

# Korean Templestay

Autumn 2015

Buddhist Festivals  
Fragrant Scent of Dharma



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## Mirror Reflecting the Good and Bad Deeds of the Deceased *Eopgyeongdae*

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*Eopgyeongdae* is a mirror that reflects the good and bad deeds of the deceased. Buddhism believes that the deceased should stand in front of this mirror and confess all the bad deeds they have done during their lives. The kinds and amounts of bad deeds reflected in the mirror decide which hell the deceased must go to. Consisting of a mirror and a stand, the *eopgyeongdae* is usually placed in a temple hall related to the underworld such as the Hall of the Dark Realm, Ksitigartha Hall or the Hall of Ten Kings. This *eopgyeongdae* consists of a stand in the shape of a lion and a mirror encircled by inscriptions of flames. The round design encircled by flames symbolizes the mirror. Lions, traditional protectors of the Buddha-dharma, are usually portrayed in a brave and dignified manner, but the one on the mirror stand looks cute and friendly. The yellow body of the lion is simple but dynamic force and variation are achieved by painting the mane and tail green and brown and by adding a lotus-shaped prop and red flame patterns.▼



77.5 cm high and 57.0 cm wide. Produced during the Joseon Dynasty. Collection of National Museum of Korea



The path to *Youngpyungsa* is lined with a profusion of pure white *gujeolcho*. The *Gujeolcho* Fest opens in the Youngpyungsa area from late September when the flowers are in full bloom until mid-October.

— © Ha Ji-gwon

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**Templestay**



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**Translated by** Lotus Buddhist English Institute Tel: +82-2-6329-0202

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# Body Exposed to the Autumn Wind

A monk asked Yunmen,  
“How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?”  
Yunmen said,  
“Body exposed to the autumn wind.”  
– The 27<sup>th</sup> Case in the *Blue Cliff Record*

Photography by Yu Dong-yeong



## Fall in Love with Buddhist Festivals

### Have All Your Senses Gratified through Sight, Sound, Taste and Just Pure Enjoyment

Article by Kim Gyeong-mi Photos by Ha Ji-gwon

In Korea, autumn offers the greatest variety of Buddhist festivals of the year. Highlighting the theme of flowers that bloom and wither following the change of seasons, flower festivals envelope temples with delicate fragrances. Fall mountain temple concerts add tasteful charm to Korea's mountain temples and fill the ears of temple visitors with joyful music. Temple food festivals showcase healthy natural dishes to the public and heighten the festival atmosphere by gratifying the taste buds of visitors.

Many temples around Korea open their mountain gates wide and hold festivals.

Baeknaksa Temple in Hongcheon exhibits works of installation art, and Golgulsa Temple in Gyeongju offers training in Seonmudo, a kind of Buddhist martial art, as well as traditional Korean martial arts. Baekyangsa Temple in Jangseong holds an annual maple festival where visitors can enjoy the spectacular and colorful fall foliage. And those are just a few. Let's take a look at some of these joyful Buddhist festivals that will gratify your senses through sight, sound, taste and just pure enjoyment.

A photograph of a flower market. In the foreground, there are large, dense displays of yellow and red chrysanthemums. Behind them, several people are standing near tables covered with various flowers and small green cards. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the market and some trees.

# Feature Stories

# The Fragrant Scent of Dharma Adorned with Flowers

Flowers symbolize utmost devotion to the Buddha. When people offer flowers to the Buddha, the Buddha also gives generously to them in return. Thus, flowers are one of the offerings that make the universe purer and more fragrant. Every fall, Jogyesa and Bongeunsa, two temples in the heart of metropolitan Seoul, adorn their compounds with fragrant mums and offer flowers to the Buddha.

Youngpyungsa Temple, located in Sejong City in South



Chungcheong Province, opens their temple gates wide whenever the Siberian chrysanthemums, a wild flower that blooms in fall, burst into full bloom, and hold a flower festival for visitors to the temple.

#### Fragrance of Mums Permeates the City

##### Jogyesa and Bongeunsa in Seoul

Every fall two temples in Seoul transform their compounds into a beautiful fall setting in the heart of the city. They are Jogyesa and Bongeunsa, two major temples in Seoul. As the overall headquarters of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, every October Jogyesa adorns itself with fragrant mums of all kinds and colors. With the theme ‘I hear October mums blooming,’ the temple’s floral adornment gives great joy to its visitors.

Last year Jogyesa replaced the usual elephant-shaped floral “sculptures,” traditionally displayed every year, with floral sculptures of cows and calves which have a connection to the Buddhist ox-herding paintings. Unusual works, like a candle-shaped Christmas tree and mums in the shape of a pine tree, were harmoniously blended with silver grasses to create splendid golden waves, catching the eyes of visitors. This year Jogyesa will hold another October Mums Festival. Under the theme “*Diamond Sutra*” they will create flower sculptures, including a likeness of the temple rice mill where the Sixth Patriarch Huineng once worked.

They will also organize many interesting programs during the festival. As the temple is located in the city’s center, many office workers visit the festival. Jogyesa will also hold a small concert for people to relax while listening to beautiful music in a temple setting filled with the fragrance of mums. Visitors will also have the opportunity to transcribe the *Heart Sutra* or to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. “Rice Cake Sharing” is a program to give out rice cake bars to tourists who visit Jogyesa and its neighboring tourist attraction, Insa-dong. They will also hold a farmers’ market so visitors can buy fresh produce transported directly from the fields. Jogyesa’s festival will be enriched with diverse things to see and to enjoy.

The same is true of Bongeunsa, a temple located in Gangnam-gu, Seoul. It also attracts people every year with its mum festival. They create

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1— At Jogyesa, the “headquarters” of Korean Buddhism, a mum festival is held every October with the theme “I hear October mums blooming.”

2— A flower sculpture created with the theme of Buddhism’s “ox-herding paintings”





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3— Bongeunsa's Mum Festival, a holy profusion of mums.

4— Every fall Youngpyungsa presents a spectacular scene covered with splendid *gujeolcho* blossoms.

a Dharma Nature Maze with mums in front of the temple's One Pillar Gate. Buddhists can walk through the maze and then arouse their Buddhist faith by walking the mum-lined walkway up to the Main Buddha Hall. From the One Pillar Gate to Beobwangnu Pavilion, images of the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac will be created so visitors can stop in front of their sign and make a wish. Visitors can enjoy creative displays of mums at many places around the temple and regain their physical and mental stability. During the festival, traditional tea demonstrations and photo exhibitions are also held.

#### **A Mountain Temple Embroidered with White Wild Flowers**

#### **Siberian Chrysanthemum Festival at Youngpyungsa in Sejong City**

When fall comes Siberian chrysanthemums (“*gujeolcho*” in Korean) bloom everywhere in mountain folds or along roadsides. Youngpyungsa, a temple nestled on Mt. Janggusan in Sejong City, South Chungcheong Province, presents a spectacular scene every fall, covered with the profuse blossoms of Siberian chrysanthemums. If the colorful cosmos sways our minds at the beginning of fall, pure white *gujeolcho* that bloom in late fall will certainly induce tranquility.

The path to Youngpyungsa is lined with a profusion of *gujeolcho*. Walking along the flowery path for about 1 km will bring you to the One Pillar Gate. For a fuller appreciation of the temple's *gujeolcho*, one should look around the Main Buddha Hall, Three Sages Hall and the Sammyeong Zen Center. Afterward, one should trek around Mt. Janggusan. Walking past the earthenware pot stand next to the Main Buddha Hall, and passing the monastic dormitory, one can

find paths lined with *gujeolcho* along the low hill trails. The flowers dotting the mountainside blend well with the trees and assorted grasses, exuding the aesthetics of nature. Though the mountain temple and its vicinity are crowded during the festival, not many people hike into the mountains, so one can enjoy the solitude of walking alongside fields of flowers. After about 500 meters of following the signs saying “*Gujeolcho Flower Lanes*,” the path heads downhill where the refreshing forest trail unfolds. Walking about 300 meters along the trail, a field of *gujeolcho* comes into view. The flowers seemed to be dancing in the wind and made me think of an innocent child's laughing face. Their pure innocence is contagious and just naturally makes onlookers smile. About 300 meters farther downhill one sees the back of the Main Buddha Hall. After a pleasant walk to view the flowers, it is relaxing to drink *gujeolcho* tea or white lotus tea at the tea house next to the Main Buddha Hall and listen to soothing music.

The “*Gujeolcho Fest*” is held every year in the Youngpyungsa area from late September when they are in full bloom until mid-October. Many programs are offered during the festival, including a temple concert, a photo exhibit, natural soap making, 108 prostrations practice and picking chestnuts. Especially popular is the temple's free noodle lunch provided during the festival. The noodles are cooked without artificial flavoring and seasoned with bamboo salt. One can often see long lines of people waiting to enjoy the noodles. \*

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#### **★ Festival Information**

Jogyesa: +82-2-768-8544 / Bongeunsa: +82-2-3218-4826 /  
Youngpyungsa: +82-44-854-1854

## Buddha's Teachings Embodied in Temple Food

To use natural food ingredients in accordance with the laws of nature, and to follow natural laws and principles without special recipes are what temple food is all about. Temple food aims to make both the body and mind healthy. Major temple food festivals in Korea are the Temple Food Festival held in spring by the Cultural Corps of Korean Buddhism under the Jogye Order and the fall Temple Food Festivals held at Bongyeongsa in



Suwon and Bulyongsa in Uljin. Other colorful cultural festivals related to temple food are also held at the temples of Jinkwansa, Gounsa, Beomeosa and Woljeongsa.

### Awaken the Mind with Food from Nature

The human body has innate natural healing powers to heal itself. With a complete change of diet, anyone can restore their physical and mental health by reviving their inherent healing abilities. Temple food is extremely healthy as it makes the most of the natural tastes and colors of each ingredient, without the five pungent vegetables Buddhism prohibits. It also helps eliminate bodily toxins. At a temple food festival one can see all kinds of healthy nutritious food in one place. Beautiful, inviting food in all forms and colors dazzle the eyes and stimulate one's taste buds.

In particular, the annual Temple Food Festival held by the Cultural Corps of Korean Buddhism (under the Jogye Order) promotes a return to the prototype of temple food that embodies the spirit of dedicated Buddhist practice. During the festival, monastics from 11 temples nationwide (temples designated “temple food specialists” or “temple food expert management temples”) who are skilled in preparing temple food come together in one place to give various experiential programs. The 11 temples are: Gounsa, Geumsuam, Daewonsa, Baekyangsa, Beopryoungsa, Bongyeongsa, Bulyongsa,



Sudosa, Youngseonsa, Jinkwansa and Tongdosa. These temple food experts explain what genuine temple food is by giving lectures on Korean temple food, performing cooking demonstrations and giving participants the opportunity to taste it. Other interesting programs include a large-scale cooking demonstration of making *bibimbap* which they then serve to onlookers and a *baru gongyang* (formal monastic meal) experience for foreigners. Temple food festivals attract many people by providing the opportunity to taste, hear about and understand temple food firsthand.



1— The Temple Food Festival is held by the Cultural Corps of Korean Buddhism every year to promote a return to the prototype of temple food that embodies the spirit of Buddhist practice.

## **Experiencing Healthy and Tasty Temple Food**

### **Bongyeongsa in Suwon and Bulyongsa in Uljin**

Every year, a festival is held to give visitors an opportunity to experience the varied temple food culture of Buddhist nations around the world at one place. Started by Bongyeongsa Temple in Suwon in 2009 and called the “Temple Food Festival,” the festival grew much bigger in 2013 by expanding its scope to include food from temples around the world and changing its name to the “International Temple Food Festival.”

During the festival one can taste and enjoy Korean temple food as well as temple food from other Buddhist nations such as Vietnam, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal and India.

Cooking demonstrations and sampling booths are packed with eager visitors, the menus listing such inviting and invigorating dishes as: *dubu gimbap* (rice and tofu rolled in seaweed), *deulkkae ueongtang* (burdock and ground perilla seed soup), *nokdu jeon* (mung bean pancakes), *dotori muk* (acorn jelly), *yeonbap dosirak* (a box lunch of rice wrapped in lotus leaf), *gamja tteok* (potato rice cake) and *sachal mandu* (temple dumplings).

The Temple Food Competition is another attraction during the festival. Pre-selected individuals and organizations participate to showcase their talents. Each participating country shows off their own unique temple food at the exhibition. At the overseas temple food booths, traditional temple food of each country is cooked

and sold on the spot. Other interesting programs include temple food lectures, Bongyeongsa *bibimbap* performance,

sampling lotus seed porridge and green tea and a tea ceremony for foreigners. At the experiential program booths one can try their hand at making lotus lanterns, drawing Buddhist flags, pounding rice flour dough with a mallet, *tuho* (“pitch-pot”, a traditional Korean game), *takbon* (ink rubbings) and offering three prostrations in the Dharma hall.

Bulyongsa also holds a temple food festival every fall. Using organic grains and vegetables grown by the temple, dishes such as *gang doenjang* (thick soybean paste stew), *yeolmu bibimbap* (young summer radish *bibimbap*) and *danhobak gui* (roasted sweet pumpkin) are showcased on the lawn near Buryeong Pond and at many places in the temple compound. Happiness depends on health, and the foundation of health is good food. Pure food makes us pure, while impure food makes us impure. The temple food of Bulyongsa embodies the monastic prayer that all beings be happy as food heals the body, and the mind heals the body. At Bulyongsa one can also experience *baru gongyang* which embodies communion with nature, discipline in eating and respect for life. One will naturally ponder what the true value of life is and how to live well without becoming deluded by the unending cycle of production and consumption. ↗

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#### **★ Festival Information**

**Bongyeongsa: +82-31-256-4127**

**Bulyongsa: +82-54-783-5004**





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2— As interest in health grows, so does the public's interest in temple food.

3— Temple food is health-enhancing as it preserves the unique taste and color of natural ingredients to the maximum and helps eliminate bodily toxins.



## Beautiful Melodies Reverberating in Mountain Temples

### Mountain Temple Concerts

When fall comes and the sizzling hot summer is past, festivals unfold in many cities, offering much to see and enjoy. In fall many regional districts prepare cultural events that can be enjoyed by everybody. Mountain temple concerts are one of these events. Mountain temple concerts are usually held not as an independent program but as part of a temple event. Hwaeomsa in Gurye holds the Hwaeom Music Festival which combines



a Templestay program and a mountain temple concert. Mihwangsa in Haenam and Naesosa in Buan incorporate a temple concert as part of their *gwaebul* ceremony (large-scroll Buddha painting festival).

#### **An Autumn Festival of Music Enhancing the Grace of Mountain Temples**

**Hwaeom Music Festival at Hwaeomsa in Gurye**  
Beginning in 2006 as the “Spiritual Music Festival,” the Hwaeom Music Festival at Hwaeomsa opens every year by inviting musicians from around the world in order to promote inner peace and spiritual communion based on Huayan philosophy. Last year’s festival theme was the Buddhist concept of “right view,” one path of Buddha’s “noble eightfold path.” Accordingly, they wanted to have visitors look within themselves, find their true self and heal themselves.

Musicians well-established in their own original genres of music appeared at the festival to offer their own beautiful, romantic melodies, giving the audience a fuller appreciation of the aesthetic beauty of late fall. The Heungyara Band, led by legendary pianist Lim Dong-chang, performed on the eve of the festival. The band performed sound meditation by creating a new kind of resonance, and played the *Yeongsan hoesang* (Assembly on Vulture Peak) using the piano as the main instrument; it is normally played on string instruments. The main performance began with the group Gongmyeong, a world music group. This was followed by a musical collaboration between Cumali Bulduk on the saz (a Turkish string instrument) and harpist Lee Gi-hwa.

Kim Hyo-yeong then played the *saenghwang* (a Korean instrument), and Park Gyeong-hun played piano. The finale was by the singer Han Yeong-ae, who plays various genres including folk, blues and rock.

Please make time to visit the Hwaeom Music Festival, ablaze with colorful autumn foliage every fall, and find the meaning of happiness at a tranquil mountain temple while enjoying the integration of nature, music, self and the world. You will feel refreshed in a new dimension.



1— The Hwaeom Music Festival combines a mountain temple concert and a Templestay program. Honoring Huayan philosophy, every year the temple invites world-class musicians. ©Hwaeom Temple





## A Beautiful Gathering of Dharma that Combines

### Gwaebuljae and Music

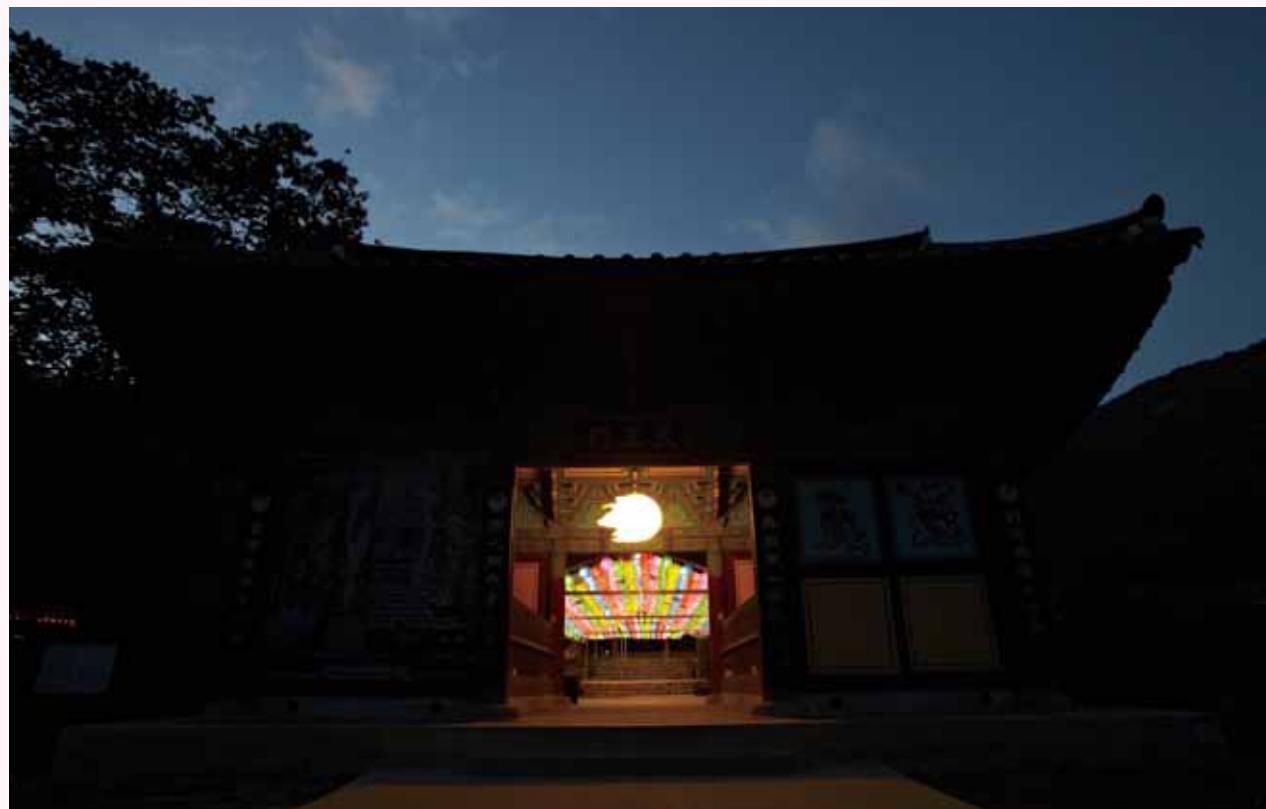
#### Naesosa in Buan and Mihwangsa in Haenam

Situated on the Byeonsan Peninsula, Naesosa is an ancient temple with over 1,000 years of history. The temple holds a mountain temple concert every fall together with its *gwaebul* ceremony, an outdoor ceremony of displaying a large scroll painting of a Buddha. The *gwaebul* ceremony is a kind of Buddhist festival in which locals get together, offer gratitude for the year's harvest, share food and unite in harmony. A “*gwaebul*” is a ceremonial scroll painting that is hung on the flagpole supports in front of a Dharma hall on occasions when a large number of people gather, such as Buddha's Birthday. At Naesosa's *gwaebul* ceremony, the Yeongsan-hoe *Gwaebul* (Korean Treasure No. 1268) is displayed to the public once a year. The festival can also be considered a comprehensive Buddhist art festival where one can experience Buddhist art and music at the same time.

Naesosa's *gwaebul* ceremony begins at 1 p.m. when monastics and young village men move the *gwaebul* into the temple courtyard while holding a white cloth in their mouths. The white cloth is so they don't exhale their own impurities onto the painting.



2— The *gwaebul* ceremony is a Buddhist festival to offer gratitude for the year's harvest, to share food and to unite in harmony. The *gwaebul* at Naesosa is a gigantic Buddha painting that is 10.5 meters high and 8.17 meters wide.



Then, prayers for world peace are read to the Buddha. Next, six kinds of offerings (incense, lanterns, flowers, fruit, tea and rice) are offered. Then, at the “*tongcheon*” ceremony, wishes are made to heaven, to earth and to all humanity. Offerings of sound (played on Buddhist instruments) are then offered to the Buddha, and lastly, the *gwaebul* is enshrined back in the Dharma hall.

Naesosa’s *gwaebul* is 10.5 meters high and 8.17 meters wide. It was produced in the 26<sup>th</sup> year of King Sukjong’s reign (1700 CE). With Sakyamuni Buddha at the center, the painting features a total of seven sacred images. In the foreground, Sakyamuni is flanked by Manjusri and Samantabhadra, and in the background are Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, the Bodhisattva of Great Power, the Buddha of Abundant Treasures and Amitabha Buddha. Within the halos that surround each one, on the right, are red vertical banners in which the name of each sage is written in gold ink. *Gwaebul* are an important resource for research into Buddhist images depicted in the late Joseon era.

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#### ★ Festival Information

Hwaeomsa: +82-61-782-7600 / Naesosa: +82-63-583-7281  
Mihwangsa: +82-61-533-3521

3— The nighttime concert after the *gwaebul* ceremony enhances the graceful aesthetics of a mountain temple in fall.  
©Naesosa Temple

When the *gwaebul* ceremony is over and the sun sets, a mountain temple concert is held in front of the Main Buddha Hall. Last year, one of the singers was Ven. Simjin. Other singers who added to the autumnal festivities included Hyeon Jin-u, Chu Ga-yeol, Park Gang-su, an acoustic guitar trio called Prologue, electric violinist Kang Myeong-jin and the Deulgukhwa Family.

Mihwangsa, a gorgeous temple located at the southern Land’s End (*ttangkkeut*) village of Haenam, also holds a *gwaebul* ceremony every fall along with a mountain temple concert. Their *gwaebul* dates back to 1727 and is Korean Treasure No. 1342. It is 5 meters wide and 12 meters tall. The ceremony begins by moving the scroll painting to an altar prepared in the front courtyard. Then offerings from the year’s harvest are made to the Buddha, followed by a lantern offering. Last year, at the nighttime concert held in front of the Main Buddha Hall, diverse performances were given with the theme “Stories from the Year of Gabo: Men Gone to Sea.” Performers included Mihwangsa’s own “*pungmul*” group (a traditional Korean music ensemble) named Gungodan, and singers Park Yang-hi, Yang Eun-seon and Jin Jae-geun. Their music centered on major incidents that have occurred around Mihwangsa for the past 120 years, from the Donghak Farmers’ Revolt to last year’s Sewol Ferry disaster.

This year again, Naesosa and Mihwangsa are preparing for the *gwaebul* ceremony and music festival in October at the height of fall. Visit these temples and be a part of their beautiful Dharma assembly. 

# Beautiful Buddhist Art Adorning Korean Temples

Article by Kang So-yon  
Photos by Ha Ji-gwon



In Korean temples one can see many different kinds of Buddhist art, including sculptures and paintings. In the Dharma halls at the heart of a temple compound, various colorful designs called dancheong are painted on doors, pillars and ceilings. One can also see various sculptural works as one walks from the One Pillar Gate at the entrance to the main temple area. Interesting designs are also inscribed on such stone structures as staircases, stone lanterns, steles, stone pagodas and monks' stupas. The exterior and interior of major wooden structures, such as the Gate of Heavenly Kings, Bell Pavilion, Teaching Hall and Main Buddha Hall, are also grandly adorned with Buddhist art on every surface.



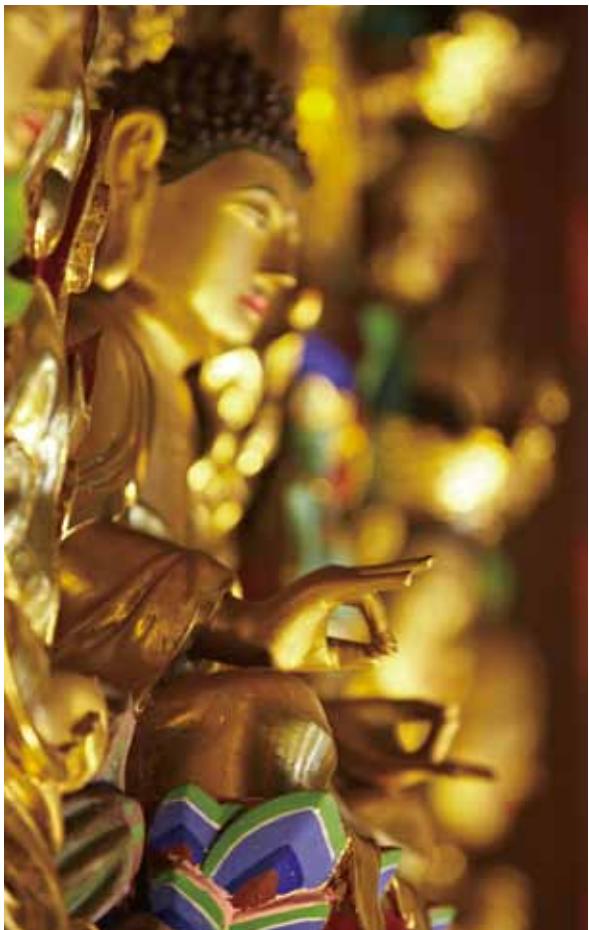
1— Details of the crown on the head of the Avalokitesvara statue enshrined at Wontongbojeon Hall at Beopjusa Temple in Boeun, North Chungcheong Province.

2— Part of the Rocana Buddha Scroll Painting enshrined at Sudeoksa Temple in Yesan, South Chungcheong Province. More than 10 meters tall, this super-sized scroll depicts brilliant light emanating from the Buddha, and from this hundreds or thousands of transformed bodies manifest.

In Buddhism, the term “adornment” refers to decorating temples or Dharma halls, the same basic meaning as “decoration” in the secular world. However, “adornment” also refers to beautifying the world through one’s personal “conduct.” The term “adornment” embraces not only tangible art that makes the world more beautiful, but also virtuous conduct which is intangible. Therefore, to burn incense or light a candle with a pure mind also “adorns” the world. Buddhism puts emphasis on the mind. Although we live in a material world, it is actually our minds that determine our happiness or unhappiness. Thus, Buddhist practice is to look into one’s self which is polluted from secular living and confused by “traditional” social values and systems, and to return to one’s original pure mind. When we are restored to the pure and innocent mind of a child, we find joy and peace in the here and now.

### How Buddhist Art Is Expressed in Temples

Our original pure clean mind, how is this mind expressed in Buddhist art? Sakyamuni Buddha defined two characteristics of this mind: it is “impermanent” and the result of “dependent origination.” One of the most spectacular Buddhist paintings in Korea is the Rocana Buddha Scroll Painting (Korean Treasure No. 1263), enshrined at Sudeoksa Temple in Yesan, South Chungcheong Province. The whole canvas is filled with brilliant lights emanating from the Buddha’s body. The body of the Buddha symbolizes the primordial source from which all things in the universe are created. The energy that creates all things emanates from the foundation of existence and is depicted with dazzling rainbow-



3—Amitabha Wooden Relief Panel (Korean Treasure No. 748) enshrined at Gyeongguksa Temple in the Jeongneung area of Seoul. It features a dramatic depiction of Buddhas and bodhisattvas manifesting from the auspicious energy arising from the fundamental source.

colored lights. From this powerful light manifest the transformed bodies of flying celestials, bodhisattvas and heavenly kings. The term “transformed body” refers to intangible energy that is transformed into tangible form.

Another superb example of Buddhist art is the Amitabha Wooden Relief Panel (Korean Treasure No. 748), enshrined at Gyeongguksa Temple in Seoul. Buddhist paintings were usually produced by painting on silk. However, in the late Joseon Dynasty, an unusual form of wooden relief panel began to be produced. Upon careful examination the complex relief designs reveal their true nature. The mystical energy that emanates from the source of all beings is depicted abstractly in various designs. The energy blossoms into lotuses, projects into high mountain peaks or radiates like beams of light. Among these various designs one also finds manifestations of Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

In addition, in the Wontongbojeon Hall at Beopjusa Temple on Songnisan Mountain in Boeun, North Chungcheong Province, one can also see an Avalokitesvara Statue noted for its miraculous power. The powerful energy of compassion that emanates from the statue is expressed in its voluminous full body, beautifully draped robe and luxurious crown. Details of the crown depict energy arising like cumulus clouds, within which lies a wish-fulfilling gem that seems to be enveloped in dancing flames. Lotus flowers bloom like peony petals within which a transformed Buddha is born. One also often sees numerous small Buddha statues as temple adornments. They symbolize the limitless Buddha nature that fills the space called the Dharma realm.

One monk's stupa at Gapsa Temple in Gongju depicts the principle of the creation of the universe with sublime aesthetic sensibility. From an inscribed lotus, symbolizing the foundation of the universe, arises a lion, and from a whirl of auspicious energy arises a dragon. Korean temple adornments found in architecture, sculpture, paintings and other crafts reflect the Buddhist worldview that can be summed up in the terms "impermanence and dependent origination." The longer a temple's history is, the more it is adorned with Buddhist art, beginning from the One Pillar Gate, to monk's stupas, to pagodas, to sculptures and to the *dancheong* (multi-colored temple paintwork) design found on the exterior and interior of Dharma halls.◆



4— Details of a monk's stupa at Gapsa in Gongju, South Chungcheong Province. Its abstract inscription depicts the arising of all things in the universe.

5— Various Buddha statues enshrined in the Palsangjeon Hall at Beopjusa.

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# Silent Teachings from the Buddha and Virtuous Monks Pagodas and Monk's Stupas

Article by Kim Gyeong-mi  
Illustrated by Han Kyung-eun



Temples can have various styles of pagodas (“*tap*” in Korean) that differ in form and size. Large stately pagodas stand on temple grounds while small simple ones are found in corners of a temple compound, usually well-weathered over time. In addition, many monk’s stupas, both big and small (“*budo*” in Korean), are observed at the entrance of temples. What are the differences between pagodas and monk’s stupas?



### Pagodas Enshrining the Buddha’s Relics

Enshrining Buddha’s relics, pagodas symbolize the Buddha and his teachings. Buddhists often circumambulate pagodas clockwise with their right shoulder toward the pagoda as a way to reaffirm their faith and experience the mind of the Buddha. Pagodas originated when the eight kingdoms of India divided up the Buddha’s relics after he passed away and built stupas in which to enshrine them. Later on, China built mostly brick pagodas, Korea stone ones and Japan wooden ones.

As can be seen, pagodas were objects of worship before Buddhists began to enshrine Buddha statues in Dharma halls. Generally there are two categories of relics: Buddha relics (teeth, fingernails, hair, ashes, etc.) and Dharma relics. Buddha relics refer to his bodily remains while Dharma relics are sutras of the Buddha’s teachings. As both types of relics symbolize the Buddha, both kinds are enshrined in pagodas.

Upon close examination of a pagoda, one sees they are inscribed with various figures such as bodhisattvas, the eight beings that protect the Dharma, four heavenly kings, vajra-warriors, etc. Such figures are also a superb form of sculptural art.

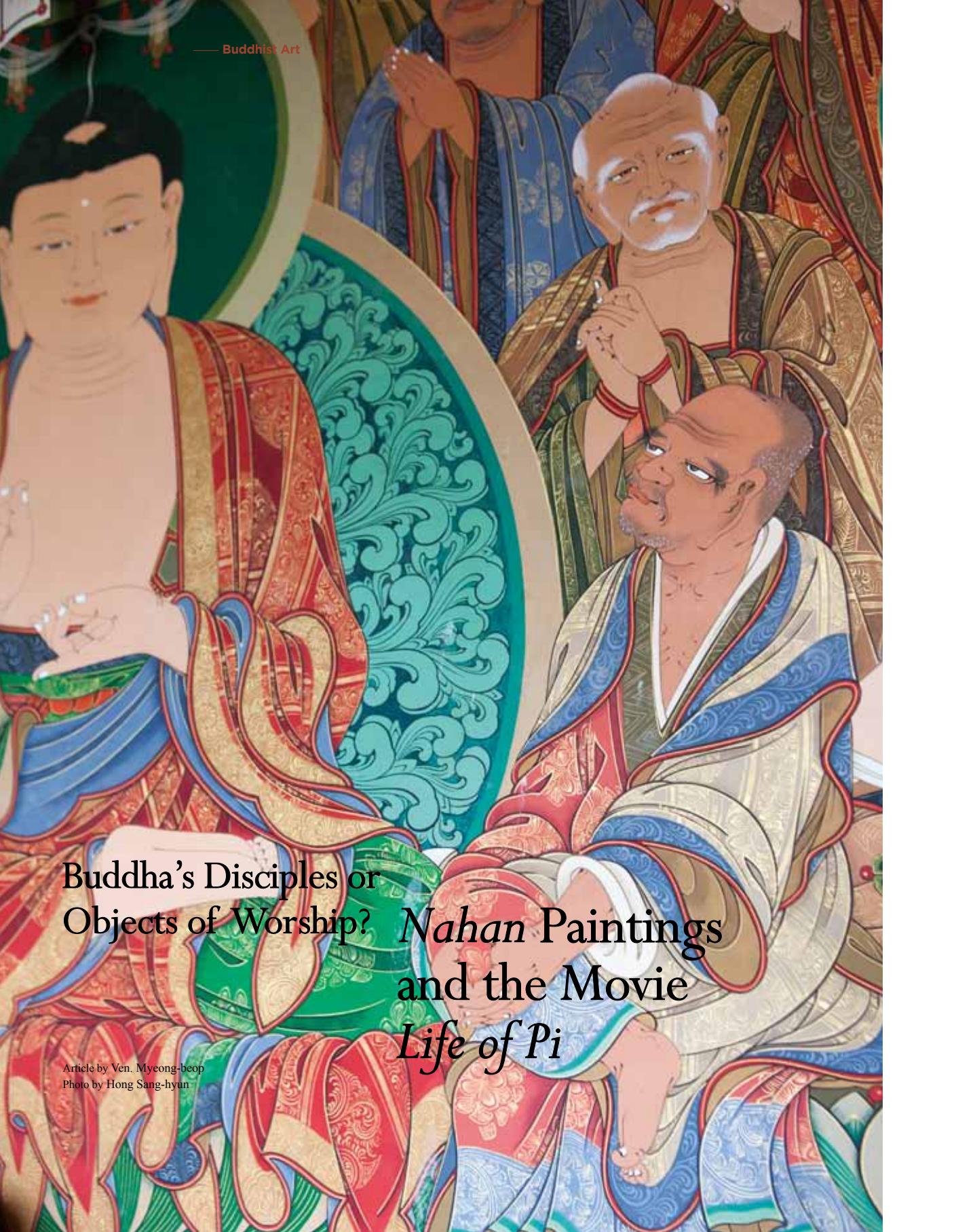
### Stupas of Deceased Monks Enshrine Their Remains

If pagodas enshrine the Buddha’s relics, monk’s stupas enshrine the relics or cremains of deceased monks. When great monks of a temple pass away, their cremains are then collected and enshrined in a stupa. In other words, monk’s stupas enshrine the relics of great monks who attained a level of practice nearly equivalent to the Buddha’s.

Most stupas are octagonal or bell-shaped. To identify who is enshrined in a stupa, some are inscribed with epitaphs revealing major events in their lives.

Traditional Korean temples of relatively large size usually have a field of monk’s stupas with many stupas on either side of the entrance or behind the temple. This may give the misconception they were all established at once, but each was erected one by one as a virtuous monk passed away.

These fields of monk’s stupas remind us to uphold the virtuous conduct and diligent practices of past monks and make them models for our own lives. They exhort us to keep practicing to attain enlightenment. 



# Buddha's Disciples or Objects of Worship? *Nahan* Paintings and the Movie *Life of Pi*

Article by Ven. Myeong-beop  
Photo by Hong Sang-hyun

*Nahans* (transliteration of *Luohan* or *Lohan* in Chinese; Sanskrit Arhat, meaning “one who is worthy of receiving offering”) that are mentioned as the Buddha’s disciples are historically real people but the *Nahans* that are worshipped in East Asia are imaginary figures. *Nahans* were thought of as special beings that had supernatural powers that guaranteed health, longevity, wealth and fame of their followers. They were worshipped either separately or in a group such as Sixteen *Nahans*, Eighteen *Nahans*, Five Hundred *Nahans*, One Thousand Two Hundred *Nahans* and so forth. The halls are named after the number of the *Nahans*, for example: Lone Saint Hall, Sixteen Hall, Five Hundred Hall, etc.

*Nahan* worship became prevalent in Tang dynasty in China and in Goryeo Dynasty in Korea. There are historical records that describe that the king himself presided over offering rites to the *Nahan* praying for the rain to come or invaders to be expelled. Taejo Yi Seonggye, the founder of Joseon Dynasty also prayed to the *Nahan* before he succeeded in becoming the king.

#### **Painting behind the Buddha, Dosoram, Mihwangsa Temple**

This *Nahan* has legs crossed and is staring straight up. Such posture appears in other pictures however this one is special because it is located right beneath the Buddha. As a result, the *Nahan* seems to be staring right into the Buddha. These provocative and mannerless *Nahans* in fact convey a message of a world free of obstructions — the world of Buddhism and its Zen masters.

It is fascinating to find that our ancestors had left comments on the artistic qualities of these *Nahans*. Often you would find their surprise stating that the *Nahans* are “of complete reality” or “as if alive.” In 1618, Jeong Yeop, Governor of Yangyang, had visited *Nahan* Hall at the Jangansa Temple of Mt. Geumgangsan. He wrote in his travel journal that “all of them were different and some in strange postures; there were both extremes of beauty and ugly; they have mysterious looks that seem to have come from monks.” In 1788, Gang Se-hwang, who was the leader of Confucius circle in late Joseon Dynasty, also commented after visiting the same place. He said that the Jangansa had already declined at that time but he was impressed with the *Nahans*. “In the Four Saints Hall were seated sixteen *Nahans* shaped from mud. The elaborate workmanship was heavenly and they all seemed alive and moving. I had never seen such.” Gim Chang-heup also gave a review that the *Nahans* were “extremely exquisite and mysterious; standing closely together, they looked alive.”

These *Nahans* are not real – they are mere images in paintings and sculptures. How can you describe them as “look alive” or “have life”? Why did our ancestors emphasize the “living” aspect so much when they were but products of imagination? What did the artists of the past have in their minds when they drew or shaped a *Nahan*? Did they depict a *Nahan* of their imagination or was there a special *Nahan* that only they could see?

#### **Freedom and Individuality, Humor and Friendliness**

##### ***Nahan* — the Transcendent Being**

In China, *Nahan* paintings first started to appear in the Northern and Southern Dynasties period (5-6 century CE) and became quite prevalent in Sui and

Tang Dynasties (6-9 century CE). It is said that monks Faxian and Fajing of Liu-Song Dynasty first painted *Nahan*. The oldest *Nahan* artwork that remains today is from Northern Song Dynasty period. It is the “Sixteen *Nahans* Painting” that is located at the Seiryoji Temple of Kyoto, Japan. After the Five Dynasties era (10 century CE), pictures of *Nahans* and *Guanyin* (*Avalokitesvara*) were favored over those of the Buddha or Bodhisattvas. They had more artistic purposes than religious. *Nahans* were drawn not only by professional artists or monks but also Confucius literati. Scholar-officer Li Gonglin of Song Dynasty was famous for his *Nahan* paintings.

When one was to depict the Buddha, one had to follow the description of the scriptures where the Buddha is said to have carried thirty-two marks and eighty features on his body. He was also a prince, a noble. These provided some guideline in depicting the Buddha. However, *Nahans*, the disciples of the Buddha, do not have as extensive an explanation of their physical characteristics. Because the *Nahans* were here to protect us after the Buddha had gone, they were thought of as beings somewhere in the middle of the Buddha and human. So here in came the artists’ imagination, and the *Nahans* came to life with full expressions of humanity. Sixteen, or sometimes five hundred *Nahans* would all have different expression and postures.

“Naban Jonja (Pindolabharadvaja)” who sits in the One Saint Hall is described as “having white hair, and very long eyebrows that can cover the whole face” in the *Asokaraja Sutra*. This passage seems to have provided a guideline on how he was to be depicted. This *Nahan* is a white-haired old man who lives forever and protects the dharma in this era of confusion where the Buddha’s teachings

is contaminated. Because of his similarity to Daoist heavenly deity (shenxian), he has come to take on a similar appearance to shenxians after coming to China. Wang Shen of Ming Dynasty looked at the *Nahan* painting of Li Gonglin and described that the Naban Jonja’s eyebrows stretched beyond the knees and touched the cushion on the floor. Middle-aged *Nahans* mostly have thick eyebrows, full mustache and dense beard whereas younger *Nahans* have thin eyebrows, small mustache and black hair.

You will see all kinds of *Nahans* in their group of five hundred. Some are holding prayer beads, bamboo stick, *vajra*; kneeling down to offer fruits; wearing a hood and in a samadhi; reading scriptures or holding a brush; resting his chin on his hands while riding a tiger; scratching their back or yawning; holding a mirror; holding a fan; holding a flower, etc. All five hundred of them have different expression and posture.

Such vivid character and diversity were previously unseen in other Buddhist arts. The fact that there were no prototype actually boosted the artists’ imagination. It is very interesting to note that some of them would most certainly have been modeled after real-life monks, particularly old, wise and widely-respected monks. In *Nigulu* written by Chen Jiru of Ming Dynasty is a record that the picture of Nagona Jonja, one of the *Nahans* in the Sixteen *Nahan* Picture is in fact a self-portrait of its painter Guan Xiu, a monk artist of the Wu Dynasty. Guan Xiu had come from India so he had large eyes and big nose. This is why we sometimes come across *Nahan* paintings that have such appearance. Guan Xiu’s Sixteen *Nahan* Painting was simplistic yet fully expressed the



A *Nahan* at Geijoosa Temple



#### Five Hundred Hall, Unmunsa Temple

Because the *Nahans* were here to protect us after the Buddha had gone, they were thought of as beings somewhere in the middle of the Buddha and human. So here in came the artists' imagination, and the *Nahans* came to life with full expressions of humanity. All five hundred disciples of the Buddha have different expression and postures.

free spirit of the *Nahans*, thus it became a model for later artists.

This is the basis on which we discuss the factuality of *Nahan* paintings. Strange and exaggerated faces, unrealistically long eyebrows and all such features might have been chosen to express the *Nahans'* supernatural and transcendental nature, but these are far from real. When it comes to *Nahans* lying on a tiger or scratching their back, this might be depicting their out-of-the-worldy character, but still, this is definitely not fit for religious worship. Then when people of our past thought that the *Nahans* were "as if alive", did they believe that the *Nahans* really existed?

#### Fine Line between Fiction and Fact

Science is strictly about facts. Facts are something we can see, verify and understand. But the movie *Life of Pi* makes us rethink of the meaning of "fact." This movie is based on Yann Martel's book on a story of a young man and a tiger stranded together in the ocean.

Pi, a boy from India, is the lone survivor of his family after their ship sinks into the Pacific Ocean. He is drifting on a small rescue boat with other surviving members – who are not humans. They are orang-utan, zebra, hyena and a Bengalese tiger all of which his father used to keep in his zoo. Soon, hyena attacks and eats the zebra and the orang-utan. When the hyena was about to attack Pi, Richard – this is the name of the tiger – jumps out of hiding and kills the hyena instantly. So Pi lives but lives with a tiger on this tiny boat. How can the tiger and Pi survive?

After Pi is rescued by a Japanese ship, he tells the crew that he stayed on a rescue boat with a tiger and had visited a beautiful cannibal island. But of course, nobody believes him. His story is dream-like and fascinating but indeed hard to believe.

If you watch *Life of Pi* in 3D, the scenes of ocean and whale in starlight, cannibal island that jumped straight out of fantasy are surely some of the images that will live through the history of movies. But are they real, a fact? Story of tiger and cannibal island is something no person with common sense will accept. Did Pi really stay on the boat with the tiger? Did the cannibal island exist? Were not Pi's story but his illusion?

Then Pi tells them another story which they can believe in. Instead of animals, this time the boat is filled with people. A French cook, a Japanese sailor with a leg injury, Pi and his mother.

The chef assaults the sailor first; then Pi's mother. Pi is infuriated and kills the chef. And through his endless journey on sea, he survives on the chef's flesh. Unlike the story with animals, this version of story is something people can believe in, but it is utterly cruel and tragic. Pi's story of the cannibal island was previously a beautiful fairy tale but now we are faced with a story fabricated by Pi's consciousness in order to relieve him of guilt.

The fact is that Pi lost his family and drifted on the ocean. But Pi had two different stories to tell. One is beautiful yet hard to believe; the other is brutal but very much believable. The movie leaves the choice to the audience.

The movie itself is surprisingly realistic.

It keeps a balance between fact and fiction; science and fantasy. It does not talk of romantic friendship between tiger and man. One can understand that the movie has always left open a possibility of interpreting the tiger as Pi's own barbarism and the boy-Pi as his reason. They respectively stand for his subconsciousness and consciousness. Pi actually is a naive young boy who believes in god and dreams of communicating with the tiger; but on the other side, he is also a man of science and reason as taught by his father. He is very logical and rational in his approach to catching fish, taming the tiger and finding a way to survive. The movie does not try to make us believe in Pi's story. It only talks of "facts" as we know them. Then, was the fact there, or was it ours to choose?

"Facts" in art are all artificial, a made-up reality, however, we choose to believe them. Aristotle said that "poetry is more philosophical than history." This was because poetries carried higher verisimilitude than real life events. But what Aristotle means by verisimilitude is not something objective but our belief that something is objective.

#### **Nahan Hall, Songkwangsa Temple, Wanju**

Built in 1656, it is a North Jeonra Provincial treasure no. 172. Middle-aged *Nahans* mostly have thick eyebrows, full mustache and dense beard whereas younger *Nahans* have thin eyebrows, small mustache and black hair.



This belief allows us to experience other worlds. Religious experiences might be something similar. Pi had believed in scientific knowledge of catching fish and taming a tiger. He also believed in the cannibal island and the friendship between man and beast. These beliefs saved his life. What makes both science and religion a fact is belief.

So, what is your choice?

### Aesthetics of *Il*

People of East Asia chose to believe the legendary stories of *Nahans* over the historic *Nahans*. They sometimes drew realistic *Nahans* sitting on a rock or resting under a tree but no less enjoyed drawing imaginary pictures of them riding a tiger or holding a dragon. And they always thought that the *Nahans* were “very much alive.”

*Nahans* are people outside of this world. They are no longer bound by things that we are restricted to; things we attach such big importance — such as manners, serious etiquette, knowledge or noble hobbies. These, to them, are only but trifle; they choose to live free without such worries. People of the past worshipped *Nahans* for their special powers but they were probably more fascinated by this free, transcendental image.

*Nahans* drawn in China were unlike any other grim and serious religious figures. Chinese chose to break the norm. Of course, some *Nahans* are very serious: some are inside a cave, practicing hard under a hood; some have their palms together giving prayers; and some are reading books in a scholarly fashion. However, some *Nahans* would be leaning against a rock, yawning or drowsing. Some are even scratching their backs or picking their ears. Some have clothes all open (how untidy is that!) exposing their fat bellies. These *Nahans*

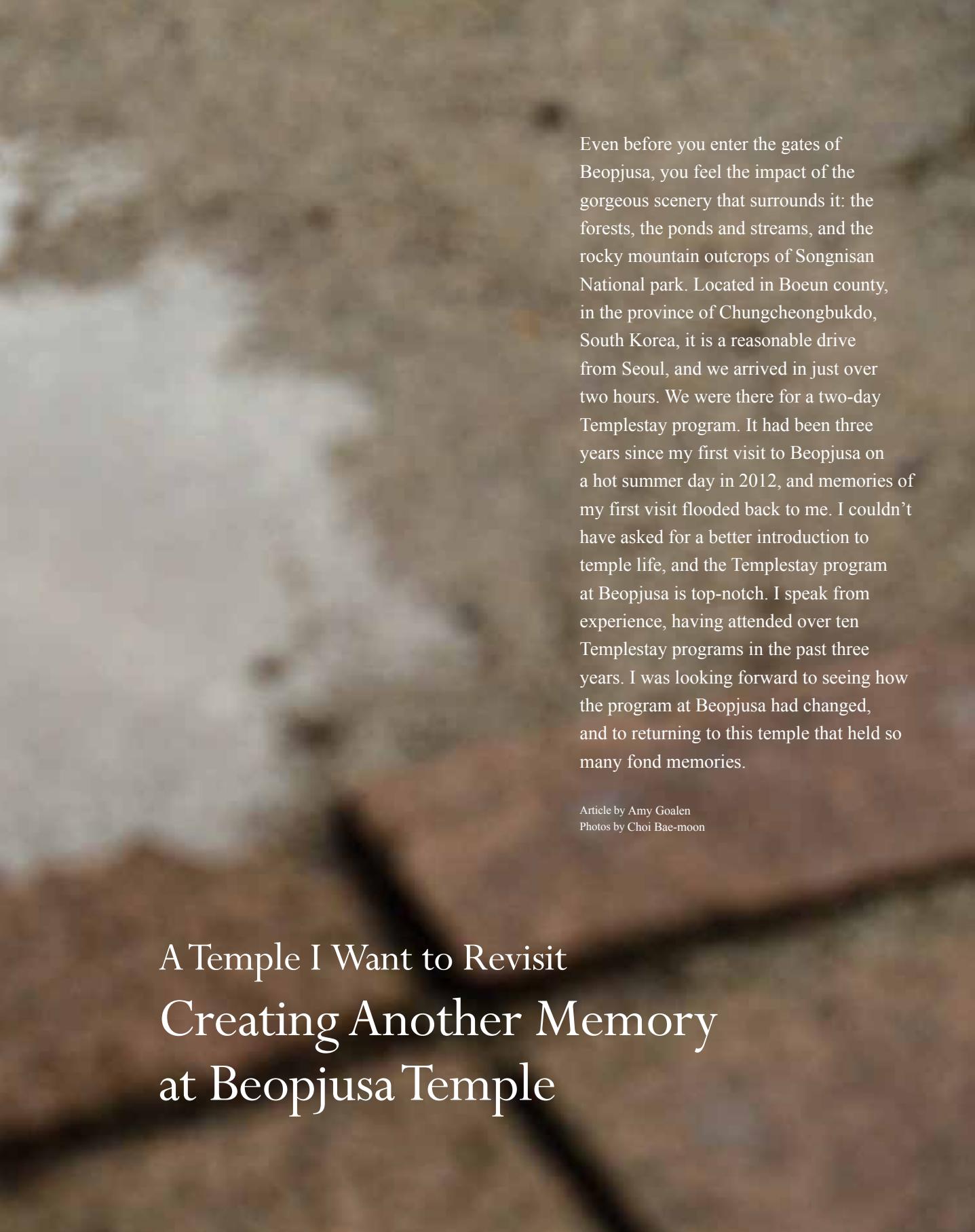
simply lack the solemnity one would expect from an ascetic. Their laughing or sometimes even jeering faces have no gravity whatsoever. The *Nahan* painting hanging behind the Buddha in Dosoram of Mihwangsa Temple even looks as if he is staring at the Buddha — in a quite impolite manner. There is a similar *Nahan* in Heungguksa Temple but he is only looking up; he does not look disrespectful. These provocative and mannerless *Nahans* in fact convey a message of a world free of obstructions — the world of Buddhism and its Zen masters.

People in the past regarded this as the highest level of art. The title “*Il* (departure)” was given to masterpieces that had departed from fixed ideas, social restrictions, stereotypes and even religious solemnity. These artworks could no longer be defined as being either artificial or super-artificial; they were utterly free.

“*Neung* (capable)” meant that the painting had accurately reproduced the object. “*Sin* (spirit)” meant that the picture succeeded in capturing the spirit of the object. “*Myo* (exquisite)” was used to describe paintings that captured the living, moving energy of the object. “*Il*” was beyond them all; the supreme level of art pursued by Confucius scholars. “*Il*” is a norm-breaker, an invitation to freedom, an art beyond our worldly ideas; this is probably why scholars who had to live under stifling rules of Confucius ethics and order were so fond of *Nahan* paintings.

People of the past chose imaginary *Nahans* and their story continued on to all kinds of legends including the mountain god and the tiger, the monk and the crow, etc. These stories are fantasy yet real. Try listening to them and you will find surprising stories that are not in the western art or literature. ↴





Even before you enter the gates of Beopjusa, you feel the impact of the gorgeous scenery that surrounds it: the forests, the ponds and streams, and the rocky mountain outcrops of Songnisan National park. Located in Boeun county, in the province of Chungcheongbukdo, South Korea, it is a reasonable drive from Seoul, and we arrived in just over two hours. We were there for a two-day Templestay program. It had been three years since my first visit to Beopjusa on a hot summer day in 2012, and memories of my first visit flooded back to me. I couldn't have asked for a better introduction to temple life, and the Templestay program at Beopjusa is top-notch. I speak from experience, having attended over ten Templestay programs in the past three years. I was looking forward to seeing how the program at Beopjusa had changed, and to returning to this temple that held so many fond memories.

Article by Amy Goalen  
Photos by Choi Bae-moon

# A Temple I Want to Revisit Creating Another Memory at Beopjusa Temple

## The Road to Beopjusa

The road leading up to the temple is lined with quaint coffee shops, restaurants specializing in local dishes, and street vendors selling everything from temple prayer beads, to the jujubes (also called “Chinese dates”) that the area is well-known for. I took note to make sure to pick up some jujube *makgeolli* (Korean rice-based alcohol) on my way back to Seoul. Because the area around Beopjusa is a national park, it has been meticulously designed and maintained. There are many places to stop along the way to behold a local lotus flower farm or a jaw-dropping mountain view, so make sure you allow time for these detours on your visit.

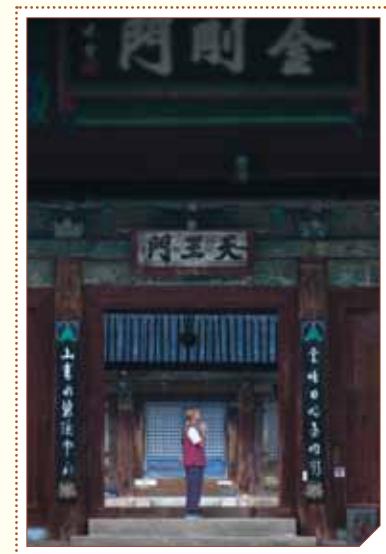
On the narrow road from the front gate to the main temple grounds, you can feel the power of the mighty evergreens that line the path. Staggeringly tall, they offer a warm welcome to the temple. You can find some giant stone relics along your path as well - perfect meditation spots. Just next to the Templestay area is a beautiful walking path where the tree boughs overhead reach out to meet each other, providing welcome shade in the intense heat of summer. The walking path leads to a gorgeous lake, which you are welcome to explore in your free time during the program. One side of the lake has a regularly traveled road, while the other side is simply a forest path with a few hills to conquer. The walk itself takes about an hour, but there are plenty of spots to stop for some silent meditation, and to enjoy the impressive reflection off the lake.

## Ever-Kind Ven. Bogwan and a Clean, Comfortable Room

Beopjusa is one of the district head temples of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, and is a very large temple, housing 60 monks. When you attend



My first visit to Beopjusa was three years ago. Both the temple and Ven. Bogwan looked the same as before. Probably because I had a good first impression? I had greater expectations and was more excited on my second visit.



Upon arrival at Beopjusa, I changed into their training uniform and walked around the temple compound. Inside the Heavenly Kings Gate I saw four fierce-looking gods. Contrary to their fierce appearance, I was told they are gods who defeat evil demons.



After a spell of rain, there were puddles of water here and there. I stopped at one and gazed at the Buddha reflected in the water. His face was one of compassion.



I participated in a program that relaxed my body and mind with music. Lying on the floor with ears tuned to the music, my tension was dispelled and peace of mind was restored.



The Buddhist service was solemn. Though I had no idea what the monastics chanted, I was enchanted by the reverent atmosphere.



Before entering the Dharma hall, I joined my palms together toward the Buddha and prayed that all my plans would turn out well.

the Templestay program here, you will be lucky enough to have an outstanding host; Ven. Bogwan has been leading the Templestay program here for the past three years. She speaks impeccable English, and her love for Beopjusa shines through her radiant smile. I have seen this amazing woman almost brought to tears more than once when taken in by the beauty of her home temple.

A typical 1-night 2-day Templestay program follows the same basic structure at most Templestays in Korea that provide English translators.

You should arrive at the temple around 2 p.m. when you will be shown a brief introduction video and given standard Templestay clothes to wear. In the summer, be sure to bring a t-shirt, socks, and closed-toe shoes, as that is in following with Templestay etiquette. The temple grounds are cooler because it is in the mountains, so prepare accordingly. This time, we were happy to have a break from the August heat. You will then be shown to your room, which is one of the most modern facilities I have seen at any temple. Each room, for up to four people, has its own private bathroom. The rooms have a quaint traditional feel and are nestled up against a small forest and garden. Even in the hot August weather, the room was cool. The comfortable sleeping mats and quiet location allowed me the great sleep I had been anticipating.

#### Programs that Provide Direct Experience of Korean Traditional Culture

You can look forward to an early delicious dinner at 5 p.m. I am never disappointed with Templestay meals as they are made with true love and devotion. Usually, meals eaten at the temple should be eaten in silence while you think about all the effort that went into making those meals for you - from the farmers

who carefully cultivated the various vegetables, to the cooks who prepared it for you that day.

Shortly thereafter, there is the daily call to service. Three monks take turns sounding various Buddhist instruments, first of which is a massive drum called the Dharma drum. This is played to save all beings that dwell on the ground. Other instruments, such as the wooden fish (played to save all beings that dwell in water) or the cloud-shaped gong (played to save all beings in the sky), may also be played. But finally, the Temple bell is sounded to save all the beings in hell. The bell is struck in the morning as well, but it is in the evening when participants of the Templestay program are invited to take turns striking the bell. This is to awaken all sentient beings to the teaching of the Dharma. The sound of this bell will hit you right in your heart chakra as you watch the beautiful sunset from the Bell Pavilion. It never fails to bring tears to my eyes to see these dedicated monks putting the world to sleep with their beautiful music.

The drum ceremony is followed by a very short evening service (“*yebul*”) inside the main temple building. This is about a 30-minute ceremony, led by monks chanting. You can just listen, observe, and bow a few times following the monks’ instructions. After the ceremony is the ideal time to do some stargazing. Beopjusa is a wonderful place for meditation under the stars, and the star-filled sky is a welcome change when you are used to living in smoggy Seoul.

Often at this time, before our nine o’clock bedtime, the temple will plan some kind of activity; whether it be meditation training or a short walk. Although it is not the norm, this time we were invited to join a *gayageum* concert performed by high school students who were staying at the temple for ten days. The *gayageum* is a traditional Korean



In the evening, I had the good fortune to hear a *gayageum* performance by students enrolled in the Department of Korean Traditional Music at Chungbuk Arts High School. A *gayageum* is a traditional Korean zither-like instrument with 12 strings. Their music was both sorrowful and touching.



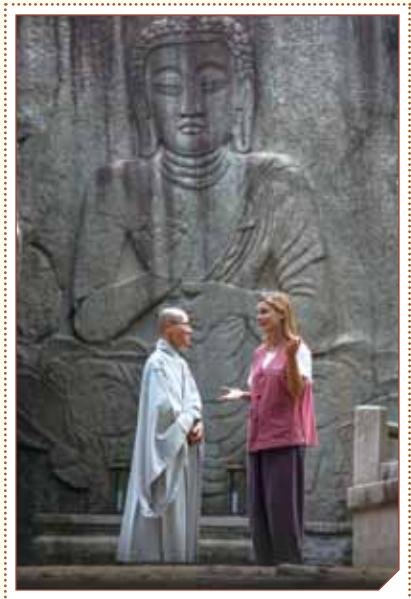
I walked around the temple compound with Ven. Bogwan as she kindly explained the history and origin of Beopjusa.



At Beopjusa, the structure named “Palsangjeon” caught my eye. I was told it is a pagoda despite its building-like appearance.



That morning at Beopjusa was clear and refreshing. Listening to Ven. Bogwan and looking around the temple compound uplifted my spirit, as did the refreshing mountain air, completely absent in cities.



The Buddha carved on this rock was intriguing. What was on the mind of the sculptor as he carved it?

stringed instrument, and the students were from a local art high school. The temple provides a quiet space for the students to simply concentrate on their craft. The concert was so moving, and I was even lucky enough to get to try playing a *gayageum* for the first time! After the concert, it was 9 p.m. and time for lights out in preparation for our 3 a.m. wakeup call.

Every temple has a different wake up time, but at Beopjusa, you are awoken at 3 a.m. by the same drum sounds as from the night before. At 3:30 a.m. is the morning *yebul* (Buddhist ceremonial service), which is slightly longer than the evening service. At this time you can participate in the 108 prostrations (full bows). The 108 bows represent our 108 earthly desires, worldly or confused passions. Compared to the 3 bows from the night before, this can be a challenge for some. But believe me, it is a workout I have come to look forward to! I feel my meditation comes most easily when I am doing these bows.

Before lunch at 11:40, there is a lot of free time. Often, your Templestay guide will organize a hike to Munjangdae or another nearby mountain trail. I opted for some private time along the lake behind the temple. Checkout is just after lunch, but you are free to stay and enjoy the temple as long as you like.

#### What Keeps me Coming Back?

A lot of my friends are surprised when they hear how many Templestay programs I have attended over the past three years. These programs are the perfect opportunity to get a break from city life. You can commune with nature, connect with your spiritual side, and devote some time to that most important of all relationships: the one you cultivate with yourself. 

# Eating Mushrooms Resembling the Ears of the Buddha

Article by Kim Seong-eun  
Illustrated by Kim Jeany



Though it is often said that during the Joseon era Confucianism denigrated and suppressed Buddhism, it couldn't influence the religious authenticity at the heart of Buddhism, which has endured for centuries. There were just as many Confucian scholars who supported Buddhism as there were those who denigrated it. Jang Yu (1587-1638), who was known widely by his pen name "Gyegok," was one of the scholars who defended Buddhism. His poem "Jocular Poem Composed after Getting the Nickname Mahil" is quite interesting.

*Name and form are inherently empty  
No need to distinguish between the past and present  
In my past life I must have been a lay Buddhist  
Now I become a poet having finished my duty  
In the past I observed precepts and offered incense  
Now I recite a poem intoxicated by spring wine  
Still my true self will never change  
Pure essence, neither coming nor going, is ever bright*

“Mahil (Chinese: Mojie)” was the courtesy name of Wang Wei (701-761), a poet of Tang China who was talented in music and art. Because of his great interest in Buddhism, he had the nickname “Poet Buddha.” However, the “Mahil” in the poem refers to the lay Buddhist Vimalakirti, a proponent of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. He said he was a lay Buddhist in his past life, and that as a lay Buddhist he observed precepts, had a single meal before noon, and burned incense. Incense is usually burned as an offering. Though he didn’t say specifically, we can assume he offered it to the Buddha.

### **Delicious Food Made by Monks His Own Age**

Having a deep affection for Buddhism, one day Jang Yu climbed Mt. Jeoksangsan in Muju on official business. There he met two monks his own age. Although he didn’t mention their Dharma names or their associated temples, it is highly probable they were monks from Hoguksa Temple, which maintained the state history archive on that mountain. It was his bad luck that when he reached the mountain temple, the rain began to pour heavily, stranding him in the temple for three days. He healed himself during this time eating delicious food prepared by monks his own age. He ate mushrooms resembling the ears of the Buddha and well-ripened pears, which were so tasty he even asked for seconds, oblivious to appearances. That story is recorded in the poem “A Poem Written for the Monks of Mt. Jeokseongsan.”

*Fragrant mushrooms resembling the ears  
of the Buddha*  
*They grew on the stump of an old tree*  
*Picked and cooked in a cauldron by monks*  
*Their tender flavor is superior to meat*  
*Touched by frost, the pear recalls the cheek  
of a beauty*  
*Its color, aroma and taste are overwhelming*  
*Refreshing as sweet nectar*  
*It can even relieve the overwhelming thirst of an  
ancient poet*  
*Light and mild food is perfect for my thirst*  
*After a long journey my body further suffered  
from wine*  
*It is difficult to bring my lunch to work*  
*The food of government offices smelled of fish*  
*The two delicacies I encountered in a mountain room*  
*I asked for more, forgetting appearances*  
*I sincerely offer gratitude to two mountain monks*  
*This poem can rather be ignored*

It is impossible to know exactly what those mushrooms were, but since they are said to resemble the ears of the Buddha, they must be large and semicircular in shape. He said they grow on the stump of an old tree, so they might have been cloud mushrooms, *yeongji* (*Ganoderma Lucidum*), *sanghwang* (*Phellinus linteus*), *jannabi bullocho* (*ganoderma applanatum*) or seashell mushrooms (*lenzites betulina*). It is a little disappointing not to know their names, but considering the passage said that light food of a mountain temple is better for him, who was suffering from overwhelming thirst, than the fishy food of the government office, he really could have been a lay Buddhist who had close ties to Buddhism in a past life.☛

# Nourishing Food for Fall

Prepared with Seasonal  
Natural Ingredients





Ven. Sujin, the abbess of Sudosa Temple in Seosan, South Chungcheong Province, believes seasonal ingredients that have survived the elements and harmful insects are the best food, and autumn is blessed with abundant natural food. Let us take a look at some original autumn dishes prepared by Ven. Sujin.

Cooked by Ven. Sujin (Sudosa)  
Food styled by Lee Seung-jin (Aranchia)  
Article by Kim Tae-hee  
Photos by Choi Bae-moon



## Diverse Vegetables and Grains from the Deep Mountains

Ven. Sujin emphasizes that life in harmony with nature is most important, whether one prefers a vegetarian diet for health or temple food as a part of practice. She sets her table with vegetables and grains she grows herself. She believes that to prepare and eat in harmony with nature is Buddhist practice. That's probably why her fall table, filled with home-grown ingredients prepared with her sensible touch, doesn't look ordinary. Good examples are her chestnut *gangjeong* (deep-fried sweet cookies) and seasoned *deodeok* flakes, aesthetically styled in four colors. She believes the authenticity of temple food is in its simplicity. As temple food is also integrated with secular food, the so called "fusion temple food" that is popular these days, she reiterates that the original taste and philosophy of temple food should not be lost. She says, "Traditional Korean food and temple food have an understated beauty rather than a luxurious appearance. There are both deep and mild tastes underneath their simple appearance. This has something to do with the beauty of Korea. In terms of food presentation, we don't pay much attention to decorations like flowers but emphasize the delicate colors the ingredients have naturally."

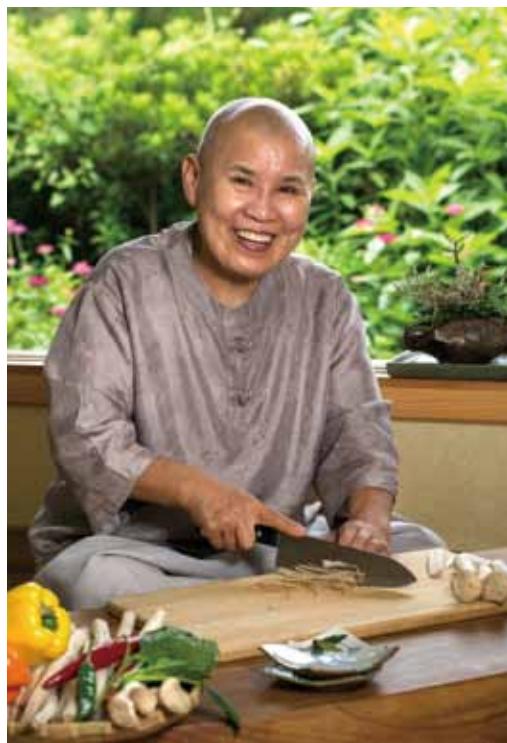
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Traditional Korean food and temple food have an understated beauty rather than a luxurious appearance.

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Artificial coloring tends to be bright, but the colors of natural ingredients tend to be more subdued. They naturally taste mild and are good for the body as they don't upset the body's natural balance. The most beautiful and health-enhancing foods are imbued with the care and sincerity of the cook, from planting, to harvesting to cooking.

To those who need invigorating food after sweating profusely throughout the summer, Ven. Sujin's fall table set with seasonal ingredients is like restorative medicine. The legendary "herb of immortality," for which China's emperor Qin Shi Huang sent his ministers on a quest all over the world, is nothing more than the seasonal vegetables and grains growing in nearby fields and mountains. That's the message Ven. Sujin conveys to us with her simple meals.





**01 Refreshing and Profound  
Mushroom and Korean Zucchini Soup  
(Beoseot Aehobakguk)**

Mushrooms are a must among the invigorating foods of fall. Pine mushrooms, which are good to eat during the change of seasons, lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of cancer. Shiitake mushrooms, with their distinct aroma and chewy texture, are known to enhance immunity, even suppressing the growth of cancer cells. In particular, eating Korean zucchini by scooping it out with a spoon, like tearing flour dough with one's hands when making *sujebi*, was the style of old Koreans. This was deemed to add "sincerity" to the preparation of food.



**02 Tender and Savory  
Stir Fried Sweet Potato Vines  
(Gogumajulgi Deulkkaebokkeum)**

Having a mild taste and soft texture, sweet potato vines are rich in vitamins. Over 90% water, they do wonders for one's skin and diet. Ven. Sujin gives this dish a more savory taste by adding ground perilla seeds and water to the stir fry. Rich in omega 3, perilla seeds are known to prevent dementia and heart disease. Soy sauce is generally used for stir fried sweet potato vines, but Ven. Sujin only uses a little salt. Its bland taste makes one's stomach feel less heavy even after eating a lot.



**03 Fragrant and Colorful  
Four-Colored Seasoned Deodeok Flakes  
(Sasaekdeodeok Bopuragi Muchim)**

Before you even taste it, this dish stimulates your taste buds with its four fantastic colors. Because *deodeok* (*Codonopsis lanceolata*) was a rare delicacy and took a lot of work to prepare, it was enjoyed only by gentlemen scholars and royal families in old times. Known to be beneficial to the lungs and bronchial tubes, *deodeok* is a precious ingredient that was once called "the meat that grows in the mountains." The dish's appearance and nutrition are further enhanced by adding gardenia seeds, which are good for the liver, spinach, which may prevent aging by removing free oxygen radicals, and cockscombs, which are known to regulate the "fire" energy of the body.

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## 04 The Harmony of Sweet Rice Syrup and Crispy Burdock Braised Burdock (*Ueong Jorim*)

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### ▣ Ingredients (4 servings)

350g burdock, 2.5 Tbsp soup soy sauce, 3 Tbsp cooking oil, 1 Tbsp sesame oil, 4 Tbsp rice syrup (*jocheong*) and 3 tsp vinegar

### ▣ Directions

- 1— Soak peeled and trimmed burdock in rice water (water left after rinsing rice) for 10-20 minutes.
- 2— Thin-slice the burdock diagonally.
- 3— Bring water to a rolling boil in a pot. Add 3 teaspoons of vinegar and the burdock into the water. Close the lid and boil about 3 minutes more. Drain the water, add about 200 ml water, and boil once more.
- 4— Add 2.5 Tbsp soup soy sauce, 3 Tbsp cooking oil, and 4 Tbsp rice syrup (*jocheong*). Keep boiling until the liquid is almost gone.
- 5— Turn off the heat when done and add 1 Tbsp of sesame oil as a final touch.

**TIP** Adding vinegar for blanching reduces the toxins in root vegetables and prevents browning. Boiling the burdock twice by changing water removes the sour aroma of the vinegar. Lotus roots and *deodeok* can also be boiled in this way for better taste.



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## 05 Sweet, Spicy and Crunchy Chestnut Gangjeong (Bam Gangjeong)

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### Ingredients (4 servings)

200g chestnuts, 3 Tbsp rice syrup, 1 Tbsp cooking oil, 1 Tbsp *gochujang* (hot chili paste), and 1 tsp sesame oil

### Directions

- 1— Put the chestnuts into heated oil and fry them. After some time lower the heat and continue frying.
- 2— Remove the fried chestnuts from the oil. Raise the temperature of the oil and fry them again.
- 3— In a pan mix 3 Tbsp rice syrup, 1 Tbsp cooking oil, 1 Tbsp *gochujang* and place over the lowest heat setting. Put in fried chestnuts and stir to evenly coat them with the sauce.
- 4— Add 1 tsp sesame oil at the last minute.

**TIP** Chestnuts can be braised in soy sauce but their sweet flavor goes better with *gochujang*. As the chestnut's cellular tissue is firm and thick, it is advised to fry them a relatively long time at first and then refry them. In this way the surface is crisp while keeping the inside moist and tender.



# Stories of Buddhism, Simple and Easy



You can see many different Buddhas at temples. At first there was only the one original Buddha, Sakyamuni. Why are there now so many Buddhas? What is temple ground chanting? What are flagpole supports, altars and Buddhist canopies? Let us explore Buddhist customs a moment to answer such enigmatic questions.

Article by Kim Sang-hwa  
Illustrations by Kwon Min-jeong

## Q Why are there so many Buddhas?

A In terms of the historical Buddha, there is only one, Sakyamuni Buddha. However, Buddhism says that anyone can become a Buddha upon enlightenment. "Buddha" means "one who is enlightened to the truth." Buddha is also called "Thus-come-one" or "Tathagata." Buddha statues are enshrined in a temple to be a model for us and to remember the Buddha. Buddha statues were not produced during the time of the Buddha but appeared later in India about 500-600 years after the Buddha passed away. Sakyamuni Buddha is enshrined in a temple's Main Buddha Hall (Daeungjeon or Daeungbojeon). Vairocana Buddha symbolizes the truth that radiates the light of wisdom. He strives ceaselessly to save sentient beings. Vairocana is enshrined in a temple's Daejeokgwangjeon Hall or Birojeon Hall. The Medicine Buddha heals sentient beings and extends their life spans. He is enshrined in a temple's Yaksajeon Hall. Maitreya is the Buddha of the future and is enshrined in a temple's Mireukjeon Hall.

## Q What is temple ground chanting ("doryangseok") and why is it done?

A *Doryangseok* is a ritual performed every morning. Monks walk around the temple compound chanting verses to announce the time to wake up and to purify the compound. The ritual's purpose is to awaken sentient beings from their sleep and to let them hear the mantras that expound taking refuge in the power of the Buddha. The sound of wooden handbells starts out low so as not to startle beings and gradually increases in volume. When *doryangseok* begins, you should get up, wash, go to the Main Buddha Hall and be seated to wait for the early morning Buddhist service.



### Q What does a half bow (“banbae”) mean?

- A Half bows are the usual way of greeting others at a temple. With palms together in front of your chest (“hapjang”), you bow your head. In a half bow, you bend forward from your waist about 60 degrees. While bowing, keep your palms together and your fingers straight and extended. Half bows are usually offered when you bow toward the Dharma hall at the temple entrance, when you meet someone, either monastic or laity, in the temple compound, when you bow to the pagodas outside a Dharma hall, and when you enter or leave a Dharma hall.
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### Q What are flagpole supports (“dangganjiju”)?

- A Flagpole supports are erected outside the temple entrance to hang banners that represent the temple. Made of stone, their tips are decorated with carved lotuses. A wooden or iron pole was hung between them, and banners were hung on the pole. Thus, flagpole supports could indicate the location of a temple or its size. Such temple flags are no longer displayed, but the flagpole supports remain preserved.
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### Q What are upper altars and Buddhist canopies?

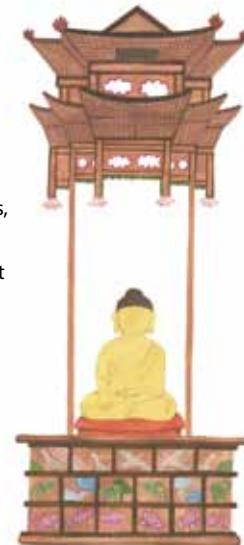
- A Altars are podiums upon which Buddha statues are enshrined. Upper altars are called *sumidan* in Korean. The term “*sumi*” comes from “Mt. Sumi,” the Korean translation of Mt. Sumeru which is said to occupy the center of the Buddhist universe. Thus, the term “*sumidan*”

symbolizes that Buddhas occupy the highest place in the cosmos.

A *sumidan* usually consists of three tiers. The squares or rectangles of each tier are inscribed with lotus blossoms, clouds, or “manja” designs (reverse swastika or “Buddhist cross”); or wild animals that live on Mt. Sumeru such as lions, tigers, elephants, fish, turtles and crawfish.

A canopy (“*datjip*”) is erected over the *sumidan*.

The term “*datjip*” means “house within a house.” On this canopy are inscribed clouds, dragons, phoenix, lotus and flying celestials, creating the feeling of elaborateness and splendor.



### Q What is Zen meditation (“chamseon”)?

- A The Buddha attained enlightenment through his practice of meditative concentration. Concentration means serenity of mind, and Zen meditation (“chamseon”) means to enter into meditative concentration. Zen meditation illuminates one’s original mind or true nature. At a temple, one begins Zen meditation after three soundings of a bamboo clapper. One enters into meditative concentration sitting in the lotus position. Zen meditation also ends with the sound of the bamboo clapper, after which one does a half bow with joined palms.
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# 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 at one of 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'd 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 a Templestay?

Most temples provide comfortable uniforms and bedding for an overnight stay. Bring your own toiletries, a towel, underwear and socks. 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, for families or small groups, some temples may assign them their own rooms.

### 05 How do I greet monastics when I pass 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 practice are prohibited, including drinking and smoking. Avoid wearing clothes too loud or too revealing, such as sleeveless shirts and shorts. Please wear socks, as bare feet are not deemed proper in Korean temples. 

# 20 Selected Temples for Foreigners

English Translators Are Available

**Seoul**  
 Bongeun-sa  
 +82-2-3218-4826  
[www.bongeunsa.org](http://www.bongeunsa.org)  
 Geumsun-sa  
 +82-2-395-9955  
[www.geumsunsa.org](http://www.geumsunsa.org)  
 Myogak-sa  
 +82-2-763-3109  
[www.myogaksa.net](http://www.myogaksa.net)  
 International Seon Center  
 +82-2-2650-2242  
[www.seoncenter.or.kr](http://www.seoncenter.or.kr)

**Gyeonggi / Incheon**  
 Jeondeung-sa  
 +82-32-937-0152  
[www.jeondeungsса.org](http://www.jeondeungsса.org)  
 Yongjoo-sa  
 +82-31-235-6886  
[www.yongjoosa.or.kr](http://www.yongjoosa.or.kr)



**Gangwon**  
 Woljeong-sa  
 +82-33-339-6606  
[www.woljeongsа.org](http://www.woljeongsа.org)

**Gyeongbuk / Gyeongnam**  
 Golgul-sa  
 +82-54-775-1689  
[www.sunmudo.com](http://www.sunmudo.com)  
 Haein-sa  
 +82-55-934-3110  
[www.haeinsa.or.kr](http://www.haeinsa.or.kr)  
 Jikji-sa  
 +82-54-429-1716  
[www.jikjisa.or.kr](http://www.jikjisa.or.kr)

**Busan / Daegu**  
 Beomeo-sa  
 +82-51-508-5726  
[www.beomeo.kr](http://www.beomeo.kr)  
 Donghwasa  
 +82-53-982-0223  
[www.donghwasa.net](http://www.donghwasa.net)

**Chungbuk / Chungnam**  
 Beopju-sa  
 +82-43-544-5656  
[www.beopjusa.or.kr](http://www.beopjusa.or.kr)  
 Magok-sa  
 +82-41-841-6226  
[www.magoksa.or.kr](http://www.magoksa.or.kr)

**Jeonbuk / Jeonnam**  
 Geumsan-sa  
 +82-63-542-0048  
[www.geumsansa.org](http://www.geumsansa.org)  
 Hwaeom-sa  
 +82-61-782-7600  
[www.hwaeomsа.org](http://www.hwaeomsа.org)  
 Mihwang-sa  
 +82-61-533-3521  
[www.mihwangsa.com](http://www.mihwangsa.com)  
 Naeso-sa  
 +82-63-583-3035  
[www.naesosa.org](http://www.naesosa.org)  
 Seonun-sa  
 +82-63-561-1375  
[www.seonunsa.org](http://www.seonunsa.org)

## How to Sign Up for Templestay

### • Online Registration

1. Visit the Templestay website (<http://eng.templestay.com/>).
2. Read the information provided, including comments of previous participants, and decide which temple you want.
3. Check the schedule, either on the Templestay site or the website of each temple.
4. Submit your registration online by filling out the reservation form.
5. Transfer the fee to the bank account designated. Confirm your reservation by calling the temple and asking any questions you may have.

### • Offline Registration

1. Visit the Information Hall on the 1st floor of the Templestay Information Center located across from Jogyesa Temple.
2. Read through leaflets from the various temples and find the temple you want to stay at.
3. Or check the Templestay schedule of different temples and find the temple that provides a program on the date most suited to you.
4. You may sign up online at the computer station provided in a corner of the Information Center. Or you may call the temple on the phone.



In Korea, autumn offers the greatest variety of Buddhist festivals of the year. Highlighting the theme of flowers that bloom and wither following the change of seasons, flower festivals envelope temples with delicate fragrances. Fall mountain temple concerts add tasteful charm to Korea's mountain temples and fill the ears of temple visitors with joyful music. Temple food festivals showcase healthy natural dishes to the public and heighten the festival atmosphere by gratifying the taste buds of visitors. Many temples around Korea open their mountain gates wide and hold festivals.



<http://eng.templestay.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/templestaykorea>

[blog.templestay.com](http://blog.templestay.com)