

Preface to
The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism

At the start of the twenty-first century, humanity looked with hope on the dawning of a new millennium. A decade later, however, the global village still faces the continued reality of suffering, whether it is the slaughter of innocents in politically volatile regions, the ongoing economic crisis that currently roils the world financial system, or repeated natural disasters. Buddhism has always taught that the world is inherently unstable and its teachings are rooted in the perception of the three marks that govern all conditioned existence: impermanence, suffering, and non-self. Indeed, the veracity of the Buddhist worldview continues to be borne out by our collective experience today.

The suffering inherent in our infinitely interconnected world is only intensified by the unwholesome mental factors of greed, anger, and ignorance, which poison the minds of all sentient beings. As an antidote to these three poisons, Buddhism fortunately also teaches the practice of the three trainings: *śīla*, or moral discipline, the endurance and self-restraint that controls greed; *samādhi*, the discipline of meditation, which pacifies anger; and *prajñā*, the discipline of wisdom, which conquers ignorance. As human beings improve in their practice of these three trainings, they will be better able to work compassionately for the welfare and weal of all sentient beings.

Korea has a long history of striving to establish a way of life governed by discipline, compassion, and understanding. From the fifth century C.E. onward, the Korean saṅgha indigenized both the traditional monastic community and the broader Mahāyāna school of Buddhism. Later, the insights and meditative practices of the Seon tradition were introduced to the peninsula and this practice lineage lives on today in meditation halls throughout the country. Korea, as a land that has deep affinities with the Buddhist tradition, has thus seamlessly transmitted down to the present the living heritage of the Buddha's teachings.

These teachings begin with Great Master Wonhyo, who made the vast and profound teachings of the Buddhadharmā accessible to all through his

various “doctrinal essentials” texts. Venerable Woncheuk and State Preceptor Daegak Uicheon, two minds that shined brightly throughout East Asia, left us the cherished legacy of their annotated commentaries to important scriptures, which helped to disseminate the broad and profound views of the Mahāyāna, and offered a means of implementing those views in practice. The collected writings of Seon masters like Jinul and Hyujeong revealed the Seon path of meditation and illuminated the pure land that is inherent in the minds of all sentient beings. All these works comprise part of the precious cultural assets of our Korean Buddhist tradition. The bounty of this heritage extends far beyond the people of Korea to benefit humanity as a whole.

In order to make Korea’s Buddhist teachings more readily accessible, Dongguk University had previously published a fourteen-volume compilation of Korean Buddhist works written in literary Chinese, the traditional lingua franca of East Asia, comprising over 320 different works by some 150 eminent monks. That compilation effort constituted a great act of Buddhist service. From that anthology, ninety representative texts were then selected and translated first into modern vernacular Korean and now into English. These Korean and English translations are each being published in separate thirteen-volume collections and will be widely distributed around the world.

At the onset of the modern age, Korea was subjected to imperialist pressures coming from both Japan and the West. These pressures threatened the continuation of our indigenous cultural and religious traditions and also led to our greatest cultural assets being shuttered away in cultural warehouses that neither the general public nor foreign-educated intellectuals had any interest in opening. For any people, such estrangement from their heritage would be most discomfoting, since the present only has meaning if it is grounded in the memories of the past. Indeed, it is only through the self-reflection and wisdom accumulated over centuries that we can define our own identity in the present and ensure our continuity into the future. For this reason, it is all the more crucial that we bring to the attention of a wider public the treasured dharma legacy of Korean Buddhism, which is currently embedded in texts composed in often impenetrable literary Chinese.

Our efforts to disseminate this hidden gem that is Korean Buddhism

reminds me of the simile in the *Lotus Sūtra* of the poor man who does not know he has a jewel sewn into his shirt: this indigent toils throughout his life, unaware of the precious gem he is carrying, until he finally discovers he has had it with him all along. This project to translate and publish modern vernacular renderings of these literary Chinese texts is no different from the process of mining, grinding, and polishing a rare gem to restore its innate brilliance. Only then will the true beauty of the gem that is Korean Buddhism be revealed for all to see. A magnificent inheritance can achieve flawless transmission only when the means justify the ends, not the other way around. Similarly, only when form and function correspond completely and nature and appearance achieve perfect harmony can a being be true to its name. This is because the outer shape shines only as a consequence of its use, and use is realized only by borrowing shape.

As Buddhism was transmitted to new regions of the world, it was crucial that the teachings preserved in the Buddhist canon, this jewel of the Dharma, be accurately translated and handed down to posterity. From the inception of the Buddhist tradition, the Buddhist canon or “Three Baskets” (*Tripitaka*), was compiled in a group recitation where the oral rehearsal of the scriptures was corrected and confirmed by the collective wisdom of all the senior monks in attendance. In East Asia, the work of translating Indian Buddhist materials into literary Chinese –the lingua franca for the Buddhist traditions of China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam– was carried out in translation bureaus as a collective, collaborative affair.

Referred to as the “tradition of multi-party translation,” this system of collaboration for translating the Indian Sanskrit Buddhist canon into Chinese typically involved a nine-person translation team. The team included a head translator, who sat in the center, reading or reciting the Sanskrit scripture and explaining it as best he could with often limited Chinese; a philological advisor, or “certifier of the meaning,” who sat to the left of the head translator and worked in tandem with him to verify meticulously the meaning of the Sanskrit text; a textual appraiser, or “certifier of the text,” who sat at the chief’s right and confirmed the accuracy of the preliminary Chinese rendering; a Sanskrit specialist, who carefully confirmed the accuracy of the language

of the source text; a scribe, who transcribed into written Chinese what was often initially an oral Chinese rendering; a composer of the text, who crafted the initial rendering into grammatical prose; the proofreader, who compared the Chinese with the original Sanskrit text; the editor, who tightened up and clarified any sentences that were vague in the Chinese; and finally the stylist, who sat facing the head translator, who had responsibility for refining the final rendering into elegant literary Chinese. In preparing these vernacular Korean and English renderings of Korean Buddhist works, we have thought it important to follow, as much as possible, this traditional style of Buddhist literary translation that had been discontinued.

This translation project, like all those that have come before it, had its own difficulties to overcome. We were forced to contend with nearly-impossible deadlines imposed by government funding agencies. We strained to hold together a meager infrastructure. It was especially difficult to recruit competent scholars who were fluent in literary Chinese and vernacular Korean and English, but who had with the background in Buddhist thought necessary to translate the whole panoply of specialized religious vocabulary. Despite these obstacles, we have prevailed. This success is due to the compilation committee which, with sincere devotion, overcame the myriad obstacles that inevitably arose in a project of this magnitude; the translators both in Korea and abroad; the dedicated employees at our committee offices; and all our other participants, who together aimed to meet the lofty standard of the cooperative translation tradition that is a part of our Buddhist heritage. To all these people, I would like to express my profound gratitude.

Now that this momentous project is completed, I offer a sincere wish on behalf of all the collaborators that this translation, in coming to fruition and gaining public circulation, will help illuminate the path to enlightenment for all to see.

Kasan Jikwan (伽山 智冠)

32nd President of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism

President, Compilation Committee of Korean Buddhist Thought

October 10, 2009 (2553rd year of The Buddhist Era)

On the Occasion of Publishing *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism*

The Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, together with Buddhists everywhere, is pleased to dedicate to the Three Jewels –the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha– the completed compilation of the Korean and English translations of *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism*. The success of this translation project was made possible through the dedication of Venerable Kasan Jikwan, former president of the Jogye Order and president of the Compilation Committee of Korean Buddhist Thought. Both the Korean and English translations are being published through the labors of the members of the Compilation Committee and the many collaborators charged with the tasks of translation, editing, and proofreading the compilation.

The thirteen volumes of *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* are the products of nearly 1,700 years of Buddhist history in Korea. These Buddhist works are the foundation and pillar of Korean thought more broadly. This compilation focuses on four towering figures in Korean Buddhism: Venerable Wonhyo, posthumously named State Preceptor Hwajaeng, who was renowned for his doctrinal thought; Venerable Uisang, great master of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* and pedagogical role model who was respected for his training of disciples; Venerable Jinul, also known as State Preceptor Bojo, who revitalized Seon Buddhism through the Retreat Society movement of the mid-Goryeo dynasty; and Venerable Hyujeong, also known as State Preceptor Seosan, who helped to overcome national calamities while simultaneously regularizing Korean Buddhist practice and education.

Through this compilation, it is possible to understand the core thought of Korean Buddhism, which continued unbroken through the Three Kingdoms, Goryeo, and Joseon periods. Included are annotated translations of carefully selected works introducing the Hwaeom, Consciousness-Only, and Pure Land schools, the Mahāyāna precepts, Seon Buddhism, the travel journals of Buddhist pilgrims, Buddhist cultural and historical writings, and the epitaphs of great monks.

This work is especially significant as the fruition of our critical efforts

to transform the 1,700 years of Korean Buddhist thought and practice into a beacon of wisdom that will illuminate possible solutions to the many problems facing the world today. Śākyamuni Buddha's teachings from 2,600 years ago were transmitted centuries ago to the Korean peninsula, where they have continuously guided countless sentient beings towards truth. *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* contains a portion of the fruits realized through Koreans' practice of the Buddha's wisdom and compassion.

With the successful completion of this compilation, we confirm the power of the Jogye Order executives' devotion and dedication and benefit from their collective wisdom and power. So too can we confirm through the thought of such great masters as Wonhyo, Uisang, Jinul, Hyujeong and others a key feature of Buddhism: its power to encourage people to live harmoniously with each other through mutual understanding and respect.

The current strengthening of the traditions of Buddhist meditation practice and the revitalization of the wider Korean Buddhist community through education and propagation derive in large measure from the availability of accurate, vernacular translations of the classics of the sages of old, so that we too may be imbued with the wisdom and compassion found in their writings. When the lessons of these classics are made available to a contemporary audience, they can serve as a compass to guide us toward mutual understanding so that we may realize the common good that unifies us all.

Compilation of this thirteen-volume English-language edition of *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* is an especially monumental achievement. To take on the task of translating these classics into English, global experts on Korean Buddhism were recruited according to their areas of expertise and were asked to consult with the scholars preparing the new Korean translations of these texts when preparing their own renderings. Though some English translations of Korean Buddhist texts have been made previously, this is the first systematic attempt to introduce to a Western audience the full range of Korean Buddhist writing. The compilation committee also sought to implement strict quality control over the translations by employing a traditional multiparty verification system, which encouraged a sustained collaboration between the Korean and English teams of translators.

This English translation of the *Collected Works* will serve as the cornerstone for the world-wide dissemination of knowledge about the Korean Buddhist tradition, which has heretofore not garnered the recognition it deserves. Together with international propagation efforts, Korean traditional temple experiences, and the temple-stay program, the English translation of the *Collected Works* will make an important contribution to our ongoing efforts to globalize Korean Buddhism. To facilitate the widest possible dissemination of both the Korean and English versions of this compilation, digital editions will eventually be made available online, so that anyone who has access to the Internet will be able to consult these texts.

Among all types of giving, the most precious of all is the gift of Dharma, and it is through sharing these teachings that we seek to spread the wisdom and compassion of Korean Buddhism, as well as the spirit of mutual understanding and unity, to people throughout the world. Our efforts to date have been to secure the foundation for the revitalization of Korean Buddhism; now is the time for our tradition to take flight. *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* appears at an opportune moment, when it will be able to serve as a guiding light, illuminating the way ahead for Korean Buddhism and its emerging contemporary identity.

To all those who worked indefatigably to translate, edit, and publish this collection; to the compilation committee, the researchers, translators, proofreaders, editors, and printers; and to all the administrative assistants associated with the project, I extend my deepest appreciation and thanks. Finally, I rejoice in and praise the indomitable power of Venerable Jikwan's vow to complete this massive compilation project.

With full sincerity, I offer this heartfelt wish: may all the merit deriving from this monumental work be transferred to the Buddhas, the bodhisattvas, and all sentient beings.

Haebong Jaseung (海峰 慈乘)

33rd President of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism

President, Compilation Committee of Korean Buddhist Thought

January 20, 2010 (2554th year of the Buddhist Era)

Preface to the English Edition of
The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism

Buddhism has nearly a 1,700-year history in Korea and the tradition continues to thrive still today on the peninsula. Buddhism arrived in Korea from India and China by at least the fourth century C.E. and the religion served as the major conduit for the transmission of Sinitic and Serindian culture as a whole to Korea. But Korean Buddhism is no mere derivative of those antecedent traditions. Buddhists on the Korean peninsula had access to the breadth and depth of the Buddhist tradition as it was being disseminated across Asia and they made seminal contributions themselves to Buddhist thought and meditative and ritual techniques. Indeed, because Korea, like the rest of East Asia, used literary Chinese as the lingua franca of learned communication (much as Latin was used in medieval Europe), Korean Buddhist writings were disseminated throughout the entire region with relative dispatch and served to influence the development of the neighboring Buddhist traditions of China and Japan. In fact, simultaneous with implanting Buddhism on the peninsula, Korean monks and exegetes were also joint collaborators in the creation and development of the indigenous Chinese and Japanese Buddhist traditions. *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* seeks to make available in accurate, idiomatic English translations the greatest works of the Korean Buddhist tradition, many of which are being rendered for the first time into any Western language.

The thirteen volumes of this anthology collect the whole panoply of Korean Buddhist writing from the Three Kingdoms period (ca. 57 C.E.–668) through the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). These writings include commentaries on scriptures as well as philosophical and disciplinary texts by the most influential scholiasts of the tradition; the writings of its most esteemed Seon adepts; indigenous collections of Seon *gongan* cases, discourses, and verse; travelogues and historical materials; and important epigraphical compositions. Where titles were of manageable length, we have sought to provide the complete text of those works. Where size was prohibitive, we have instead offered representative selections from a range

of material, in order to provide as comprehensive a set of sources as possible for the study of Korean Buddhism. The translators and editors also include extensive annotation to each translation and substantial introductions that seek to contextualize for an English-speaking audience the insights and contributions of these works.

Many of the scholars of Korean Buddhism active in Western academe were recruited to participate in the translation project. Since the number of scholars working in Korean Buddhism is still quite limited, we also recruited as collaborators Western specialists in literary Chinese who had extensive experience in English translation.

We obviously benefitted enormously from the work of our Korean colleagues who toiled so assiduously to prepare the earlier Korean edition of these *Collected Works*. We regularly consulted their vernacular Korean renderings in preparing the English translations. At the same time, virtually all the Western scholars involved in the project are themselves specialists in the Buddhist argot of literary Chinese and most already had extensive experience in translating Korean and Chinese Buddhist texts into English. For this reason, the English translations are, in the majority of cases, made directly from the source texts in literary Chinese, not from the modern Korean renderings. Since translation always involves some level of interpretation, there are occasional differences in the understanding of a passage between the English and Korean translators, but each translator retained final authority to decide on the preferred rendering of his or her text. For most of the English volumes, we also followed the collaborative approach that was so crucial in preparing the Korean translations of these *Collected Works* and held series of meetings where the English translators would sit together with our Korean counterparts and talk through issues of terminology, interpretation, and style. Our Korean collaborators offered valuable comments and suggestions on our initial drafts and certainly saved us from many egregious errors. Any errors of fact or interpretation that may remain are of course our responsibility.

On behalf of the entire English translation team, I would like to express our thanks to all our collaborators, including our translators Juhn Young

Ahn, Robert Buswell, Michael Finch, Jung-geun Kim, Charles Muller, John Jorgensen, Richard McBride, Jin Y. Park, Young-eui Park, Patrick Uhlmann, Sem Vermeersch, Matthew Wegehaupt, and Roderick Whitfield; as well as our philological consultants Chongdok Sunim, Go-ok Sunim, Haeju Sunim, Misan Sunim, Woncheol Sunim, Byung-sam Jung, and Young-wook Kim. We are also appreciative to Ven. Jaseung Sunim, the current president of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, for his continued support of this project. Our deepest gratitude goes to Ven. Jikwan Sunim (May 11, 1932–January 2, 2012), one of the most eminent monks and prominent scholars of his generation, who first conceived of this project and spearheaded it during his term as president of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism. Jikwan Sunim's entire career was dedicated to making the works of Korean Buddhism more accessible to his compatriots and better known within the wider scholarly community. It is a matter of deep regret that he did not live to see the compilation of this English version of the *Collected Works*.

Finally, it is our hope that *The Collected Works of Korean Buddhism* will ensure that the writings of Korean Buddhist masters will assume their rightful place in the developing English canon of Buddhist materials and will enter the mainstream of academic discourse in Buddhist Studies in the West. Korea's Buddhist authors are as deserving of careful attention and study as their counterparts in Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese Buddhism. This first comprehensive collection of Korean Buddhist writings should bring these authors the attention and sustained engagement they deserve among Western scholars, students, and practitioners of Buddhism.

Robert E. Buswell, Jr.

Distinguished Professor of Buddhist Studies, University of California,
Los Angeles (UCLA)

Chair, English Translation Editorial Board, *The Collected Works of
Korean Buddhism*

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