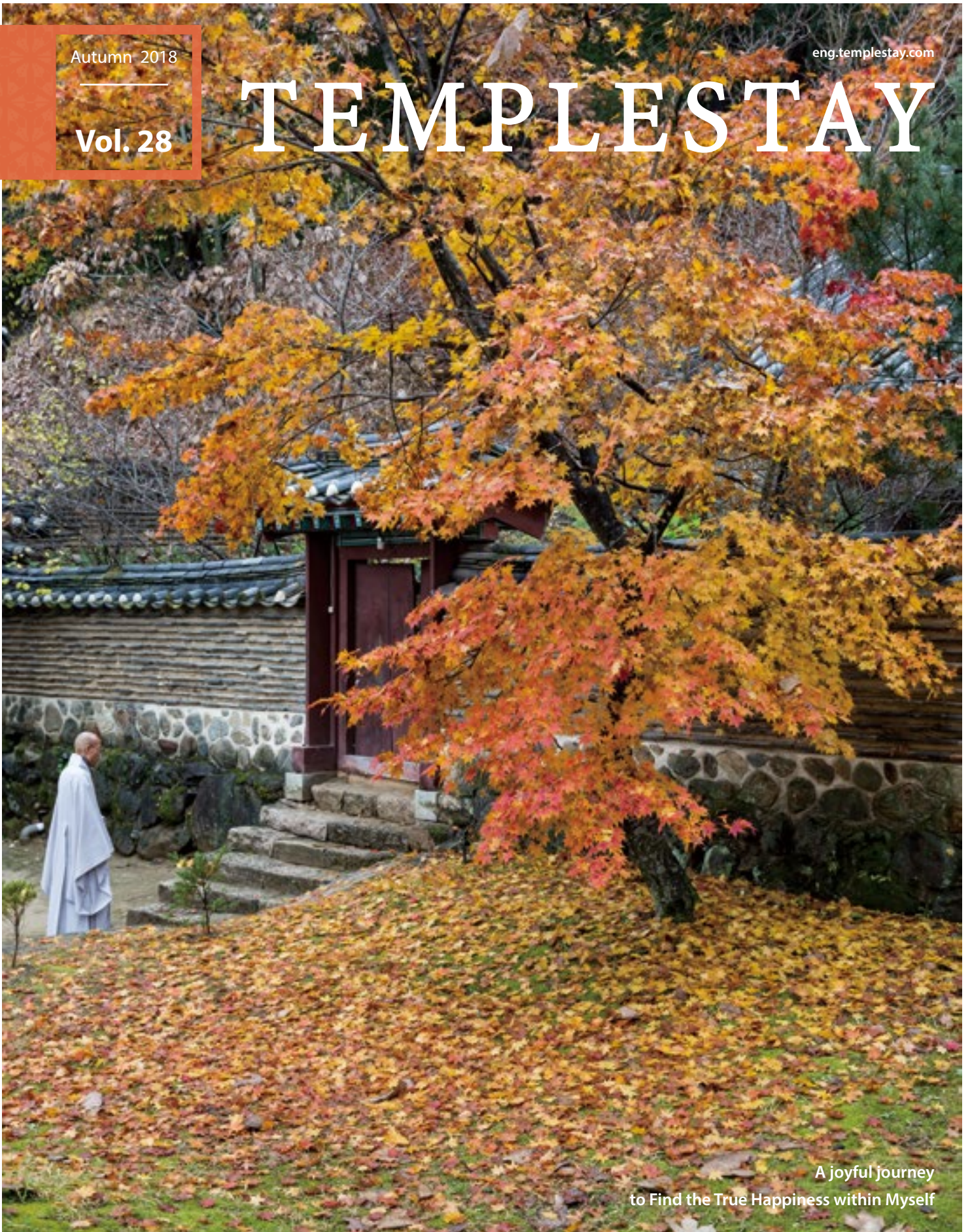


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TEMPLESTAY



A joyful journey
to Find the True Happiness within Myself

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Templestay Quarterly uses eco-friendly paper that looks at nature and the future of humanity.

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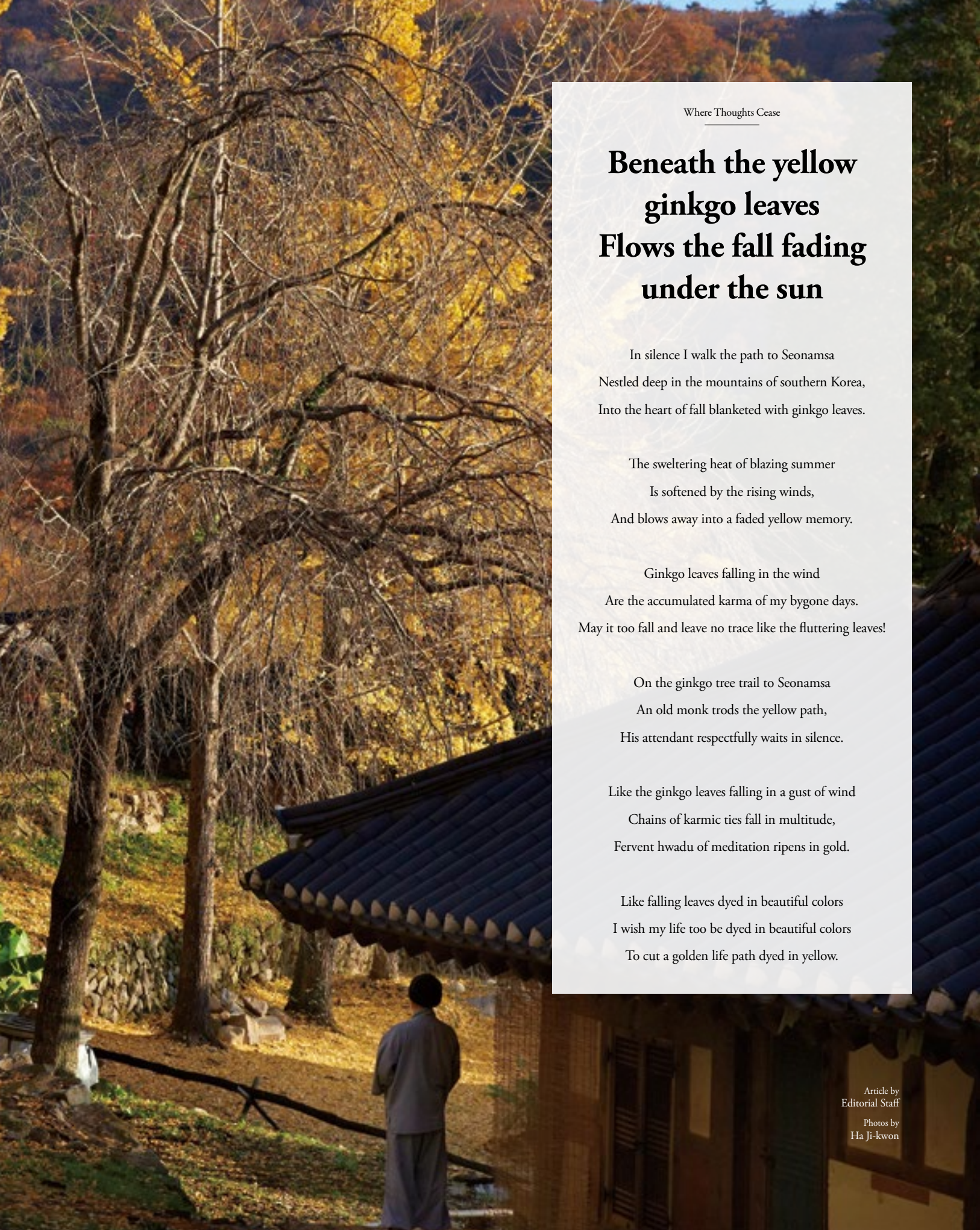
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Templestay Guide





Where Thoughts Cease

Beneath the yellow ginkgo leaves Flows the fall fading under the sun

In silence I walk the path to Seonamsa
Nestled deep in the mountains of southern Korea,
Into the heart of fall blanketed with ginkgo leaves.

The sweltering heat of blazing summer
Is softened by the rising winds,
And blows away into a faded yellow memory.

Ginkgo leaves falling in the wind
Are the accumulated karma of my bygone days.
May it too fall and leave no trace like the fluttering leaves!

On the ginkgo tree trail to Seonamsa
An old monk trods the yellow path,
His attendant respectfully waits in silence.

Like the ginkgo leaves falling in a gust of wind
Chains of karmic ties fall in multitude,
Fervent hwadu of meditation ripens in gold.

Like falling leaves dyed in beautiful colors
I wish my life too be dyed in beautiful colors
To cut a golden life path dyed in yellow.

Article by
Editorial Staff

Photos by
Ha Ji-kwon

The World of Manjusri Bodhisattva

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Manjusri Bodhisattva plays a critical role in Buddhism as an assistant to Sakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, and to Vairocana Buddha who symbolizes the essence of truth. The name Manjusri (Mañjuśrī) literally means “wonderfully auspicious.”

Manjusri Bodhisattva embodies supreme wisdom. He is often called the manifestation of transcendent wisdom as he promoted the law of wisdom (prajñā) in India after the Buddha passed away.



Child Manjusri statue at the Liberation Gate at Dogapsa Temple in Yeongam



Sangwonsa Temple on Mt. Odaesan

Mahayana Buddhism advocates that one's devoted effort for the salvation of others is the most proper and desirable path to Buddhahood. A person of great character who practices this ideal is a bodhisattva. The four major bodhisattvas of Mahayana Buddhism are: Avalokitesvara, Ksitigarbha, Manjusri and Samantabhadra.

THEME>01

Who is Manjusri Bodhisattva?

Of these, Manjusri Bodhisattva is a key figure as he helps Sakyamuni Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, and Vairocana Buddha, the embodiment of truth. The name Manjusri (Mañjuśrī) literally means “wonderfully auspicious.”

Embodying wisdom, Manjusri represents learning. However, the Chinese spelling of Manjusri (Wenshu 文殊) raises questions. “Wen (文)” refers to “language” and “shu (殊)” “kill,” so a literal translation of his name is “kill language.” As Chinese language is not phonographic but ideographic, even a simple transliteration can have meaning.



Child Manjusri statue enshrined in the Main Buddha Hall at Bulguksa Temple



Manjusri Bodhisattva statue in the Manjusri Hall at Munsusa Temple in Gochang

To give a bodhisattva who is the embodiment of wisdom a name seemingly opposite to his function reveals that, in the early days of Chinese Buddhism, scholars who didn't have a positive view of Buddhism were involved in translation. In other words, non-Buddhist assistants participated in translation. This ill intent becomes clearer when compared to the transliterations of "Coca Cola" (可口可乐, "tasty and pleasant") and the French multinational retailer "Carrefour" (家乐福, "joyful fortune of family"). In his introduction to China, Manjusri seemed to have suffered some discrimination.

According to the *Sutra of the Complete Nirvana of Manjusri*, Manjusri was a monk at the time of the Buddha and from Sravasti in the Kingdom of Kosala, located in what is now central India. Accordingly, his other name was "Prince of the Dharma," which means a son or heir of the Dharma King (Buddha), implying he was in fact a monk. This alias led to another iconographic form; Manjusri as a child monk. From this, he acquired the image of youth in addition to that of wisdom.

Known for its hot dry climate, Indians tend to consider the term "cool and refreshing" as an ideal, the same way we love refreshing soft drinks and desserts. This may be why Manjusri resides on Mt. Qingliang (lit. "cool and refreshing"), among other places.



Buddha Relic Temple on Mt. Odaesan in Pyeongchang

Manjusri's residing on Mt. Qingliang is recorded in Chapter 32 of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* titled "Bodhisattvas' Dwelling Places." This chapter explains where the major bodhisattvas of Mahayana Buddhism reside. Consider this text a sort of Mahayana "Map to the Stars' Homes." The chapter states, "Manjusri teaches his retinue of 10,000 on Mt. Qingliang."

Indians regarded wisdom as refreshing when accompanied by precise judgment. Any situation where what is right or wrong cannot be determined leads to confusion and frustration; in other words, a state of "mental heat." On the other hand, clear judgment based on wisdom can be refreshing. Due to this Indian way of thinking, Manjusri resides on "refreshing" Mt. Qingliang and is associated with the "cool" color blue.

Manjusri holds a symbolic "cool blue" sword and rides on a "cool blue" lion. The sword symbolizes clear judgment, and the lion is regarded as a wise animal in India because they hunt in "prides" or groups. Therefore, Manjusri Bodhisattva is an icon of wisdom who holds a blue sword, rides a blue lion and resides on Mt. Qingliang.

Also according to Chapter 32, Mt. Qingliang is located in the northeast, so Chinese Buddhists regard Mt. Qingliang as being in China, a country located northeast of India. Actually, the *Sutra of Dharani Repository of Manjusri* says that to the northeast of India lies China in which sits a mountain of five peaks (Mt. Wuding) where Manjusri Bodhisattva dwells. Based on these texts, Chinese Buddhists determined that Manjusri dwelt on Mt. Wutai in Shanxi Province. Both "Wuding" and "Wutai" refer to "five peaks." From another perspective, the statement that Mt. Qingliang is located northeast of India implies it is not in India. This is a clearly different stance from other texts stating that the abode of Avalokitesvara is on Mt. Potalaka in southern India. So, we can assume that Mt. Wutai in China might be Manjusri's primary residence.



Manjusri Bodhisattva on Mt. Wutai in China © Jahyeon

With the spread of faith in Manjusri, Korean Vinaya Master Jajang went to Mt. Wutai in China during the reign of Silla's Queen Seondeok and encountered a manifestation of Manjusri. Manjusri then gave Jajang diverse teachings and told him that Silla also had a mountain equivalent in energy to Mt. Wutai (五臺山) and encouraged him to go find it. Jajang returned to Silla and determined it was a mountain in Pyeongchang which he named Mt. Odaesan (五臺山; same Chinese characters, different pronunciation). Later, a Japanese monk named Gyogi established a temple devoted to Manjusri in Kochi Prefecture. In addition, the Tangut Empire of Central Asia also established its own equivalent of Mt. Wutai. In this way, faith in Manjusri enchanted East Asian Buddhism for some time and commanded powerful influence. In fact, faith in Manjusri centered on Mt. Wutai was recognized as being a force to protect the state in early Tang China, and by the mid-Tang era, all Chinese temples had established a Manjusri Hall, solely dedicated to him. Wuzhao, a monk based in Hangzhou during the late Tang Dynasty, prayed for a visitation from Manjusri on Mt. Wutai. He received the following verse from Child Manjusri:

*A face without anger is a genuine offering vessel.
A word of peace is a subtle fragrance.
A clear, truthful mind without a speck of dust
Is the mind of a Buddha that never wavers.*

From this perspective, Manjusri Bodhisattva seems to never be far away from us, and his wisdom is thought to flow continually in our life, nourishing each of us. ㉔

Article by
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Photos by
Ha Ji-kwon

Manjusri Bodhisattva often appears as a bodhisattva acting on behalf of Sakyamuni Buddha in the Huayan School of Buddhism (Kor. Hwaeom or Flower Adornment). The Huayan School became popular in Korea in the late three kingdoms period and early Unified Silla era, and no artwork that can be confirmed as a Manjusri Bodhisattva statue appeared before this period. Even if such statues did exist, it would be difficult to confirm them as Manjusri because a distinctive Manjusri iconography had not yet been established as it had been for Avalokitesvara and Ksitigarbha Bodhisattvas.

Manjusri, Sakyamuni Buddha and Samantabhadra Bodhisattva constitute the typical “Buddha Triad.” The earliest example of this is found in the *Dharani Collection Scripture* (Dhāraṇī-samuccaya Sūtra), translated by Atigupta in 645 in Tang China. This scripture can be compared to what today we would call an incantation encyclopedia as in the Harry Potter series. In this scripture is the following passage explaining how to draw the “Buddha of Great Blazing Perfect Light.”

THEME»02

Manjusri Bodhisattva, the Embodiment of Wisdom

*When you want to draw the image of this Buddha... (partly omitted)
... To the left of the Four Heavenly Kings is Manjusri Bodhisattva,
riding a lion and having a meticulously adorned white body with
light behind the crown of his head; he wears celestial garments and a
crown bejeweled with seven kinds of jewels. To the right of the Kings
is Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, riding a white elephant and is
adorned as is Manjusri. Between the lion and white elephant is
the Great Wisdom Bodhisattva (Prajñāpāramitā Bodhisattva)
who has three eyes, holds a piece of neck armor in one hand,
seated gracefully and
adorned as are the other
two bodhisattvas.*





Manjusri Bodhisattva statue riding on a lion at Shuxiangsi Temple on Mt. Wutai in China. Vinaya Master Jajang probably saw a manifestation of Manjusri Bodhisattva similar to this.



The lion pedestal for the Manjusri Bodhisattva statue at Bulguksa Temple in Gyeongju

The iconography of Manjusri riding on a lion is based on the *Flower Adornment Sutra*. The iconography of Samantabhadra was first based on the *Lotus Sutra* and later integrated in the *Dharani Collection Scripture*. Because the *Dharani Collection Scripture* specified how to prepare the altar and images before practicing the magical mantras, it contributed greatly to the actual crafting of these images.

With the prevalence of Huayan faith, the image of Manjusri on a lion appeared relatively early in China. The hub of Huayan faith was Mt. Wutai in Shanxi Province where Manjusri was thought to permanently reside. The story of Silla monk Jajang visiting Mt. Wutai, meeting the manifestation of Manjusri, receiving the body relics of the Buddha, and bringing them back is well known in Korea. One record says Jajang fell asleep in front of a Manjusri statue while offering prayers on Mt. Wutai, which confirms the existence of a statue there. The *Samguk yusa* (Legends and History of Korea's Three Kingdoms) says that a manifestation of Manjusri riding on a dog appeared before Jajang at Jeongamsa Temple in Korea. The dog later transformed into a lion which Manjusri mounted and left. This reveals that during Jajang's lifetime, the iconography of Manjusri riding a lion was known. In Korean Buddhist art, the first case that can be relatively clearly confirmed as Manjusri Bodhisattva is found in Seokguram Grotto, crafted in the mid-8th century, although its iconography is different from that in the *Dharani Collection Scripture*. The main Buddha statue with the Earth-Touching Mudra is surrounded by many noble images, one of which is thought to be Manjusri. What draws our attention is that this Manjusri is holding a teacup. No Buddhist scriptures ever described Manjusri Bodhisattva holding a teacup. The only example is found in the book *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks*, which describes an episode where, in 767, Chan Master Wuzhao meets an old man, who was a manifestation of Manjusri. In this story the Master drank tea served in a glass cup by Manjusri. In the following verse, which appears in this episode, the "fragrance" is "tea fragrance," and the "offering vessel" refers to the "teacup."

*A face without any anger is a genuine offering vessel.
A word of peacefulness is a subtle fragrance.
A clear, truthful mind without any speck of dust
Is the mind of Buddha that knows no fluctuation.*

The teacup held by Manjusri in Seokguram Grotto could be a reference to that verse.

Seokguram enshrines another Manjusri Bodhisattva, which is found facing the Layman Vimalakirti inscribed in a niche in the lower part of the ceiling. This Manjusri, however, is holding nothing and riding nothing. During the Unified Silla era, images of Manjusri riding a lion were thought to have been crafted, but none have been found. Only two lion pedestals supporting Manjusri are known to exist: one in the Museum of Kyungpook National University and the other in Bulguksa Temple which also has an elephant pedestal. Later, in Goryeo Buddhist paintings, Manjusri often flanks Sakyamuni Buddha and is holding either a sutra or a lotus. In the Joseon dynasty, his iconography became fixed as holding a lotus. Thus, in terms of appearance, Manjusri looks the same as Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, but holding the lotus in a different hand.

Koreans also crafted an unusual Manjusri image, a “child Manjusri.” The best known is the Child Manjusri statue at Sangwonsa Temple. It was crafted in celebration of King Sejo’s encounter with Manjusri who manifested to him as a child at a pond in the forest when the King visited Mt. Odaesan. Perhaps due to this miraculous legend, child Manjusri iconography enjoyed great popularity during the Joseon era. This later evolved into statues of Child Manjusri riding a lion and Child Samantabhadra riding an elephant. These are now enshrined at Dogapsa Temple’s Liberation Gate.



Goryeo era painting that depicts Amitabha Buddha and eight bodhisattvas. Manjusri Bodhisattva is holding a scripture.



Of the Wooden Seated Buddha Triad at Gaeamsa Temple, this Manjusri Bodhisattva is placed on the left (crafted in 1658)



Child Manjusri statue at Sangwonsa Temple on Mt. Odaesan © Ha Ji-kwon



Manjusri Bodhisattva statue of Qing China in the Tibetan style

Meanwhile, as the Tibetan-influenced Buddhist art of Qing China was introduced to Joseon, Tibetan Buddhist iconography also came into fashion. In particular, because the Manchus regarded themselves as descendants of Manjusri, Manjusri faith became important to them. However, in Tibetan Buddhist iconography, Manjusri appears as a fierce image holding a sword. As an icon of wisdom, the sword seems to symbolize keen judgment, embodying the wisdom that can tell right from wrong.

Countless practitioners have desired to encounter Manjusri Bodhisattva, but it's not as easy as it was for Jajang and Wuzhao. Who knows? If you decide to participate in a Templestay program, maybe you'll be one of the fortunate few. He usually manifests as a monastic or child, but actually, he can take any form. Keep your eyes wide open, and I'm not talking about your physical eyes. 🙏

Article by
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Photos by
Ju Su-wan



Woljeongsa Temple on Mt. Odaesan

Manjusri Bodhisattva (Kor. Munsu Bosal), an icon of supreme wisdom in Mahayana Buddhism, is predominant in the Buddha halls of Korean temples. First of all, images of Manjusri Bodhisattva usually flank Sakyamuni Buddha on the left in the Main Buddha Hall. Manjusri also flanks Vairocana Buddha. Temples that practice faith in Manjusri have a separate hall enshrined with his image, a building called Munsujeon.

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THEME»03

Korea's Manjusri Temples and Related Legends

Every Blue Valley of Mt. Odaesan Replete with Stories of Manjusri Bodhisattva Woljeongsa and Sangwonsa Established by Jajang

Manjusri Bodhisattva is often called the manifestation of wisdom as he promoted the law of wisdom (prajñā) in India after the Buddha passed away. In Buddhist scriptures, he is part of the Vairocana Triad where he and Samantabhadra Bodhisattva flank Vairocana Buddha. If Samantabhadra Bodhisattva acts in the world as a practitioner who seeks the Way in his actions embodying the Dharma, Manjusri Bodhisattva is the model of wisdom. Manjusri Bodhisattva usually sits on a lotus pedestal holding the sword of wisdom in his right hand and a blue lotus in his left. Sometimes he rides on a lion, symbolizing dignity and bravery. Other times he holds scriptures in his hand including the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*. The *Flower Adornment Sutra* says there is a mountain named Qingliang in the northeast where all bodhisattvas have resided since olden times. The Sutra further says that Manjusri Bodhisattva now resides on Mt. Qingliang with his retinue and 10,000 bodhisattvas, teaching Dharma.

Templeslay

Korea's Manjusri faith was established by the eminent Silla monk Jajang. Vinaya Master Jajang offered prayers for seven days in front of the Manjusri Bodhisattva statue at China's Taihe Lake on Mt. Qingliang in Shanxi province and received a quatrain verse in Sanskrit, the body relics of the Buddha and some scriptures. Upon returning to Korea in 643 (12th year of Queen Seondeok's reign), Jajang established a nine-story pagoda at Hwangnyongsa Temple in Gyeongju, and then a Buddha Relic Temple on Jungdae Peak on Mt. Odaesan, making the mountain a center of Manjusri faith. Later, Jajang performed many miracles related to Manjusri Bodhisattva at Sudasa Temple in Gangneung and Seongnamwon Temple on Mt. Taebaeksan. Jungdae Peak on Mt. Odaesan is known as the permanent abode of Manjusri Bodhisattva, for which the area receives continual offerings of flowers and incense from visitors. Even during the Joseon Dynasty when Buddhism was being suppressed by state policy, King Sejo was healed from a chronic disease through the blessing of Child Manjusri after offering prayers for 100 days at Sangwonsa Temple on Mt. Odaesan. From then on, the lamp of Manjusri faith has burned brightly without interruption, even in the midst of hardship.

In addition, many other stories of Manjusri legends have been passed on: the story of Silla's King Gyeongsun who was reluctant to give offerings because he didn't realize the man he met was a manifestation of Manjusri; the legend of three eminent Goryeo monks who practiced Buddhism together with Manjusri; and Precept Master Hwanu who was reprimanded by Manjusri. Many other Manjusri-related legends are still being passed on at temples named after him, which can be found in numerous mountain valleys. Six temples come to mind: Woljeongsa and Sangwonsa on Mt. Odaesan,

Munsusa in Uljin, Munsusa in Gochang, Chilbulsu in Hadong and Chukseosa in Bonghwa.

As the head temple of the 4th religious district of the Jogye Order, Woljeongsa sits quietly on Mt. Odaesan where sacred mountain energy is concentrated. In the refreshingly cool water in front of the temple compound swim Manchurian trout. Surrounded by green needleleaf trees year-round, Woljeongsa exudes a tranquil beauty. Its nickname, "temple where the moon of the human mind is luminous," comes close to the truth.

Jajang established Woljeongsa after an encounter with a manifestation of Manjusri Bodhisattva. He also established a 13-story pagoda there to enshrine the Buddha's body relics.

Sangwonsa, an associated temple of Woljeongsa located on the same mountain, still passes on various Manjusri legends. Prince Hyomyeong, son of Silla's King Sinmun, came to Mt. Odaesan and offered tea he had brewed to Manjusri. Upon returning to Seorabeol, Silla's capital, he was enthroned and became King Hyoso. In 696, the 4th year after his enthronement, King Hyoso established Jinyeowon Temple, where Sangwonsa sits today, and enshrined a statue of Manjusri Bodhisattva within it. Twenty years later, he commissioned Sangwonsa's Bronze Bell (National Treasure No. 36) to be cast. Joseon's King Sejo commissioned a statue of Manjusri Bodhisattva to be made for Sangwonsa after encountering a manifestation of Manjusri there and designated the temple a royal Buddhist temple.

Munsusa Temple in Ulsan, one of Korea's three major Manjusri sanctuaries, is perched on the upper reaches of Mt. Munsusan from where one has a panoramic view of Ulsan and the East Sea (Donghae). According to the *Sinjeung dongguk yeoji seungnam* (Revised Edition of the Augmented Survey of the Geography of Korea), Mt. Munsusan was called Yeongchwisan (Vulture Peak) or Cheongnyangsan (Chi. Mt. Qingliang) during the Silla and Goryeo dynasties. The region where Munsusa is located is called "Cheongnyang," borrowing its name from Mt. Cheongnyangsan. The *Beomugo* (Temple Directory of Joseon), published in 1799, mentions Munsusa, so it appears to have existed for a long time. As icons of Ulsan, Munsusa Temple and Mt. Munsusan are greatly loved by Ulsan's residents.



Chukseosa Temple in Bonghwa



Munsusan is a holy mountain where Manjusri Bodhisattva, the embodiment of wisdom, is thought to have resided since long ago. It is also not far from Ulsan's downtown area, so locals have easy access to multiple hiking paths cut around the mountain. It has a constant stream of visitors, but during the college entrance examination period, a temporary Dharma hall prepared in the courtyard is crowded by people offering prayers for their children to do well.

Munsusa Temple in Gochang is another Manjusri sanctuary established by Jajang. Mt. Cheongnyangsan where Munsusa nestles is a smallish 620 meter high mountain, but due to its location in the central Noryeong Mountain Range, it towers over three surrounding cities: Yeonggwang in the south, Jangseong in the east and Jeongeup in the north. Standing on top of Mt. Cheongnyangsan, one enjoys a panoramic view of superb scenery including the West Sea (Seohae). Behind Musujeon Hall in a grove of maple trees is Jajanggul, a cave where Jajang used to offer prayers. In front of Munsusa's Main Buddha Hall is a spring that feeds the clear waters of the Yongjicheon River. Another icon of Munsusa is the maple tree grove inhabited by 100-400 year old maple trees, designated Natural Monument No. 463 in 2005. The 800-meter path that runs from the One Pillar Gate to the temple compound cuts through the maple grove, their fragrant scent greeting visitors with a fragrance better than any perfume.

Mt. Jirisan in southwestern Korea is also called "Mother Mountain," and Manjusri's full name in Korean is "Daeji Munsu Sari Bosal" (大智文殊師利菩薩), which literally translates to "Manjusri Bodhisattva of Great Sagacity." The syllables "ji (智)" and "ri (利)" from his Korean name are the characters in Jirisan. Mt. Jirisan's highest peak is Cheonwangbong, and it is physically connected to Banyabong Peak, whose name is also a reference to the great wisdom of Manjusri. In fact, the whole of Mt. Jirisan can be rightfully called a sanctuary of Manjusri Bodhisattva.

Chilbalsa Temple on Mt. Jirisan was established to celebrate the simultaneous attainment of Buddhahood by all seven sons of King Gimsuro, founder of the Garak Kingdom. Thus, Chilbalsa is called the sanctuary of the living Manjusri and is widely known for miraculously answering the prayers of practitioners who pray there. It is said that those who offer prayers here will encounter a manifestation of Manjusri Bodhisattva, in accordance with their understanding, and their prayers will be realized. For those who meditate here, Manjusri will watch over them and guide them to enlightenment. Chilbalsa is also considered the foremost Seon sanctuary in Korea thanks to its two Seon centers: Ajabang Seon Center and Unsang Seon Center. Ajabang has under-floor heating (*ondol*) with stone slabs laid out in the shape of the Chinese character "亞 (Ah)." This keeps the room warm for 100 days in winter using only one load of wood.

At the highest elevation (800 m) among temples running Templestay programs, Chukseosa Temple in Bonghwa boasts a refreshing atmosphere and vast open views. Chukseosa was established by Uisang in 673 during the reign of Silla's King Munmu. According to one legend, when the abbot of Jirimsa Temple (now Suworam Hermitage) followed an auspicious light emanating from the direction of Mt. Cheongnyangsan, he discovered a luminous Vairocana Buddha statue. He told Uisang about this, who then established a temple there and enshrined the Buddha statue in it, which is now Chukseosa. In the 10th year of the reign of Silla's King Gyeongmun, a pagoda was built to enshrine 10 pieces of the Buddha's body relics. Since olden times Chukseosa has been known as an ideal place to cultivate the mind. An open-minded person can visit anywhere in Korea and find great natural scenery and the wisdom of Manjusri Bodhisattva. Transcending any religious boundaries, one may walk in communion with nature. Soon all worldly desires will subside, and with a clear mind, one will be filled with the wisdom of Manjusri Bodhisattva. 卍

The Joy of Keeping Forest Colors in the Heart

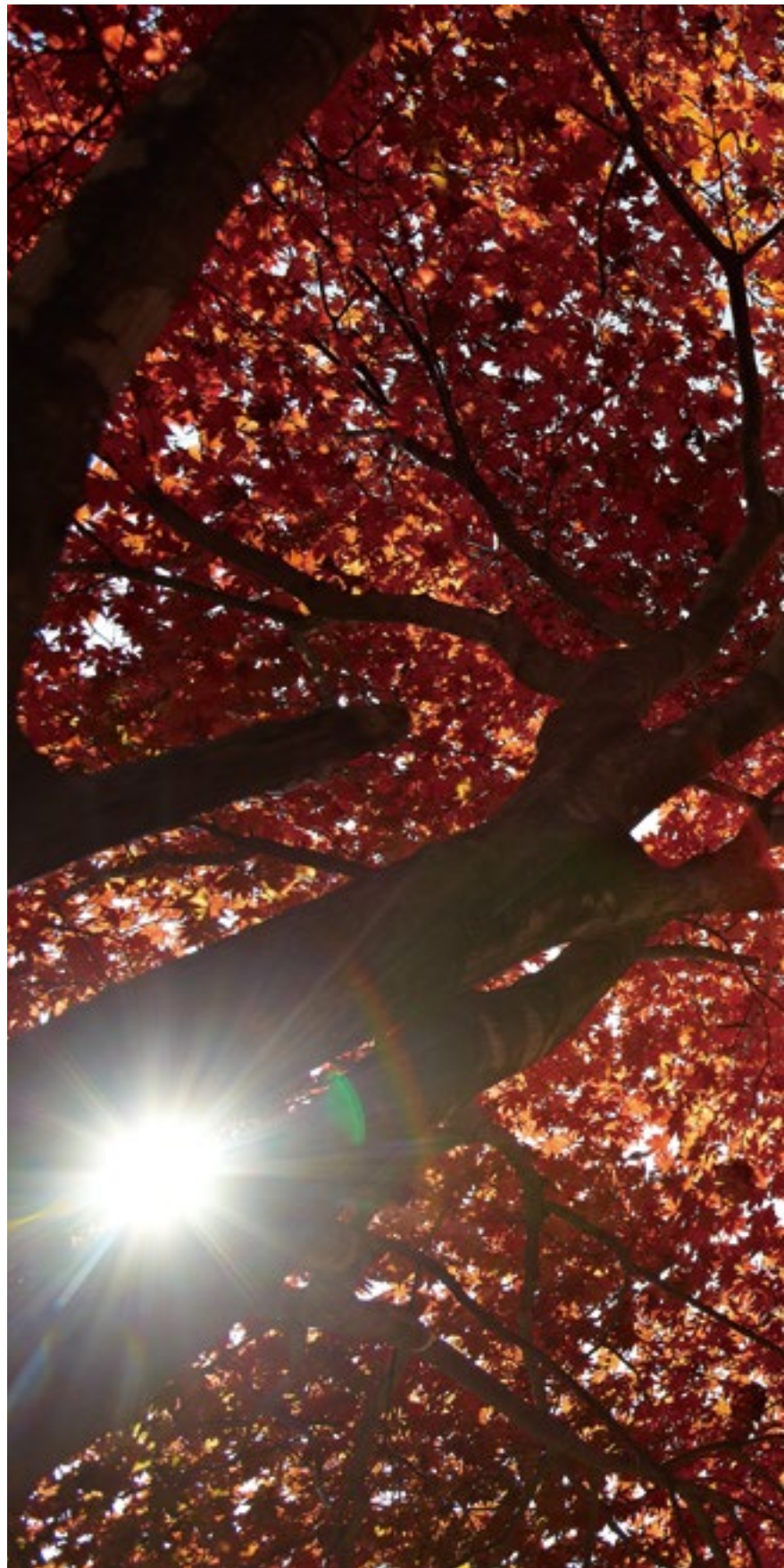
The sky is vast, and the wind from the forest is refreshing. The water flowing in the mountain valleys changes color. All of these make me realize fall is coming. Cool breezes without a hint of moisture and the indigo blue water are messengers of fall. At this time of year, temple forests also change colors.

Forests experience seasonal changes in accordance with natural law, often unnoticed by us. Unfortunately, most of us do not have the level of awareness that enables us to appreciate the moment-by-moment changes in the forest. Caught up in the daily routine of our lives, it is difficult to have the presence of mind to reflect calmly on nature.

A few years ago, I saw the fall leaves ablaze with a myriad of colors in the forest at Seonunsa Temple. That awesome experience is still with me. The forest path from Seonunsa's One Pillar Gate to the Gate of Heavenly Kings was so dazzling there were no words to describe it. Many people visiting the temple that day shared that touching experience with me, and I was blessed to be a part of it. Whenever enjoying such a beautiful scene, savor it and don't taint it with unnecessary words or noise. People aware of the magic of the moment had a special glow about them, and their faces beamed.

Most visitors to Seonunsa Temple are moved by the multi-colored fall foliage, but the breadth and depth of their emotional experience will differ from person to person. For those still clinging to their usual desires, habits and thoughts, the moment the forest is out of sight is the moment the experience ends. Looking back on my own temple forest visits, I find some similar experiences. Some scenes still captivate me even after years have passed, while others are only vague memories. This seems to depend on my state of mind when I visit a temple. When I visit a temple with an uncluttered mind, I absorb more of the experience. When my mind is cluttered, I absorb less, and the memories are less vivid and lasting.

One thing I now realize, though rather late, is that I need to let go of any greed, anger and foolishness I have buried inside when I visit a temple. Then I can absorb more and become one with the experience. A vessel needs to be emptied before it can be filled. That is especially true of the mind.





Maple tree forest at Seonunsa Temple in Gochang



Rock-Carved Buddha of Dosoram Hermitage at Seonunsa Temple in Gochang

Life can sometimes be a battle, and that often leaves scars upon the heart. Edward Wilson, a professor at Harvard University, says that nature's beauty is great for healing wounded souls, a phenomenon he calls "biophilia." He defines biophilia as "the urge to affiliate with other forms of life," and a true sense of humanity can be realized when we commune with nature. In the same vein, I contend that temple forests, or any forest, can provide a magic potion to reinvigorate us when we are beaten down and weary with civilization. We should cherish the inspiration and hope nature gives us deep in our heart as long as possible and draw strength from it in times of need.

It is not only Seonunsa's temple forest that can enrich our minds and heal wounded souls. There are countless temples in Korea that exude natural beauty at the changing of the seasons, especially at the arrival of spring and fall, but they are often overlooked. How very sad!

The first signs of spring, we notice in our own neighborhoods, but not the first signs of autumn. By the time we sense the arrival of autumn, unseen processes have already been preparing for it, and we only have a relatively short time to enjoy the breath-taking autumn foliage. The first signs that fall is coming appear on distant mountain ridges. Then they gradually creep down the mountainsides before manifesting in our neighborhoods. This is the opposite of what happens in spring when we notice the first signs of spring in our neighborhoods, and then it gradually spreads up into the mountains.



Maple tree forest at Seonunsa Temple in Gochang

Forests tend to remain green and expressionless all summer long, but almost daily changes can be noticed in the fall, which most city dwellers do not notice. However, when you observe a temple forest, or any forest, with heightened awareness, you have a greater appreciation of its beauty and the magic transpiring there. It is not that hard to do. The variety of colors in an autumn forest are often augmented by dazzling shades of red from trees like Korean maples, Amur maples, lacquer trees, sumacs, Korean barberries, mountain ashes, mountain cherries and winged spindles; shades of yellow and yellowish-brown from trees like aspens, ginger plants, basswoods, fragrant snowbells, oaks, dogwoods and birches. Fall foliage created by broadleaf trees is less noticeable because the transformation begins in late summer. In fall the continual transformation of the maple trees is most stunning. The leaf veins struggle to remain green to the last minute but soon turn yellow and bright yellow and finally to red. However, even the vivid red foliage of maples does not last long and eventually succumbs to yellowish brown, adorning the last moment of life. Soon the trees shed all their leaves to greet the winter. They cease their struggle and prepare for the coming winter.

Enjoying fall in a temple forest is simple. There are no peaks to climb, no valleys to cross and no schedules to keep. Just come, take your time, walk around, and fill your spirit with the dazzling colors of fall. Leave your cares and worries at home. They are not welcome here. And when your spirit is full, go home for another round with life. You can always come back. 🍁

Article by
Jeon Yeong-u (Honorary professor at Kookmin University)

Photos by
Ha Ji-kwon



Main Buddha Hall of Bulguksa Temple seen from the Jahamun Gate

Temple Gates

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Architecture is made complete with gates. Serving the function of keeping people safe and comfortable, architecture provides protection from outside with walls and fences, and from the weather with roofs and eaves. Walls without gates, however, isolate the interior from the outside world. In fact, all architectural structures are made whole by installing gates last. With closed gates one finds stability and comfort, but the gates should be wide open at times to remove the barrier and encourage communication and development. Therefore, gates may represent the history and culture of an era. The grand fortress gates to the capital city of Seoul, like Namdaemun and Dongdaemun, exude the brilliant magnificence of the Joseon Dynasty while the smaller gates of country houses radiate warmth and comfort and possibly memories of childhood. Temple gates represent profound Buddhist teachings and the ardent wishes of devotees.

In the early years of Korean Buddhism, the standards for a temple compound required only certain gates to be installed. These included a middle gate that opened into the central area where the Main Buddha Hall sat, and a front gate functioning as the main gate of the whole temple compound, usually located south of the middle gate. This layout for temple gates, seemingly reflecting the influence of palace architecture, was applied to most large temples of the 7th century including the now abandoned temple sites of Cheongamsa in Pyeongyang, Mireuksa in Iksan, and Hwangnyongsa in Gyeongju.

In the late 9th century, temples began to be established on mountains as Korea's Seon School began to flourish. This prompted changes in a temple's layout to adapt to the mountainous terrain, and this is clearly seen at mountain temples that have a variety of gates. Placed along a path that connects a temple's main center to its entrance, these gates add philosophical meanings to the footsteps walking the path to enlightenment. With these new meanings, gates with diverse names were established. One is reminded of the oneness of the truth when passing through the One Pillar Gate, receives the blessings of the guardian deities at the Gate of Heavenly Kings, and finally, rejoices upon entering the Buddhist paradise through the Paradise Gate. In short, temple gates were built to help enlighten temple visitors.

Mountain temples have numerous gates. Of all the architectural structures in the world, probably no other place has as many gates as a temple. As one passes one gate after another, beginning from the climbing access trail to the temple compound, one is more and more purified, magnified by the anticipation of going deeper into the mountains. These diverse temples gates are unique to Korean mountain temples and not found in the temples of China or Japan.

The first structure one finds at the entrance to a temple is the One Pillar Gate (Iljumun). With two pillars on both sides, supporting a heavy roof with eaves, the gate looks precarious and weighted down at times. Nonetheless, it is built this way to symbolize that truth is one and that though the paths of practice are many, they ultimately all fuse into one.



Gate of Non-Duality at Geonbongsa Temple in Goseong
Paradise Gate at Buseoksa Temple in Yeongju

The Gate of Heavenly Kings (Cheonwangmun) and the Vajra Gate or Diamond Gate (Geumgangmun) are different in style from the One Pillar Gate. These two gates both have four pillars and in the two little spaces on both sides of the passageway are statues of guardian deities. These deities keep the temple compound pure by warding off all evil forces within and without the compound. Of the 20 to 30 extant Gates of Heavenly Kings from the Joseon Dynasty in South Korea, the oldest one was established in 1515 at Borimsa Temple in Jangheung, followed by another at Jikjisa Temple in Gimcheon, established in 1596. In addition, four other of these gates boast over 400 years of history at such temples as Beopjusa in Boeun (1624), Songgwangsa in Suncheon (1628), Hwaeomsa in Gurye (1632) and Songgwangsa in Wanju (1649). The Gate of Heavenly Kings at Naejangsa Temple is especially admired because of the beautiful, picturesque scenes incorporated into it.

The Vajra Gate has depictions of Vajra Warriors (aka. Inwang). Of all the gates, the Vajra Gate is placed nearest to the Main Buddha Hall because Vajra Warriors walk in front of the Buddha to protect him whenever he ventures forth. Even the placement of a gate faithfully reflects Buddhist scripture. The tall fir trees lining both sides of the Vajra Gate at Ssanggyesa Temple in Hadong resemble Vajra Warriors guarding the Buddha.



Gate of Heavenly Kings at Jikjisa Temple in Gimcheon



Liberation Gate at Dogapsa Temple in Yeongam (National Treasure No. 50)



Vajra Gate and Gate of Heavenly Kings at Songgwangsa Temple in Wanju
Vajra Gate at Ssanggyesa Temple in Hadong

The Liberation Gate (Haetalmun) encourages visitors to escape from the suffering of transmigration. This is related to a passage from the *Guangzan jing*, (Perfection of Wisdom Sutra), in which the Buddha says to Sariputra, “With the discretion of the Dharma Eye... practice Dharma, practice emptiness, practice absence of thought and absence of aspiration, which will lead to the gate of liberation.” Built in 1473, the Liberation Gate at Dogapsa Temple is 550 years old. The number of people who have passed through this gate for centuries and attained liberation would not be a few.

The Gate of Non-Duality (Burimun) is similar to the One Pillar Gate in its meaning that truth is one, but it is based on a passage from the *Minor Collection* (Kṣudraka Āgama) that says “Self, others and myriad phenomena are neither dual, nor different, nor extinct.” It interconnects with the saying “84,000 Dharma gates are in fact one.” The One Pillar Gate at Geonbongsa Temple has a Vajra design inscribed on all four pillars, an unusual feature which also serves to protect.

The last gate to discuss symbolizes the gate to the Buddhist paradise. It is the Paradise Gate called Anyangmun. A Buddhist text titled *Guang hongming ji* says “There is a country called Anyang in the west. To reach it one should travel a long journey over countless regions.” Here, Anyang refers to Paradise or the Pure Land. The gate called Jahamun also leads to Paradise. The term “jaha” refers to “red sunset,” and the Buddhist paradise or the Pure Land is in the west where the sun sets. This makes the Jahamun the gate in front of the Buddhist paradise. Jahamun or Gate of the Red Sunset is a name that incites poetic inspiration. One suddenly realizes there is a reason their footsteps feel lighter when they enter the Anyangmun at Buseoksa Temple in Yeongju or the Jahamun at Bulguksa Temple in Gyeongju.

When the threshold is raised too high and the latch is locked tight, the gate forms a formidable fortress that separates self from others. With only pillars and eaves, most temple gates do not have doors that loom ahead. Even when there are gates, they are usually wide open and symbols of interaction and hope that connect this shore to the other shore, the sacred to the mundane, and me to you. That is why every visitor to a temple insists on passing through the narrow temple gates instead of walking around them.

Article by
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Savory Fall Flavors from Experienced Hands

Hyangjeok Segye,
Temple Food Institute in Seoul

Four or five years ago I met Ven. Dongwon
for the first time.

In a garden behind Bongnyeongsa,
a Buddhist temple and nunnery in Suwon,
we engaged in animated conversation.
Meeting her again at Hyangjeok Segye,
a temple food training institute in Seoul,
I found her to be the same enchanting
conversationalist with magic hands.

The simple and savory fragrance of autumn
comes alive in her dishes.

A Hub of Temple Food Education

Across the street from Jogyesa Temple, the “general headquarters” of Korean Buddhism and featuring a unique, modern One Pillar Gate, is the Templestay Information Center.

The 2nd floor is the home of Hyangjeok Segye (lit. Abode of the Fragrant Buddha). Here I met Ven. Dongwon who teaches temple food to the wider public. Having arrived earlier, she was already preparing the ingredients to be used today.

“It’s been a long time. How have you been?” she greeted me first. Even after such a long time, she received me delightfully as if we had never parted.

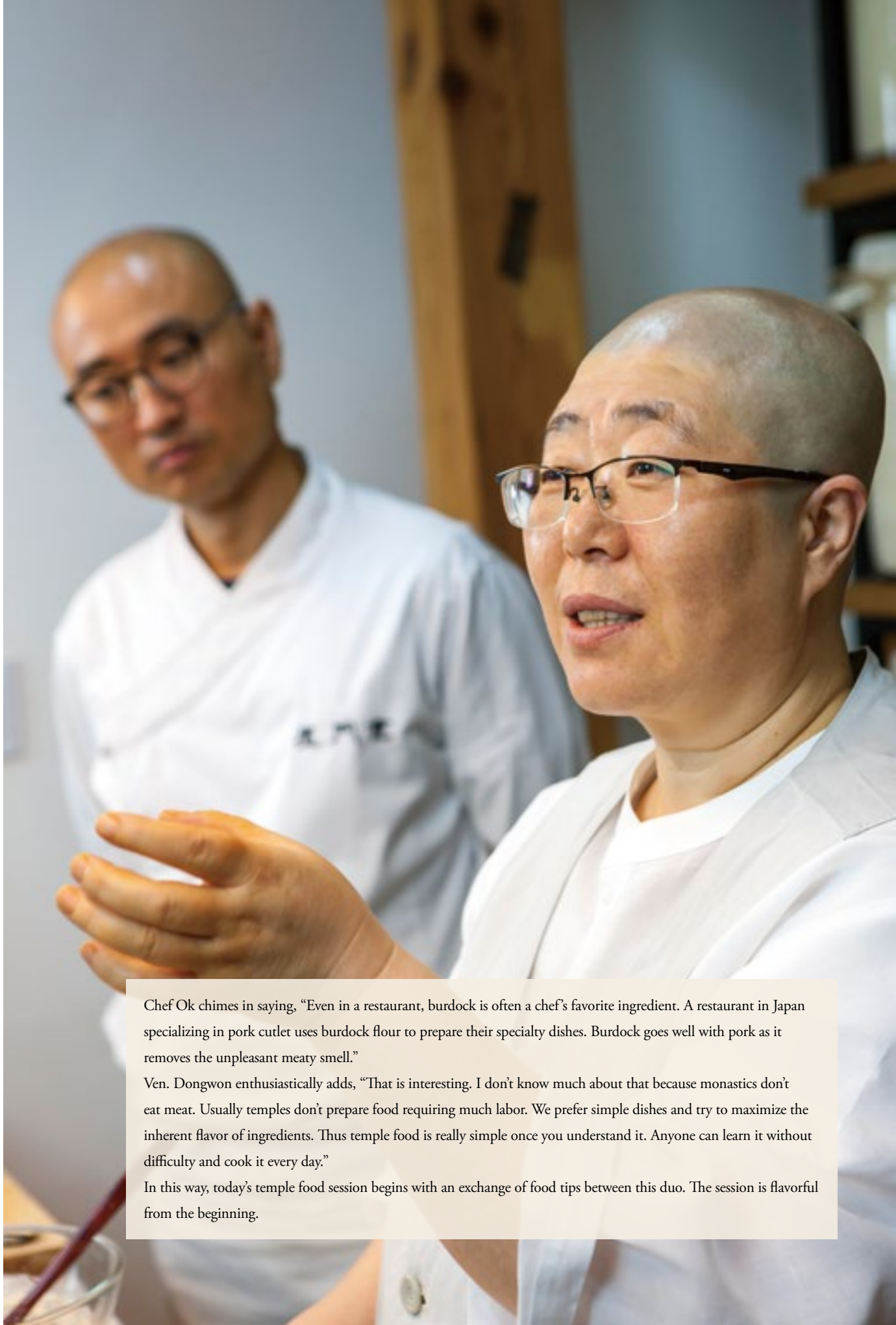
Ven. Dongwon promoted temple food for a long time at Bongnyeongsa. The temple is



now acclaimed for its temple food, a feat significantly attributable to Ven. Dongwon’s passionate effort. Food reflects the person who made it. Food with a hearty, flavorful and clean aftertaste, that describes Ven. Dongwon’s temple food.

Donning an apron, Chef Ok Dong-sik prepares ingredients beside Ven. Dongwon. Chef Ok is busier than ever since he opened a branch restaurant of Okdongsik in Yeoksam-dong, an affluent neighborhood in southern Seoul. That’s because more people want to try his food after six restaurant reviews chose Okdongsik as one of Korea’s major restaurants last year including the Michelin Guide and Korea’s Blue Ribbon Survey. Two masters working in harmony side by side in the kitchen, Ven. Dongwon and Chef Ok soon engage in lively conversation.

Ven. Dongwon begins her conversation praising burdock saying, “Burdock is the best food in fall. No part of the burdock goes to waste. The cleaned skin, peeled, can be dried and brewed for tea. Many Seon monastics who need to watch their health to sustain meditation in a Seon room look forward to burdock tea.”



Chef Ok chimes in saying, “Even in a restaurant, burdock is often a chef’s favorite ingredient. A restaurant in Japan specializing in pork cutlet uses burdock flour to prepare their specialty dishes. Burdock goes well with pork as it removes the unpleasant meaty smell.”

Ven. Dongwon enthusiastically adds, “That is interesting. I don’t know much about that because monastics don’t eat meat. Usually temples don’t prepare food requiring much labor. We prefer simple dishes and try to maximize the inherent flavor of ingredients. Thus temple food is really simple once you understand it. Anyone can learn it without difficulty and cook it every day.”

In this way, today’s temple food session begins with an exchange of food tips between this duo. The session is flavorful from the beginning.

Plants Tremble When a Monk Appears

Stories of temple food ingredients told by monastics embody the culture of temples. Their communal life style necessitates handling food in bulk like restaurants, but, unlike restaurants, temples depend a lot on preserving food. In spring and fall they prepare ingredients in bulk and store them to use when needed. In spring, a temple may order 300 kg of shiitake mushrooms, dry them, store them, and use them for up to a year. Spring is the best time to prepare dried shiitake mushrooms because after the harsh winter, the mushrooms have a superb appearance, taste and fragrance.

Ven. Dongwon shares her food experience saying, “At temples, monastics do all aspects of food preparation. In the past we stripped off chili pepper leaves and prepared them. Chili peppers were also sorted according to type. A long time ago my teacher said that a monk appeared, and seeing him, the mountains, rivers and all plant life were gripped in fear. That’s because frugal monastics use everything and leave nothing.”

The subject of frugality in cooking temple food continues. Even for *gimchi* (or kimchi), most people throw away the cabbage roots, but Ven. Dongwon advises not to because the roots are even higher in nutrition. She recommends cutting the roots in thin slices before serving to make them easier to chew. Chef Ok agrees enthusiastically saying, “I totally agree with you. When I serve *gimchi* at my restaurant, I use every part of the cabbage, and customers seem to love it. I try not to create any food waste in my restaurant. I love the fact that I own it and can try whatever I like.”

Listening to Chef Ok speak, Ven. Dongwon’s eyes sparkle. She looks at him as though having met a chef with raised awareness.





The Protagonist on a Korean Table is the Rice, not the Side Dishes

Even during conversation, the duo's hands are not idle. Kok Kok Kok! After trimming and cutting ingredients, the actual cooking begins, starting with the dish that takes longest to cook. First is the rice with burdock, followed by black trumpet mushroom

cold-remedy soup, and lastly, soy bean pancakes. Of these, the one that piqued my curiosity most was the black trumpet mushroom cold-remedy soup. What on earth could that be?

Praising the curative property of the black trumpet cold-remedy soup, Ven. Dongwon said:

“With our raised standard of living, monastics can easily go to doctors and pharmacies now, but it was not like that in the past. Furthermore, at temples where tens or hundreds of monastics lived together, if one caught a cold, it spread instantly. Prevention was the best remedy at a temple. The simple dish called “cold-remedy” worked great for monastics. All of its ingredients have a “warm energy” to raise body temperature. Cold viruses are vulnerable to heat, so you should try this before winter comes.” Actually, the recipe itself is really simple. Trim all the ingredients, put in a pot and boil vigorously, that's it. Simple to prepare but tastes good and prevents colds. What more could one ask?

As each dish is being cooked, the kitchen is filled with savory aromas. Rice with burdock is cooked in a pot, not an electric rice cooker, for a reason. Chef Ok says rice cooked in a pot tastes far better, but most people opt for convenience over taste, which he finds frustrating. Ven. Dongwon nods in agreement. The better the heat is conducted, the more alive the rice tastes. Rice cooked in an iron caldron is even better. On a Korean table, the protagonist is not the side dishes but the rice. That is why the taste of the rice is essential.

The Labor of the Cook and Attitude of the Eater

Finally, all the dishes are ready. The duo puts the rice with burdock and black trumpet cold-remedy soup into bowls and nicely arranges on a plate the round, golden brown soybean pancakes. Looking at the set table, Ven. Dongwon remarks, “How simple! This simplicity is what temple food is all about.” We all sit down and pick up our spoons. The tastes of the three dishes they prepared are pretty much what I had imagined from the recipes. In the rice with burdock the bitter yet savory taste of the burdock harmonized well with the sweet taste of rice. The rice itself was good enough that I didn’t feel any need for side dishes. The black trumpet cold-remedy soup, with its spicy flavor and fragrant black trumpet mushrooms, harmonized well with the rice. The soup covered up the sweet taste of rice completely and perked up my appetite. The soybean pancakes (*jeon*) had a wonderful aroma and were as delicious as I had expected. If one asks what the difference is between soybean pancakes and tofu or *biji* (tofu residue), I’d have to answer that their tastes are totally different and cannot be compared. Soybean pancakes have a simpler flavor not found in tofu or *biji*. They’re also crispy and taste more “alive.”

Enjoying the bountiful table, I was reminded of a story Ven. Dongwon told me before.

“When food is eaten with happiness and relish, the cook is greatly fulfilled and satisfied. However, cooking food can be hard labor itself. Without humility, one cannot cook. Sometimes I cook for myself, but most times I cook for others. Thus, cooking is a sacrifice. It is not easy to please the tastes of others. I hope each of us can reflect on how much labor many people put into each dish we eat. One dish requires the sweat of numerous people and interdependent relationships.”

One dish is connected to numerous people, and one dish contains the whole universe. Perhaps, the essence of the Buddhist term “flower ornament” is contained in a bowl of food. With a frame of mind that recognizes these connections, one picks up a spoon with gratitude and eats with appreciation. Perhaps temple food does not stop at simply preparing it, but also encompasses the proper mindset of those who eat it. With this observation, it was a table replete with the flavors of fall. ❸

Article by
Jeong Tae-gyeom

Photos by
Ha Ji-kwon



RECIPES



Black Trumpet Mushroom Cold-Remedy Soup

INGREDIENTS

100 g dried black trumpet mushrooms,
100 g white radish,
50 g soy bean sprouts,
10 g kelp, 3 dried red chili peppers, 2 tbs house soy sauce, a little sea salt & minced ginger, 8 C water



DIRECTIONS

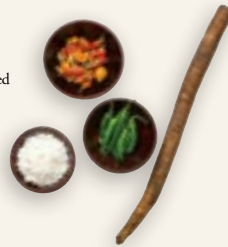
1. Cut the radish a little thick, trim and wash soy bean sprouts, and wash dried black trumpet mushrooms, kelp and dried chilis under running water.
2. Pour water in a pot and add radishes, kelp and dried chilis. Add house soy and bring to a boil.
3. Add bean sprouts to the soup and boil once more. Lastly add mushrooms and sea salt to taste, boil once more and serve.



Rice with Burdock

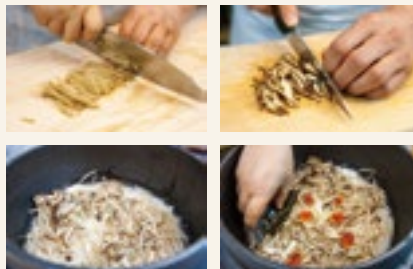
INGREDIENTS

150 g burdock root, 1 1/2 C soaked rice, 2 shiitake mushrooms, 1/2 each of green and red chilis, 1 kelp leaf, a small amount of whole sesame seeds, house soy sauce & sesame oil



DIRECTIONS

1. Thin shred burdock root and soak in water. Thin shred shiitake mushrooms.
2. Soak rice in water for 1-3 hours.
3. Put soaked rice in a pot and lay shredded burdock and kelp on top. Add water and cook. If you add a few gardenia seed pods at this time, the rice is more nutritious and takes on a bright yellow color, making it look more appetizing.
4. When rice is cooked, mix with sesame oil and whole sesame seeds.
5. Prepare seasoned soy sauce by mixing house soy sauce with chopped green and red chilis and sesame oil. Serve with rice.



Soybean Pancakes

INGREDIENTS

1 C soy beans, 1/2 C rice, 50 g cabbage *gimchi*, 100 g mung bean sprouts, one small carrot, salt and water



DIRECTIONS

1. Wash soy beans and rice, and soak separately in water for 5 hours.
2. Wash soaked soy beans a few times to separate and discard skins. Put soaked beans and rice into a blender, add 1/2 cup water and blend into a thick paste.
3. Squeeze excess juice from cabbage *gimchi* and chop it up. Blanch mung bean sprouts in salted boiling water and mix with sesame oil and salt. Julienne carrot.
4. Mix the preparations from steps 2 & 3 and add a little salt if needed.
5. Add sufficient amount of cooking oil in heated pan. Scoop 1-2 spoonfuls of the mixture from step 4 and pour into the pan. Allow to spread into a flat round patty. Fry golden brown on both sides.



Their dyed hair fastened in a ponytail tells me they are young men of a new generation. But the earnest way they wield knives and pots tells me they mean business. Their sharp eyes follow Jeong Kwan's every move so as not to miss anything. Jeong Kwan, a fully ordained Buddhist nun and temple food chef, moves deftly about the temple's kitchen and commands, "Stir-fry faster! Prepare food fast as in fast food but eat slowly as in slow food."

“Mind Food” of Chefs at Cheonjinam Hermitage

Chef Kim Chang-hun obeys and stir-fries cucumbers and then overripe cucumbers (*nogak*) by rotating the pan quickly.

In a small space with five people, it's not easy to cook standing before a fire, but the four apprentice chefs show no sign of fatigue. These four young men are going to stay for three to seven months at Cheonjinam Hermitage of Baegyangsa Temple located in Jangseong. What has made these four, with impressive academic and business backgrounds, come to this remote place nestled on Mt. Naejongsan? All of them have studied cooking in America, Australia or France, and have worked as chefs or restaurant owners.

The young men unanimously answer that the reason they are here is because they were touched by Jeong Kwan's cooking philosophy.

The New York Times first introduced Jeong Kwan as the “philosopher chef,” and hailed her cooking as “the most exquisite food in the world.” She has been visited by a world-renowned architect and has appeared in several food-related documentary films.







“At first I just wanted to learn her cooking secrets,” says Lee Su, a 28-year old chef from France. Having come to learn temple food but also learning “proper attitude” in the process, Lee is a Korean but was born and raised overseas. Having studied at Le Cordon Bleu and having operated restaurants in Hong Kong, Australia and France, Lee found himself drawn to Korean food despite his specialization in Western food. However, upon his visit to Korea a while ago, Lee was shocked to eat at a famous restaurant and find no hint of Korean culture amidst the pungent tastes and aromas. He then participated in a Templestay program at Baegyangsa, and met Jeong Kwan at one of her cooking classes. He was deeply impressed by “the way she treated food as a living organism.” Every word she uttered while cooking had strength and weight. Drawn by this unwavering confidence, Lee came to study at Cheonjinam.

Two other chefs, Kang Seong-wan and Ryu Won-seok, came to Cheonjinam right after graduating from the Culinary Institute of America (CIA). They disclose they came here at first to learn the basics of Korean food. Kang came here during summer vacation last year after an acquaintance told him about it, and he studied temple food under Jeong Kwan for ten days. After graduating, he returned to Cheonjinam with his friend Ryu. “I came to learn temple food at first, but I’ve also learned the Buddhist concept of meals as an offering,” says Ryu. He elaborates, “Unlike the past when I ate quickly to fill my stomach, I now concentrate on the act of eating.” With his new attitude toward food, he was able to establish a direction for a box lunch business, a new business to be launched and run together with his friend. He shares his hope of “providing tasty, pleasant food that is easy on the stomach.” A Chinese woman in her 30s begins her second month at Cheonjinam. She came here after seeing the Netflix documentary series “Chef’s Table, Season 3” which aired in February 2017. The series featured six world-renowned chefs, and Jeong Kwan was the subject of episode one. Watching it, she was greatly moved by Jeong Kwan’s lifestyle who cooked in close connection with nature. Now at Cheonjinam, she feels “the rich taste and peace from Jeong Kwan’s food cooked with ingredients picked from the nearby garden.”

“Food ingredients torn roughly in a slapdash style have a richer taste. It is important to discern the character of the ingredients,” says Jeong Kwan while cooking a soup using ingredients from her vegetable garden. It is the very garden which fascinated Eric Ripert, the chef at the Michelin three-starred Le Bernardin in New York City, where weeds grew thick among the vegetables, and the boundary between garden and field was invisible. With various ingredients plucked from her garden, including chili peppers, zucchinis and leaf lettuce, Jeong Kwan whips out new dishes every day. Jeong Kwan has never attended a culinary school. She has no set recipes either because even with the same ingredients she creates different dishes. Thus, seasonal ingredients appear on her table in different incarnations every day, which she describes as “food unfolding limitlessly day by day.”

Examining her vegetable garden, she says, “Today, the lettuce flower stalks are beautifully grown,” and decides on the spot to cook lettuce pancakes (*sangchu jeon*) as a side dish for lunch. She decides on two more: curled mallow soup (which has an abundant aroma in fall) and stir-fried cucumbers. Upon returning to the kitchen with the lettuce, she assigns different tasks to different chefs according to their specialty and character. Known for his talent in choosing the appropriate seasoning for cooked vegetables, Chef Kim is assigned the stir-fried cucumbers. Kim fast fries the cucumbers and overripe cucumbers, both of which have been salted and excess water removed. Assigned with lettuce pancakes, Kang dips the freshly plucked, unshapely lettuce leaves with stalks attached into a batter made of ground potatoes and flour. He then fries them in a heated pan sprinkled with perilla oil until golden brown on both sides.





Meanwhile, Jeong Kwan makes curled mallow soup with *doenjang*, fermented bean paste aged four years. She kneads the curled mallow leaves forcefully to draw out the bitter taste, rinses them and squeezes out the excess water. She mixes *doenjang* into some water and adds potatoes and zucchinis by scooping them into bite sizes with a spoon without using a knife. She then stretches the flour dough thinly, tears off bite-size pieces and adds them to the soup, stirring occasionally to prevent them sticking together. Lastly, she adds spicy Cheongyang chili peppers after tearing them roughly with her hands. She says, "They say curled mallow soup in fall should be eaten with the front gate locked." This is a humorous Korean saying that means the soup tastes too good to share with neighbors. The savory smell of the soup, great in taste and high in nutrients, fills the kitchen. She then says they need to prepare "*maji*," a mid-day rice offering to the Buddha. Rice offerings are cooked differently from regular rice. One should not engage in idle talk while cooking it and should carry the cooked rice in one's right hand when taking it to the Buddha hall. *Maji* is usually offered between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m., and making today's *maji* is assigned to Chef Ryu. From washing the rice, to cooking it and to offering it to the Buddha, Ryu moves in a calm, nimble manner.

After the offering, all sit around and eat in the style of *baru gongyang* (formal monastic meal). Each takes one spoonful of rice, and one spoonful of soup, and then munches the crisp fried cucumbers. They're unanimous in the verdict, "Umm... This sure is good!"

Kim defines the temple food he learned from Jeong Kwan as "food of the mind." He says, "She doesn't follow a set recipe but adapts and acts following her instincts and the nature of the ingredients. From her I have learned that to know my food ingredients is to know myself. From the food I cook I should be able to know my state of mind and my emotions. I must not forget this when I return to my job."

Chefs must concentrate on the dishes they are preparing with attentive devotion and visualize the mind and energy they want to achieve. The chefs studying at Cheonjinam are absorbing first-hand the lessons Jeong Kwan wants to convey through her temple cuisine. ㉔



Article by
Editorial Staff
Photos by
Ha Ji-kwon

“Peck! Peck! Click! Click!”

Ven. Deongmun, abbot of Hwaeomsa Temple

A conspicuously clear sound comes to my ears from both sides: one from right next to me, the forest beside Hwaeomwon Hall where both needleleaf and broadleaf trees grow thick, and the other from the direction of Nahanjeon and Wontongjeon Halls, farther away. The sound from the forest is made by Japanese pygmy woodpeckers pecking at tree trunks. It reminds me of the sound of wooden handbells (“*moktak*”) that monastics strike when chanting. If monastics are knocking on the door of the mind in search of the Buddha’s “flower-adorned world,” then the woodpeckers are devotedly making offerings to life, the most solemn mission of nature. I wonder sometimes if perhaps nature and humanity walk the same path.

Hwaeomsa Temple in summer is magnificent indeed. As I walk along the access road from the entrance, I listen to the gurgling of clear brooks running through the valleys of Mt. Jirisan, and the rustling sound from dense forests where trees, branches and leaves converse while being swayed by the wind. Woodpeckers, scops owls and crow-tits sing together of the rapture of life. Then, as I pass the Diamond Gate and Gate of Heavenly Kings, I am surrounded by the sound of *moktaks* and chanting. All is in harmony with the universe, the wondrous sounds of the Buddhas, and the chorus of heaven and earth.







Ven. Deongmun, abbot of Hwaeomsa Temple, guides me toward a structure via a path of stepping stones, saying, “This is exactly the “Lotus-Treasury World,” the Buddhist paradise where Vairocana Buddha attained Buddhahood. This temple is like a gigantic lotus flower. The building we have arrived at is named Bojeru, embodying the salvation of all living beings.

Bojeru Pavilion breathes history. The columns in the lower part are made from thick, untrimmed and curved logs, the curves giving them the appearance of dancing. Lacking *dancheong*, traditional five-colored cosmic decorative designs, the columns retain their natural beauty. Between the columns of the 1st floor, I see the Seomjingang, an ancient river with a lengthy history, and I see the entire path leading to Hwaeomsa. Looking upward toward the mountains, many Buddha halls and beautiful pagodas create a cozy sanctuary, and behind them stands Nogodan, a sacred peak of Mt. Jirisan, smiling quietly. The temple is where devotees gather, and Nogodan Peak is like the “Great Hero” (Buddha) beaming and beckoning them.

“Come lie down on this wooden floor and tell me what you see,” says Ven. Deongmun. Wearing formal monastic robes, he doesn’t lie down with us. The best part of lying on Bojeru’s floor is watching the sky. In a temple I usually bow before the Buddha and only get to see the floor. However, lying here, that is not the case. The sky is vast and unobstructed. “So is the world of Buddhas and temples. Open to all; a place anyone can enter and receive a warm welcome and where the mind is not confined,” says Ven. Deongmun. He further says he helps those who want to stay at the temple have this kind of experience.



Hwaeomsa's Templestay programs are different from others. They don't insist that participants offer 108 prostrations (a common Buddhist practice), make prayer beads or do *hwadu* meditation. He simply tells them to stay a day or two and rest. He asks them to "toss themselves into the void" with no expectations and try to empty their mind. He tells them to look at the mountains, the sky and the moon while simply sitting on the wooden veranda, even all night if they wish. When we sit still doing nothing, we can gain insight into the gap we put between self and family, self and society, and self and the world.

Ven. Taegam, the guiding monk of the Templestay program, has similar thoughts. "Temples often say 'let go,' but I ask participants what they should let go of. What I mean is that they should even let go of the idea that they are obliged to let go of anything." His advice is to drop any expectation of gaining anything from the temple; simply tear down the mental wall inside and let the sky, clouds, mountains and wind flow freely within you. In doing so, you will naturally experience something, and that could be the beginning of realization.

Jirisan, the mountain on which Hwaeomsa nestles, is a magnanimous mountain, 314 km in circumference. Located on the western mid-slope of Nogodan, Hwaeomsa has a central area consisting of the Main Buddha Hall and the magnificent Gakhwangeon on the left, the largest wooden building in Korea. In front of Gakhwangeon is a stone lantern, the biggest in Korea, and a three-story stone pagoda supported by four lions. Behind Gakhwangeon stands another stone pagoda supported by four lions, a monument to the filial piety of Patriarch Yeongi, the founder of Hwaeomsa. All of these are viewed as great treasures.


At 4:30 the next morning, I attend the morning Buddhist ceremony. As I lower myself onto the floor of Gakhwangeon, I am confronted by three majestic, solemn statues of Buddhas (364 cm) including Sakyamuni Buddha and four bodhisattvas. However, I do not feel overawed. With their profound, tranquil and gentle faces, they reveal to us earthlings the "flower-adorned world" of the Buddha.

The message of the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, the most grandiose and comprehensive of all sutras, boils down to just one thing, Ven. Deongmun says: “All sentient beings are inherently Buddhas. To take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha is to realize that we are all inherently Buddhas. Upon realizing this, individuals imprisoned in darkness are relieved of their agony, and the world becomes a realm of splendid joy. Then we come to love all forms of life and walk together toward a world where all can live together in harmony”

Since the current abbot took office, Hwaeomsa has transformed itself as a spiritual sanctuary where people can come with peace of mind. Every Saturday, a small concert is held at the entrance to Hwaeomsa in a style similar to busking. Anyone can attend dressed any way they choose. For the past ten years the temple has also held mountain temple concerts where people listen to music while sitting around in groups or lying on the grass. The idea is to listen to music in a relaxed position and with eyes closed. Hwaeomsa Templestay participants can spend their evenings, nights and mornings in this same state of relaxation. About this Ven. Deongmun says, “I want Buddhism to provide a space that young people can come and visit any time. Instead of forcing teachings upon them, we should let them learn the teachings naturally while they are here resting. When they begin to visit temples from childhood with their parents and see Buddhas often, they may follow the Buddha’s teachings later on.” Ven. Deongmun’s thoughts flow effortlessly like a mountain stream.



The trail to Nogodan cuts through a thick growth of forest along the valley where clear waters run ceaselessly. These days, walking is praised as a way to heal the “dis-ease” of body and mind, and I anticipate the one-hour walk along the forest trail from Hwaeomsa to Yeongiam Hermitage very uplifting. Ven. Deongmun tells me that cars can drive up to Yeongiam Hermitage now, but soon it will become a vehicle-free area. Hearing this, I decide to climb the trail but find it difficult. Drenched in sweat, I encounter a 12 m high statue of Manjusri Bodhisattva. A new world unfolds before me, and my suffering disappears. The path to Gucheungam Hermitage is also a short uphill climb, but the abbot says the paved path will also return to being an old dirt road soon.

Temples are more accessible these days. Even with the scorching record heat of this summer, visiting Mt. Jirisan is like visiting a refreshing stream that washes away the pain of those beaten down by life. Ven. Deongmun says all Korean Buddhist temples should now abandon any desire for power and influence and reinvent themselves as an honest, trustworthy network of communities. In doing so, more Koreans will come to temples to learn Buddha’s teachings and apply those teachings to make the world more beautiful. On my way down the mountain, I suspect that such wisdom is what the Buddhas residing at Hwaeomsa want to teach us. 

Article by
Lee Dong-sik (Journalist)

Photos by
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Loving-Kindness Meditation





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Autumn 2018

Loving-kindness meditation is one form of “concentration meditation.”

Loving-kindness gives stability to our emotions, and a stable mind nurtures loving-kindness.

This is easily understood when we observe those moments we are not tranquil.

Some of the major mental phenomena that agitate our minds greatly include anxiety, anger and sorrow.

Once these emotions creep in, we are prone to burst into anger and may be hurt either mentally or physically. It takes a while to be restored to a calm state.

When we get angry, selfishness usually underlies the anger most of the time. In other words, we are angry because things do not go the way we want. Since industrialization, most everything, even love, has turned into a commodity, and we work ceaselessly with a passion for success. If there is neither peace nor tranquility in our effort, we are soon exhausted and aggravated. If things do not suit us even the least bit, anger is triggered. At the root of this anger lies our greed and/or selfishness.

This selfishness is always self-centered. This “self” never knows satisfaction because it has a perpetual sense of paucity. Loving-kindness meditation is just the right practice to help us overcome this selfishness. We should strive to fill the whole universe with loving-kindness and wish all sentient beings a life of happiness, ease and peace. That is loving-kindness meditation.

With good will for the entire cosmos,

Cultivate a limitless heart:

Above, below, and all around,

Unobstructed and without hostility or hate.

This is the 150th verse from the *Sutta Nipata*. “Obstruction” here refers to greed and anger; in other words selfishness. With the arising of loving-kindness, selfishness ceases as kindness overcomes the selfish mind. However, we sometime feel this works in the opposite direction in reality. But it is only a temporary phenomenon. In the end, loving-kindness conquers all because selfishness only makes you exhausted; loving-kindness brings unlimited happiness. Of course this is easier said than done. When we are gripped by anger, it is difficult to show consideration to self and others. Loving-kindness grows in proportion to the subjugation of anger. The more we overcome anger, the stronger our mind of loving-kindness becomes. To be able to forgive self and be considerate of others indicates how much we have overcome selfishness.





*Whether walking, lying down, or awake
One should be alert,
And committed to loving-kindness.
This is the sublime abiding in the here and now.*

This is the 151st verse from the *Sutta Nipata*. Can loving-kindness win over anger? Yes, and the process can be achieved in four steps. First is to be aware of whatever arises in your mind. Second is to have firm recognition that “this is the emotion of anger” based on clear awareness. Third is to fully experience the anger by holding it in your mind for a while. Fourth is to practice loving-kindness meditation by repeating, “May you be happy, in peace and at ease.” In this way we resolutely dwell in loving-kindness.

If anger still remains in the mind, we can meditate with the anger as the object of meditation. It won't be easy because you still feel strong aggression toward others. Still, we should let it go by being aware of the anger, admitting to it and embracing it. If we try to remove or control the anger forcefully, it will be to no avail, and we end up with even more severe stress. It is better to drop our defenses and just observe it until it disappears. Do not fight with yourself. If we lecture our children to forgive and embrace people they hate, most of them will be angry at us feeling we do not take their side.

In daily life, to listen to others attentively and proactively read others' pained minds is the practice of loving-kindness meditation. This practice dissolves our ill will and helps reveal our inherent inner kindness. Ill will is an obstruction to loving-kindness. However, boundless loving-kindness overcomes it. Loving-kindness is fundamentally to embrace self and the world and to have limitless compassion for all living beings who suffer. Stop your work for a minute, close your eyes, imagine people close to you and pray for their happiness and well-being. Then forgive yourself of your own wrongdoings and the wrongdoings of your neighbors. Then you will feel far more peaceful and at ease. ☸

Article by
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Illustration by
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for 26 2018

Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea

Dynamic Spaces Replete with the Originality of Korean Buddhism

Seven traditional Korean mountain temples were inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List on June 30, 2018 under the title "Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea" (hereafter "Sansa"). These temples are: Tongdosa in Yangsan, Beopjusa in Boeun, Buseoksa in Yeongju, Bongjeongsa in Andong, Magoksa in Gongju, Seonamsa in Suncheon and Daeheungsa in Haenam. The history and cultural heritage value of Korea's mountain temples, preserved for centuries by monastics and devotees, are now recognized worldwide. These Sansa are the 1,080th World Heritage listed by UNESCO, and the 13th in Korea. In terms of Korean Buddhist heritage, the Sansa are the 3rd such listing in Korea after Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple in 1995, and Haeinsa Temple's Janggyeong Panjeon (Repositories for the Tripitaka Koreana Woodblocks), also in 1995.

The Sansa were highly praised for their long legacy and as a living heritage of monastic life and religious practice. The World Heritage Committee said, "These seven temples have continued the tradition of Korean Buddhism that is both religious and deeply rooted in people's lives," and "The Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), a requirement for inscription, has been met because the temples' layouts accommodate the mountainous terrain specific to Korea and harmonize interior space with exterior space and the surrounding scenery; Buddhist thought and rituals distinctive to Korean Buddhism exist here; and the unique monastic life and culture are maintained based on monastics' daily life and education, Seon meditation and scriptural study." Commemorating Sansa's inscription, Templestay magazine introduces these seven mountain temples in two serials in its Fall and Winter issues.



Beopjusa Temple compound in Boeun © Choe Hang-yeong

Established by Vinaya Master Jajang in 646 (15th year of Queen Seondeok's reign), Tongdosa is the head temple of the 15th religious district of the Jogye Order. During the Silla and early Joseon eras, it functioned as the head temple, and when the Korean Empire designated 16 head temples in the nation, it became the head temple for Gyeongnam province. Continual reconstruction and repairs expanded the temple compound. Within the main temple compound of Tongdosa stand 69 structures, and in the surrounding mountains are 13 associated hermitages including Geungnagam and Jajangam.

With the enshrinement of the Buddha's body relics, Tongdosa became a "Buddha Jewel Temple," one of the three jewel temples in Korea. The other two are Haeinsa which enshrines the printing woodblocks for the Buddhist canon called *Tripitaka Koreana*, and Songgwangsa, a temple which produced 16 national preceptors. Jajang brought the Buddha's relics from Tang China, and enshrined them within the Diamond Precepts Altar (Geumgang Gyedan; National Treasure No. 290), which he established for exactly this purpose. At that time all prospective monks were required to come to Tongdosa and receive precepts at the Diamond Precepts Altar.

Since its establishment, Tongdosa's monastics have exerted tireless effort to guard the Buddha's relics enshrined there. Japanese invaders tried unsuccessfully to steal them twice. In 1377, Ven. Abbot Wolsong hid them away, and in 1379 he escaped north to Gaegyeong, taking them with him. In 1592 during the Imjin War, Japanese soldiers looted the relics from the temple, but in 1603 (36th year of King Seonjo's reign), a Confucian scholar named Baegok recovered them and enshrined them again in the Diamond Precepts Altar.





At the entrance to Tongdosa stands a grove of thousands of majestic pines, known in Korea as “diamond pines.” They are hundreds of years old and welcome visitors to the temple every day. Upon passing the One Pillar Gate, one can see many Buddha halls and Mt. Yeongchuksan, framed by the Gate of Heavenly Kings. That is possible because Tongdosa’s Buddha halls and buildings are built on mostly flat land although it sits in mountainous terrain.

Tongdosa’s Main Buddha Hall has no Buddha statues enshrined there. Instead, one wall has a large picture window through which one can see the Diamond Precepts Altar where the Buddha’s relics are enshrined. Behind the Main Buddha Hall is Nine Dragon Pond which is tied to Tongdosa’s founding legend. The legend says that the land Tongdosa now sits on was originally a large pond inhabited by nine venomous dragons. Using his spiritual power, Jajang made eight dragons leave but allowed one to stay. That’s because the dragon swore to guard the site, so Jajang left a small portion of the pond undrained for him to live in.

The Diamond Precepts Altar and the Main Buddha Hall meet at right angles to the temple’s entrance path which naturally follows the mountain streams. This makes its architectural layout noteworthy. Since the 2016 earthquake in Gyeongju, the Diamond Precepts Altar is only open to the public six days a month to ensure the preservation of the stupa. Visiting hours are limited from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., so one must plan ahead to ensure seeing it. However, participants of Tongdosa’s Templestay programs can enjoy meditating at the Diamond Precepts Altar and circumambulating the stupa, a true privilege. Special programs like the tea ceremony and classes in natural dying can be arranged with prior notice.

Nestled in the foothills of Mt. Songnisan in Boeun, Beopjusa is the head temple of the 5th religious district of the Jogye Order. It was established in 553 (14th year of King Jinheung's reign) by Uisin. Many legends and stories have been passed on at Beopjusa befitting its long history. Patriarch Uisin went to India to seek the Buddha-dharma and returned home with many scriptures. He then went to Mt. Songnisan and established Beopjusa, a name he hoped would embody "a temple transcending the secular world where Dharma can safely abide." With the support of Goryeo's royal family, the temple expanded to have 60 Buddha halls and 70 associated hermitages. However, most of the structures burned down in two Japanese invasions in 1592 and 1597. Later, Ven. Byeogam (1575-1660) initiated its restoration, and gradually, 30 structures were rebuilt. At present Beopjusa has 12 hermitages including Bokcheonam and Dongam.

Beopjusa is also called the "treasure house of cultural properties" because it has three national treasures, 12 treasures and 22 regional tangible cultural properties. Palsangjeon (National Treasure No. 55) is the only extant wooden pagoda and enshrines *palsangdo* paintings, which depict the eight major events in Sakymuni Buddha's life. Standing 22.7 m tall, the pagoda was burned down during the Imjin War and rebuilt in 1626. Crafted in the Silla era, a Twin-Lion Stone Lantern (National Treasure No. 5) is supported by two lions. The Lotus Stone Basin (National Treasure No. 64) is carved with lotus flowers. Beopjusa's Main Buddha Hall (Treasure No. 915) is the largest in Korea, and a Rock-Carved Seated Buddha (Treasure No. 216) is inscribed on a nearby 6 m high rock cliff. Next to Palsangjeon Hall stands the 33 m high Gilt-Bronze Maitreya Buddha. Crafted in bronze in 776 during the reign of Silla's King Hyegong, it was sadly dismantled after more than 1,000 years by Heungseon Daewongun under the pretext of securing funds for Gyeongbokgung Palace's reconstruction. After Korea's liberation in 1945, it went through many restorations using cement, bronze, and then gilt-bronze.





© Choe Hang-yeong

With superb natural scenery all around, Beopjusa is known as one of Korea's eight scenic wonders. In particular, the meandering forest path from the One Pillar Gate to the Diamond Gate is bordered by pines and firs over 100 years old. On the path to Sesimjeong Pavilion is a sign posted in the Joseon dynasty prohibiting tree cutting in the area. This tells us the forest was protected for exclusive use by the royal family. Mt. Songnisan was designated a national park in 1970 and is a natural treasure house inhabited by over 1,831 animal species.

Passing through the Diamond Gate into the temple compound, one finds many structures within the 1,000-year-old Beopjusa encircled by numerous mountain ridges. Behind the Gilt-Bronze Maitreya Buddha stands Sujeongbong Peak, and behind the Main Buddha Hall is Gwaneumbong Peak. Situated on flat, open land, the Diamond Gate, Gate of Heavenly Kings, Palsanjeon and Main Buddha Hall define the temple's central axis.

On one's way out of Beopjusa, there is one item not to be missed. It is the 600-year-old giant pine named "Minister Pine" or "Jeongi Pumsong" (Natural Monument No. 103). Legend says when King Sejo was about to pass by this pine on his way to recuperate at Beopjusa, a low-hanging branch raised itself to allow safe passage of his palanquin. On his way back to the palace, King Sejo and his retinue took shelter from a sudden shower under this pine. Praising the pine the King said, "You let me pass safely on my way here and provide refuge from the rain on my return. How commendable!" He then bestowed upon the pine the second senior rank government position.

Beopjusa's most popular Templestay program provides the opportunity to rest while fully appreciating the area's natural environment. In the morning, participants especially enjoy the "Stroll along King Sejo's Path," a relatively flat trail about 2.62 km long that goes from Beopjusa along the streams to Sesimjeong. The path takes its name from a historical incident when King Sejo visited Bokcheonam Hermitage to meet Ven. Sinmi, one of his teachers.



Located in Haenam, the southernmost part of Korea, Daeheungsa is the head temple of the 22nd religious district of the Jogye Order. Established by Ado in 544 during the reign of Baekje's King Seong, Daeheungsa has branch temples dispersed in 8 nearby cities and counties. Situated in a large basin, the Daeheungsa compound consists of four distinct areas: the northern area centering on the Main Buddha Hall, the southern area with the Hall of 1,000 Buddhas, the Pyochungsa area where Seosan's shrine and his relics are, and the Hall of Great Luminosity behind the central temple compound. Daeheungsa's temple layout is unique and doesn't follow set standards for temples.

Even during hard times when Joseon authorities oppressed Buddhism, Daeheungsa continued to develop and produced many great monks who excelled in scholarship or Seon meditation. It also maintained its stature as a temple devoted to protecting the nation. Pyochungsa (lit. Shrine of Manifesting Royalty) was established in 1789 to honor the noble spirit of Seosan (1520-1604) who helped defeat the invading Japanese by organizing a monk militia during the Imjin War. It is a Confucian style shrine, not common in Korean temples, which represents well the syncretic characteristic of Korean Buddhism. In front of Daeheungsa's Eungjinjeon Hall stands the Three-Story Stone Pagoda (Treasure No. 230) where some of the Buddha's body relics that Jajang brought back from China are enshrined. Another Three Story Stone Pagoda (Treasure No. 301) and Seated Rock-Carved Buddha (National Treasure No. 308) are both located at Bungmireugam Hermitage. Daeheungsa's door plaques are celebrated for writings rendered by great calligraphers like Kim Jeong-hui (pen name Chusa) and Yi Gwang-sa (pen name Wongyo). In particular, the door plaque calligraphy on the Main Buddha Hall is famous for an event involving Kim Jeong-hui and Yi Gwang-sa.



On his way to exile on Jeju Island, Kim stopped over at Daeheungsa. He found the calligraphy on the door plaque of the Main Buddha Hall, rendered by Yi, not up to his standards, so he had it taken down and replaced it with his own. When his time in exile was finished, he stopped over again at Daeheungsa, and this time he had his door plaque taken down, apparently having cultivated the virtue of humility during his exile. Daeheungsa also preserves facilities and utensils related to Master Choui (1786-1866), also known as the “Korean Tea Sage.” The spirit of Choui truly comes to life throughout the temple compound. Daeheungsa’s compound is also noted for its surrounding valleys and picturesque scenery. The mountain stream flowing down from Duryubong Peak divides Daeheungsa into a northern section and southern section and then flows through meandering valleys before reaching the Hinoki cypress grove. Pine, cherry and maple trees provide cool shade on nearby trails even at mid-day, and groves of trees extend to Muyeomji, a pond inside the temple compound. The zelkova tree called “yeolligeun” is well known at Daeheungsa.

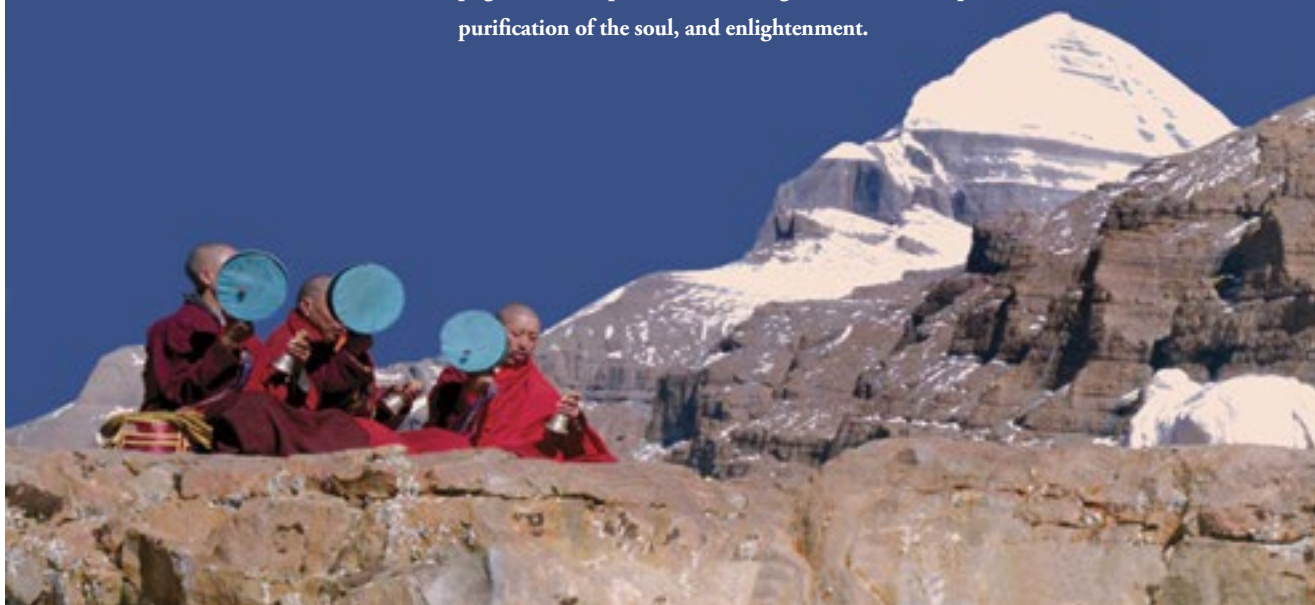
Over 500 years old, it is actually two zelkova trees whose roots have intertwined. Legend says if one prays sincerely to this tree, one will meet a spouse with whom they may live happily ever after. Climbing to the top of Mt. Duryunsan, one can see the South Sea beyond fields of rolling wild grasses. These days, Daeheungsa is attracting more visitors than usual because people have heard that President Mun Jae-in prepared for his bar exam there. Daeheungsa runs vigorous Templestay programs where participants can choose either a rest-oriented or experience-oriented program. In the rest-oriented program, one can spend their time as they wish, but must attend the Buddhist ceremonies and communal meals. In the experience-oriented program, one participates in various group activities including a trek to Iljam Hermitage and Mt. Duryunsan. 📖

Beautiful Scenery Emanates a Sacred Religious Fragrance

Paths of the Soul by Zhang Yang

A road can be compared to a rough map of life that imprints the history of life. Roads have a strong affinity with art. In his *Hualun* (A Discussion on Painting), Chinese painter-scholar Dong Qichang says, “A good painter needs natural talent and ceaseless effort. Those lacking talent must do two things to become a good painter: one is to read 10,000 books and the other is to travel 10,000 kilometers on the road.” Here “road” is synonymous with “world.” The road cultivates the spirit of art nourished by the suffering of the world.

A painter hones his unrefined talent through encounters with others, and approaches perfection by depicting real life. For a painter, “walking the road” is a tempering process required for development, and for a Buddhist pilgrim it is the process of climbing to the summit of peace and purification of the soul, and enlightenment.





Musing about Roads and Running

Zhang Yang's documentary film *Paths of the Soul*, is a record of ordinary Tibetan people making a pilgrimage to Lhasa. In the film, the camera just focuses on the subjects, pilgrims traveling toward a destination, and the audience witnesses how human activities and nature are interwoven in a religious tapestry.

Haruki Murakami, a Japanese writer, lives life on a strict schedule. Two most essential elements of his routine are writing and running. Why running? To this question he says because "to expend one's energy ever more effectively within the limitations of each individual" is the nature of running. Indeed running was both his philosophy and teacher on the subject of how to write a novel. Revealing that "many aspects of novel writing have been picked up on his morning runs," he confessed his writing has been nourished by running. To Haruki, running can be compared to the swordsmanship of a swordsman or the brush strokes of a painter.

As our actions become part of our daily routine, they provide a framework that can be compared to a kind of philosophy. With continual development, philosophy is raised to the stature of religion. In the Andrei Tarkovsky movie *The Sacrifice* appears an episode about a Catholic monk. Every day he climbs a mountain, waters a dead tree, and returns to the monastery, faithfully following his teacher's command. Then, one day the dead tree blooms, after which the act of watering the tree is no more a daily act; it becomes a religious ritual.

Likewise, to Haruki, running isn't just running; it is a noble art and an activity to raise his life to the status of a religion. Running is not a passive act to stay healthy but is an art turned religion that supplies him with artistic nourishment. Some acts raise a daily routine to a sacred religion. In the movie, *Paths of the Soul*, the Tibetan pilgrims actually take three steps forward and prostrate themselves on the ground all the way to Lhasa, which is then elevated to a sacred act.

Beautiful Images and Sacred Fragrances

Director Zhang Yang's documentary film, *Paths of the Soul*, depicts 11 residents of a Tibetan village embarking on a 2,500 km pilgrimage to Lhasa and Mt. Kailash (Mt. Sumeru). Pilgrims walk three steps and then prostrate themselves touching both elbows, both knees and forehead to the ground, all the way to their destination. The movie tells the story of their journey, beginning from organizing the pilgrimage, their progress on the road, and their arrival at the Potala Palace in Lhasa. The movie shares the story of their pilgrimage and the conversations they share against the backdrop of a vast blue sky, but it also has a mystical element in which an outwardly mundane act is transformed into a sacred religious experience.



Their farming tractor is converted to carry their supplies and their “pilgrimage of prostrations” through beautiful landscapes is transformed into a simple religious act. The pilgrims are all laity, and their pilgrimage is a daily repetition of simple acts that outwardly no one would consider sacred. However, the audience experiences their bodily movements transforming into a holy ritual at some point, and the film’s subjects become sacred religious figures. This may be attributed not so much to the spiritually inspiring scenery of the countryside but to the film’s realism.

Among the pilgrims are a butcher, an expectant mother, a nine-year-old girl and an old man. Their decisions to take part in the pilgrimage were motivated more by individual wishes than by the religious aspect of the pilgrimage. Of course their lifelong desire to go on a pilgrimage to Lhasa plays a large part, but a penitent mind that wants to offer prayers for the animals he’s killed, and the obedient minds of nephews obeying their uncle’s demands are no less important. During the journey, the expectant mother has a baby, the pilgrims meet other pilgrims, one has a traffic accident and another dies. Their journey is an abridgment of life.



From a Tibetan village to Lhasa, pilgrims keep pilgrimage diaries, but the road itself also becomes “awakened” through their pilgrimage. A path is made by walking. The path is usually made by pioneers. However, pilgrims in the movie are traveling well-worn roads. However, they imprint the pristine scenery like one walking through a field of new-fallen snow. Scenes of their walking and prostrating are shot from a distance, creating a vivid and unforgettable image in the psyche of the audience. Following some inner path of mind and heart, the pilgrims encounter their true self and meet on old sage to hear the wisdom of life.

Each of them started the pilgrimage for different reasons, but ultimately they become one in a sacred religious tableau. Their hearts and facial expressions gradually come to reflect the scenery of Tibet. Scenes of their “pilgrimage of prostrations” exude a sacred religious fragrance in the mind. ¹⁾

Article by
Mun Hak-san (Prof. at Pusan National University)

Photos by
NAVER

Understanding Consideration from Temple Ground Chanting

Putting the blistering heat of summer behind, a suddenly refreshing fall arrives. The extreme heat we thought would never end, finally ends like a bad dream. I again realize the truth that nothing in this world is permanent. In the fall, trees are already preparing for winter. In the fall, they preserve inside, the spring that will follow winter. This act of preserving spring our eyes see as beautiful multi-colored fall leaves. I can already imagine roads filled with sightseers on trips to enjoy the blazing autumn leaves. To appreciate fall foliage is a freedom we all have.





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However, we tend to overlook the countless living creatures that inhabit these colorful surroundings. On early morning hikes in my neighborhood, I hear whole choruses of birds chirping. I am always surprised that there are so many. I used to carry my walking sticks but then became worried their sound hitting the ground might disturb the birds, so I quit taking them. I walk for a while and notice redstarts and yellow-throated buntings frolicking on the ground not far in front of me. It brings a smile to my lips. Then suddenly they fly away, and I hear a loud noise coming from a radio or a group of people talking loudly. Such a racket not only disturbs nocturnal animals who sleep during the day but also timid birds.

The increasing number of hikers also creates other problems. One day I noticed a group of hikers throwing away fruit peels along a mountain trail and told them they should carry them back home. They argued with me saying that the peels would decompose in due time. I was perplexed. Yes, in the past that may have been true. Insects would have devoured them, or they would have rotted into the soil. These days, however, peels often have traces of pesticide and are often coated with wax to make them look prettier in the grocery store. Imported fruits too are often treated with chemicals to give them a longer shelf life. Although the amounts may be small enough not to harm humans, they can be fatal to insects and birds. These chemicals can even disturb their endocrine systems resulting in infertility. Of course humans can also experience health problems if these chemicals accumulate in the body for an extended period. If a hike is long enough to require taking food along, it is better to pack just as much as you can eat, and afterward, pack all of your garbage and leftovers out. With a little consideration, this is not a difficult thing to do.

Care and concern for all the creatures sharing this planet with us are embodied in various Buddhist rituals and implements. The ritual of pre-dawn temple ground chanting is to purify the temple compound before the morning ceremony and arouse all beings from delusion. In the wee hours when stillness and tranquility pervade the four directions, the soothing sound of a wooden handbell embodies consideration so as not to frighten creatures that may still be sound asleep. This is not only an act of consideration; it also embodies the hope that all beings attain Buddhahood together with us. It also expresses a sincere desire to establish the Pure Land of the Buddha here on Earth by learning the Buddha-dharma together, putting it into practice and finally eliminating all afflictions and delusions. The sounding of the Dharma bell, wooden fish, cloud-shaped gong and temple bell embodies the same sincere desire. It embodies our prayers that all living beings awaken to their Buddha nature when they hear these sounds and recognize them as the sound of truth. This includes all beings that dwell on land, in the water or in the sky; even those in hell. Such compassion can arise immediately from simply understanding the eternal universal law that the lives of all beings are interwoven in a limitless network of interdependence. Thus, when one understands the Buddha-dharma properly, consideration and compassion can be put into practice naturally.



Consideration may be understood from another angle by putting ourselves in another's shoes. Recently I have noticed that some restaurants and cafes have established so called "no kids zones." This term reveals consideration for others. Such zones are not "anti-children," rather, it is an admonition to parents who do not try to control their children in a public setting. I wish such parents would keep in mind the proverb: "Put yourself in another's shoes." Parents should stop and ask themselves, "If I was the owner of this establishment and a customer's children were running around being loud and acting unruly, what would I do?" And what about customers who come just to enjoy the peace and quiet? A culture without consideration will eventually become a culture in which I myself cannot receive care and consideration.

To look for a path in which I feel good, you feel good, and all of us feel good; that is wisdom. Doing what only feels good to me is foolishness and only shows consideration for myself. Doing only what I feel is good for others is the extreme opposite and cannot be sustained. To seek what is good for all is the highest form of consideration. Like the sound of a wooden handbell that spreads outward in low, soft tones during pre-dawn temple ground chanting, if we have consideration for all forms of life, even those we do not see, and wish that all attain Buddhahood, consideration will become a daily phenomenon in this world of ours.



Article by
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Illustration by
Lee Shin-hye



A Journey of Happiness for Myself

TEMPLESTAY

What is a Templestay Program?

It is a program designed to give lay people an opportunity to temporarily experience the tranquil life of a monastic practitioner in one of the many beautiful mountain temples where traditional Korean Buddhist culture still flourishes. Why don't you embark on a special journey today to restore your mind and body, worn down by the complexities of modern life?

01

How do I sign up for a Templestay program?

First, visit the English language Templestay site (<http://eng.templestay.com/>). Click the "Reservations" tab and read through the temple information. Select the temple you want and make a reservation for the time and date you like. Reservations are mandatory.

02

What is the fee?

One adult pays 50,000 - 70,000 won for a 2-day-1-night program which covers lodging and other expenses. There may be minor differences in fees between temples for their "rest-oriented" and "experience-oriented" Templestay programs.

03

What should I bring to the temple?

Most temples provide comfortable uniforms and bedding for an overnight stay. Bring your own towel, underwear, socks and toiletries. Comfortable sneakers or hiking boots are highly recommended.

04

Can I have my own room?

Most temples provide separate communal rooms for men and women. However, families or small groups may be provided with their own rooms in some temples.

05

How do I greet monastics when I pass by them or meet with them?

You should greet them with a half bow and with reverence. That is, you bow from your waist with palms together in front of your chest.

06

What rules should I follow in a Dharma hall?

When entering or leaving a Dharma hall, please use the side doors located on the left or right sides of the hall. Arrange your shoes neatly, facing outward, so that you may put them on with ease when leaving the Dharma hall. Walk gently into the hall without making any noise. For morning and evening Dharma services, offer three prostrations to the Buddha upon entering the Dharma hall, and then do as the monastics do to the beat of the wooden handbell called moktak.

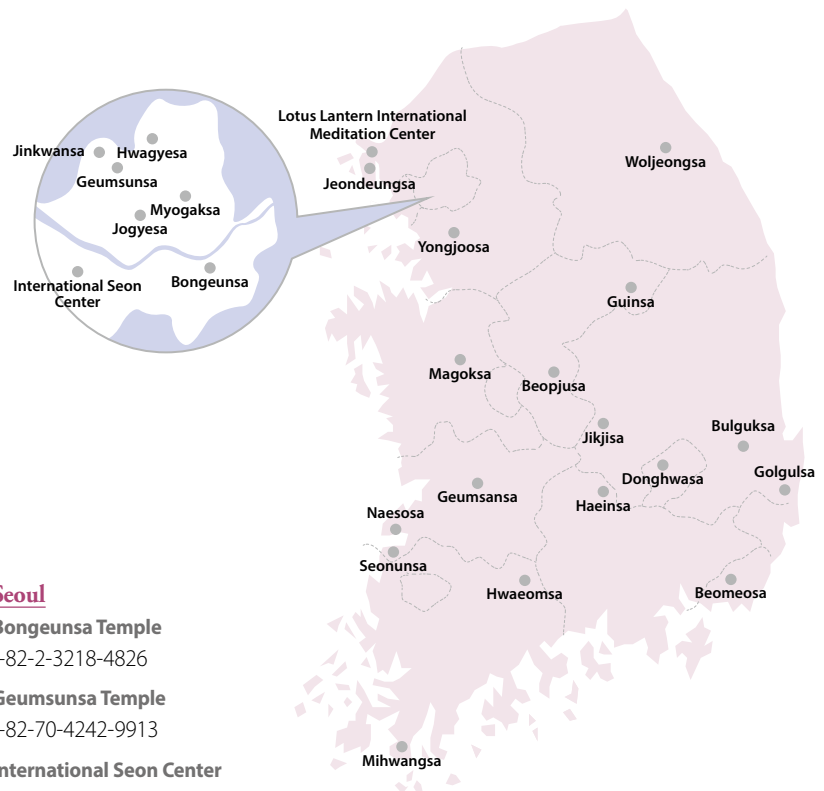
07

What is the basic etiquette to observe at temples?

As temples are sacred places that enshrine Buddha images, we should be careful in our speech and actions. Any words or deeds that may disrupt the proper atmosphere for Buddhist practices are prohibited, including drinking and smoking. Avoid wearing clothes that are too revealing, such as sleeveless shirts and shorts. Please wear socks, as bare feet are not deemed proper in Korean temples.

26 Selected Temples for Foreigners

English Translators Are Available



How to Sign Up for Templestay Programs

Online Application

- Visit the Templestay website (eng.templestay.com)
 - Read the provided information carefully, and decide on the temple you want.
 - Select the program and dates you want, fill out the reservation form, and click the "reservations" button.
 - Pay the participation fee once your reservation is confirmed (confirmation is thru a text message).
 - Contact the temple via phone or email to confirm your payment and ask about any other information needed.
- » When computer access is difficult, you can also make a reservation by calling the temple you'd like to visit.

Visit the Templestay Information Center

- Visit the Information Hall on the 1st floor of the Templestay Information Center located across from the Jogyesa Temple.
 - Read through leaflets from various temples and choose the one you want to stay at.
 - Check the schedule of different temples and find the one that provides the program of your choice on your preferred date.
 - Sign up online at the computer station provided in the corner of the information area.
- » English-speaking staff is available year-round for foreign visitors.

Seoul

Bongeunsa Temple

+82-2-3218-4826

Geumsunsa Temple

+82-70-4242-9913

International Seon Center

+82-2-2650-2242

Jinkwansa Temple

+82-2-388-7999

Jogyesa Temple

+82-2-768-8523

Myogaksa Temple

+82-2-763-3109

Hwagyesa Temple

+82-2-900-4326

Gyeonggi-do

Yongjoosa Temple

+82-31-235-6886

Incheon

Jeondeungsa Temple

+82-32-937-0152

Lotus Lantern International Meditation Center

+82-32-937-7033

Chungcheongbuk-do

Beopjusa Temple

+82-43-544-5656

Guinsa Temple

+82-43-420-7397

Chungcheongnam-do

Magoksa Temple

+82-41-841-6226

Gangwon-do

Woljeongsa Temple

+82-33-339-6606

Jeollabuk-do

Geumsansa Temple

+82-63-542-0048

Naesosa Temple

+82-63-583-3035

Seonunsa Temple

+82-63-561-1375

Jeollanam-do

Hwaeomsa Temple

+82-61-782-7600

Mihwangsa Temple

+82-61-533-3521

Gyeongsangbuk-do

Bulguksa Temple

+82-10-2241-8966

Golgulsa Temple

+82-54-775-1689

Jikjisa Temple

+82-54-429-1716

Gyeongsangnam-do

Haeinsa Temple

+82-55-934-3110

Busan

Beomeosa Temple

+82-51-508-5726

Daegu

Donghwasa Temple

+82-53-980-7979

Jeju

Yakchunsa Temple

+82-10-3891-7007

About temple food

Temple Food

Temple food is the food of practice that shares the history of 1,700 years of Korean Buddhism.

Temple food is the food of tradition that inherits the prototype of unique Korean food culture.

Temple food is the food of wellness that makes the body and mind healthy.



Balwoo Gongyang is the only restaurant that serves delicate temple cuisine. Run by the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, it was opened to promote the culture of Korean temple food.

Balwoo Gongyang serves original temple food made from traditional recipes handed down in Korean temples. Balwoo Gongyang is the place to enjoy not only the taste but also the tradition and culture of temple food.

Opening hours | Open: Mon to Sat
Close: Sunday
Lunar New Year & Korean Thanksgiving(Chusok) Holidays

Lunch | 11:30 ~ 15:00, Last Order: 14:00
Dinner | 18:00 ~ 22:00, Last Order: 20:45

Telephone inquiry | 02-733-2081
Address | 5F, Temple Stay Information Integration Center, 56, Ujeongguk-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul, Korea
Homepage | www.balwoo.or.kr



Let's Learn Korean Temple Food

Temple Food that Brings Alive the Flavors of 4 Seasons.

Learn and understand how Temple Food made of seasonal ingredients helps Buddhist monks get through 4 seasons.

This is a Temple Food program for international visitors (the program will be conducted in English)

Schedule 10:30 to 12:00 on Saturdays (1day class)

Menu Temple Food prepared with seasonal ingredients

*The reservation should be made at least two days prior to the event by email. Schedule or activity is subject to change, in which case we will notify you in advance. Reservations can be made separately for a group of 10 persons or more and dishes can be chosen after consultation.

OPEN | 09:00am CLOSE | 06:00pm

CLOSED | Every Monday

Add_39, Yulgok-ro, Jongno-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Tel_02-733-4650 / Fax_02-733-4657 / Email_info@templestay.com

www.koreatemplefood.com

www.facebook.com/jogyeeorder.templefood

<http://blog.naver.com/f7team>



