Flower Garland Sūtra

*Hwarang* – A fraternity of young elite Silla Dynasty warriors who followed a Buddhist martial ethic

*Hyŏnjunghyŏn* (C. 玄中玄) Mystery in the Mystery – third stage of the Three Mysterious Gates, see below.

*Indŭramang saengmyŏng kongdongche* - Indra's Net Life-Community, a socially engaged lay-Buddhist organization in South Korea.

*inka* 印可 – Dharma Transmission, the official recognition by a Zen master of a student's realization.

Japanese colonial period in Korea (1910-1945)

Jeju Island, also Cheju – island on the south coast of the Korean peninsula.

Jido Beopsa Nim (JDPSN) – 'Guiding Teacher,' position in the KSZ.

Jingak Order of Korean Buddhism – an esoteric order of South Korean Buddhism.

Jogye – the village where the Sixth Patriarch of Chán taught in China.

Join Together Society (JTS) – see *Chŏngtohoe*.

*Kànhuà Chán* 看話禪 (J. kanna Zen/ kanwa Zen; K. kanhwa Sŏn) "Questioning Meditation."

Kanhwasŏn (KHS) – see *Kànhuà Chán* above.

*kasa* 歌辭 - a mostly male-composed genre of discursive vernacular Buddhist poetry during the late Chosŏn Dynasty.

*Kōan* – see *Kongan*.

Koguryŏ (K. 고구려, C. 高句麗 37 BCE – 668 CE)

*kōkoku bukkyō* 皇国仏教 – Imperial Buddhism during the Japanese colonial period

*kong* (K. 공, C. 公) – public spheres

*Kong'an* 公案 (J. kōan; K. kongan) – sometimes referred to as a Zen riddle, literally means a 'Public Case' in the form of a question, anecdote or parable.

Korean Buddhism Promotion Foundation (KBPF) - see *taehan pulgyo chinhŭngwŏn*

Koryŏ Dynasty – 'Goryeo' in revised transliteration. Peninsular dynasty 998 – 1392 CE.

*Kujunghyŏn* (C. 句中玄) - ‘Mystery in the Word’ second stage of the Three Mysterious Gates (see below).

*Kundaehwa* – military-style.

*Kusan Sŏnmun* (C. 九山禪門) or ‘Nine Mountain Schools’ of Korean Sŏn

(KSZ) - Kwanum School of Zen, international order founded by Zen Master Seung Sahn.

*Kyŏngbullyŏn* - Buddhist Coalition for Economic Justice (BCEJ) South Korean socially engaged lay-Buddhist organization.

*Kyŏngguk Daejŏn* (National Code) of 1449 CE, a prohibition on monks participating in urban and political life in Korea.

Lañkāvatāra School (C. Lóngjié Zōng, 楞伽宗) – early name for what would later become the Chán sect with practices based on the sutra of the same name.

Línjì Yìxuán 臨濟義玄 (d. 866 CE) – Renowned innovator of Chán pedagogy.

Minjok – the ethno-nation, a concept prevalent in Korea since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*Minjung Pulgyo* (People’s Buddhism) – Lay-Buddhist movement in 1980s South Korea

*Mòzhào Chán* 默照禪 (J. mokushōzen; K. mukcho Sŏn) “silent-illumination” meditation

*neigōng* – internal force, a goal in Kungfu practice.

*Mudang* (K. 무당, C. 巫堂) – a Korean Shaman, usually but not exclusively female

Nembutsu Zen 念佛禪 – (Japanese) the Zen of reciting the Buddha’s name

*Nianfō Chán* 念佛禪 in China (J. nembutsu Zen; K. yŏmbul Sŏn)

Nichiren Sect (日蓮宗 *Nichirenshū*)

Nishi Honganji – A Branch of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism

Non-Conceptual Pedagogy – NCP

Ōbaku-shū 黄檗宗 – the Obaku Zen Sect who recite the Buddha’s name, see Nembutsu.

One Vehicle - (C. 一乘) – a view of Buddhism as unified and non-sectarian.

*Pan-il* – anti-Japanese or Korean resistance to Japanese colonial rule.

Pulgyo – Buddhism

*Pulgyobangsong* - Buddhist Broadcasting System (BBS), a Buddhist television channel in South Korea.

*Pulgyo Bōmnan* - state-level persecution of Buddhism in October 1980.

*Pulgyo hak* - Buddhist Studies

Pure Land Buddhism – a form of Buddhist practice founded on reciting Amitabha Buddha’s name with the goal of rebirth in Amitabha’s heaven.

Purification Movement (1954 – 1970) – a conflict in South Korean Buddhism over temple ownership and the ousting of monks from temples who had retained the colonial-era Japanese custom of marrying.

Puril Hoe – a South Korean lay-Buddhist association founded in the 1970s by Kusan.

Rinzai-shū – a sect in Japanese Buddhism following the teaching of Línjì.

ROK – Republic of Korea (South Korea)

*Rúlái Chán* 如來禪 (J. Rurai Zen; K. Yōrae Sōn) - Tathāgata Sōn, non-conceptual meditation.

*Sa* - (K. 사, C. 私) - *private* spheres

*Samguk Sagi* – Record of the Three Kingdoms by Kim Pusik

*Samguk Yusa* – History of the Three Kingdoms compiled by the State Preceptor Iryōn.

Saṅgha – the community of Buddhist monks, nuns and lay-people.

Śakyamuni - Siddhartha Gautma, the figure known as ‘The Buddha’ (‘Enlightened One’) circa fourth/ fifth century BCE, India.

*Samhyŏnmun* (C. 三玄門, *Sānxiuánmén*) – Three Mysterious Gates, a rubric of Chán pedagogies formulated by Línjì Yìxuán.

Seung Sahn (Dae Seon Sa Nim) - Zen Master Seung Sahn (1927 – 2004), Korean master who brought Sŏn to the West in the 1970s.

Shaolin Temple 少林寺 – the temple in Henan, China famous as the birthplace of Chán, Sŏn and Zen.

Sòng Dynasty 宋朝 (960 – 1279 CE) – a Chinese dynasty.

*Shikan Taza* 祇/只管打坐 or “just-sitting” - sitting in meditative poise without letting any thoughts arise, signature practice of the Sōtō Zen sect.

*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離 - forced separation of Shinto from Buddhism during Meiji Japan.

*shūkyō senshi* 宗教戰士 – ‘religious warriors’ of the Sōtō sect of Japanese Buddhism during the colonial period.

Silent-illumination Meditation – see *Mòzhào Chán*.

Silla Dynasty 新羅 (57BCE – 935 CE) – a peninsular Korean dynasty.

Singye-sa – a Buddhist Temple in present-day North Korea.

Songgwang-sa – famous temple in present day South Korea.

*Sŏnmudo* – ‘Sŏn Martial Art’ a martial practice derived from and complimentary to Sŏn.

Sŏnwŏn – Zen centre, a place (usually a large room or hall) for the practice of Sŏn/ Zen meditation, sometimes residential.

Sōtō-shū – the Soto Zen Sect of Japanese Buddhism founded by Dōgen.

Subitism –From the French *subite*. See Sudden Teaching.

Sudden-Gradual Debate - *han’guk ton-chŏm nonjaeng* 韓國頓漸論爭



Sudden Teaching (C. 頓教, dùnjiào) - a style of Meditation School pedagogy characterized by ‘shock tactics’ or ‘non-conceptual’ pedagogies such as strikes, sudden shouts, qualified silences designed to cut-off intellectualisation and place the student in a state where the mind is clear of all thoughts and conceptualization.

Sūnim – a Venerable Monk, honorific title. Revised spelling, Sunim.

Supreme Vehicle Chán 最上乘禪 – a type of non-conceptual Chán practice.

Soldier monks – Thai; *thahān phra*, Korean; *sūngbyōng*, Japanese; *sōhei* (C. 僧兵)

*taech’ōsūng* – married monks from Jeju Island, present day South Korea.

Taego Order of Korean Buddhism – formed by splitting from the Jogye Order after the ‘Purification Movement’ (see above) supposedly over the issue of clerical marriage, custodians and stewards of Korean Buddhist ritual practices and ceremonies which were discarded by the modernizing Jogye Order who sought to identify themselves only with meditation practice.

*taehan pulgyo chinhŭngwŏn* – Korean Buddhism Promotion Foundation (KBPF), a lay-Buddhist organization in South Korea with a cultural centre in Seoul and a property in the south of France.

Temple Stay Program (TSP) – South Korean Buddhist orders opening their temples to tourism, guests can stay at the temple and experience Buddhism.

Thích Nhất Hạnh – Vietnamese Zen Master, b. 1926. Founder of Plum Village in France.

Thiền 禪 – Vietnamese Zen.

Tiāntāi Sect 天台宗 – Tientai, Tendai sect of Chinese Buddhism (Cheontae Sect in Korea).

*T’ongbulgyo* – paradigm of viewing Korean Buddhism as ‘Syncretic Buddhism.’

*Tonghak* - ‘Eastern Learning,’ nationalist, anti-corruption and anti-Western peasant rebellion.

*Tosŏng ch’ulip kŭmji* 都城出入禁止 – a law prohibiting monks from participating in urban and political life under the National Code of 1449, see *Kyŏngguk Daejŏn*.

Treaty of Ganghwa (1876) – after which Korea was forced open by a Japanese government promoting the fortunes of Satchō business interests which moved swiftly to tie up Korean industry.

VVAK - Vietnam Veterans Association of Korea

Wōnjong – a unified Korean Buddhist order during the early years of Japanese occupation in the early twentieth-century.

Wenzi Chán 文字禪 (J. monjizen; K. muncha Sōn) or “lettered Chán” (sometimes referred to as Yili Chán, theoretical Chán was ‘a literati style of Chan exegesis that valorized belle lettres, and especially poetry, in the practice of Chán.

Wonkwang-sa - a South Korean Buddhist ‘convert’ temple in Hungary.

*Woori* (MR: *Uri*) (lit. ‘We,’ South Korean society generally).

*Woori Pulgyo*, (Korean vernacular for ‘Korean Buddhism’ which literally means ‘Our Buddhism’)

Yōmbul Sōn – the Zen of reciting the Buddha’s name, practice of Pure Land Buddhism.

Yǔlù 語錄 – ‘Records of the Sayings,’ ‘Recorded Sayings,’ ‘Encounter Dialogues’ – Sòng Dynasty records of didactic dialogues between past masters and their students.

Zazen – (Japanese) practice of sitting-meditation.

(ZCR) - Zen Centre Regensburg, Bavaria, Germany founded by Hyongak Sunim.

Zhìyǐ 智顓 (538 – 597 CE) founder of the Tiantai School of Chinese Buddhism

*Ch’oesangsŭng Sōn* 最上乘禪 (J. *saijōjō Zen*; C. *Zuì shàngshéng Chán* ) or ‘Supreme Vehicle Chán’ which is founded in subitist meditation practice.

