

Thought and Praxis in Cotemporary Korean Buddhism: A Critical Examination

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Sŏn (Ch. *Chan*; Jp. *Zen*) Buddhism has constituted the main current of Korean Buddhism since the ninth century. Korea is also the country where the tradition of *Kanhwa Sŏn* (Ch. *Kanhua Chan*; Jp. *Kōan Zen*)¹ or “Keyword Meditation” (Bodiford 2010:95) or meditation of observing the critical phrase, has been best preserved in the world (KHS 2008:45), which is a great characteristic of Korean Buddhism in comparison with the Chinese and Japanese counterparts (Kim 2009:46). The purpose of this paper aims to examine the relationship between Buddhist thought and praxis in contemporary Korea², focusing on the Chogye³ Order of Korean Buddhism (*Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong*),⁴ the mainstream of Korean Buddhism, from the critical point of view.

Scholars in Korea have focused on research on the paths to enlightenment. The Chogye Order also has held international conferences on *Kanhwa Sŏn* and published books on it⁵ and guidelines for its practice for both monks and lay people. However, Buddhist thought and practice in contemporary Korea are not in unity and little study has been done with regard to this issue.⁶

Composed of three sections, the first section of this paper will examine the thought of the Chogye Order, focusing on its emphasis on the concept of emptiness, meditative thought, and Flower Garland (K. *Hwaŏm*; Ch. *Huayan*; Jp. *Kegon*) thought, and the second section will be devoted to investigating its soteriology, concentrating on the historical development and procedure. Finally, the third section will analyze the relationship between the thoughts and the practices of the Chogye Order. Major references to this research will be scholarly works on the meditative technique, *Kanhwa Sŏn* (hereafter, KHS) published from the Chogye Order, conference papers sponsored by the Order, and media material.⁷

This research hopes contribute to clarifying the nature of contemporary Korean

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** Romanization: In general, there are two types of the Romanization system for terms in Korean: the McCune-Reischauer system and the revised system by the Korean government. In this paper the former will be employed, unless otherwise specified.

¹ With the purpose of exemplifying the Chogye Order's determination to present *Kanhwa Sŏn* as its hallmark and to lead a campaign spreading its practice both in Korea and overseas the Order sponsored international conferences in recent years (Dongguk Institute for Buddhist Studies Research 2010; and Institute for the Study of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, Dongguk University 2011).

² For Buddhism in contemporary Korea, refer to Buswell 1992:21-36; Kim 2008b:267-74.

³ The name "Chogye" is the Korean pronunciation of "Caoqi," which is the name of the mountain of residence of Huineng (638-713), the sixth Patriarch of the Chinese Chan tradition, adumbrating the fundamental Zen stance of Korean Buddhism.

⁴ The Chogye Order is alternately romanized as Daehan Bulgyo Jogyejong. As for its history and impending issues related to it, see Kim 2005a:158-9. As of 2011, several tens of Buddhist orders are registered on a Korean government body. Among these, the Chogye Order holds 13,000 monks and nuns, more than half of the total number of monks and nuns in Korea, and the majority of traditional Korean monasteries, whose total number is more than 1,000.

⁵ In particular, the book *Kanhwa Sŏn* (hereafter, KHS) reflects the official view of the Chogye Order on Korean Sŏn Buddhism, including that of Supreme Patriarch (*chongjŏng*) of the Order.

⁶ For overseas trends in research on Korean Buddhism, refer to Jorgensen 2006:9-26; McBride 2006:27-48; Mohan 2006:49-68; and Sørensen 2007:212-34.

⁷ *Bulgyo sinmun* (Buddhist Newspaper, <http://www.ibulgyo.com>), *Beopbo sinmun* (Dharma Jewel Newspaper, <http://www.beopbo.com>), and *Hyeondae Bulgyo sinmun* (Modern Buddhist Newspaper, <http://news.buddhapia.com>) are representative of their kind. These newspapers have paid keen attention to discourses on *Kanhwa Sŏn* in Korea.

Buddhism in particular and to broadening scholarly horizons in the field of East Asian Buddhism in general.

Thought of the Chogye Order:

Buddhism was introduced to Korea from China in the fourth century. Thereafter, a variety of Buddhist schools existed on Korean soil. In particular, the Hwaom school flourished most until the ninth century, when Sŏn schools of Korea had their firm roots in Korea. Those Sŏn schools were eventually united into one main school, the Chogye Order. However, the Chogye Order emerged twice in Korean history. The first order came to the fore after the twelfth century, but came to a close in 1424 as a result of the anti-Buddhist policy by the Confucian Chosŏn (1392-1910) government. The second Chogye Order was a product of the Japanese colonial period from 1910 to 1945. As a response to the colonial policy of that period, the name "Chogye" re-emerged in the Korean ecclesiastical order in 1941 and it was not until 1962 that the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism was established. Therefore, in terms of history and ideology, both continuity and discontinuity exist between these two different types of orders. The Chogye Order in this paper refers to the latter and its ideological underpinnings are the thought of emptiness, Sŏn thought, and the Flower Garland thought.

Emphasis on Emptiness:

The *Diamond Sūtra* (Skt. *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*) is one of the basic texts of the Chogye Order. Regarding this, the third article of the first chapter titled "The Name of the Order and Its Purport" (*chongmyŏng mit chongji*) of its "Religious Charter" (*chŏnghŏn*) stipulates:

The basic texts of this [Chogye] Order are the *Diamond Sūtra* (*Kŭmgang kyŏng*) and...⁸

Regarding this, the "Religious Charter" details as follows:

The reason why the Chogye Order takes the *Diamond Sūtra* as one of its basic texts is because: the scripture teaches emptiness (Skt. *śūnyatā*), the Buddhist predicate of existence; Master Huineng [638-713] of Caoqi, the sixth Patriarch [of Chinese Chan school], read it closely; and he also recommended it to his disciples.

This scripture is a short and well-known Mahāyāna sūtra from the *Prajñāpāramitā*, or "Perfection of Wisdom" genre, and emphasizes the practice of non-abiding, non-attachment, and emptiness. This means that the Chogye Order embraces the concept of emptiness in its philosophical system of thought.

Sŏn Thought:

The Chogye Order has proclaimed itself to be a *Sŏn* Buddhist order and the first article of the first chapter of the "Religious Charter" of the Chogye Order records:

This [Chogye] Order originated from the Kajisan School, which was founded by National Master Toŭi [d. 825] of Silla [57 B.C.E.-935 C.E.], revived by National Master Pojo [Chinul, 1158-1210] of Koryŏ [918-1392], and took its firm root by National Master T'aego Pou [1301-82] who harmonized diverse Buddhist schools

⁸ <http://www.buddhism.or.kr/pGuidance/GuidView.aspx?pcode=01021&ppgm=1> (retrieved October 7, 2011). Other quotations from the "Religious Charter" of the Chogye Order in the following are from the same web information.

of his time.

According to this quotation, National Preceptor Toŭi was the founder of the Chogye Order. The Sŏn monk Toŭi, the founder of one of the Nine Mountain Schools of Sŏn (*Kusan Sŏnmun*),⁹ introduced Patriarchal Chan (Ch. *Zushi Chan*; K. *Chosa Sŏn*), which was the precursor of Kanhua Chan and refers to the Chan tradition transmitted from mind to mind by patriarchs in history (*KHS* 2008:59), to Korea. In addition, National Preceptor Pojo Chinul was its reviver, and National Preceptor T'aego Pou was its settler. The Order's "Religious Charter" also stipulates dharma talks by eminent meditation masters as one of its basic texts:

The [Chogye] Order takes... the dharma talks which have transmitted the lantern [of the Buddha's wisdom] (*chŏndŭng pŏbŏ*) as its basic texts.

With regard to this, the "Religious Charter" details as follows: The transmission of the lamp means the transmission of [the Buddha's] teaching. It refers to the continuation of the teaching from generation to generation, just like the light of a lantern is put on one by one. Therefore, the dharma talks that have transmitted refer to the teachings of succeeding patriarchs such as Mahā Kāśapa who succeeded the teaching of the Buddha. In fact, Korea is unique in that Buddhist followers are seeking enlightenment¹⁰ primarily through meditative practice.

Hwaŏm Thought:

The *Kyo* (doctrinal study) side of Korean Buddhism has been completely dominated by the one vehicle round-sudden teachings of the Hwaŏm school (Odin 1982:189). Primarily due to the monumental efforts of Ŭisang (625-702),¹¹ the founder of the Hwaŏm school of Korea, Hwaŏm became the predominant doctrinal study school of Korean Buddhism (Odin 1982:xvi). Ŭisang thought his teaching through his "Dharma-realm chart" (*Pŏpkye to*), a diagram used in Korean Hwaŏm doctrine to indicate the complex web of interrelationships governing everything in existence (Buswell 1992:51-2).¹² Even after the solid foundation of the Sŏn thought in Korea in the ninth century, Hwaŏm thought has maintained its strong influence in the development of Korean Buddhism. Dharma lectures by eminent Korean Sŏn masters such as Kusan also contained much of Hwaŏm imagery for a formal statement about Sŏn understanding, which is distinctively Korean (Buswell 1992:184). The monastic curricular of the three major monasteries in contemporary Korea, T'ongdosa, Haeinsa, and Songgwangsa, each of which is Buddha-jewel Monastery, Dharma-jewel Monastery, and Saṅgha-jewel Monastery, shares similarities in their major content and represent the strong influence of Hwaŏm thought.

However, Meditation and Doctrine had been in conflict vying for religious hegemony before the twelfth century, when Chinul emerged. Chinul harmonized the two Buddhist traditions,¹³ eventually developing his philosophical system of thought. Chinul sought to develop a comprehensive system of Buddhism in which Meditation would be practiced in tandem with training in the Hwaŏm scholastic teachings. He advocated a

⁹ For the history of the Nine Mountain Schools of Sŏn, its development, and characteristics, see Sørensen 1987.

¹⁰ The concept of "enlightenment" tends to have been even mystified in contemporary Korea. Regarding a critical discussion of this issue, refer to Kim 2005b:609-39.

¹¹ For an introduction to Ŭisang's Ocean Seal of Hua-yen Buddhism, see Odin 1982: xiii-xx. For a translation of Ŭisang's Autocommentary on the Ocean Seal, refer to Odin 1982:189-213.

¹² The chart appears in *T*1887 A.45.711a. For an English translation of the chart, see Lee 1993:163-4.

¹³ For Chinul's harmonization between Sŏn and Hwaŏm thought, see Shim 1999:3-158

“sudden awakening and gradual cultivation” (*tono chōmsu*)¹⁴ approach to practice, in which the initial awakening engendered by Hwaōm doctrinal understanding was bolstered through gradual cultivation of Meditation and finally verified through direct realization (Buswell 1992:59).

In addition, Chinul’s legacy has been persistent down to the present in terms of monastic curricula, Buddhist precepts, and soteriology. Prospective ordinands in contemporary Korea are supposed to follow a system of postulancy. Postulants, known literally as “practitioners” (*haengja*), are expected to complete a six-month training period to ordination (Buswell 1992:76).¹⁵ After their six-month postulancies are over, the postulants are ready to ordain as novice monks (*sami*; Skt. śramaṇera) or nuns (*samini*; Skt. śramaṇerī). They are supposed to study either in the monastic college (*kangwōn*) or in the meditation center (*sōnbang*) for four years before full ordination.¹⁶ Chinul’s works, including his magnum opus *Excerpts from the Dharma Collection and Personal Notes on Its Special Practice Records* (*Pōpchip pyōlhaengnok chōryo pyōng ip sagi*) constitute an important part of these monastic curricular, Buddhist precepts, and soteriology.

Therefore, unlike thus far known in the West, where Zen Buddhism is characterized by such aphorism as “special transmission of Buddhism distinct from the teachings, which is not dependent on words and letters” (Buswell 1992:217), monks of the Chogye Order study doctrinal teachings primarily based on the thought of Chinul as its theoretical prop, which is characterized by the unity of doctrine and meditation. However, the two are not on equal standing in the Chogye Order: Doctrinal study is considered inferior to Meditation and the former just serves as a prerequisite to enter into the latter. In addition, Chinul’s *Admonition to Beginners* (*Kye ch’osim hagin mun*) constitutes part of a major work on Buddhist ethics in contemporary Korea and his approach to enlightenment represented by sudden awakening followed by gradual cultivation still serves as a major soteriology of Korean Buddhism.

Kanhwa Sōn: The Major Praxis of the Chogye Order:

Kanhwa Sōn is the Korean version of Chinese Kanhua Chan, which had exerted a significant influence in the formation of Korean Sōn Buddhism. The Chogye Order has adopted Kanhwa Sōn to be its major soteriology to attain enlightenment. The Order also regarded Kanhwa Sōn as the only and best Buddhist practice.¹⁷ In fact, Kanhwa Sōn is virtually the only type of meditation used in contemporary Korean monasteries (Buswell 1992:220).¹⁸

It was Chinul,¹⁹ the philosophical founder of Korean Sōn Buddhism, who introduced Kanhua Chan to Korea. Hyesim (1178-1234), who was National Master Chin’gak and the best disciple of Chinul, and his pupil published *Sōnmun yōmsong chip* (Collection of the Meditation School’s Enlightened Verses), making Kanhwa Sōn as the representative Buddhist practice of Korea. In particular, the Chogye Order has regarded

¹⁴ In the Japanese monk Yasutani Hakuun (1885-1973)’s soteriological schema, “sudden enlightenment” or “sudden awakening” is based on tathāgatagārbha and “gradual cultivation” is based on ālayavijñāna (Gregory 2011:106).

¹⁵ Before 1945 it was expected to complete a three-year training period before ordination (Buswell 1992:76).

¹⁶ The standardized curriculum adopted in Korean seminaries is divided into four levels: The elementary curriculum, or *sami kwa* (Śramaṇera Course), the intermediate curriculum, or *sajip kwa* (Fourfold Collection Course), the advanced curriculum, or *sagyo kwa* (Fourfold Doctrinal Course), and the graduate level, the *taegyo kwa* (Great Doctrinal Course). A student who completes all four of these curricular would have spent approximately twelve years in study (Buswell 1992:98-9) in the past.

¹⁷ For the practice of meditation and training in the meditation hall, see Buswell 1992:149-202.

¹⁸ As for the scholarly discussions of various meditative traditions in a global perspective, refer to Eifring 2010. In particular, for the Buddhist meditation, see Eifring 2010:491-731, 861-82. As for books on Korean Kanhwa Sōn in English, see Chin 2009:7-9.

¹⁹ For the collected works of Chinul, see Buswell 1983 and its abridgment Buswell 1991; for Chinul as the philosophical founder of Korean Sōn Buddhism, refer to Keel 1984.

T'aego (1301-82) as the actual founder of the Kanhwa Sōn tradition of Korea, a result of efforts of the disciples of Hyujōng (1520-1604),²⁰ who made the Kanhwa Sōn tradition survive during the anti-Buddhist Chosōn dynasty, eventually making it the main practice of Korean Buddhism up to the present (Kim 2010:712-3).

Kanhwa Sōn aims to attain enlightenment through the practice of keyword meditation. It is generally practiced in the following order: A practitioner should have a firm faith in the Buddha's teaching and arouse a firm mind to become a great man of freedom (*KHS* 2008:311); next, he has to request a teaching from an able master; if admitted, he will be given a *hwadu*, the subject of meditation, to be observed from the master;²¹ the master examines his disciple's level of spiritual progress; and finally, if the disciple is considered to have attained enlightenment, the master gives him recognition (*KHS* 2008:369-70).

Analysis of the Relationship between Thought and Praxis:

The Chogye Order adopts the thought of emptiness, meditation, and Hwaōm thought as its theoretical basis and Kanhwa Sōn as its major praxis. Both Sōn practice and Kyo study in the Chogye Order make modern Sōn monastic life in Korea offer a valuable conterparadigm to the usual Western portrayals of Zen (Buswell 1992:223). However, the Order lacks its identity both historically and philosophically (Keel 2000:159-93; Park 2000:43-62). There were two distinctive types of Chogye Orders throughout Korean history. This is an extremely important issue because it is associated with the search of the exact identity of the school itself, and by extension, that of Korean Buddhism and history. In fact, the Chogye Order holds continuity and discontinuity in history. Korean Buddhist scholars have developed many different theories regarding its lineage. These theories, however, were not based on historical fact, but a product of ideological motives to connect it to the "orthodox" lineage of the Chinese Linji Chan tradition. In addition, the Order professes it to be a Sōn school. Nevertheless, the Order also allows doctrinal study and recitation of the Buddha's name²² and incantation within its system of thought. In addition, the Kanhwa Sōn tradition, the crux of soteriology of the Chogye Order, also remains problematic in various aspects.²³

Analysis of Thought:

Simultaneous emphasis on Sōn and *Kyo* or Doctrine is a characteristic feature of Korean Buddhism (Buswell 1992:223). However, thought and praxis of the Chogye Order are not in harmony.

Pursuit of Cupidity against Emptiness:

As stipulated in its "Religious Charter," the Chogye Order has emphasized the concept of emptiness. However, this ideal does not fit in with the reality. Religious rituals often tend to be used for economic reasons. In most Chinese Buddhist institutions in the 1990s, Buddhist ritual served as the principal source of income for monasteries (Welch 1973: 207). Likewise, Buddhism for fortune (*kibok Pulgyo*) serves as a concept to

²⁰ For Hyujōng's synthetic vision under Confucian domination, see Buswell 1999:134-59. For Hyujōng's approaches to enlightenment, see Kim 2006:78-108 and for Hyujōng's soteriological strategies in his *magnum opus*, refer to Kim 2012:381-98.

²¹ In this process, doubt is considered important. For the role of doubt, see Buswell 2011:187-202.

²² Recitation of the Buddha's name was also used in Chinese Kanhua Chan. For this, refer to Schlütter 2011:215-40. The Japanese Zen monk Dōgen (1200-53) also embraced various Buddhist practices, including burning incense and repentances (Foult 2001:16-7).

²³ Regarding the impending issues of Korean Kanhwa Sōn, refer to Kim 2010:713-6.

characterize the nature of Buddhism in contemporary Korea²⁴ and Buddhist circles are not free from mercenary affluence.

Ancestor worship ritual in Korea has been a medium through which the living could express filial piety by requiting the ancestors' favors and keeping their memories alive. Korean Buddhist circles, including the Chogye Order, are not exceptional in this regard. In fact, the Buddhist calendar published from Chogyesa Monastery, the headquarters of the Chogye Order, is fraught with Buddhist memorial services called *chae* for payment. In addition, Yonghwasa Monastery, which is also affiliated with the Chogye Order, has been well known for those services since the 1960s.²⁵ Therefore, the Chogye Order is not free from non-abiding to material gain.

The Buddha's birthday is the highlight of the Buddhist ceremonial year in Korea and lanterns are offered for sale on that day, thus making it one of the largest income-producing events (Buswell 1992:43-6). Scholars of Korean Buddhism already pointed out that commercialization of Buddhism was an impending issue to be resolved in contemporary Korea (Shim 1993:50-6). Korean Buddhist mass media have also reported that some Korean monasteries are using Buddhist memorial ritual as an easy means to raise monastic fund and even went to excess in their commercialization (Nam 2004).

Incongruence with the Spirit of Meditative Buddhism:

The spirit of Meditative Buddhism is characterized by independency and self-supportiveness. However, its Korean version is different, providing the master with absolute authority. The Chogye Order emphasizes that the master's recognition of a practitioner's spiritual advancement has been considered very important in the Kanhwa Sōn tradition. However, able masters are very few in contemporary Korea and the master's criteria for evaluating Sōn practitioners' spiritual progress are unclear. It is also taken for granted that all monks, including Sōn practitioners, should observe Buddhist precepts. However, in reality, many Korean Sōn practitioners are disinterested in keeping Buddhist precepts and social ethics. Some Sōn monks are living their monastic life as antinomians even with a mercenary motive (Kim 2010:721-3).

Kanhwa Sōn or Hwadu Absolutism:

The Chogye Order emphasizes the simultaneous practice of Doctrine and Meditation. Although Korean monks are literate (Buswell 1992:217-8), they are not much familiar with the basic teachings of the Buddha. Scholars have debated about what the Buddha actually taught. However, they agree that there are the basic teachings of the Buddha, which include the Four Noble Truths, the theory of dependent origination, the three attributes of existence, and the theory of twelve abodes of sensation. In addition, the Chogye Order adds the Middle Way and six perfections to these. In particular, the Four Noble Truths are considered the most important Buddhist doctrine among others (Kim 2010:725). Nevertheless, the monastic curricular in contemporary Korea do not include any work and course on early Buddhism (Kim 2001:492-9). The late monk Sōngch'ōl (1912-93), who assumed the position of Supreme Patriarch of the Chogye Order and was well known for his soteriological scheme "sudden enlightenment and sudden realization" (*tono tonsu*) and ascetic life, was not exceptional in this regard. His understanding of

²⁴ Jae-ryong Shim views the latter period of the twentieth century as the third paradigmatic period of Korean Buddhism and characterizes it as the continuation of the "Buddhism as state protector" (*hoguk Pulgyo*) tradition, the maintenance of Buddhism for fortune, and the Buddhist movement for the masses (*minjung Pulgyo*) (Shim 1999:161-70). In addition, the concepts of "hooligans Buddhism" (*chop'ok Pulgyo*), and "skirt Buddhism" (*ch'ima Pulgyo*) are another expressions used to characterize contemporary Korean Buddhism from the critical point of view.

²⁵ For the relationship between the Buddhist memorial services at Yonghwasa Monastery and the modernization of Korea, see Kim 2008a.

early Buddhism was not based on what the Buddha actually taught but on Sinicized form of Buddhist texts (Kim 2006b:75-87).

However, the Order it still sticks to Meditation absolutism to the neglect of Doctrine. In fact, Kanhwa Sŏn in contemporary Korea is characterized by hwadu absolutism (Chŏng 2000:6) to the neglect of doctrinal teachings and its practitioners regard verbal interpretation of hwadu as arsenic poison to kill Sŏn Buddhism, probably a typical characteristic of Korean Kanhwa Sŏn (Pak 2005:16). However, “Kanhwa Sŏn absolutism” is problematic (Sŏ 2000:93-7). In addition, not all monks agree to the efficacy of Kanhwa Sŏn and some Korean monks are quite skeptical of its soteriological efficiency (Kim 2010:719).

Limits of Kanhwa Sŏn as Soteriology:

The Chogye Order has an insufficient practical system and Kanhwa Sŏn in contemporary Korea has several impending issues to be resolved. Depending on the traditional authority, pro-Kanhwa Sŏn practitioners have argued lopsided that it was the best approach to enlightenment. In contrast, scholars and some reform-minded monks tend to show a critical attitude toward the practice. Although the two sides are in conflict, there is no substantial conversation between them (Sŏ 2000:88-90), leaving Kanhwa Sŏn primarily for a small number of Sŏn monks.

In fact, the idea that Kanhwa Sŏn is the best soteriology is not persuasive (Kang 2003:138), but a result of the fossilization of culture, which places absolute trust in the superior culture, but lacking knowledge of it (Wŏn'gyŏng 2003:5-7). The Chogye Order's exclusive favor for the Kanhwa Sŏn tradition appears to be anachronistic (Sŏ 2006:24) and Kanhwa Sŏn has no reason for being considered the best soteriology in terms of the number of meditative monks, soteriology, and target audience.

A Small Number of Meditative Monks:

Meditative monks are considered elites in Korean monastic circles. However, their number is small. As of mid-1970s, meditation student numbered less than about 5 percent of the total number of monks and nuns ordained in the Chogye (Buswell 1992:167) and there was no significant increase in their number up to the present. The rest are still engaging in non-meditative Buddhist practices.

Non-meditative Practices:

In spite of its profession to be a Sŏn school, the Chogye Order is not exclusively a Sŏn school. Unlike thus far known in the West regarding the characteristics of Zen Buddhism, it also embraces as part of its practical way the invocation of the Buddha's name, reading and copying of Buddhist texts, bowing in front of the Buddha image, and engagement in Buddhist events, etc. In particular, Korean Sŏn monks also engage in ascetic practices, including eating only raw food, fasting, and never lying down to sleep (Buswell 1992:189-99). Regarding this, the third article of the first chapter of the “Religious Charter” of the Order also stipulates:

This [Chogye] Order's basic texts are the *Diamond Sūtra* and the dharma talks that have transmitted lanterns [of the Buddha's wisdom]. Other Buddhist canonical texts, and recitation of the Buddha's name (*yŏmbul*) and incantation (*chiju*) are also allowed.

Therefore, the Chogye Order allows non-meditative practices, including recitation of the Buddha's name and incantation in its system of thought, making a Korean approach to Zen quite different from its counterparts: China and Japan. However, these practical elements are distant from the spirit of Sŏn Buddhism (Wŏn'gyŏng 2003:11; Misan 2006:6).

Monks-oriented Practice:

Texts on meditation such as the *Platform Sūtra* say that people of higher spiritual faculty are qualified for practicing Kanhwa Chan. Likewise, Kanhwa Sōn has been in principle for monastic professionals in Korea and lay people are not much interested in meditative practice. Although some of lay people are often allowed to practice meditation with monks, they are expected to just remain passive participants.

Toward a New Direction:

First of all, the Chogye Order needs to clarify its historical and philosophical identity. In addition, the idea that Kanhwa Sōn is the best soteriology is no longer effective in contemporary society, which is characterized by openness and diversity. Meditation was first of all a method for obtaining supranormal powers (Faure 1996:75). Morten Schlütter argues the Chinese Chan traditions must be examined within the context of secular political, social, and economic forces in Song China (Chia 2010:56). In addition, the public cases of Chan also need to be analyzed not just as accounts of historical events or of pedagogical techniques, but also as works of literature, as stories, poems, narratives, and myths (Bodiford 2010:99). In Japan, *kōans* also played a major role in the ritual process and they tended to become an object of bookish study or they were memorized and became the object of a kind of “fetishism” (Faure 1996:218-9). Now, it is time for Korean Sōn circles to respond to James Robson’s argument, “Scholars of Zen Buddhism needs to explain deeper questions about why it is that the Linji style of Kanhwa practice became the prominent style of Chan/Sōn/Zen practice around the world and particularly here in Korea” (Robson 2010:355).

Conclusion:

The purpose of this paper aimed to examine the relationship between Buddhist thought and praxis in contemporary Korea, focusing on the Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism, the mainstream of Korean Buddhism, from the critical point of view. The ideological underpinnings of the Chogye Order are the thought of emptiness, Sōn thought, and the Flower Garland thought and its major praxis is Kanhwa Meditation. However, this research came to a conclusion that the reality of the Chogye Order is in general incongruent with the thought of emptiness vying for material affluence and the spirit of Meditative Buddhism; and the Sōn Buddhist Chogye Order also allowed non-meditative practices. This research also argues that Kanhwa Sōn is no longer effective in contemporary society; and the Chogye Order needs to redefine the notion of Buddhist practice beyond Kanhwa Sōn absolutism as ‘a process of one’s living up to the basic teachings of the Buddha’ and accept the diverse ways of practice.²⁶

²⁶ For a discussion of this issue, see Kim 2010:724-6

Glossary:

- chae 齋
chiju 持呪
Chin'gak 眞覺
Chinul 知訥
Chogyesa 曹溪寺
Chogye (Ch. Caoqi) 曹溪
chöndŭng pöbö 傳燈法語
chonghön 宗憲
chongjǒng 宗正
Chosa Sön (Ch. Zushi Chan) 祖師禪
Chosön 朝鮮
Dōgen 道元
Haeinsa 海印寺
haengja 行者
hoguk Pulgyo 護國佛教
Huineng 慧能
hwadu 話頭
Hwaöm (Ch. Huayan, Jp. Kegon) 華嚴
Hyesim 慧諶
Hyujǒng 休靜
Kajisan 迦智山
kangwön 講院
Kanhwa Sön (Ch. Kanhua Chan, Jp. Kōan Zen) 看話禪
kibok Pulgyo 祈福佛教
Koryō 高麗
Kūmgang kyōng 金剛經
Kusan 九山
Kusan Sōnmun 九山禪門
Kye ch'osim hagin mun 誠初心學人文
Kyo 教
Linji 臨濟
Pojo 普照
Pōpchip pyōlghaengnok chōryo pyōng ip sagi 法集別行錄節要并私記
Pōpkye to 法界圖
Pou 普愚
sagyo kwa 四教科
sajip kwa 四集科
sami (kwa) 沙彌(科)
samini 沙彌尼
Sön (Ch. Chan, Jp. Zen) 禪
sōnbang 禪房
Songgwangsa 松廣寺
Sōnmun yōmsong chip 禪門拈頌集
T'aego 太古
T'ongdosa 通度寺
taegyo kwa 大教科
Taehan Pulgyo Chogyejong 大韓佛教
曹溪宗
tono chōmsu 頓悟漸修
tono tonsu 頓悟頓修
Toūi 道義
Ŭisang 義湘
Yasutani Hakuun 安谷白雲
yōmbul 念佛
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