

Daesoon Jinrihoe in Modern Korea

Daesoon Jinrihoe in Modern Korea:

*The Emergence, Transformation
and Transmission of a New
Religion*

By

David W. Kim

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For Tammy and Ok Bun Lee

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This project (*Daesoon Jinrihoe in Modern Korea: The Emergence, Transformation and Transmission of a New Religion*) was originally motivated through casual dialogues with scholars of religion, sociology and history at international conferences including the IAHR (the International Association for the History of Religions), the CESNUR (the Centre for Studies on New Religions, Torino), the ANU Religion Conference 2016 and the KARS (the Korean Association for Religious Studies). This new volume, in a pioneering perspective, introduces the various socio-cultural phenomena of a new religious movement in the modern history of Korea and East Asia. The study draws from the approaches of geopolitics, the Jeungsanist movements, hagiographical and mystical narratives of leadership history, canonical literature, Hyeonmu-gyeong, systems of philosophical thought, rituals, sacred sites and their functional roles and social outreach. The ideological subjects of this volume are related to the multi-disciplines of Asian studies, anthropology, East Asian history, Korean studies, sociology, religious studies and theology.

This research was financially sponsored by the Academy of Korean Studies (the Korean Government), the International Daesoon Research Foundation and the Korea Foundation (of the Field Research Fellowship). The School of History (CASS) and the Department of Political and Social Change, the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs, Australian National University generously offered their research facilities. This project would not have been possible without the financial and organisational assistance of these funding agencies and research institutions. I would like to thank Suemin Kwak, Research Grant Officer, the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS, Korea) and Jodi Hamilton, Business Officer, College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University for their assistance. Associate Professor Greg Fealy, former Director of the Coral Bell School of Asia and Pacific Affairs, Australian National University showed a special interest in this project and kindly provided me with university research sources and space. Professor Frank Bongiorno (Head of the School of History, CASS) and Associate Professor Paul Kenny (Head of the Department of Political and Social Change) helped me in many ways including the resolution of official and administrative issues, such as university access. Professor Robert Cribb (Australian National University)

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David W. Kim
Kookmin University, Seoul &
Australian National University

TESTIMONIALS

Despite being the largest of Korea's new religions, remarkably little has been written on the Daesoon Jinrihoe. David Kim's book is therefore to be welcomed as a detailed and meticulous study of the organisation, and it is likely to be the definitive book for years to come.

George D. Chryssides,
York St John University and the University of Birmingham;
and formerly Head of Religious Studies at the University of
Wolverhampton (UK)

Most research into Korea's religious and philosophical traditions tends to focus on Buddhism and Confucianism, as well as Christianity and Donghak, also known as Eastern Learning. Hence, David W. Kim's latest book on Daesoon Jinrihoe is a valuable contribution, which expands our understanding of modern religiosity in Korea, highlighting the importance of this new religion in the Korean context, offering a uniquely alternative *modus vivendi* for its followers.

Kevin Cawley,
University College Cork, Ireland

This new volume written from a pioneering perspective introduces the various socio-cultural phenomena of a new religious movement in East Asia in modern history. One can obtain a complete picture of Daesoon Jinrihoe of South Korea, including not only its basic teachings, but also its international outreach activities throughout the world.

Midori Horiuchi,
University of Tenri, Japan

David Kim's well-researched, detailed account of this fascinating Korean religion contributes new insights to two fields - Asian Studies and New Religious Studies. For scholars in the West, Kim's analysis of the social and political context within which this unique spiritual movement emerged, and eventually flourished, teaches us that NRMs in Asia are a whole new "ball game", challenging our preconceptions and requiring fresh theoretical approaches for those who engage in the sociological analysis of religion.

Susan Palmer,
McGill University, Canada

David Kim's knowledge of the family of Korean new religions tracing their origins to Kang Jeungsan, a Korean figure they recognise as the incarnation of the Supreme God, is unique and impressive. Others have tried to put some order in the maze of some one hundred religions of this family. Finally, Kim has succeeded in giving to us a clear and complete map, as well as a detailed presentation of the largest movement of the family, Daesoon Jinrihoe, one of the largest Korean new religions and one not well known in the West.

Massimo Introvigne,
Centre for Studies on New Religions
(CESNUR), Italy

PREFACE

Daesoon Jinrihoe is still a new religion, so it has had to endure the criticism that new religious movements usually receive. It has been labeled a cult, it has been called a purveyor of superstition, and it has been denigrated for supposedly lacking the qualities that define a genuine religion. True to its teaching that we should do nothing to cause others to get angry with us, Daesoon Jinrihoe has not engaged in arguments with its detractors. Instead, it has let its history prove its detractors wrong. Despite its critics, it has thrived and grown large and respectable enough to become a major component of Korea's religious landscape. Yet, up to now, it has not received much scholarly attention. Most scholars of Korea's religious culture focus on its four major components: shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity. Those are all deserving of academic examination, of course, but a focus only on those four relegates to the shadows some of the more interesting, and more distinctively Korean, features of Korean spirituality. Fortunately, David Kim has stepped up to help us gain a more comprehensive view of contemporary Korean spirituality with this survey of the scriptures, theology, philosophy, ethics, rituals and even the sacred art of Daesoon Jinrihoe.

Early on in this book, readers will learn about a dizzying series of fissures in the community of those who believe that Kang Jeungsan was the incarnation of the Supreme God Above (Sangje). That will inspire questions about what is so special about Daesoon Jinrihoe that it was able to rise above the fray and become the largest, strongest and most respected in the entire Jeungsan family of religions. Believers might answer that it is the result of Daesoon Jinrihoe sticking closer to the original message of Kang Jeungsan than other groups. Outside observers tend to give the credit to the organisational skills and charisma of Park Han-Gyeong, also known as Park Wudang. Evidence of Park's organisational skills can be seen in this study. Thanks to the example of Protestant missionaries who first began settling down in Korea near the end of the nineteenth century, for a religious organisation to be seen as respectable and modern, it should operate modern educational institutions and modern hospitals. Led by Park's skillful management in its first decades, Daesoon Jinrihoe has done both.

But that is not the only reason for Daesoon Jinrihoe's rise to prominence. Daesoon Jinrihoe has provided guidance for Koreans seeking

to navigate through the typhoon-force winds of modernisation. It has shown Koreans how to be both modern and Korean, how to adopt the positive features of globalised modern life without jettisoning those beliefs and values that are uniquely Korean so that they can maintain their Korean cultural identity. It has done that by being both a modern religion as well as a Korean religion with distinctive Korean elements.

It is not just that Daesoon Jinri teaches that the Supreme God Above reincarnated on the Korean peninsula and lived as an ordinary Korean man for several years. It also teaches an ethical philosophy that draws on Korean ethical concerns from centuries past. And, though Daesoon Jinrihoe embraces elements from China's Daoist, Buddhist and Confucian traditions, those elements have been so Koreanised that few Chinese would recognise them. For example, both Daoists and Confucians in China believed that change in the cosmos was fueled by relations among five forces, to which were applied the labels of wood, metal, fire, water and earth. Those relations were dominated by mutual conflict, in which wood splits earth by growing out of it, metal chops wood, fire melts metal, water quenches fire, and earth dams water, followed by wood splitting earth again and so on (Yoke 1985, 11-24). This is a never-ending circle of destructive interactions. However, Kang Jeungsan and Daesoon Jinrihoe teach that the world dominated by mutual conflict is drawing to a close. Instead, we are about to enter an age of mutual production. Just as wood produces fire, fire produces earth (ashes), earth produces metal (mined out of the ground), metal produces water (through condensation), and water, in turn, produces wood, human beings will engage in mutually productive interactions with their fellow human beings leading to a world free of injustice, disease, and other problems, a world that Daesoon Jinrihoe labels a *Sangsaeng* (상생, 相生, mutually life-giving) world.

It is the emphasis on harmony, harmonious interactions within the human community, as well as harmony between human beings and nature, and harmony between human beings and spiritual beings, that resonates with Korean tradition and gives Daesoon Jinrihoe such persuasive power in Korea. Moreover, its approach to achieving such harmony, by eliminating the resentment that injustice has generated over the centuries, also has broad appeal, for who has not felt that they have been treated unfairly in the past and resented that mistreatment? Daesoon Jinri promises a better world in the near future, and also teaches techniques, such as its rituals and its ethical principles, that promise to hasten the end of the old world of constant conflict and lead to the emergence of the new world of mutual cooperation, peace and prosperity.

Another reason Daesoon Jinrihoe appears distinctively Korean is that, arguably, it shows less Christian influence than other Korean new religious movements. It doesn't have regular Sunday services with hymns and sermons. Moreover, unlike Christianity, it promises a paradise on this earth, not in heaven above. Even more remarkably, Daesoon Jinrihoe promises that soon human beings will not need divine assistance. Not only does it agree with Buddhism and Confucianism that human beings are capable of becoming god-like through their own efforts, it also teaches that once the old era of constant conflict is over, human beings will no longer need gods for anything since humans will have become like gods. This means Daesoon Jinrihoe is more in tune with traditional East Asian anthropocentrism than Western theocentrism.

Daesoon Jinrihoe offers a fascinating glimpse into how Koreans have coped with the challenges of globalisation and modernisation while nevertheless preserving a Korean core. There is much that scholars of Korea, not just scholars of religion in Korea but scholars of Korean culture and modern Korean history in general, can learn from this comprehensive study of Daesoon Jinrihoe. We should be grateful to David Kim for finally giving it the scholarly attention it deserves.

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INTRODUCTION

The traditional religions of Asia not only prospered among the local people during ancient and medieval centuries but also played a significant role within each society of the continent by sustaining Asia's unique regional culture within the history of humanity. The social order was influenced by the teachings of each religion and by plural religions. The political institutions were established based on those religious creeds or customs. The motivation of local education was likely launched by the leadership of religious organisations. The social stand of Asian religions was more than just a spiritual guide in the pre-modern period. Even the lives and thinkings of Asian people were deeply rooted in the religious principles of their societies. However, religious domination was soon challenged by the wave of colonialism that swept the region during the modern period of Asian history. When the global boom of European imperialism and the expansion of Christianity reached the Asian continent, local communities experienced confusion and transformation. The traditional ways of education, medicine and thought conflicted with Western social principles. For the European colonists, their action was that of global pioneers, but the introduction of new ideas and commercial trade brought threats and uncertainty to the indigenous people who felt that being invaded contributed to the loss of their identity and historical customs.

East Asian nations share a similar historical background of modernisation in the nineteenth century. None had been colonised under Western imperialism, but all of them commonly became subjected to Western powers, whether directly or indirectly. Meanwhile, Western imperialism is seen to have had three key aspects: culture, economy and territory. The first was missionary endeavours to spread the Christian religion to each part of East Asia. The new wave is understood as cultural imperialism. Secondly, mercantilism was interested in boosting profit through free trade, and this was seen as economic imperialism. Western powers wanted to open the countries in East Asia to expand foreign markets. Thirdly, military interventions to protect and promote their national interests were a form of territorial imperialism through which they acquired extra territories.

The change in the Asian political landscape challenged religious beliefs in the modern period. Social insecurity became the main concern for

the followers of traditional religions. When people started to realise the powerlessness of their old faiths, they sought new teachings or founders of new religions. Many new religious movements (NRMs) emerged to satisfy the spiritual needs of local people in overcoming the hardship of transition. Another reason was related to the perceived correction and decline of mainstream religions. The general figure of new religious movements was originated from a particular old religion or multi-religions. Many of them disappeared after the death of key charismatic leaders. Meanwhile, some of them successfully survived throughout socio-religious persecutions. Since religion was used to act as a social stand, the new religions also indicated new perspectives on the universe for their followers.

When Christianity was introduced as a new religion, new indigenous religious movements arose in each nation of China, Taiwan, Japan and Korea. The Republic of China (1912–1949) initially witnessed the appearance of Xiantian dao, Yiguandao, Zailiism, Weixinism and Tiandism. There were also various Qigong schools related to the Chinese folk religions, such as Falun Gong, Zhong Gong, Yuanji Gong and Wang Gong. The groups of Zhushenism, Linglingism, Fuhuodao, Mentuhui and Eastern Lightning (Church of Almighty God) originated from foundational Christian thought. During the postbellum conditions of the Meiji Restoration (明治維新, *Meiji Ishin*), the Japanese NRMs were mainly based on the religious philosophies of Buddhism and Shintoism. For example, Omoto-kyo, Nakayama-Shingosho-shu and Honmichi appeared during the period 1837–1881, but the Meiji Restoration (1886–1906) and the post-Meiji Restoration were confronted with numerous NRMs such as En'nokyo, Nenpo-shinkyō, Reiyu-kai, Perfect Liberty Kyodan, Zenrinkyo and Myochikai Kyodan.

The transformation of local Korean religions was not exempt from colonial encounters but caused the emergence of NRMs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Korean NRMs of *Donghak* (later called Cheondogyo), the Jeungsan group, *Daejonggyo* and *Wonbulgyo* arose post 1860, in part, as reactions against the Western Learnings (*Seohak*, a euphemism for Christianity). Among the post-1860 movements, Daesoon Jinrihoe, a religion within the Jeungsan group transmitted by heirs of Jo Jeongsan and Park Wudang, was one of the most successful movements in terms of its size and social impact. The religious community has delivered an innovative voice that sounds out from the traditional religions (Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Christianity and local shamanism) of contemporary Korea. They believed that the god of the universe himself (comparable to the Son of God in Christianity) incarnated from “the ninth heaven” to restore the corrupted *Samgye* (the

three worlds of heaven, earth and human beings) of the universe. The *Injon* ideology of Daesoon Jinrihoe is seen to enlighten the status of human beings above all creatures even above divine sages in the case that one reaches the condition of Dotongjingyeong. This book (*Daesoon Jinrihoe in Modern Korea: The Emergence, Transformation and Transmission of a New Religion*) will explore the socio-religious character of the new religion in the context of East Asian religious culture and history.

Methodologies in religious studies are the interpretive models on which the analysis of religious phenomena and resources can be discussed. The approach provides a lens through which one is able to understand the perspective of a (new) religion. Within the critical view, there are three common methodologies: the philosophy of religion (Phenomenology), the study of religious communities (Functionalism), and the study of all aspects of the beliefs, practices and experiences of the followers of a particular religion (Lived Religion). There are also many subsets within these fields and other methodologies can be used in combination to study a particular faith community. Based on such an approach, this book will explore the Daesoon movement in the context of functionalism in modern Korean society even though the perspectives of religious philosophy and personal experiences are regarded to consider the relationship that Daesoon Jinrihoe has with the other religious movements of the Korean peninsula.

What was the geopolitical condition of East Asia and Korea? How does one perceive a new Korean religion? Who was Kang Jeung-san? How did he relate to Korea? What are the teachings of the Daesoon god (Sangje)? What does their canon, *Jeon-gyeong*, reflect? What are their systems of philosophical thought? What kinds of rituals do they practice? Where are their sacred sites located? Why do they focus on local educational work? How do social welfare projects relate to their teachings? How do they differ in comparison with other East Asian (new) religions? Such primary questions will find their answers through the subjects of historical identity, unique doctrines, teachings, social purposes, the roles of women, educational strategies, practical rules and financial principles. *Daesoon Jinrihoe in Modern Korea: The Emergence, Transformation and Transmission of a New Religion* is the result of initial research for Western scholars and readers of Korean new religions.

Further, this research in a socio-religious perspective considers the cultural environment of East Asia in the context of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Since the emergence of this new religious movement was not spontaneous, Chapter One (*The Geopolitical Landscape of East Asia in the 19th and 20th Centuries*) describes certain situations in which a unique historical figure promotes a new teaching based on the traditional

doctrines of Buddhism, Daoism, and/or Confucianism. The subject of political conflicts covers the strategy of the national parties of *Wijeong Cheokssapa*, *Dongdo Seogipa* and *Gaehwapa*. The social incidents of *Byeongin Yangyo*, *Shinmi Yangyo*, *Imo Gyorang* and the *Gapsin* Coup are represented with the civic protects of the Peasant Protests, the Merchants' Business Suspension Movement and the *Gabo* Reform. The end of the chapter then briefly introduces the religio-philosophical background and emergence of native Korean new religious movements, such as *Donghak*, *Daejonggyo* and *Wonbulgyo*.

Chapter Two (*The Jeungsanist Movement in Modern Korea*) explores the origin of the Jeungsanist movement that was rooted in their humanised god Kang Jeungsan. The social phenomenon of the sectarian division details five major splits like Goh Pan-Lye's Daeheung-ri sect, Jo Jeongsan's Mugeukdo sect, Kang Sunim's Jeungsan Hyangwon sect, Jeong Inpyo's Maitreya Buddha sect and Bae Yongdeok's Jeungsan Jinbeophoe. The various sects of the new movement are also categorised as having familiar characteristics with Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Samdo Gwanwang (the combination of three East Asian religions), Dangun, Choi Suwun and the mysticism of talisman (부적, 符籙). Yet, there were unity movements in the times of colonial Korea (1926), Korean independence (1949), post-Korean war (1955) and two democratic periods (1961 and 1971).

Chapter Three (*Hagiographical and Mystical Narratives in the History of the Daesoon Leadership*) examines the genealogical history of Daesoon Jinrihoe through their leadership in the Jeungsanist movement. The hagiographies of the three major figures (Kang Jeungsan, Jo Jeongsan and Park Wudang) are unfolded in the context of the personal life stories and religious achievement. Daesoon is a religious body that originated when Jo Jeungsan received a heavenly call in 1909. The word "Daesoon (대순, 大巡)" means their god Sangje Kang's "Great Itineration" around the three realms of heaven, earth and humanity, along with the subsequent "reordering works of the universe," which were carried out to rectify the world in calamities and to open the "Later World of Earthly Paradise." Jo experienced the revelation of the Orthodox authority in 1917 from its supreme being (Kang Jeungsan). This religious body was established in 1969 by Park Wudang on whom the leadership was bestowed with the last words of Jo Jeongsan. Thus, the history of the FDT covers the roles of Kang Jeungsan (1871–1909)'s heirs such as Jo Jeongsan (Doju; 1895–1958) and Park Wudang (1917–1995).

Chapter Four (*Canonical Literature*) attempts to demonstrate the context of Daesoon literature. The canonical texts include *Jeon-gyeong*,

Daesoon Jichim, Essentials of Daesoon Jinrihoe, the Constitution of Daesoon Jinrihoe, Basic Principles for Propagation and Edification 1 & 2 and Explanation of Sacred Paintings. The teaching sources for their belief and doctrine, are *Life and Thought of Jeung-san, Collected Treatises of Daesoon Thought, Lecture on Daesoon Jinrihoe I and II, Chaejiga and Road to Mutual Beneficence 1, 2, 3 and 4.* The role of the contemporary magazines is to share religious news and recent information: the Daesoon Magazine, Donggeurami (circle) and Daesoon News. The *Hyeonmu-gyeong* that was written by Kang Jeung-san himself is one of the most orthodox canonical texts, but it is introduced as part of their canon, *Jeon-gyeong*.

Chapter Five (*Daesoon Philosophical Thought*) analyses the philosophical thought of the Korean new religion based on the canonical texts and written traditions (historical and cultural heritage). The cosmological theology of the Daesoon religion is receptive, compositive and syncretic in the context of East Asian philosophy and custom. Yet, they have uniquely delivered an innovative thought in comparison with the traditional religions of contemporary Korea. The charismatic philosophy in doctrine/beliefs is demonstrated in the view that the god of Daesoon himself (like the Son of God in Christianity) was present in the world and directly involved in the restoration process of the corrupted universe (Samgye 삼계, 三界) as the superintendent of the universe. The monotheistic religion still has a pantheistic perspective of Cheonji-Shinmyoung (천지신명, 天地神明, substantial deities of heaven and earth). The principle of Daesoon cosmology has been reflected in the meaning of the Cheonggye Pagoda (청계탑, 靑鷄塔, Blue Rooster Tower), while the earthly cycle of creation and destruction is related with the flow of yin and yang in the concept of cosmic change from Seoncheon (선천, 先天, the Pre-World) to Hucheon (후천, 後天, the Post-World). Another part of this chapter further explores the ideological and meditational subjects of Simudo paintings, creeds, Daesoon objectives, hunhoe (훈회, 訓誨, commandments) and suchik (수칙, 守則, five ethical rules).

Their various rituals are then explored in Chapter Six (*Religious Rituals and Practices*). Among them, the Suryeon (spiritual training) is comprehended as the internal action of cleaning one's heart and character. It is the practice of chanting the Tae-eul mantra without a designated place or time. The Gongbu (Holy Works) is the action of reciting incantations. It represents not only a ritual of the religious movement but also a monastic activity of the followers. The Gongbu is divided into the Sihak Gongbu and the Sibeop Gongbu. For Daesoon, the meaning of Gido (prayer) is understood as part of Sudo (spiritual cultivation). Gido is the practice of

reciting prayerful incantations at designated places or at home at a designated time. It is divided into Daily Prayer and Weekly Prayer. The action of Gido is known as the method by which gods and human beings can communicate. Chiseong (Devotional Offering) reflects the view that one sincerely worships deities. The Daesoon Chiseong ritual follows the traditional aspect of the Korean value. The use of spells is adopted for asking god for the fulfilment of prayers' wishes. The actions of Wolseong (an offering), Baeryebeop (method of salutation) and Hanbok (traditional dress) are also recognised as a significant part of Daesoon rituals.

Chapter Seven (*Sacred Sites and Their Functional Roles*) attempts to identify the meaningful sites and its mission of Daesoon religion. The Korean new religion has many different kinds of sacred places, such as the Dojang (도장, 道場, temple complex), the Hoegwan (회관, 會館, fellowship building), affiliated buildings (as well as gates, Maitreya statue, bell and drum pavilions, and bridge), the Hoesil (회실, 會室), and the Podeokso (포덕소, 布德所, propagation centres). Each sacred place has unique functions for the religious activities of Suryeon (수련, 修練), Gongbu (공부, 工夫), Gido (기도, 祈禱) and Chiseong (치성, 致誠). Each sacred site likewise keeps distinctive sacred stories. Unlike these cultivation programs, the Yeonsu (연수, 鍊修, Training) and the Sugang (수강, 受講, Lecture) are more like internal training programs for organisational development and leadership. Such training programs are also performed at one of these sacred sites.

The last Chapter (*Social Outreach in Reductive Enterprise*) regards the social works of the Korean religion which was based on the primary teachings of Haewon Thought (the resolution of bitterness and grief) and Boeun Thought (the grateful reciprocation of favours). The efforts of educational establishments (high schools and the university) are geared towards the activity of Charity Aid supporting the victims of natural disasters and helping people in need. The volunteer work through the Daejin International Volunteers Association (DIVA) was ideally emphasised in the context of humanitarianism. The social welfare was launched through the purpose of communal enterprises (the Saemaetul movement (새마을운동, 新鄉村運動, the new community movement), a nature conservation campaign and filial piety for elderly people), medical enterprises (the Daejin Medical Foundation) and welfare enterprises (the Medical Care Institute, the Medical Care Hospital and the Senior Welfare Centre).

Although this book does not focus on the traditional thoughts or teachings of the new religion, it clearly suggests the view that Daesoon Jinrihoe (대순진리회, 大巡眞理會, the Fellowship of Daesoon Truth (FDT))

should not be seen as another syncretic religion. The approach of “fulfilment philosophy” is expected to lead to a new direction for contemporary readers, especially for those who see the new religious movement just as a marginalised religious group in modern Korea. The native Korean religion is not perceived as new anymore if one sees it through the organisational size and institutional capacity. Thus, *Daesoon Jinrihoe in Modern Korea: The Emergence, Transformation and Transmission of a New Religion* is the first English manuscript to theoretically reflect the new Korean religious movement for non-Korean readers since there are as yet few English sources on their socio-religious identity.

The references and figures in each chapter and the glossary at the end of the book help professional and casual readers for further study. The Chicago Manual foortonte formation (17th edition) supports special contexts of the book, while the APA type of in-text citations is applied for simple sources. For the Korean font, the McCune–Reischauer system is often used among non-native scholars and students from 1945. It is also used in some parts of the book, but the Revised Romanisation System (RR: without diacritical markings) introduced by the Korean government in 2000, is applied over the cultural terms of the book to unify with the standard of the Korean society and the religious organisation. Each personal name in the main parts will be with Korean characters in brackets. In the case of an organisation’s name (or title), Korean and Chinese characters will be added together. All terms will be explained by Korean and Chinese characters as well as English meanings in brackets. The Modified Hepburn Romanisation System is adopted for Japanese names and terms except in some cases. Since there are a couple of divided groups in the Daesoon movement after the 2000s, some parts of the book may not be acceptable for every insider, but it would be a useful source for outsiders to draw a whole picture of the religious movement.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE GEOPOLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF EAST ASIA IN THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES

Introduction

The first chapter demonstrates the regional environment of modern East Asia (including Korea) through which various ethnic and nationalistic groups of new religious teaching or philosophy gained the social attention and confidence of marginalised people including low-class citizens and women. The cultural innovation began when the colonialism of Western power, culture and technology challenged the local societies. Each nation not only experienced a political transformation from feudalism to democracy, but also witnessed the weakening of the government by corruption. This chapter describes the transitional phenomenon of the Joseon dynasty (Korea) in the 19th and 20th centuries. The historical narratives of the political conflicts, social incidents and civic protests are seen to generate the ideological change of the Korean peninsula from the traditional beliefs of Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism and folk religions. The emergence of the initial native new religions, such as Donghak, Daejonggyo, Wonbulgyo and the Jeungsan movement is the result of the social and political disorder in the process of colonial modernisation.

The (British) East India Company (BEIC) had been flooding into the Qing dynasty of China from 1720, but the genuine trade balance was broken in the 1830s with the commodity issues of the British Industrial Revolution (Smets and Pilecky-Dekajlo 1975; Duff 1970). The loss of the First Opium War (1839–42) caused the doors to open to the Western nations including France, Russia, Germany and Japan.¹ While the foreign influx created a good deal of bitterness against the West, the social unsteadiness challenged the Chinese to wake up to the necessity for reform. China was

¹ Or it is called ‘the Anglo-Chinese War.’ China saw little progress towards modernisation but experienced the social strikes of the Taiping Rebellion (1850–64), the Second Opium War (1858–60), the Sino–Japanese War (1894–95) and the Boxer Rebellion (1898–1900).

more vulnerable than ever to the foreign powers, when Empress Dowager Cixi (慈禧太后) ran the nation instead of her son and nephew (1875–1908) (Duff 1970). Under such circumstances, China witnessed new religious movements of the Xiantiandao lineage which originated from the White Lotus movement and a Buddhist-Manichaeian movement (Pye 2008).²

There were also Qigong schools related to the Chinese folklore religions (Pye 2008). Among those new religious movements, Yiguandao (*I-Kuan Tao*, 一贯道, the Way of Unity or the Consistent Way) was one of the most vigorous movements in modern China and in contemporary Taiwan. The new religion of the Xiantiandao group that emerged in Shandong was led by the leadership of Zhang Tianran (张天然) in 1911. The missionary work of this movement helped to increase the size of the movement as the largest one with 12 million followers in the 1940s (Kuo 2008). Although Yiguandao was banned afterwards, they relocated to Taiwan and successfully flourished from 1987 (by the end of Martial Law) as the third largest religious organisation (6–7 million) (Kuo 2008).³ The new religion spread to over eighty different countries including those in Southeast Asia, Hong Kong and the United States (Kuo 2008).

Likewise, Japan has its own story of modernisation. When the Western ships increasingly appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was an edict (異國船打払令, *Ikokuusen Uchiharairei*) to expel foreigners (Western ships other than those of the Dutch East India Company) in 1825, which lasted until 1842 (Marukawa 1986; Marras 1986; Nobutaka 2002). However, the modernisation of the society began, when the United States' Navy forced the opening of the nation in 1854. After the Convention of Kanagawa, similar treaties with Western countries (Russia, the Netherlands, the UK and France) brought politico-economic crises during the Bakumatsu period (1853–1867) (Juri 2003; Kawabata and Tamura 2007). The domestic result of the Boshin War (1868–1869) between the forces of the Tokugawa Shogunate and those seeking to return political power to the imperial court, eventually established a centralised state unified under the new Emperor Meiji (明治大帝) (Marukawa 1986; Nirei 2007; Tankha 2000; “Modern Illumination of the Theory of Shtoshi,” n.d.).⁴

² As well as Yaochidao, Jiugongdao, De Religion, Weixinism and Tiandism. The ancient movement emerged in the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) as *Wugongdao*, but was later renamed *Xiantiandao*.

³ Its members operate many vegetarian restaurants, while they recently cooperated with academic and non-governmental organisations.

⁴ Because of its unequal treaties, the Emperor Kōmei reissued the ‘Order to expel barbarians’ (foreigners).

The reformative policy of the Meiji Restoration (1868–1912) separated Shintoism from Buddhism in 1868, which “aimed to restore the ancient state of Shinto shrines before Buddhism” (Marukawa 1986, 292).⁵

While Japan began to experience such social turmoil and rapid modernisation, the Japanese NRM (Shinshukyo) appeared from the last decade of the Tokugawa period (1837–1881) (Marukawa 1986; Hardacre 1989). The Meiji Restoration witnessed a huge number of NRMs (Pye 1962; Van Straelen 1962).⁶ Most of the Japanese new religions were directly influenced by the religious philosophy of Shintoism, Buddhism and shamanism. Among them, Tenrikyo of Shinshukyo was created by a female named Nakayama Miki in 1838 during the final years of the Edo period (1838–1867) and the first twenty years of the Meiji period (1868–1912) (Marras 1986; Hardacre 1989). The Tenrikyo Church officially appeared in 1888, when it gained legal recognition from the local government as a sect of the Shinto headquarters (Marras 1986; Nakayama, 1986; Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, Tenrikyo 1989).⁷ The new religion was once the largest new religion in Japan before World War II. Even today, they manage 16,833 local churches, with two million followers (Marras 1986; Kawabata and Tamura, 2007).⁸ They promoted their movement in approximately thirteen overseas nations. The organisation is known for its work in social welfare activities in orphanages, public nurseries, blind schools, disaster relief corps, hospitals, universities, libraries and various primary schools and high schools (Okubo 1986; Morishita 2005; Juri 2003; “Modern Illumination of the Theory of Shtoshi,” n.d.). The new religion additionally interests and encourages members to engage in various sports and arts. Tenri Judo is particularly renowned as a successful competition style of Judo (Nobutaka 2002; Juri 2003).⁹

The Joseon dynasty of Korea was the last nation of the East Asian region to be affected by Western powers. The global imperial movement brought political confusion and conflict for modern Confucian Korea. The USS *South American* initially visited Busan for 10 days in 1853 (Kim 2001).

⁵ The period of the Meiji Restoration was the time during which Japan successfully modernised from being a feudal society.

⁶ Perfect Liberty Kyodan, Seicho-no-Ie, Sekai Kyusei-kyo, Kodo Kyodan, Rissho Kosei-kai, Bussho Gonenkai Kyodan, Soka Gakkai, Shinnyo-en, Tensho Kotai Jingu-kyo, Zenrinkyo and Myochikai Kyodan.

⁷ The Meiji government designated them as one of the thirteen groups in *Sect Shinto* in 1908 under State Shinto. The son of the leadership was recognised as a Shinto priest in 1867.

⁸ However, Tenrikyo withdrew from the Association of Shinto Sects in 1970 and became an independent religion with a global mission.

⁹ Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *Tenrikyo: The Path to Joyousness*.