

# Korean New Religious Movements: An Introduction

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## Terminology

Observant of the unfurling Japanese discourse on new religious movements (NRMs), South Korean scholars gradually started to adopt the neologism *sinjonggyo* 신종교/新宗教 (new religion) by the end of the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> Following the publication of the monumental *Han'guk minjok munhwa taebaek kwa sajön* 한국민족문화대백과사전/韓國民族文化大百科事典 (Great Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture) in 1979, which includes the category of *sinjonggyo*, the term became a fixed designation widely used in Korean academe (Yi 2011: 341).<sup>2</sup> Similarly, *sinhŭng chonggyo* 신흥종교/新興宗教 (newly-arisen religion)—another calque from the Japanese, which is largely uncritically taken as a mere synonym for *sinjonggyo*—is frequently found in the scholarly literature, predating *sinjonggyo* in the pertinent usage. Whereas *sinjonggyo* has become the most popular notation over the past years in the field of religious studies,<sup>3</sup> *sinhŭng chonggyo* keeps being the first choice among journalists and

- 1 In consistency with the usage in this Handbook, 'new religious movement' is used in lieu of 'new religion.' Being a re-translation from the English, the term *sinjonggyo undong* 신종교운동/新宗教運動 (new religious movement) is the precise Korean rendering for NRM sometimes used by scholars instead of *sinjonggyo*. A similar composite one finds in the literature is *sinjonggyo kyodan* 신종교교단/新宗教教團 (new religious order).
- 2 For an outline of NRMs scholarship in Korea, see Kim 1998 and, more recently, Kim Hong-ch'öl 2016: 1025-1047. Today, the majority of NRMs scholars in Korea hail from an NRM background. NRMs scholarship represents a substantial portion of research conducted within contemporary Religious Studies (Kim 2017). Western scholarship on Korean NRMs, in the main, focuses on studying individual groups chiefly limited to Wönbulgyo 원불교/圓佛敎 (Circle Buddhism, 1916), Ch'öndogyo 천도교/天道敎 (Teaching of the Heavenly Way, 1860), Segye P'yöngghwa T'ongil Kajöng Yönhap 세계평화통일가정연합/世界平和統一家庭聯合 (Family Federation for World Peace and Unification, 1954), and Yöüido Sunbogüm Kyohoe 여의도순복음교회/汝矣島純福音敎會 (Yöüido Full Gospel Church, 1958). The earliest attempts surveying the field include Earhart 1974 and Prunner 1980. In recent years, Donald Baker has made prolific efforts in the same direction. The latest contribution in a Western language is Lee 2016.
- 3 A notable development settling the centrality of the term is the founding of an independent learned society dedicated to NRMs Studies in 1999, the 'Korean Academy of New Religions'

the contributors to popular science. An even earlier label coming from folklore studies, specifically embracing ethnic NRMS and rising to popularity from the late 1930s, albeit rarely being encountered qua exclusive overall category in NRMS scholarship today, is *minjok chonggyo* 민족종교/民族宗教 (ethnic religion).<sup>4</sup> The same holds for the array of alternative terms, such as: *minjung chonggyo* 민중종교/民衆宗教 (popular religion); *minsok chonggyo* 민속종교/民俗宗教 (folk religion); *minjokchök chonggyo* 민족적종교/民族的宗教 (ethnic-religious religion); *chasaeng chonggyo* 자생종교/自生宗教 (indigenous religion); *kuksan chonggyo* 국산종교/國産宗教 (native religion); *toch'ak chonggyo* 토착종교/土着宗教 (autochthonous religion); and *poguk chonggyo* 보국종교/保國宗教 (nationalist religion). More recently and inspired by Western sociologist coinages referring distinctively to the supposed 'fringe' nature of NRMS, a Korean equivalent came into occasional use: *chubyön chonggyo* 주변종교/邊緣宗教 (peripheral religion). Similarly, the Korean rendering for 'alternative religion,' *taech'e chonggyo* 대체종교/代替宗教, has been introduced to the scholarly parlance lately. The same applies to the term *sinsinjonggyo* 신신종교/新新宗教 (new new religion), a loan translation of the Japanese *shinshinshūkyō* 新新宗教. However, the usage of *sinsinjonggyo*—very much like *taech'e chonggyo*—is commonly limited to the actors of the 'new spirituality movement' (*sinyöngsöng undong* 신영성운동/新靈性運動) emerging from the 1970s onwards. One related synonym is, for instance, *yöngsöng chonggyo* 영성종교/靈性宗教 (spirituality religion). A similar conceptual pair is *kündae sinjonggyo* 근대신종교/近代新宗教 (modern new religion), signifying *sinjonggyo* and *hyöndae sinjonggyo* 현대신종교/現代新宗教 (contemporary new religion) denoting *sinsinjonggyo* (cf. Yun 2013). In contrast, the neologism *sejonggyo* 새종교 (novel religion), occasionally used in the 1980s and 1990s, has virtually disappeared. Naturally, a pejorative terminology is commonly applied in apologetic and 'anti-cult' jargon, much of what also saliently pervades public and media discourses to this day. The anti-cult vocabulary represents the oldest idiom in reference to those movements manoeuvring outwith the domain of—what some scholars, mindful of the Japanese diction, call—'established religions' (*kisöng chonggyo* 기성종교/既成宗教, or *ch'angnip chonggyo* 창립종교/創立宗教) reaching back well into Chosön 조선/朝鮮 (1392–1910) and, sporadically, even further, as is the case with terms like *idan* 이단/異端 (heresy). Similar expressions are, among others, *igyo* 이교/異教 (heretical religion) and *sagyo*

(*Han'guk sinjonggyo hakhoe* 한국신종교학회), and its publication organ, *Sinjonggyo yön'gu* 신종교연구 (New Religion Studies), both carrying *sinjonggyo* in the title (cf. Kim 2009).

4 Rather *minjok chonggyo* is chiefly employed as a synonym for older Korean NRMS outwith the scope of Christian- and Buddhist-derived movements.

사교/邪教 (deviant religion), all being used in the sense of ‘cult,’ for which there is also a more recent English loanword, *k’ölt’ü* 컬트. Other derogatory terms central for the anti-cult, Christian apologetic, and (historically) ethnographic narrative are *saibi chonggyo* 사이비종교/似而非宗教 (pseudo religion) and *yusa chonggyo* 유사종교/類似宗教 (quasi religion); the latter, was prominently introduced in the pioneering *Chōsen no ruiji shūkyō* 朝鮮の類似宗教 (The Quasi Religions of Korea) published in 1935 by the ethnographer Murayama Chijun 村山智順 (1891-1968). Lesser so are the terms *ūsa chonggyo* 의사종교/疑似宗教 (bogus religion) and *misin chonggyo* 미신종교/迷信宗教 (superstitious religion).

### Numbers and Classification

Looking at membership statistics concerning NRMS reveals a yawning gap between survey data on the one hand,<sup>5</sup> and the (often varying) figures presented by the groups themselves on the other. Both verifying these numbers and determining the exact membership of groups which do not provide any is nearly impossible. Generally, it can be said that communicated statistics are more often than not overstated, at times blatantly so, like in the case of Taesunjillihoe 대순진리회/大巡眞理會 (Truth of the Grand Tour Society, 1969) claiming, for example, eight million adherents in 1997. Likewise, scholarly estimates may be far underrated or—more commonly—overinflated like, notably, in the case of Poch’ongyo 보천교/普天教 (Teaching of Universal Heaven, 1921-1936), which frequently appears as having had up to six million faithful (Ro 2002: 46).

One faces a similar problem when turning to the total number of individual movements in (South) Korea. An oft given figure taking together all movements that emerged on the Korean peninsula since 1860, whether they are still in existence or not, is around 500 (Kim Hong-ch’öl 2013: 16-17). Ro contends that more than five hundred movements formed since 1945 of which likely one fifth has already disappeared (Ro 2008: 117). A seminal study by Kim, Yu, and Yang (1997) counts 342 active groups including thirty-five non-Korean ones in 1997. In his *Han’guk sinjonggyo taesajōn* 한국신종교대사전 (Encyclopedia of Korean New Religions), Kim Hong-ch’öl (2016: 5) estimates up to seven hundred NRMS appearing in past and present. Such approximated values, of course,

5 The 2005 South Korean census, for instance, assigned only relatively small numbers to NRMS: Wōnbulgyo (129,907); Ch’ōndogyo (45,835); the Chūngsan religious cluster 증산교/甞山教 (34,550); and Taejonggyo 대중교/大衆教 (Teaching of the Great Progenitor, 1909) (3,766). The census figures certainly do not provide a fully accurate picture.

refer for the most part to ‘tangible’ communities. In fact, a significant portion of new religious developments are, if at all, hardly traceable due to small size and ephemerality, which holds especially true for the latest wave of NRMs within the new spirituality segment. The dislocation of religious supplier and consumer often encountered therein renders it even more difficult to ascertain whether or not a particular new religious product has been ‘institutionalised’ in the form of a discernible fellowship.

The membership figures of Korean NRMs can be roughly divided into groups comprising: 1) more than 100,000; 2) 100,000-10,000; 3) 10,000-1,000; 4) 1,000-100; and 5) below 100 members, with the majority of groups to be placed in the latter two categories. In the first one, with a membership of well beyond 100,000 adherents each are: Taesunjillihoe; Hanölgyo 한얼교 (Religion of God, 1965); Wönbulgyo; and in particular Christian-based groups, such as Yöüido Sunbogüm Kyohoe, Segye P’yöngghwa T’ongil Kajöng Yönhap, Hananim’üi Kyohoe Segye Pog’üm Sön’go Hyöphoe 하나님의교회세계복음선교협회 (World Gospel Mission Society Church of God, 1962), and Sinch’önji Yesugyo Chünggö Changmak Söngjön 신천지예수교증거장막성전 (New Heaven and Earth Church of Jesus the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony, 1984). Taesunjillihoe, in fact, may have already surpassed the one million mark. Even if this were not the case, this group over the past years advanced to become the single largest Korean NRM. In the second category one encounters NRMs like: Tan Wöltü 단월드 (Tan World, 1985); Chüngsando 증산도/甞山道 (Way of Chüngsan, 1974); Ch’öndogyo; Kümgangdaedo 금강대도/金剛大道 (Great Way of the Diamond, 1910s); Suun’gyo 수운교/水雲教 (Teaching of Suun, 1923); and Kaengjöngyudo 개정유도/更定儒道 (Revised Confucian Way, 1928). NRMs falling into the third size category are, for example: Taejonggyo; Maüm Suryön 마음수련 (Heart/Mind Training, 1996); and Minaesa K’üllöp 미내사클럽 (Minaesa [i.e., an abbreviation for ‘People looking ahead into the future’] Club, 1996). The majority of the remaining NRMs mentioned in the historical section of this introduction, if they have not disappeared, are found in the lower part of the third category, or in the fourth category.

Most commonly, Korean NRMs are classified by scholars according to conspicuous relational elements, placing them either within a major ‘parent tradition’ (Buddhism or Christianity), the wide domain of native(-derived) groups, or—adopting the Japanese terminology (*shinreisei undō* 新靈性運動)—the new spirituality movement (*sinyöngsöngundong*). Representatively, Kim et al. (2014) divide Korean NRMs into: Korean indigenous new religions (*Han’guk chasaeng sinjonggyo* 한국자생신종교); Buddhist-based new religions (*Pulgyogye sinjonggyo* 불교계신종교); Christian-based new religions (*Kürisüdogyogye sinjonggyo* 그리스도교계신종교); and the aforementioned new spirituality movements—the latter grouping of which accounts for more

recent new religious developments that are chiefly of a (mixed) Daoist and esoteric bent with a focus on self-cultivation practice, such as Tan Wöltü and Maüm Suryön. Evidently, the boundaries between these categories are (historically) fluid. Moreover, the notions of ‘indigenosity’ and ‘new spirituality,’ especially, are ill-defined and thus allow for a certain level of arbitrariness. In more recent years, scholars introduced more comprehensive classification schemes, further dividing the scope of Korean indigenous NRMs according to the religious currents deemed doctrinally constitutive for the respective formation process. The schemes vary; however, all centre on the core trinity of the Tonghak- (*Tonghakkye* 동학계/東學系), Chüngsan- (*Chüngsan'gye* 증산계/甞山系), and Tan'gun-based (*Tan'gun'gye* 단군계/檀君系) religions.<sup>6</sup> The *Han'guk sinjonggyo taesajön* (Kim Hong-ch'öl 2016: 1020-1021), for example, lists the following divisions of NRMs:

1. Suun-based (*Suun'gye* 수운계/水雲系), that is, Tonghak-based;<sup>7</sup>
2. Ilbu-based (*Ilbugye* 일부계/一夫系);<sup>8</sup>
3. Chüngsan-based;
4. Tan'gun-based;
5. Buddhist-based (*Pulgyogye* 불교계/佛敎系);
6. Confucian-based (*Yugogye* 유교계/儒敎系);
7. Söndo- (*Söndogye* 선도계/仙道系) or Daoist-based (*Togyogye* 도교계/道敎系);<sup>9</sup>
8. Christian-based (*Kidokkyogye* 기독교계/基督教系);
9. Pongnam-based (*Pongnamgye* 봉남계/奉南系);<sup>10</sup>

6 Chüngsan 증산/甞山 is the honorary name of Kang Il-sun 강일순/姜一淳 (1871-1909), whose teachings were formative for dozens of NRMs. *Tan'gun* 단군/檀君 is the mythical progenitor and first ruler of the Korean people. According to tradition, he founded the kingdom of Kojosön 고조선/古朝鮮 in 2333 BCE, which marks the first year of the South Korean calendar introduced in 1948.

7 Suun 수운/水雲 is the honorary name of the Tonghak 동학/東學 (Eastern Learning, 1860) founder Ch'oe Che-u 최제우/崔濟愚 (1824-1864).

8 Ilbu 일부/一夫 is the honorary name of Kim Hang 김항/金恒 (1826-1898), whose millenarian teachings drawing on the Yijing 易經 (Classic of Changes; Korean: Yökkkyöng 역경/易經) were inspiring for a number of later NRMs.

9 Söndo 선도/仙道 (literally, Way of the ‘Immortals’) refers to an indigenised tradition of spiritual nourishment along the lines of Daoist practices. A *sön* 선/仙 is a person indulging in self-cultivation with the aim to transcend her/his spiritual faculties, which would implicate a bodily transformation including, traditionally, the attainment of longevity or immortality.

10 Pongnam 봉남계/奉南 is the honorary name of Kim Yöng-gün 김영근/金永根 (1898-1950), the founder of Pongnamgyo 봉남교/奉南敎 (Teaching of Pongnam, 1937-1950).

10. Kaksedo-based (*Kaksedogye* 각세도계/覺世道系);
11. Musok- (*Musokkye* 무속계/巫俗系), that is, folk mediumistic- or 'Shamanistic'-based;
12. foreign (*oeraegye* 외래계/外來系).

A last category comprises those groups which cannot be arguably connected to a particular religious lineage, labelled as NRMs of an 'indistinctive descent' (*kyet'ong pulmyöng* 계통불명/系統不明). As a matter of course, this like any other classification scheme cannot avoid ambiguities in terms of assigned family affiliation.

### Periodisation: The History of Korean New Religious Movements

Scholars of Korean NRMs commonly mark the year 1860, that is, when Ch'oe Che-u [Suun] founded Tonghak, as the beginning of new religious developments on the Korean peninsula. The history of Korean NRMs can be divided into five periods:<sup>11</sup> (1) the year 1860 or, more generally, the mid-nineteenth century to the end of Chosön dynasty; (2) the time of Japanese colonial rule (1910-1945); (3) the traumatic post-Pacific War years between 1945 and 1960, exacerbated by the devastations of the Korean War (1950-1953); (4) the era of accelerating industrialisation and urbanisation from the 1960s to the 1980s; and (5) the ongoing period starting at the dusk of the Fifth Republic (1981-1987), marked by increasing globalisation, rapid technologisation, and (successful) democratisation (Yun 2013: 91-92; No 1998).

#### *The Concluding Years of Chosön (1860-1910)*

In 1392, General Yi Söng-gye 이성계/李成桂 (1335-1408) ascended the throne as T'aejo 태조/太祖 (r. 1392-1400), putting an end to the Kingdom of Koryö 고려/高麗 (918-1392) after nearly five hundred years. In the newly proclaimed dynasty of Chosön, Neo-Confucianism replaced Buddhism, which had potently affected Korean socio-cultural consciousness for a thousand years as the chief reference point in articulating self-identity. Although the Confucian *weltanschauung* qua elite-sanctioned orthodoxy soaked through all layers of life, at

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Pongnamgyo is also known as Mulböbgyo 물법교 (Teaching of the Water Law), which is why this NRM-lineage is occasionally also labelled as 'Mulböb-based' (*Mulböbkye* 물법계).

11 Phases 4 and 5, and for the most part phase 3, exclusively concern the situation in South Korea.

times by force, during Chosŏn the religious environment *in toto* was not monolithic but a crucible of beliefs. Buddhism, albeit greatly eclipsed in its influence by Neo-Confucianism, could skilfully retain a level of charisma especially within popular religious imaginations, which were also impacted by Daoist and folk mediumistic (*musok* 무속/巫俗) ideas and practices.<sup>12</sup> The Japanese (1592-1598) and Manchu invasions (1627 and 1636), the former particularly laying waste to the economy, put Chosŏn governance on a strict isolationist path for more than two centuries. The ‘hermit kingdom,’ a sobriquet given by Western observers in the late nineteenth century, eventually had to yield to imperialist advances. In 1876, the unequal ‘Treaty of Kanghwa Island’ (*Kanghwado choyak* 강화도조약/江華島條約) with Meiji 明治 Japan ushered in the inevitable opening, and, concomitantly, rendered Korean territory a triangular battlefield of geostrategic interests between Tsarist Russia, Qīng 清-China, and Japan. The tense situation was peaked in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), enabling Japan to virtually unopposedly take control of the peninsula arriving at a crescendo in the form of the 1910 ‘Korea-Japan Annexation Treaty’ (*Hanil pyŏnghap choyak* 한일병합조약/韓日併合條約). From the 1880s, the forging of diplomatic ties with the West also led to a surge of Christian presence—chiefly of the Presbyterian and Methodist bent—which was to permanently alter the religious face of Korea. Already a century before, the Catholic faith that arrived via China was noticeably spread in the country but had to sustain a history of persecution. In 1857, for example, the local Bishop secretly reported to Rome an impressive membership of over 15,000 faithful (Grayson 1989: 183-184). The Chosŏn authorities approached Catholicism (*Chŏnjugyo* 천주교/天主教) with great suspicion and, frequently, outright hostility, perceiving it as an ideological threat to established tradition, and a harbinger of Western imperialism that had already forced Qīng-China to her knees. In mid-nineteenth century Chosŏn, the Christian gospel fell on fertile soil. The country was in turmoil, suffering from natural disasters, a poor economy, and a series of peasant uprisings that were markedly occurring since the 1810s. Undoubtedly, foreign influence had its substantial share in the collapsing system of traditional values. The rapid societal shift felt by many created the matrix for a spiritual countermotion that was manifested through a number of NRMS. The striking religious revitalisation commencing at the time inhaled a conspicuously millenarian spirit—which was informed by an increasingly popular apocalyptic narrative, as can be found most seminally in the *Chŏnggamnok* 정감록/鄭鑑錄 (Record of Chŏnggam) that prophesied

12 The popular religious sphere of premodern Korea, nor East Asia in general, does not spell out clear boundaries between religious traditions.

the impending fall of Chosŏn—voiced most echoingly by Ch'oe Che-u and, later, Kang Il-sun [Chŭngsan]. The former established Tonghak (renamed Ch'ŏndogyo in 1905) in 1860, desiring to make a religious stand against alien beliefs—especially Catholicism then termed 'Western Learning' (*sŏhak* 서학/西學)—and the general moral decay, by realigning Korean spiritual resources towards a dawning era of peace and plenty.<sup>13</sup> The millenarian theme so powerfully enunciated by early Tonghak leaders, and most succinctly embraced by the notion of *kaebyŏk* 개벽/開闢 (creation [of a new world/cosmos]), had a veritable lighthouse effect, conceptually energising a plethora of other new religious developments with a consonant millenarian tenor that flows through the veins of the vast majority of Korean NRMs to this day (cf. Yang 2015). Notable early groups that navigated in such millenarian waters are Namhak 남학/南學 (Southern Learning, 1860s) by Yi Un-gyu [Yŏndam] 이운규/李雲圭 [연담/蓮潭] (1804–?), and its spawns, Yŏnggamudogyo 영가무도교/詠歌舞蹈教 (Teaching of Singing and Dancing, 1881) by Kim Hang [Ilbu], and the short-lived Obang Pulgyo 오방불교/五方佛教 (Five Regions Buddhism, 1888–1895) by Kim Ch'i-in [Kwanghwa] 김치인/金致寅 [광화/光華] (1855–1895). The dual notion of *kaebyŏk* was greatly popularised by the Namhak-cluster of religions,<sup>14</sup> and especially through Kim Hang's *Chŏngyŏk* 정역/正易 (Corrected Yijŭng) published in 1885, which also had a lasting impact on Kang Il-sun when formulating the cornerstones of his Humch'igyo 흙치교/吡哆教 (Teaching of Humch'i, 1901).<sup>15</sup> Kang began to mould his distinct religious thought under the impression of the failed Tonghak Rebellion, providing a doctrinal template for dozens of groups in past and present that trace their origin back to 'Chŭngsan'gyo 증산교/甌山教 (Teaching of Chŭngsan), following the dismemberment of the original movement after the founder's death. Chŭngsan-related groups espouse a pronounced form of catastrophic millenarianism arranged in an ethnocentric fashion, the latter aspect of which is brought to fruition

13 Ch'oe's millenarian legacy—he was executed by the authorities in 1864—was to fuel the Tonghak Peasant Revolution (*Tonghak nongmin hyŏngmyŏng* 동학농민혁명/東學農民革命) thirty years later, which triggered the First Sino-Japanese War that led to major geopolitical shifts in East Asia.

14 That is to say, the shift from *sŏnch'ŏn kaebyŏk* 선천개벽/先天開闢 (creation of the former heaven) to *huch'ŏn kaebyŏk* 후천개벽/後天開闢 (creation of the latter heaven) at whose crossroads the world now stands with the Korean peninsula as the springboard of soteriological transition.

15 Together with Tonghak, Namhak was the core supplier for new religious developments until the end of Chŏson. Namhak owes the sustainability of its key ideas to Kim's *Chŏngyŏk*, which is why it is occasionally referred to by scholars as 'Corrected Yijŭng Movement' (*Chŏngyŏk undong* 정역운동/正易運動) (No 1998: 333–334).



even bolder in nativist Taejonggyo, founded in 1909 by Na Ch'öl [Hong'am] 나철/羅喆 [홍암/弘巖] (1863-1919) as Tan'gun'gyo 단군교/檀君敎 (Teaching of Tan'gun), while of course sharing in the overall millenarian assonance of Korean NRMs. The specific narrative constellation of Taejonggyo, anchored in the Tan'gun religious discourse that became tangible from the 1880s manifesting in a couple of small precursor groups (Yun 2006: 127-128), was congealed as a vehicle opposing the increasingly felt political sway of Meiji-Japan; a dominion that was put into full aggravating force in 1910 and endured by the Korean people for thirty-five years.

### *The Japanese Colonial Period (1910-1945)*

The Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula spelled the end of the Chosŏn dynasty, also concluding the short-lived 'Great Korean Empire' (*Taehan cheguk* 대한제국/大韓帝國) that was proclaimed by King Kojong 고종/高宗 (1852-1919; r. 1863-1907) in 1897, in a desperate attempt to stress complete national sovereignty in fear of rising imperialist cravings in the region. Being incorporated into the Empire of Japan entailed that Chōsen 朝鮮 entered into the Japanese legal sphere as well. In addition to the increasingly harsh general religious policies taking effect in the colonial motherland, the Government-General of Korea added further legal regulations to accommodate its assimilation scheme. A central means for the colonial ruler to advance Japanisation (*kōminka* 皇民化) was to install a State Shintō (*kokka Shintō* 国家神道) system (Kawase 2017), while simultaneously implementing measures to suppress 'native' religious currents, including NRMs. Already in 1912 an order was issued by the colonial ruler allowing the authorities to crack down on any form of institutionalised 'superstition' (*meishin* 迷信) or 'quasi religion' (*ruiji shūkyō* 類似宗教), categories that formally placed many NRMs qua 'social pathology' outwith the boundaries of 'true religion' (Kim Kwang-Ok 2013: 273). That is to say, Shintō 神道, Buddhism, and Christianity, which were assigned the status of 'officially sanctioned religion' (*kongjin chonggyo* 공인종교/公認宗教) by the Government-General in 1915. The promotion of Shintō aside—whose impact on the religious landscape was insignificant at all times—the colonial ruler essentially facilitated the resurgence of Buddhism, albeit putting it under tight control and Japanese-Buddhist sectarian lead.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the authorities tol-

16 Parallel to the adoption of State Shintō, various (then) Shintō-affiliated NRMs commenced or expedited proselytising on the Korean peninsula, such as Konkōkyō 金光敎 (Teaching of the Golden Light, 1859; Korean: Kūmgwanggyo 금광교/金光敎), Izumo Ōyashirokyō 出雲大社敎 (Teaching of the Great Shrine of Izumo, 1873; Korean: Taesagyo 대사교/大

erated to some extent the active presence of Christianity within a supervised setting due to the significant contribution to social welfare, medical care, and education (Kim Michael 2016). The ambivalence in the colonial treatment of Buddhism can be extended to the dichotomous colonial influence exerted on the Korean peninsula in the main. Whereas the colonial ruler exploited the area socially and economically, lastingly wounding the cultural memory of the Korean people, he nevertheless pushed infrastructure and self-perception on a quickened trajectory towards future economic growth and nation-building. The colonial trauma, while being disastrous in itself, simultaneously gave momentum to the formation of an overarching concept of ‘Koreaness,’ that is, the construction of ethnic identity; an impulse religiously underpinned and carried forward prominently by many NRMs. Rising tensions between coloniser and colonised eventually erupted most significantly in the 1919 Independence Movement (or ‘March First Movement,’ *Samil undong* 삼일운동/三一運動) in which exponents especially of Ch’öndogyo played a leading role. Another key actor of the anti-colonial movement was Taejonggyo. Due to its explicitly nativist religious programme, devotees flocked to the movement, increasing membership to nearly half a million during its heydays in the 1920s. A large portion of members, including a number of leaders relocated to Manchuria in the first years of the occupation. Many were joining armed combat against the Japanese thereafter. Despite the failure of the 1919 Independence Movement, the colonial ruler embarked on a generally less repressive course of action over the next fifteen or so years—labelled as ‘cultural rule’ (*bunka seiji* 文化政治) subsequent to the phase of ‘military rule’ (*budan seiji* 武斷政治) that characterised the initial decade—in order to avoid further insurrections. With the wartime mobilisation prior to the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), the Government-General tightened its grip once again, also speeding up its programme of Japanisation.<sup>17</sup> The authorities came down with force on those movements as well as on individuals that were considered to be involved in nationalist activities. Since anti-Japanese sentiments respectively propelled the emergence of NRMs and the influx of adherents during the colonial period, a wide spectrum of these groups naturally came under suspicion and strict

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社教), and Tenrikyō 天理教 (Teaching of the Heavenly Principle, 1838; Korean: Ch’ölligyo 천리교/天理教), of which the latter was by far the most successful in its mission with almost 16,000 Korean and several tens of thousands adherents by late 1941. Tenrikyō arrived in Chosŏn in 1893. As of 2010, the Korean branch has an estimated 154,000 adherents (Yi 2013: 5-7), which is very much likely overstated.

17 After 1938, for example, the colonial ruler pursued a rigorous enforcement of the use of Japanese among Koreans, culminating in 1940 with the coercion to adopt Japanese names.

surveillance, being eventually disbanded or driven underground in large numbers. Prominently, from 1936 onwards, the authorities began to wipe out Chŭngsan-derived movements, which had mushroomed in the preceding decades. Poch'ŏn'gyo (1921) established by Ch'a Kyōng-sōk 차경석/車京石 (1880-1936), emerged as the largest one within the Chŭngsan-cluster.<sup>18</sup> Up to its dissolution enforced by the Government-General in 1936, resulting in a panoply of splinter groups, Poch'ŏn'gyo grew into one of the largest NRMs during the colonial era with 250,000 estimated faithful, representing the greatest danger to the authorities due to its mobilisation potential (Jorgensen 2017: 177). Other major Chŭngsan-based NRMs established at the time were:

- Mirŭkpulgyo 미륵불교/彌勒佛敎 (Maitreya Buddhism, 1915) founded by Kim Hyōng-nyōl 김형렬/金亨烈 (1862-1932);
- Samdōkkyo 삼덕교/三德敎 (Teaching of the Three Virtues, 1920-1939), founded by Hō Uk 허옥/許昱 (1887-1939);
- Mugŭkto 무극도/無極道 (Way of the Infinite, 1921; renamed into T'aegŭkto 태극도/太極道, Way of the Supreme Ultimate, in 1942), founded by Cho Ch'ŏl-je [Chōngsan] 조철제/趙喆濟 [정산/鼎山] (1895-1958);
- Pohwagyo 보화교/普化敎 (Teaching of Universal Transformation, 1930), founded by Kim Hwan-ok 김환옥/金煥玉 (1896-1954);
- and Mugyo 무교/戊敎 (Teaching of the Mu, 1942; renamed into Muŭlgyo 무을교/戊乙敎, Teaching of the Muŭl, in 1946), established by Kim Kye-ju 김계주/金桂朱 (1896-1950).

The years of Japanese occupation witnessed a multiplication of offshoots not only in the line of Humch'igyo but also Tonghak, most notably Sich'ŏn'gyo 시천교/侍天敎 (Teaching of Serving Heaven, 1913; renamed into Ch'ŏnjin'gyo 천진교/天真敎, Teaching of Heavenly Truth, in 1960), founded by Kim Yōn-guk [Kuam] 김연국/金演局 [구암/龜菴] (1857-1944);<sup>19</sup> Suun'gyo (1923), founded by Yi Sang-nyong [Ch'ullyongja] 이상룡/李象龍 [출룡자/出龍子] (d. 1938); and

18 Ch'a was a chief disciple of Kang Il-sun and cousin of Kang's wife, Ko P'al-lye 고판례/高判禮 (1880-1935), with whom in 1911 he launched Sōndogyo 선도교/仙道敎 (Teaching of the Way of the Immortals), also known as T'aeyŭlgyo 태을교/太乙敎 (Teaching of the Supreme Ŭl), the core succeeding group of Humch'igyo. Later the two split and Ch'a's group took the name of Poch'ŏn'gyo (renamed from Pohwagyo 보화교/普化敎, Teaching of Universal Transformation).

19 A precursor group of the same name was founded by Kim's teacher and a leading Tonghak figure, Yi Yong-gu 이용구/李容九 (1868-1912) in 1906. Kim's Sich'ŏn'gyo was renamed Sangjegyo 상제교/上帝敎 (Teaching of the Lord on High) in 1926 under which designation it became mainly known in the colonial period.

its break-away Taedonggyo 대동교/大同教 (Teaching of the Great Unity, 1932), founded by Pak Sŏng-ho 박성호/朴性昊 (1882-1966). Similarly, within the Christian milieu, the decades following the 1907 Great Revival (*taebuhŭng* 대부흥/大復興) brought about an extraordinary dynamics in the creation of new congregations, centring on the 'Jerusalem of the East' (*Tongyang'ŭi Yerusalle* 동양[東洋]의 예루살렘), that is, P'yŏngyang 평양/平壤, and its vicinity.<sup>20</sup> The doctrinal trajectory of these early Protestant-based NRMs ingrained in nativist messianism pervades the NRMs rooted in a predominantly Christian discourse to this day. An influential early example is Yesugyohoe 예수교회 (Jesus Church), launched in 1933 around the mystic Yi Yong-do 이용도/李龍道 (1901-1933).<sup>21</sup> A notable Christian-based NRM that emerged in the South of the peninsula, absorbing messianic ideas especially from the *Chŏnggammok*, is Chŏngdogyo 정도교/正道教 (Teaching of the Correct Way, 1924), founded by Yi Sun-hwa 이순화/李順和 (1870-1936). Another segment of NRMs formed at the time and upholding nationalism blended with traditionalism comprise Confucian-based groups, such as Wŏnjong 원종/元宗 (Original Religion, 1913), founded by Kim Chung-gŏn 김중건/金中建 (1889-1933); Hanin Konggyohoe 한인공교회/韓人孔教會 (Confucian Religion Society of the Korean People, 1914), founded by Yi Sŭng-hŭi 이승희/李承熙 (1847-1916); and Konggyo Undong 공교운동/孔教運動 (Confucian Religion Movement), established by Yi Pyŏng-hŏn 이병헌/李炳憲 (1870-1940) in the 1920s. Another noteworthy movement outwardly faring in the Confucian tradition, yet inhering conspicuously syncretic (and catastrophic-millenarian) traits is Kaengjŏngyudo (1928), formed by Kang Tae-sŏng [Yŏngsindang] 강대성/姜大成 [영신당/迎新堂] (1890-1954).<sup>22</sup>

20 The burgeoning Christian environment kept attracting groups from overseas. For instance, Jehovah's Witnesses (Yŏhowa'ui Chŭngin 여호와와의증인) commenced proselytising in 1912 (Yun 2014: 37). From mid-1930, the Churches of Christ (Kŭrisŭdo'ui Kyohoe 그리스도의교회) started to spread. Already in 1904, a first missionary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (Che Ch'iril Ansigil Yesu Chaerim Kyohoe 제칠일안식일예수재림교회) arrived. The first branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Yesu Kŭrisŭdo Hugi Sŏngdo Kyohoe 예수그리스도후기성도교회), or 'Mormonism' (Morŭmon'gyo 모르몬교 or Mommon'gyo 몰몬교), was established in 1955.

21 The group was dismantled by the North Korean authorities in 1945 but was revived in the 1970s under the name of Yesugyohoe Kongŭihoe 예수교회공의회 (Council of the Jesus Church).

22 The movement was formally incorporated after the colonial period. Kaengjŏngyudo is the abbreviation for Siun Kihwa Yubulsŏndongsŏhak Habil Taedo Taemyŏng Tagyŏng Taegil Yudo Kaengjŏng Kyohwa Ilsim 시운기화유불선동서학합일대도대명다경대길유도갱정교화일심/時運氣和儒佛仙東西學合一大道大明多慶大吉儒道更定教化一心 (Confucian Revised Teaching of the Harmonisation of Ki, the Unification of Confucianism, Buddhism, the Way of Immortals, Tonghak, and Western Learning, the Great

Further crucial NRMS saliently drawing on the Three Teachings (*samgyo* 삼교/三教) are Kūmgangdaedo, Kaksedo 각세도/覺世道 (Way of Awakening the World, 1915), and Pongnamgyo (1937-1950), established by Kim Yōng-gūn [Pongnam]—the latter two became important parent traditions in their own right. Kūmgangdaedo slowly became visible from the early 1910s taking on various names under the lead of Yi Sūng-yō [T'oam] 이승여/李承如 [토암/土庵] (1874-1934). Kaksedo, founded by Yi Sōn-p'yōng [Sin'gye] 이선평/李仙樺 [신계/晨鷄] (1882-1956), equally rests chiefly upon the Three Teachings, yet with a perceptible Christian flavour. A crucial feature of Pongnamgyo is the particular focus on the power of water as the main object of faith. Likewise profoundly shaped by the Three Teachings emphasising the impact of the spiritual world are Muryangch'ōndo 무량천도/無量天道 (Limitless Heavenly Way), founded by Kim Chin-ha 김진하/金振河 (1903-1962) in 1940 as Kwansōnggyo 관성교/關聖教 (Teaching of Kwan Sōng [i.e., Guān Shèng 關聖]), and Yōngjugyo 영주교/靈主教 (Teachings of the Spiritual Lord, 1937), founded by Yim Ch'un-saeng [Yōngdang] 임춘생/林春生 [영당/靈堂]. Finally, the Buddhist gamut gave rise to novel communities as well, with Pak Chung-bin's [Sot'aesan] 박중빈/朴重彬 [소태산/少太山] (1891-1943) Pulbōp Yōn'guhoe 불법연구회/佛法研究會 (Society for the Study of Buddha-dharma, 1924 [or 1916 for its forerunner]; renamed into Wōnbulgyo in 1947) leading the way. Much like other Buddhist- as well as Christian-derived NRMS, Wōnbulgyo too arranged itself with the colonial framework, appreciating to some degree the assigned legal status of the wider tradition.

### *The Post-Pacific War Years (1945-1960)*

Despite, or rather, because of the heavy colonial yoke, the number of NRMS surged during the occupation period. Accommodating to the new political realities, on the one hand the post-Pacific War years—by contrast—served mainly as a phase of reorganisation and consolidation (South Korea). The First Republic (1948-1960) was promulgated based on a new constitution, in which is stipulated that there must be 'no discrimination on account of religion' (Article 11) as well as 'freedom of conscience' (*yangsim'ui chayu* 양심의자유; Article 19) and 'freedom of religion' (*chonggyo'ui chayu* 종교의자유; Article 20). The latter Article further states that "No state religion may be recognised, and church and state are to be separated" (*kukkyo'nūn injōngdoeji anihamyō, chonggyo'wa chōngch'i'nūn pullidoenda* 국교는 인정되지 아니하며, 종교와 정

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Way and the Great Enlightenment, the Manifold Rejoicing and the Great Fortune Transforming the One Heart-Mind Within the Rhythm of Times), also styled 일심교/一心教 (Teaching of the One Heart-Mind).

치는 분리된다). Although the state took a formally neutral position, mainline Christianity was indeed treated in a more favourable way while Buddhism and especially folk traditions (*musok*) and certain NRMS were subject to stricter scrutiny. Eventually, during the Third (1963-1972) and the Fourth Republic (1972-1981), the authorities were to increase related measures, taking reprisals vis-à-vis 'superstitious beliefs' (*misin* 미신/迷信) often including NRMS as well. On the other hand, the post-war period also witnessed an aggravating struggle for survival resulting either in ideological exodus or its virtual extinction (North Korea). Article 14 of the North Korean Constitution of 1948 notwithstanding—"Citizens have freedom of religious belief and of conducting religious services" (*kongmin'ün sinang mit chonggyo ūsik kōhaeng'ūi chayu'rŭl kajinda* 공민은 신앙 및 종교의식거행의 자유를 가진다)—religious activities came effectively to a halt due to persistent oppression by the government. The liberation of the peninsula and the ensuing division at the thirty-eighth parallel between a Soviet-dominated communist North and a capitalist United States-allied South introduced an implacable fratricidal conflict lasting to this day, materialising most grimly in the Korean War (1950-1953). The havoc caused by the War added to the vulnerability of a people already being at odds with ethnic and national confidence, opening up new avenues in the self-understanding of new religious creeds. Protestantism (*Kaesin'gyo* 개신교/改新敎) seems to have been best-tailored to provide the hotbed to syncretically devise nativist-minded millenarian programmes forging together an attitude of *han* 한/恨,<sup>23</sup> with a vision of spiritual empowerment by dint of ineluctable divine justice and grace. Christianity at the time in general obtained the sustained nimbus of a faith epitomising progress and success.<sup>24</sup> Both established churches and Christian-based NRMS became the most attractive religious providers after 1945, greatly facilitated by their generally anti-communist stance. The Korean War gave another major impulse to new religious developments. The most prominent groups forming at the time comprise:

- Segye Kidokkyo T'ongil Sillyōng Hyōphoe 세계기독교통일신령협회/世界基督教統一神靈協會 (Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World

23 That is to say, a cultural sentiment of powerlessness in the face of felt existential injustice.

24 For example, up to now the percentage of Christians within South Korean politics is disproportionately high. In the same vein, early post-war governments were filled by converts or second generation faithful at top-level positions, which thus positively impacted the official discourse vis-à-vis the Christian mission. Yet, this also entailed a less favourable course of action against non-mainline groups.

- Christianity, 1954; renamed into Segye P'yŏnghwa T'ongil Kajŏng Yŏnhap in 1994), founded by Mun Sŏn-myŏng 문선명/文鮮明 (1920-2012);
- Han'guk Yesugyo Chŏndogwan Puhŭng Hyŏphoe 한국예수교전도관부흥협회/韓國예수敎傳道館復興協會 (Jesus Church Evangelisation Hall Revival Association of Korea, 1956; renamed into Han'guk Ch'ŏnbugyo Chŏndogwan Puhŭng Hyŏphoe 한국천부교전도관부흥협회/韓國天父敎傳道館復興協會, Heavenly Father Church Evangelisation Hall Revival Association of Korea, in 1980), in short Chŏndogwan 전도관/傳道館 (Hall of Evangelisation), established by Pak T'ae-sŏn 박태선/朴泰善 (1917-1990);<sup>25</sup>
  - Yŏuido Sunbogŭm Kyohoe (1958), founded by Cho Yong-gi 조용기/趙鏞基 (b. 1936);
  - the early Chŏndogwan spin-off Tongbanggyo 동방교/東方敎 (Church of the East, 1956), launched by No Kwang-gong 노광공/盧光公 (1914-1967);
  - and Yongmunsan Kidowŏn 용문산기도원/龍門山祈禱院 (Mount Yongmun Retreat Centre, 1947), established by Na Un-mong 나운몽/羅雲夢 (1914-2009).

Membership of Chŏndogwan skyrocketed in the 1960s, rendering the group one of the largest NRMs on the peninsula with—according to the group—1,800,000 adherents (Moos 1967: 17), before it shrank down from the 1970s onwards. As is the case with the Unification Church, Chŏndogwan/Ch'ŏnbugyo too pursues a Koreacentric millenarian agenda largely stressing the crucial messianic role of the founding figure. Both founders were influenced by Yi Yong-do's Yesugyohoe. A flagbearer of Korean re-unification, and for decades a most strident proponent of anti-communism, the Unification Church attained worldwide fame within the scholarly and public discourse particularly in the 1970s and 1980s due to the visibility of its international proselytising activities invigorated by Mun's relocation to the United States. Also within the wider new religious panorama, a number of novel groups sprouted up. However, none of these came close to the newly gained outreach of Christian-based NRMs and were to remain small in size. Movements emerging in this period are, among others:

- the Tan'gun-based Tan'gun Ch'ŏnjo Kwangmyŏng Taedodŏk Pobonhoe 단군천조광명대도덕보본회/檀君天祖光明大道德報本會 (Society Commemorating the Heavenly Ancestor Tan'gun's Shining Light, Great Way and Virtue,

25 Today, the former is best known by its abbreviated name T'ongilgyo 통일교/統一敎 (Unification Church), the latter as Ch'ŏnbugyo 천부교/天父敎 (Heavenly Father Church), or in English, 'Olive Tree Church.'

- 1947; also known as Kwangmyŏngdaedo 광명대도/光明大道, Great Way of the Shining Light), founded by Chŏng Yu-sun 정요순/鄭驍舜 (b. 1913);
- and Sinsŏndo Ch'ongbonwŏn 신선도총본원/神仙道總本院 (Head Centre of the Way of the Immortal, 1958), founded by Kim Paeng-nyong 김백룡/金白龍 (1912-1995);
  - the Pongnamgyo-derived Ch'ŏnji Taeando 천지대안도/天地大安道 (Way of the Great Peace of Heaven and Earth, 1952; renamed into Ch'ŏnji Taeangyo 천지대안교/天地大安教, Teaching of the Great Peace of Heaven and Earth, in 1954), founded by Pu Kyŏng-sun [Haewŏlsŏn] 부경순/夫景順 [해월선/海月仙] (1900-1965);
  - the Chŭngsan-based Mirŭkkyo 미륵교/彌勒教 (Teaching of Maitreya, 1955), founded by Yu Tong-yun 유동운/柳東允 (b. 1899);
  - and—in the tradition of Kim Hang's *Chŏngyŏk*-thought—Yŏnggamudogyo 영가무도교/詠歌舞蹈教 (Teaching of Singing and Dancing, 1960), formed by Song Ch'ŏr-hwa 송철화/宋喆和 (1904-1976).

Similarly, the influence of the movements that held great discursive power previously, such as Ch'ŏndogyo and Taejonggyo, waned significantly during this period, never recovering to this day.<sup>26</sup>

### *The Era of Industrial Awakening (1960s–1980s)*

This period extends from the Second (1960-1961) to the first years of the Fifth Republic (1981-1987), largely corresponding to the era of autocratic leadership of Pak Chŏng-hŭi 박정희/朴正熙 (1917-1979; in power 1961-1979) and his successor Chŏn Tu-hwan 전두환/全斗煥 (b. 1931; in power 1979-1988). Overthrowing the Second Republic in 1961, the military regime under Pak launched extensive economic reforms, developing rural areas and building up—especially in the phase of the third five-year economic plan from 1972—heavy and chemical industry. The incipient 'Miracle on the Han River' (*Han'gyang'ŭi kijŏk* 한강의기적) was substantially carried forward in this period. Hastened industrialisation was accompanied by growing urbanisation, further dissolving traditional local-based familial networks. The economic upturn was unprecedented,

26 Two eminent NRMS, Mormonism aside, lastingly gaining a foothold in South Korea at the time were the Bahá'í (Pahaigyo 바하이교, 1954) and Yīguàn Dào 一貫道 (Ilgwando 일관도/一貫道, Way of Unity, 1952). In addition, several Japanese NRMS (re-)started small-scale missionary activities, such as Reiyūkai 靈友會 (Yŏnguhoe 영우회/靈友會, Association of Friends of the Spirits, 1953). After liberation, also Chinese Christian-based NRMS took root, such as, most prominently, Difāng Jiàohuì 地方教會 (Chibang Kyohoe 지방교회/地方教會, Local Church, 1945).



turning large parts of society to pursue the materialist cause. The gap between the rich and the poor and between material anticipation and reality widened, engendering the need of pertinent religious response. Thus, the religious field likewise witnessed a tremendous shift. Membership of the Protestant churches soared in this period, increasing tenfold from 1960 (623,072) to 1985 (6,489,242) (Kim 2006: 310-311). Naturally, Christian-derived NRMs also had their share of an increased influx of adherents, such as Chöndogwan. Pentecostal movements in particular attracted a rising number of faithful—most notably Yöüido Sunbogüm Kyohoe, which grew into the largest Pentecostal church in the world. Many now also internationally well-known groups were formed during this Christian ‘rush hour,’ such as:

- Hananim’üi Kyohoe Segye Pog’üm Sön’go Hyöphoe (1962), in short Hananim’üi Kyohoe 하나님 의 교회 (Church of God), established by An Sang-hung 안상홍 (1918-1985) as Hananim’üi Kyohoe Yesu Chünginhoe 하나님의 교회 예수증인회 (Witnesses of Jesus Church of God) and after his death renamed into Hananim’üi Kyohoe An Sang-hung Chünginhoe 하나님의 교회 안상홍증인회 (Witnesses of An Sang-hung Society Church of God);
- the Chöndogwan derivative Han’guk Kidokkyo Eden Sönghoe 한국기독교에덴성회 (Korean Christian Holy Eden Society, 1973), established by Yi Yöng-su 이영수/李英壽 (b. 1942);
- Kidokkyo Poküm Sön’gyohoe 기독교복음선교회 (Christian Gospel Mission Society, 1982), founded by a former Unification Church member, Chöng Myöng-sök 정명석/鄭明析 (b. 1945);
- and Sinch’önji Yesugyo Chünggö Changmak Söngjön (1984), in short Sinch’önji 신천지 (New Heaven and Earth), founded by Yi Man-hüi 이만희/李晚熙 (b. 1931).

Subscribing to Koreacentric messianism, all four movements have been enthusiastically engaged in large-scale proselytising. Another prominent community forming at the time is Yöngsaenggyo Hananim’üi Sönghoe 영생교 하나님의 성회 (Religion of Eternal Life Holy Society of God, 1981), founded by Cho Hüi-söng 조희성/曹熙星 (1931-2004). Particularly from the 1960s to the early 1970s a new wave of Tan’gun-based NRMs emerged, such as, most notably:

- Samsin Sinang Taebonsa 삼신신앙대본사/三神信仰大本司 (Great Central Office of the Three Divinities Belief, 1962), founded by Pae Sön-mun 배선문/裴善汶 (1933-2010);

- Tan'gun Chosŏn Chongch'ŏn'gyo 단군조선종천교/檀君朝鮮宗天教 (Chosŏn Ancestral Heavenly Religion of Tan'gun, 1964), established by Kim Hŭi-u 김희우/金熙宇 (1924-1994);
- Ch'ŏnsang Hwan'in Mirŭk Taedo 천상환인미륵대도/天上桓因彌勒大道 (Great Way of the Heavenly Lord Hwan'in Maitreya, 1973), founded by Kim Ch'un-hwa 김춘화/金春花 (1931-1996);
- and, especially, Hanŏlgyo (1965), founded by Sin Chŏng-il 신정일/申正一 (1938-1999) growing into a group of impressive size in later years.

Joining the array of new Tan'gun-related groups somewhat later was the influential Saejonggyowŏn 새종교원/새綜敎院 (Centre for the Novel Outline of the Religion, 1980), established by Na Tong-sŏp 나동섭/羅東燮 (b. 1935).

Also within the Chŭngsan-cluster new religious developments swelled in this period. In 1969, Pak Han-gyŏng's [Udang] 박한경/朴漢慶 [우당/牛堂] (1917-1996) Taesunjillihoe splintered from T'aegŭkto rising to become the single largest NRM on the Korean peninsula today. Five years later, An Se-ch'an [Unsan] 안세찬/安世燦 [운산/雲山] (1922-2012) established Chŭngsando (prior to a name change the group was called Taebopsa Chŭngsan'gyo 대법사 증산교/大法社甌山敎, or Great Law Shrine of the Chŭngsan Religion), which turned into the chief rival of Taesunjillihoe. Other than Taesunjillihoe that via T'aegŭkto traces its lineage back to Kang Il-sun through a revelation Cho Ch'ŏl-je allegedly received from God, Chŭngsando places itself within the tradition of Ko P'al-lye as right spiritual heir of Kang. Ko's key authority is dismissed by Taesunjillihoe. Alongside T'aegŭkto, the two groups represent the major exponents of Chŭngsan-thought. Further notable movements forming in this period include, for example: Chŭngsan Taedo Irhwajang 증산대도일화장/甌山大道一俵場 (Great Way and Harmony Temple of Chŭngsan, 1967), launched by Chŏng Hye-ch'ŏn 정혜천/鄭惠天 (1911-?), and the Taesunjillihoe break-away Ch'ŏngu Ilsaehoe 청우일신회/靑羽一新會 (Ch'ŏngu Reform Society, 1985), founded by Yŏn Tong-hŭm 연동흠/延東欽 (b. 1925) as Yonghwailsimhoe 용화일심회/龍華一心會 (One Heart/Mind Society of the Dragon-Flower). Other important movements of this period appeared respectively within the Kaksedo-cluster, namely Kaksedo Chŏnji Wŏlligyo 각세도천지원리교/覺世道天地原理敎 (Religion of the Principle of Heaven and Earth and the Way of Awakening the World, 1975), founded by Yi Sŏng-jae 이성재/李成宰 (b. 1921), and the Tonghak-cluster, namely, Tonghakhoe Chungang Ponbu 동학회중앙본부/東學會中央本部 (Tonghak Society Central Headquarters, 1969), founded by Wŏn Yong-mun 원용문/元容汶 (1916-2000). In the wake of normalising diplomatic relations with Japan in the early 1960s, proselytising activities of Japanese NRMs also intensified, further diversifying and fertilising South

Korea's new religious landscape. Major groups subsequently arriving in South Korea establishing a lasting presence include, *inter alia*:

- Sōka Gakkai 創価学会 (Ch'angga Hakhoe 참가학회/創價學會, Value Creation Society, 1962);
- Sekai Kyūseikyō 世界救世教 (Segye Kusegyo 세계구세교/世界救世教, Religion of World Salvation, 1966);
- Seichō no Ie 生長の家 (Saengjang'ui Chip 생장의집 or Saengjangga 생장가/生長家, House of Growth, 1970);
- Zenrinkai 善隣會 (Söllinhoe 선린회/善隣會, 1975), later renamed into Zenrinkyō 善隣教 (Söllin'gyo 선린교/善隣教);
- and Risshō Kōseikai 立正佼成會 (Ipchōng Kyosōnghoe 입정교성회/立正佼成會, Society for Establishing Truth and Mutual Perfection, 1978).<sup>27</sup>

Today, more than twenty Japanese NRMs operate branches in South Korea. Sōka Gakkai with its claimed 1,500,000 adherents—even if this figure is well overstated—ranks as the largest non-Korean NRM in the country. In the 1970s and, especially, the 1980s, a new area within South Korea's religious market gained traction, saliently unfolding from the late 1990s up to the present day. This phenomenon, labelled as the 'new spirituality movement,' largely coalesces nativist and self-cultivation patterns of indigenous (particularly Tan'gun-related) religiosity, which is markedly influenced by the Daoist mindscape, with narratives and practices chiefly informed by contemporary esoteric currents. The earliest organised attempts in this direction go back to Ko Kyōng-min's 고경민/高庚民 (1936-1984?) Kuksōndo 국선도/國仙道 (Way of Our Country's Immortals, 1970) as well as Pak Tae-yang's 박대양/朴大洋 (b. 1952) Kich'ōnmun 기천문/氣天門 (Ki Heavenly Gate, 1970).

### *New Horizons (1980s to Present)*

This last phase of the periodisation flags the transitory years towards as well as the era of democracy—that is the Sixth Republic (since 1987)—internationally 'solemnised' through one of its major catalysts, the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul. The effects of globalisation and technologisation had and still have a considerable impact on new developments in the (new) religious arena. Whereas the new religious domain has from the onset been hardly assessable due to the multiplicity of religious actors, in the past thirty years or so the scope of diversity bursts any means of closely keeping track of the steadily evolving new religious scenery. The number of providers and consumers on the

<sup>27</sup> The years in the brackets indicate the year of arrival in South Korea.

religious market ballooned, not least due to new technologies (internet) and a broadening range of specialised literature facilitating accessibility. Offerings addressing individual exercise (often within a small-group setting)—not necessarily outwardly framed as ‘religious’—became particularly in vogue. This ‘new spirituality movement’ is the fluid sum of the various esoterically moored self-cultivation trajectories on offer (chiefly styled in a traditionalist way), carrying forward the idea of spiritual transformation often bound to a wider millenarian notion. Many of these do not concretise as tangible organisations, virtually being ‘invisible.’ No (2003: 75) thus speaks of mounting ‘religious privatisation’ (*chonggyo’ui sasahwa* 종교의사사화). Akin to the Japanese new spirituality movement (*shinreisei undō*), providers draw upon a rich New Age (*nyu eiji* 뉴에이지) portfolio, ranging from channelling and UFOs to secret or lost prehistorical wisdom and superhuman assistance. Self-cultivation as promoted in these ‘spiritual’ circles more often than not implicates a holistic healing purpose. Spiritual healing is deemed the foundation for mental and physical health; accordingly, self-cultivation paves the way for interpersonal and economic wellbeing. A reinforced interest in the New Age discourse in South Korea is noticeable since the early 1980s, sparked in particular by the best-selling novel *Tan* 단 (Cinnabar) by the then head of Taejonggyo, Kwōn T’ae-hun [Pongu] 권태훈/權泰勳 [봉우/鳳宇] (1900-1994) (Baker 2005: 219). In 1986, Kwōn went on to establish a separate group—Han’guk Tanhakhoe Yōnjōngwōn 한국단학회연정원/韓國丹學會研精院 (Korean Study of the Cinnabar Society Spiritual Research Centre)—focusing on *tanhak* 단학/丹學 (‘study of the cinnabar’). *Tanhak* is a form of self-cultivation, assembling various techniques with the aim to nourish and harvest one’s ‘energy’ (*ki* 기/氣) through bodily ‘energy centres’ (*tanjōn* 단전/丹田; literally, cinnabar field). Organisational manifestations of the wider New Age scene foremostly comprise the two globally active movements (U 2011) *Tanhak Sōnwōn* 단학선원/丹學仙院 (Immortal’s Place for the Study of the Cinnabar, 1985), that is present-day *Tan Wōltū*, founded by Yi Sūng-hōn [Ilchi] 이승헌/李承憲 [일지/一指] (b. 1950), and *Maūm Suryōn* (1996), launched by U Hoe-ho [U Myōng] 우희호 [우명/禹明] (b. 1966). Other major exponents in this area—some more than others overtly embracing their esoteric stimulus—include: *Inhūi Sōndo T’aebaegwōn* 인희선도태백원/仁僖仙道太白院 (T’aebaek Centre of Inhūi’s Way of Immortals, 1981), founded by Kim Yong-guk 김용국/金龍國 (1911-?); *Chōngsin Segyewōn* 정신세계원/精神世界院 (Spirit World Centre, 1993), launched by Song Sun-hyōn 송순현 (b. 1951); and *Minaesa K’ūllōp* (1996), established by Pak Yōng-ch’ōl [Ch’wisan] 박영철 [취산/翠山] (1926-1999). Adding to the related Korean discourse are several transplanted groups, of which the Raelian Movement (Raellian Mubūmōnt’ū 라엘리안 무브먼트, 1983) (cf. Mun 2013) and *Fālún Gōng* 法輪功 (Pōmnyun’gong 법륜공/

法輪功 or P'arun'gong 파룬궁) achieved the greatest visibility. Moreover, since 2000, the yoga (*yoga* 요가 or *yuga* 유가/瑜伽) movement is growing almost exponentially. Whereas new religious formations hailing out of the indigenous parent clusters such as Chŭngsan'gyo perceptibly diminished in recent decades, the foundations of Christian-based NRMs remains unabated. The vast majority of new communities, however, retain a relatively small-scale profile. One notable group that emerged in this latest period spreading overseas is Tami Sŏn'gyohoe 다미선교회 (Tami [i.e., an abbreviation for *tagaol mirae* 다가올미래 or 'the future draws to a close'] Mission Society, 1988), founded by Yi Chang-nim 이장림/李長林 (b. 1947). This group is particularly well-known to the public for its failed 1992 Rupture prophecy. Another more prominent *musok*-based NRM is Ch'ŏnugyo 천우교/天字敎 (Religion of the Universe, 1988), launched by Ch'oe Nam-ök 최남억/崔南億.

Democratisation advanced the governmental will to more strictly embrace a religiously neutral position while safeguarding the constitutionally stipulated right of freedom of religion, allowing for an uninhibited growth of the new religious field. A special law aiming at religious organisations does not exist in South Korea. Instead, religious communities that seek out formal recognition qua juridical person (*pöbin* 법인/法人) must do so chiefly through applying for the status of non-profit organisation (*piyöngni tanch'e* 비영리단체/非營利團體) as an association (*sadan* 사단/社團) or, less common, a foundation (*chaedan* 재단/財團). Religious groups are not subsidised by the state, with some minor exceptions, such as financial support given to selected organisations based on the 1987 Traditional Temples Preservation Law—*Chönt'ong sach'ar'üi pojon mit chiwö'n'e kwanhan pömyun* 전통사찰의 보존 및 지원에 관한 법률. Whereas religious instruction is prohibited in public schools, private educational facilities may offer such—a regulation which is greatly utilised by various NRMs. Many groups now maintain a variety of educational services ranging from nurseries and primary and high schools to universities—a development gathering pace following successful democratisation.

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