



Restoration and Legitimacy of the *Bhikṣu* Precept Lineages in the Late Joseon

Jarang LEE

Abstract

A significant event in 19th-century Joseon Buddhism was the restoration of the bhikṣu precept lineage. The ordination tradition was weakened in the Joseon period, as Buddhism failed to maintain a cultural, philosophical, and political mainstream position. Although monks were produced throughout the Joseon period, it is highly unlikely that they received complete ordination in accord with the traditional way. The revival of bhikṣu ordination in the early 19th century, therefore, reflects Joseon monks' attempts to re-establish their Buddhist identity. An interesting phenomenon of this attempt was that, although Master Daeun Nango 大隱朗昨 (1780–1841) reinitiated the complete ordination and formed a precept lineage with some renowned monks in the early 19th century, several other monks, including Manha Seungnim 萬下勝林 (fl. late 19th century), formed new precept lineages in the same period following their travel to China for ordination. As indicated in the literature, Daeun's distinctive method of precept lineage restoration served as rationale for the emergence of later new precept lineages. This paper examines how Joseon saṃgha's attempts to restore a precept lineage evolved throughout the 19th century, focusing on the historical and religious backgrounds of the formation of Daeun's and others' precept lineages.

Keywords: *bhikṣu* precept lineage, 19th-century Joseon Buddhism, ordination ceremony, Daeun, Manha, Four-Part Vinaya

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Jarang LEE is an assistant professor of the Humanities Korea Project at the Academy of Buddhist Studies, Dongguk University. E-mail: jaranglee@hanmail.net.

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Introduction

An ordination ceremony is an important rite of passage that gives birth to a member of a Buddhist order. The ceremony of taking the full precepts, intended to produce *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇīs*, who are essential members of the saṃgha, is more complex in procedure than the ceremony performed to produce ordinands, such as *śrāmaṇeras* and *śrāmaṇerīs*, or lay believers, such as *upāsakas* and *upāsikās*. According to the *Four-Part Vinaya* (*Sifen lu* 四分律), the ceremony of taking the full precepts should be offered in the form of the “*ñatticatuttha*-ordination-procedure” (*baisi jiemo* 白四羯磨),¹ in which ten qualified *bhikṣu* (three masters and seven witnesses) participate.² This principle is respected not only in India, the birthplace of Buddhism, but also in other areas where Buddhism has been transmitted, including Korea.

After Buddhism was introduced to Korea in the 4th century, dual ordination³ for the *bhikṣuṇī* was performed in Baekje in the late 6th century following the *Four-Part Vinaya*.⁴ The rules for taking the precepts were implemented in 646 CE in Silla as the monk Jajang 慈藏 (590–658) had a Diamond Ordination Platform (Geumgang gyedan 金剛戒壇) constructed at Tongdosa temple. The modern scholar Yeo Seong-gu, based on ancient written records and the epitaphs of eminent monks, demonstrated that although not all ordination temples had ten qualified *bhikṣu* for the ordination ceremony, most of the Silla ordination temples tried to maintain this ten-monk system (Yeo 2014, 61). In the period from late Silla to early

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1. According to Heirman (2000, 32n12), “A *ñatticatuttha*-ordination-procedure is a formal act consisting of one motion (*ñatti*), three propositions (*kammavācā*) that concern the acceptance of the motion by the assembly of monks or nuns, and a conclusion.”
 2. The ten qualified *bhikṣu* consist of the three masters (the conferring preceptor, reciting preceptor, and ritual-teaching preceptor), along with the seven members of clergy who serve as witnesses at the ordination ceremony. For further details, see Hirakawa (2000, 194–196).
 3. According to the *Four-Part Vinaya*, a *bhikṣuṇī* candidate should receive ordination from *bhikṣu* and *bhikṣuṇī* saṃghas, both of whom would organize the *ñatticatuttha*-ordination-procedure (T22, 923b).
 4. *Nihon shoki* (Chronicles of Japan) 21, the 1st year of Emperor Sushun 崇峻 (588); March, Spring, the 3rd year of Emperor Sushun (590).

Goryeo, the ordination ceremony was formally performed on the government ordination platform (*gwandan* 官壇) that the state installed, apparently following the rules of the *Four-Part Vinaya*.⁵ However, this government ordination ceremony declined gradually under the influence of the Mongol invasions around the 13th century, during the late Goryeo period (Bak 2016, 57–60). By the Joseon period (1392–1910), the government ceremony had completely disappeared.

Due to the lack of evidentiary material, it is difficult to paint a full picture of *bhikṣu* ordination in the Joseon period. Nonetheless, temple lineage books (*hogye cheommun* 護戒牒文) in several temples and some articles in early 20th-century Buddhist magazines provide some accounts for ordination practices during Joseon. These materials commonly report that two monks, Daeun Nango 大隱朗昨 (1780–1841) and Baekpa Geungseon 白坡巨璇 (1767–1852), made separate attempts to revive the formal ordination ceremony and, thereby, restore a precept lineage by using the methods of “auspicious sign ordination” (*seosang sugye* 瑞祥受戒) and “ten-wholesome-precept” (*sipseon gye* 十善戒) ordination, respectively. These materials also indicate that, although Daeun’s precept lineage was recognized among many Joseon monks, Manha Seungnim 萬下勝林 (fl. late 19th century) formed a separate precept lineage in the late 19th century after returning from China, where he had received ordination. These materials clearly indicate that the ordination tradition was in a significantly weakened state by the 19th century. Although monks were produced throughout Joseon, it is highly unlikely that they received full ordination in accord with the traditional way. As the reception of the *bhikṣu* precepts was connected to the Buddhist identity of a monk, the monks of this period attempted to secure a legitimate precept lineage connection.

Although these lineage books and articles are valuable in that they directly mention the situation surrounding monks’ ordination in the late Joseon period, they are too brief to be sources of detailed information. This

5. By the early Goryeo, full ordination took place in the form of “receiving the precepts on the platform,” which followed the *Four-Part Vinaya* that would require three masters and seven witnesses for the reception of the 250 precepts (G. Han 1998, 353).

has led to the lack of research on the topic. Recently, however, a few scholars have obtained interesting research outcomes. For example, Jeong-eun Park (2017) focused on the restoration of the *bhikṣu* lineage in late Joseon in researching the issue of clerical marriage. In particular, she explored the use of the *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts in the ordination ceremony in relation to the re-establishment of Buddhist identity in the 19th century when the state monk certificate system had been completely eliminated. On the other hand, Jarang Lee (2021) investigated the background to the restoration of the precept lineage in the early 19th century, focusing on Baekpa, who attempted to establish an independent precept lineage by arguing for the method of ten-wholesome-precept ordination. Although these two studies touched on the religious meaning of restoration of the precept lineage in the 19th century, many questions regarding this topic remain unanswered.

This study offers a detailed exploration of the historical and religious background and meaning of this movement to revive the precept lineage of Joseon, focusing on the new precept lineages that Manha and other late 19th-century monks attempted to establish. The literature to date has only established that a controversy on the method Daeun employed to restore a precept lineage was the main reason for Manha and others to decide to go to China for ordination, even though Daeun's lineage had already been formed. This paper takes a more comprehensive look at the situation surrounding Daeun's lineage, i.e., how he initiated his lineage, how this lineage was transmitted, and the reasons behind the decision of several monks to travel to China in the late 19th century. This paper sheds new light on the emergence of the precept lineages of Joseon—particularly Daeun's and Manha's lineages, which have since occupied an important position in the Korean Buddhist vinaya tradition, as well as the legitimacy controversy involving these lineages, which has persisted to the present and continues to impact the Korean Buddhist community.

Attempts to Restore the *bhikṣu* Lineage in the Early 19th Century

According to sources, including temple lineage books and modern Buddhist magazines, the tradition of the ordination ceremony that observed the *Four-Part Vinaya* was not preserved in the early 19th century. The lineage book of Haeinsa temple records that Daeun, lamenting the reality of the precept study no longer being conducted, in order to revive the broken precept lineage of Joseon, drew on the “auspicious sign ordination” method, a method of receiving ordination by obtaining an auspicious sign (Yi 2005, 152). Baekpa also advocated the revival of the *bhikṣu* lineage with the ten wholesome precepts, bemoaning in the *Paragon of Rules for Buddhist Rituals* (*Jakbeop gwigam* 作法龜鑑) that a novice could become a full monk by merely receiving the ten *śrāmaṇera* precepts.⁶ Gwon Sang-ro, too, wrote in 1917, “People become monks simply by receiving the five precepts for *śrāmaṇera* and the great ceremony of the *bhikṣu* ordination is not being conducted since the precept study has deteriorated for the past hundred years...It is shameful that there are many who live their whole life as *śrāmaṇera* without knowing the contents of the *Four-Part Vinaya*” (Gwon 1917b, 11–12). These records show that the *bhikṣu* ordination ceremony was hardly carried out in the Joseon Buddhist saṃgha of the 19th century.

It was in 1826 that the first attempt to revive a precept lineage during Joseon was made. Coincidentally, Daeun Nango at Dogapsa temple, Yeongam, and Baekpa Geungseon at Seonunsa temple, Gochang, attempted to revive a precept lineage in the same year. According to the lineage book of Haeinsa temple, Daeun received the precepts through the auspicious sign ordination (Yi 2005, 152). This so-called “auspicious sign ordination” was based on the *Brahma’s Net Sutra* (*Beommang gyeong* 梵網經), a work that had a tremendous impact on Korean monastic rules and regulations. According to the 23rd light precept in the sutra, a postulant can receive ordination by making vows himself and obtaining an auspicious sign before the statues of buddhas and bodhisattvas.⁷ An auspicious sign here refers to a

6. *Jakbeop gwigam* (HBJ10, 574a).

7. T24, 1006.

mystical experience of seeing, for instance, the Buddha caressing the top of a postulant's head or flowers raining from the sky. The precept lineage that Daeun initiated with his own auspicious sign was transmitted by renowned monks of Joseon at the time, such as his master Geumdam Bomyeong 金潭普明 (1765–1848), Choui Uisun 草衣意恂 (1786–1866), and Beomhae Gagan 梵海覺岸 (1820–1896). On the other hand, Baekpa advocated the method of the *bhikṣu* ordination with the ten wholesome precepts.⁸ These precepts can be stated as follows: not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie, not to speak improperly, not to speak harshly, not to speak divisively, not to be greedy, not to be angry, and not to have wrong views. Baekpa's precept lineage was transmitted along the line of masters such as Chimheo Hanseong 枕虛翰醒 (1801–1876), Seoldu Yuhyeong 雪竇有炯 (1824–1899), Gyeongdam Seogwan 鏡潭瑞寬 (1824–1904), Hwaneung Tanyeong 幻應坦泳 (1847–1929), and Yeongho Hanyeong 映湖漢永 (1870–1948) (Yi 2005, 262). However, his lineage did not influence later generations as much as that of Daeun.

There is no source from which we can gain direct information about why this movement rose in the early 19th-century Joseon Buddhist community. To address this question, Jarang Lee (2021) focused on the fact that both Daeun and Baekpa belonged to the Pyeongyang branch of the Chengheo dharma lineage. The Pyeongyang branch emerged when Pyeongyang Eongi 鞭羊彦機 (1581–1644) re-established the dharma lineage that connected his master Cheongheo Hyujeong 淸虛休靜 (1520–1604) to Taego Bou 太古普愚 (1301–1382). Pointing out that Pyeongyang branch monks tried to find their identity through this Taego lineage claim in the early 17th century and made intensive efforts to have vinaya texts carved from the late 18th century in the southwestern region of Korea, where they received organized monastic education, Lee assumed that Pyeongyang branch monks attempted to re-establish the weakened ordination tradition and restore a precept lineage (Lee 2021). As Kim Yong-tae explained, the 19th

8. This is a comprehensive manual for various Buddhist rituals. It was published in two books in Unmunam, Baegyangsan mountain, Jangseong, Jeolla province in 1827 (Baekpa Geungseon 2010, 7).

century witnessed an increase in the state imposition of corvée labor and other duties on temples and monks, along with Confucian scholar officials' private plundering of these temples, which resulted in a socially and economically difficult situation for many temples and monks (Y. Kim 2021, 179). It is reasonable to state that this situation led monks to try and reaffirm their Buddhist identity through the restoration of an ordination ceremony and a precept lineage.

The revival of the precept lineages by Daeun and Baekpa in the early 19th century were different in method from the former revival of the auspicious sign ordination and the latter revival of the ten-wholesome-precept ordination. However, they were the same in their effort to re-establish an autonomous precept lineage of Joseon through the repentance practice that the bodhisattva precept tradition had cherished. However, these two methods of the precept lineage revival were far removed from the traditional ordination method in Buddhist vinaya texts and, therefore, their legitimacy could not be firmly established. The sense of this lack of legitimacy in these methods (though the precept lineages established through these methods gained popularity among many Joseon monks) was so palpable in the Buddhist community of the time that it served as a major reason several monks decided to go to China to receive ordination and form another, more legitimate, precept lineage for Joseon in the late 19th century.

The *Bhikṣu* Who Traveled to China for Ordination

A *bhikṣu* named Manha Seungnim established an independent precept lineage after returning from China, where he had received ordination in 1892, approximately 60 years after Daeun and Baekpa attempted to separately revive a *bhikṣu* lineage (Yi 2005, 147). However, according to some magazines published in the early 20th century, it was not only Manha who traveled to China for ordination (Sanghyeon geosa 1917, 663[91]; Gwon 1930, 12–13). Based on the records, the following chart can be developed of the monks who received ordination in China and the Chinese monks who conferred ordination on them:

Table 1. Korean Monks who Received the Precepts in China in the Late 19th Century and their Chinese Preceptors

	Korean monks and their temples	Chinese monks
①	Seokgyo Seonso 石橋善沼, Beophwasa 法華寺 ⁹	Huikuan 惠寬, Xiuyunsi 岵雲寺, Mt. Tanzhe
②	Manha Seungnim 萬下勝林, Yongyeonsa 龍淵寺	Changtao 昌濤
③	Hanpa 寒波, Jangansa 長安寺	Changtao
④	Yeongbong 靈峰, Yujeomsa 楡岾寺 ¹⁰	Deming 德明, Nianhuasi 拈花寺, Beijing
⑤	Worun 月運, Mt. Bogae ¹¹	Qingran 慶然, Yuanguang Chansi 圓廣禪寺, Beijing
⑥	Jinha Chugwon 震河竺源 (1861–1925), Beopjusa 法住寺	Jichan Jingan 寄禪敬安, Tiantongsi 天童寺, Ningbo prefecture
⑦	Neungheo 凌虛, Paeyeopsa 貝葉寺 ¹²	□□, Nanjing
⑧	Yongheo Jangho 龍虛莊昊 (1869–1930), Cheongnyongsa 靑龍寺, Mt. Seoun	□□□□□□□□

These records only mention the names of the monks who went to China for ordination, without indicating exactly when they did so. However, it is important to know the dates of their travel to China to determine when this phenomenon occurred in Joseon Buddhism. However, as it is difficult to find sources to provide information regarding the birth and death dates of most of the aforementioned monks or their activities, including their travel to China, this paper estimates the periods of their activities in light of their relations with other monks.

① Seokgyo Seonso is known to have taught precept texts to Unbong

9. The *Joseon Bulgyo tongsa* (Comprehensive History of Joseon Buddhism) states differently that it was Bodam 普曇 of Mt. Palgong who received the precepts from Hyegwan while Seokgyo received the precepts from Bodam (N. Yi 2010, 208–209).
10. Yeongbong conferred the precepts upon Bowol 寶月 who then conferred them upon Dongseon Jeongui 東宣淨義 (J. Yi 2005, 259).
11. The name is recorded as Worun 月雲 in J. Yi (2005, 259).
12. Neungheo’s precept lineage was transmitted along the line of Seongwol 聖月, Haeun Yega 荷隱例珂 (1828–1898), Gubong 九峰 of Paeyeopsa, and Yeonwol 蓮月 of Jeondeungsa (J. Yi 2005, 258).

Seongchwe 雲峰性悴 (1889–1946). This was when Unbong was 25 years old (1913). Two years before, in 1911, Unbong received *bhikṣu* ordination at the age of 23 from Manha Seungnim on the Diamond Platform of Beomeosa temple in Busan (J. Yi 2000, 1088). Since Manha is said to have returned from China in 1892 after receiving ordination, it is highly possible that Seokgyo was active a little before Manha. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that it was in the late 19th century that Seokgyo returned from China after receiving ordination.

② According to lineage books extant in famous Korean temples, Manha of Yongyeonsa received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva ordinations in 1892 from a preceptor named Changtao Hanbo 昌濤漢波 in China. Changtao was inducted as the great master of the transmission of the precepts in 1869 on the Huangcheng Precept Platform 皇城戒壇 of Fayuansi 法源寺 temple. When he presided over the ordination ceremony in the same temple in 1892, Manha received ordination from him and returned to Korea (J. Yi 2005, 144).

③ Almost nothing is known about Hanpa of Jangansa, but he is also known to have received ordination from Changtao Hanbo (Sanghyeon geosa 1917, 663[91]). Apparently, he was ordained in China in the late 19th century, as was Manha.

④ Yeongbong of Yujeomsa is believed to have given *bhikṣu* ordination to Seokdu Botaek 石頭寶澤 (1882–1954) in 1909 at Yujeomsa temple, Mt. Geumgang. Seokdu was 27 years old at the time (J. Yi 2000, 1039). We can assume that it was in the late 19th century that Yeongbong returned from China after receiving ordination.

⑤ Worun of Mt. Bogae refers to Worun Haecheon 月運海天, who was Cheongho Hangmil's 晴湖學密 (1875–1934) master. Cheongho became a monk with Worun as his master in 1889 and received *bhikṣu* ordination in 1897. Hence, it is highly likely that Worun received ordination in China and returned to the peninsula in the late 19th century, though he might have been slightly earlier than Manha (J. Yi 2005, 345).

⑥ Jinha Chugwon of Beopjusa temple entered the order at the age of 12 in 1872 with Seokju Sangun 石舟常運 as his master and received the *bhikṣu* precepts from Byeogam Seoho 葉庵西灝 (J. Yi 2000, 868). Apparently, he went on to travel to China and received another ordination. Versed in Seon, Vinaya, and doctrinal studies, he taught more

than half of the abbots at the main temples during the colonial period.

⑦ It is difficult to find any relevant information about Neungheo of Paeyeopsa temple.

⑧ Yongheo Jangho of Cheongnyongsa temple is considered a major leader in the Buddhist community of his time, being inducted in 1929 as one of the seven overseers in the Seon-Gyo Yangjong of Joseon Buddhism (Im 2010, 147). His birth and death dates are known. He was active from the late 19th century to early 20th century.

It is highly possible that most of the eight monks went to China for ordination in the late 19th century. However, it appears that all the monks other than Manha conferred the full precepts to other monks through the ordination ceremony but failed to establish a lineage because they had no disciples.

Efforts to Establish the Legitimacy of the Precept Lineage

As indicated in the literature, one of the major reasons several *bhikṣu* went to China for ordination in the late 19th century was that they doubted the legitimacy of the auspicious sign ordination that Daeun had received. Yi Jigwan explained the situation, “There was controversy regarding Daeun’s auspicious sign ordination among some monks” (J. Yi 2005, 244; T. Han 2007, 105). Han Tae Sik agreed with Yi, quoting Yi’s explanation. At that time, the Buddhist order was in a dire situation in which a full ordination ceremony with three masters and seven witnesses could not be properly conducted. Daeun advocated his method of the auspicious sign ordination, following the 23rd light precept in the *Brahma’s Net Sutra*, though this is presented in the sutra as the method of bodhisattva ordination. Thus, it was difficult to secure the legitimacy of his precept lineage. Why then did Daeun choose a method that did not correspond to the traditional precept literature? The primary reason could be that, as mentioned, the situation at the time was not suitable for conducting the traditional ordination ceremony in accord with the *Four-Part Vinaya*, which would require the presence of

three masters and seven witnesses. Another reason was that the method of the auspicious sign ordination is recorded in the *Brahma's Net Sutra*, which the Korean Buddhist tradition had valued, and that the method was found in some earlier eminent Korean monks' life records, especially during the Silla period. According to Gwon Sang-ro's article "Joseon-ui yuljong" (Joseon's Vinaya school) of 1930, "Daeun not only lamented the ambiguity of our country's precept lineage, but also thought highly of the sacred ordination of Jajang 慈藏 (590–658) and Jinpyo 眞表 (b. 718). Daeun prayed for and finally received the auspicious sign ordination" (Gwon 1930, 12). Jajang and Jinpyo were renowned Silla monks. Jajang organized the ordination ceremony by building the Diamond Platform at Tongdosa temple. It is said that he received the five precepts from a heavenly figure in his dream.¹³ Jinpyo edified Silla society by accepting the divination method that was popular among the public of his time and establishing the method of the divination repentance ritual. He received the precepts from bodhisattvas Kṣitigarbha and Maitreya by practicing the "repentance while mortifying the body" (*mangsin chamhoe* 亡身懺悔) on the recommendation of his master Sunje 順濟 (n.d., also known as Sungje 崇濟).¹⁴ Here, we can see the sacred ordination in the life of Jajang and Jinpyo, who played important roles in the Korean precept tradition. Such a shared sense about this sacred ordination in Korean tradition apparently contributed to some famous 19th-century masters accepting Daeun's precept lineage (Gwon 1930, 13).¹⁵ However, the sacred ordination of Jajang and Jinpyo was not the *bhikṣu* ordination. Although Daeun's ordination can be regarded as one such sacred instance, it could never be a basis to secure the legitimacy that might revive the Joseon precept lineage. Therefore, as more monks tried to draw on Daeun's auspicious sign ordination to reinitiate the *bhikṣu* precept lineage, this ordination inevitably caused controversy regarding its legitimacy.

13. "Jajang jeogyul," in *Samguk yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms).

14. "Jinpyo jeongan," in *Samguk yusa*.

15. The *Joseon Bulgyo tongsa* explains that Daeun's auspicious sign ordination was similar to the case of Chitsū 智通 who had received the sacred precepts from Samantabhadra (N. Yi 2010, 207–208).

Monks such as Manha chose to go to China as they wanted to form a legitimate precept lineage due to their Sinocentric mindset. However, the precept lineage in China had been discontinued since around the Ming period. The precept lineage Manha received had been, in fact, been revived by the preceptor Guxin Ruxin 古心如馨 (1541–1615) through the auspicious sign ordination. Guxin was active in the late Ming. When he entered the order, the tradition of the Chinese precept lineage had long ceased to exist. Even the two nationally famous ordination platforms in the southern and northern areas of Zhaoqing 昭庆 and Tanzhe 潭柘 were closed by the government in 1566. Under the strict government order that banned the ordination ceremony, Guxin could not receive a proper ceremony. One day, however, while reading the chapter of “Main Abode of Bodhisattvas” of the *Huayan jing* (Flower Garland Sutra), Guxin learned that the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī was residing on Mt. Qingliang. He then made a “three-steps-one-bow” pilgrimage (i.e., walking three steps then bowing down on the ground, done repeatedly) to the mountain, prayed before the bodhisattva’s statue to revive the precept school, and finally obtained the auspicious reception of the precepts (X. Liu 2015, 73).¹⁶ Afterward, Guxin went back to the Jiangnan region and reopened the dharma assembly to confer the precepts through the ordination ceremony in over 30 places throughout the region. Fayuansi temple of Yanjing 燕京 was one of the temples that received Guxin’s precept lineage. The preceptor Changtao Hanbo 昌濤漢波 was inducted as the great master of conferring the precepts on the Huangcheng Precept Platform of Fayuansi in 1869 upon the imperial order of Muzong 穆宗 (r. 1861–1875), the tenth Qing emperor. Manha received ordination through the precept-conferring assembly Changtao held in this temple and then returned to the Korean Peninsula (J. Yi 2005, 141–142; Ogawa 1994, 144–145).

Manha questioned the legitimacy of Daeun’s auspicious sign ordination and received the precepts in China. It was ironic then that the precept lineage Manha received was based on the auspicious reception of the precepts. There is no source that indicates whether Manha or other

16. CBETA 2021.Q4, GA079, no. 81, 146a3–147a3, “Qingliang shan zhi” 清涼山志 (Record on Mt. Qingliang), *Zhongguo Fosi shizhi huikan* 中國佛寺史志彙刊, 第79冊, No. 81.

Joseon monks of his time recognized this fact. As shown in Table 1, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were several Korean monks who went to China and returned after receiving the precepts, and the names of the Chinese monks who conferred the precepts to these Joseon monks are not found in the list of the monks who succeeded Guxin's precept lineage (J. Yi 2005, 141–142). Considering this fact, it can be assumed that Joseon monks made continuous efforts to find a precept lineage whose legitimacy might be more easily recognized. Monks of both Daeun and Manha lineages claimed legitimacy, arguing for the autonomy of their lineage through the auspicious sign or succession to a Chinese precept lineage.

Coexistence and Competition between the Precept Lineages of Daeun and Manha

For approximately 60 years from the time Daeun received the auspicious sign ordination in 1826 to the late 19th century, when Manha received ordination in China and returned to Korea, Daeun's lineage was mainly transmitted from his master Geumdam through Choui to some other late Joseon masters, including Beomhae (J. Yi 2005, 150–152).

There was a 60-year gap between Daeun's auspicious sign ordination and Manha's Chinese ordination. The former occurred in 1826 and the latter in 1892. A question arises as to why Korean monks suddenly chose to go to China in the late 19th century, some 60 years after Daeun's ordination. We can consider of the political situation that made travel to China easier at the end of the 19th century. On August 23, 1882, the Sino-Korean regulations on land and sea commerce were signed. These regulations were called "Jo-Jung sangmin suryuk muyeok jangjeong" 朝·中商民水陸貿易章程, or simply "Joseon jangjeong." Before this agreement, trade between Joseon and China occurred in three ways: (1) occasionally, when there was a visit from an envoy; (2) at an open market (*gaesi* 開市) in a few border towns; and (3) by smuggling between private merchants (*sasang* 私商). As there were strict restrictions even to the first two methods, merchants smuggled and caused much trouble, occasionally even causing serious diplomatic issues between

Joseon and China.¹⁷ As the regulations were signed, the exchange between the two countries grew more active, and there appeared many Chinese merchants in the Joseon capital city of Hanseong (today's Seoul) and port cities such as Incheon, Busan, and Wonsan. In 1883, shortly after the opening of the Incheon port, the regular sea route was opened between that port and Yantai 煙臺 on China's Shandong Peninsula, whose easternmost point directly faces the Korean Peninsula, and the opening of this route stimulated travel between the countries (C. Liu 2012, 189–190). Such social and political changes probably enabled many Joseon monks, including Manha, to embark more easily on their journey to China for ordination.

Another reason this movement of Joseon monks to China was concentrated in the late 19th century was that Daeun's precept lineage came to be accepted as a *bhikṣu* lineage among Joseon monks around the mid- or late 19th century. We can observe this fact by looking at how Choui and Beomhae, who had received Daeun's lineage through Geumdam and Choui, respectively, played their roles as preceptors. Based on the *Dongsa yeoljeon* 東師列傳¹⁸ and the *Hanguk goseung bimun chongjip* (J. Yi 2000), we can list the monks to whom the two monks transmitted the precepts by the early 20th century by name, year, temple, and contents of the transmission, as follows (in the order of the birth and death dates of those who received the transmission), though the exact times of the transmissions could not be determined for most cases.

As shown in this chart, Choui mainly focused on conferring the bodhisattva precepts. The *Dongsa yeoljeon* also emphasizes that he mainly served as a preceptor for the bodhisattva precepts and śrāmaṇera precepts, reporting “40 disciples received the śrāmaṇera precepts from Choui while 70 disciples received the bodhisattva precepts.”¹⁹ Unlike Choui, Beomhae was an active preceptor for the *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts. However,

17. Jongwon Kim, 1966, “Jo-Jung sangmin suryuk muyeok jangjeong” (Regulations on the Land and Sea Commerce between Joseon and China), *Minjok munhwa dae baekgwasa jeon* (Encyclopedia of Korean Culture), accessed December 22, 2021, <http://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Contents/Item/E0052637>.

18. https://kabc.dongguk.edu/viewer/view?dataId=ABC_BJ_H0258_T_004.

19. “Choui seonbaek jeon,” *Dongsa yeoljeon* 4 (HBJ10, 1039a).

Table 2. The Activities of Choui and Beomhae as Preceptors

Choui Uisun 草衣意恂 (1786–1866)				Beomhae Gagan 梵海覺岸 (1820–1896)			
Name	Year	Temple	Contents	Name	Year	Temple	Contents
Bomun Myohwan 普門妙煥 (1816–1892)		Mihwangsa, Haenam	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts	Geumseong Boheon 錦城普憲 (1825–1893)		Daedunsa	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts
Beomhae Gagan		Daeheungsa (=Daedunsa)	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts	Geumpa Eungsin 金波 應信 (1833–1894)		Daedunsa	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts
Woryeo Beomin 月如梵寅 (b. 1824)		Daeheungsa	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts	Sangun Eunghye 祥 雲應惠 (1827–1894)		Daedunsa	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts
Gyeongwol Nyeongo 鏡月寧邀 (1775–1857)			bodhisattva precepts	Seoru Daeun 雪藕大雲 (1830–1868)	1864	Daedunsa	bodhisattva precepts
Hwaun cheoro 化運銀哲 (d. 1864)			bodhisattva precepts	Chwiun Hyeo 翠雲慧 悟 (b. 1866)		Daedunsa	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts
Gyeonhyang 見香 (n.d.)			bodhisattva precepts	Howol Gwallye 湖月寬禮 (n.d.)		Daedunsa	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts
Muwi Anin 無爲安忍 (1816–1886)			bodhisattva precepts	Wonhae Munju 圓海文周 (n.d.)		Mt. Duryun, Haenam	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts
Yeongho 靈湖 (n.d.)			bodhisattva precepts	Yeam Gwangjun 禮庵廣俊 (1834–1894)		Daedunsa	bodhisattva precepts
				Hoam Munseong 虎 岩文性 (1850–1919)	1893	Daeheungsa	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts
				Jesan Jeongwon 霽 山淨願 (1862–1930)	1893	Daeheungsa	<i>bhikṣu</i> and bodhisattva precepts

Choui had already received the *bhikṣu* precepts from Wanho Yunu 玩虎倫佑 (1758–1826) before receiving the *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts from Geumdam. Therefore, the fact that Choui appears in the Haeinsa lineage book as a receiver of Daeun's precept lineage reveals that Choui might have intended to strengthen his lineage through Daeun's precept lineage, as well as Daeun lineage monks' intentions to complement the legitimacy claim of their lineage through the reputation of Choui. As for Beomhae, in most cases, he conferred the *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts together, which shows that Daeun's lineage played a stable role as a method of *bhikṣu* ordination around the time of Beomhae. Choui and Beomhae belonged to the Pyeongyang dharma branch, as did Daeun. Pyeongyang branch monks became active with Daedunsa temple in Haenam, as their stronghold from the beginning of the 19th century (Yong-tae Kim 2010, 125). The two monks were central figures of the branch.

Daeun's lineage was transmitted through Beomhae to Hoam Munseong 虎岩文性 (1850–1919) and Jesan Jeongwon 霽山淨願 (1862–1930), and it widely spread to nearby temples beyond Daedunsa. According to Yi Neunghwa's *Joseon Bulgyo tongsa*, Daeun's precept lineage took root in the southern part of the peninsula. Beomhae conferred the precepts to Chwiun 翠雲 of Daeheungsa, Geumbong 錦峰 of Seonamsa, and Jesan 霽山 of Haeinsa; Jesan conferred the precepts to Yongseong 龍城, Eunghae 應海, and Namcheon 南泉 of Haeinsa, as well as Hoeun 虎隱 of Yongmunsa; and Hoeun conferred the precepts to Giryong 起龍 of Chilburam, Gwanseong 冠城 and Jonghyeon 宗炫 of Ssanggyesa, and Jineung 震應 of Hwaomsa (N. Yi 2010, 207–208). The rapid increase in the number of monks who went to China for ordination in the late 19th century seemingly had a close relationship with this change in the Buddhist community. The lineage book of Haeinsa reports that Hoam, who had received the precepts from Beomhae at Daedunsa in 1893, conferred the precepts to approximately 40 candidates, setting up the Diamond Platform at Sangseonwon 上禪院, Haeinsa, in 1908 (J. Yi 2005, 150–152). Thus, Daeun's lineage was accepted as a precept lineage, being transmitted mainly among Beomhae and his disciples, who received ordination from him.

Manha first held the ordination assembly by building a platform at

Tongdosa temple in Yangsan in 1897 after returning to Joseon. According to the lineage book of Tongdosa, Haedam Chiik 海曇致益 (1862–1942) received the precepts that year, while Hoedang Seonghwa 晦堂性煥 (n.d.) received the precepts in 1935, and Wolha Huijung 月下喜重 (1915–2003) in 1944 (J. Yi 2005, 142, 144). According to the lineage book of Beomeosa, Manha's lineage was transmitted in the order of Seongwol Iljeon 惺月一全 (1866–1943), Ilbong Gyeongnyeom 一鳳敬念 (1863–1936), Unbong Seongsu 雲峰性粹 (1889–1946), Yeongmyeong Boje 永明普濟 (n.d.), and Dongsan Hyeil 東山慧日 (1890–1965) (J. Yi 2005, 165, 167).

Manha intended to establish a legitimate precept lineage by receiving ordination in China. However, his lineage was not free from controversy because it originated from the Chinese monk Guxin's auspicious sign ordination. By contrast, although Daeun's auspicious sign ordination did not follow the traditional rules of ordination, it contributed to the establishment of an autonomous precept lineage, instilling a sense of pride among Joseon monks when the fate of the country was at stake with the advancement of Western and Japanese imperialist powers from the late 19th century. Yongseong Jinjong 龍城震鐘 (1864–1940), an eminent monk who received Daeun's precept lineage, was a well-known monk and independence movement activist. He took great pride in belonging to Daeun's lineage and the fact that he was part of one of the precept lineages that the Joseon Buddhist community had independently revived. When he visited Huayansi temple in Tongzhou 通州, China, in February 1908, at the age of 45, a monk said to him, "I heard that Joseon monks only receive the śrāmaṇera precepts, not the great precepts." Yongseong responded, "Our country's precepts were transmitted from master to master. About 100 years ago, while the two elders, named Geumdam and Daeun, made a vow in the greatest Seon house of our country [i.e., Chilburam hermitage, Hadong] and prayed for seven days, an auspicious ray of light shone atop Daeun's head. Afterwards, they set up various precept platforms. This is the same case as that of the preceptor Guxin in China."²⁰ While already knowing at the time

20. "Giyeon mundap," *Yongseong seonsa eorok* (Recorded Sayings of Seon Master Yongseong), year of the monkey (1908) (ABC, Y0001_0001, 1:20a01) <https://kabc.dongguk.edu/>

that the Chinese precept lineage had been revived through Guxin's auspicious sign ordination, Yongseong treated the lineages of Guxin and Daeun on the same footing. He did not problematize the auspicious sign ordination method and rather emphasized that Daeun's lineage had been autonomously revived apart from a Chinese one. Before Yongseong received the precepts from Seongok 禪谷 (n.d.), he had attempted to receive the precepts from Seokgyo (n.d.) of Mt. Cheonghwa but eventually decided to forgo after discovering that Seokgyo's lineage was connected to a Chinese one.²¹ Gwon Sang-ro also praised that Daeun's precept lineage had been formed in Joseon, saying, "The autonomous precept lineage of Joseon was firmly founded and transmitted until now" (Gwon 1930, 13).

Conclusion

A noteworthy phenomenon in the 19th-century Joseon Buddhist community was the attempts made to revive the *bhikṣu* precept lineage. In the early 19th century, Daeun applied the auspicious sign ordination, while Baekpa used the ten-wholesome-precept ordination. In contrast, Manha received a Chinese precept lineage in the late 19th century. The lineages of Daeun and Manha garnered support from many monks at the time and have survived as two major precept lineages in Korean Buddhism. However, Daeun's auspicious sign ordination had too great a flaw to be considered a turning point in the revival of the precept lineage of Joseon. While it is based on the 23rd light precept in the *Brahma's Net Sutra*, the auspicious sign ordination is not appropriate for the complete ordination ceremony, which requires three masters and seven witnesses. Although Daeun's lineage was accepted as a precept lineage by such renowned masters as Choui and Beomhae, the fact that Manha went to China to receive a new precept

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21. Do-hyeong Kim, "Yongseong seunim: minjung gwa hamkke haneun kkedareum silcheon" (Master Yongseong: Practice for Enlightenment with the People), *Hangyeorye sinmun*, September 27, 1991.

lineage in the late 19th century reveals that there was still doubt about the legitimacy of Daeun's lineage in the Buddhist community of the time.

Daeun's lineage does not seem to have been fully accepted by Joseon monks in the midst of the controversy regarding its legitimacy. Temple lineage books emphasize the transmission of the precepts along the lines of Daeun, Geumdam, Choui, and Beomhae, while only a few documents have recorded the names of the monks, other than Choui, who received *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts from Daeun and Geumdam. Choui had already received full precepts from Wanho before receiving ordination from Geumdam. After his reception of Daeun's precept lineage, Choui focused on conferring the bodhisattva precepts. Therefore, it was actually Beomhae and his disciples who established Daeun's lineage as a *bhikṣu* precept lineage. Beomhae, who had received the *bhikṣu* and bodhisattva precepts from Choui, conferred these precepts mostly in the mid-and late 19th century when he served as a preceptor. Although it is uncertain why Joseon monks prioritized the reception of the precepts from such eminent monks as Beomhae, this phenomenon apparently raised doubts about the legitimacy of Daeun's precept lineage, which was based on the auspicious sign ordination. One reason several monks, including Manha, suddenly decided to travel to China 60 years after Daeun's auspicious sign ordination can be attributable to the fact that Daeun's lineage was accepted owing to Beomhae. Another important reason could be that travel between Joseon Korea and China became easier in the late 19th century. These two precept lineages played important roles in maintaining the identity of Korean Buddhism. In particular, Daeun's lineage provided a significant sense of pride for Joseon monks during the period of Japan's colonial rule, as it was the lineage that Joseon monks had independently revived.

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Abbreviations

- ABC = Bulgyo girok munhwa yusan akaibeu (Archives of Buddhist Culture). <https://kabc.dongguk.edu/>.
- CBETA = Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (Zhonghua dianzi fodian xiehui 中華電子佛典協會), www.cbeta.org.
- HBJ = Dongguk daehakgyo Hanguk Bulgyo jeonseo pyeonchan wiwonhoe, ed. *Hanguk bulgyo jeonseo* 韓國佛教全書 (Collected Works of Korean Buddhism). 1979–. 14 vols. Seoul: Dongguk University. http://ebti.dongguk.ac.kr/ebti/keyword/index_keyword.asp.
- T = Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡邊海旭, eds. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (Revised Buddhist Canon Compiled during the Taishō Period). 1924–1935. 100 vols. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai.

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