

# On the Sinin and Ch'ongji Schools and the Nature of Esoteric Buddhist Practice under the Koryŏ

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## Introduction

Esoteric Buddhism, by which I understand a distinct form of *Mahāyāna* that originally arose on the basis of beliefs in magic, chiefly brought into effect through the use of spells during the 3-4th centuries in India. In the course of the following centuries it developed into a number of complex systems—sometimes inter-related sometimes not—focusing on ritual practices in which ritualized hand-gestures (Skr. *mudrā*), sanctified, ritual spheres symbolizing the spiritual world (Skr. *maṇḍala*), and various types of powerful incantations (Skr. *dhāraṇīs* and

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*mantras*).<sup>1</sup> In Korea this tradition has played an important role in the history of Buddhism, not only as a persistent undercurrent in traditional Buddhist practice, in particular that relating to ritual, but as a main factor in underpinning the divine legitimacy of the ruling houses.<sup>2</sup> As such it has served an important role in forging of a strong link between Buddhist spirituality and the secular powers during Korea's medieval period.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this study is to establish the historical reality of two Esoteric Buddhist denominations, the Sinin 神印 and Ch'ongji 總持 schools, as well as attempting to account for some of the beliefs and practices which they are thought to have expounded. Although the Korean Buddhist tradition as well as modern Korean scholarship ascribes a much earlier ancestry to both denominations, they are now known to have flourished during the Koryŏ 高麗 dynasty (918-1392). Korean scholars generally believe that the Sinin School existed as an

1 If we exempt the study of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism which in any case is highly regionalized and culturally specific, that of Esoteric Buddhism as a general movement in Mahāyāna Buddhism is still a relatively uncharted field. In particular the tradition's early phase in India is largely in the dark. One of the main reasons being that virtually no material survives in Sanskrit from this early period, and secondly because Indologists have avoided to take on the task for a variety of reasons. So far the best study—despite its many problems—is David Snellgrove's *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, London: Serindia Publications, 1987. For an attempt at defining Esoteric Buddhism in the East Asian cultural context, see Charles D. Orzech, "Seeing Chen-yen Buddhism: Traditional Scholarship and the Vajrayāna in China," *History of Religions* 29:2 (1989), pp. 87 - 114.

2 For an all-round survey of Esoteric Buddhism in Korea, see Henrik H. Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism (*Milgyo*) in Korea", *The Esoteric Buddhist Tradition*, ed. H. H. Sørensen, SBS Monographs II, Copenhagen: Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1994, pp. 73 - 96. For a number of pioneering essays in Korean the reader is referred to *Han'guk milgyo sasang yŏn'gu* (Studies in Esoteric Buddhist Thought in Korea), comp. Pulgyo Munhwa Yŏnguwŏn, Seoul: Tongguk Taehakkyŏ Ch'ulp'anbu, 1986.

3 My interest in the history of Esoteric Buddhism in Korea goes back to the late 1980s, when I discovered a large number of ritual manuals in the library of Songgwang Temple 松廣寺 near Sunch'ŏn, South Chŏlla province. The results of this "discovery" was published as "A Bibliographical Survey of Buddhist Ritual Texts from Korea," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 6 (1991 - 1992), pp. 159 - 200. Since then I have published a number of articles on various aspects of Esoteric Buddhism in Korea including; "Lamaism in Korea During the Late Koryŏ Dynasty," *K* 33:3 (1993), pp. 67 - 81; "On Esoteric Practices in Korean Sŏn Buddhism during the Chosŏn Period," in CHKP, Iri: Wŏngwang taehakkyo ch'ulp'an kuk, 1993, pp. 521 - 46; "The Worship of the Great Dipper in Korean Buddhism," in *Buddhism and Religion in Korea*, ed. H. H. Sørensen, SBS Monographs III, Copenhagen: Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1995, pp. 71-105. Later I wrote a piece on the nature of the Esoteric Buddhist rituals at the Koryŏ court, "Buddhist Rituals during the Koryŏ Dynasty: A Re-assessment of a Korean Buddhist Tradition" (forthcoming Inha University Press).

independent Buddhist denomination or school (Kor. *chong* 宗) during the Unified Silla (668–935) and the Koryŏ, while the Ch’ongji tradition was mainly a phenomena of the Koryŏ. Nevertheless, there is a tendency to see both denominations as inheritors of the Esoteric Buddhist tradition from the Silla.<sup>4</sup> I am somewhat reluctant to accept these views for a variety of reasons, and below I shall seek to answer these questions in more detail. However, in the light of the weak historical sources currently available on both the Sinin and Ch’ongji denominations I tend to interpret “school” in the broadest possible sense as “tradition” or “school of practice” rather than as a full-blown, sectarian denomination with its own distinct institutions and officials. This would seem to hold true for both denominations, at least until the late Koryŏ dynasty.

### I. On the Esoteric Buddhist Antecedents of the Silla

Before proceeding to a discussion of the extant data we have on the Sinin and Ch’ongji schools of Buddhism under the Koryŏ, let us first take a look at the Esoteric Buddhist background of their Esoteric Buddhist antecedents which existed during the Silla. I have previously written a historical survey on Esoteric Buddhism in Korea, and therefore I will not repeat what I have already said there (Sørensen, 1994:76–85). Here I shall limit myself to a discussion of those aspects of Esoteric Buddhism to which the later Koryŏ tradition traces itself: 1) Namely whether or not the Sinin and Ch’ongji traditions existed during the Silla, and 2) whether or not either of them had any direct link with the Korean monks, who studied Esoteric Buddhism under the great

4 See Kim, Yŏngt’ae, “Samguk sidae ūi sinju shinang (Belief in Divine Mantras during the Three Kingdoms Period),” in *HMSY*, pp. 35 - 8; and Ko, Ikchin, “Silla milgyo ūi sasang naeyŏng kwa chŏngae yangsang (The Characteristic of Esoteric Buddhist Thought under the Silla and its Origin),” in *HMSY*, pp. 127 - 222; and Pak, T’aehwa, “Sinin chong kwa Ch’ongji chong ūi kaechong mit paltal kwachŏng ko (Concerning the Origin and Further Development of the Sinin School and the Ch’ongji School),” in *HMSY*, pp. 253 - 294. Note that both of these studies are highly tendentious and uncritical as to their use of the primary sources. For a more moderate and historically sound approach, see Sŏ, Yun’gil, *Han’guk milgyo sasang sa yŏn’gu* (Studies in the History of Thought of Korean Esoteric Buddhism), Pulgwang pulhak ch’ongsŏ 3, Seoul: Pulgwang ch’ulp’anbu, 1994, pp. 301 - 313.

Zhenyan 眞言 masters of Tang China.

The *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Bequeathed Records from the Three Kingdoms; hereafter *SGYS*) (HPC, 6-245a-369c) contains the accounts of three Esoteric Buddhist monks who allegedly lived during the 7th century. Namely Milbon 密本 (n.d.), who is said to have lived during the reign of Queen Söndök 善德 (632-647) (HPC, 6-355ab), Hyet'öng 惠通 (fl. 7th cent.), a contemporary of Milbon who also performed miracles at the Silla court (HPC, 6-355c - 356b), and Myöngnang 明郎 (n.d.) (HPC, 6-356bc). Moreover, the two latter monks are said to have journeyed to China to study under famous masters. It is even said that Hyet'öng studied under the important Zhenyan 眞言 master Śubhākarasiṃha (637-735), truly a magical feat given the fact that the latter monk arrived in Tang China during the early years of Emperor Xuanzong's (r. 712-756) reign. The chronicle on Myöngnang also has him assist Silla's struggle against the Tang following the unification of the Korean Peninsula in 668 A.D. (HPC, 6-356c).

Unfortunately the *SGYS* is the only source which treats these three monks, and as the source itself is a late Koryŏ collection of miscellaneous writings from different periods—some with more historical validity than others—we should not place too much reliance on it.<sup>5</sup> Rather, I would suggest that we take the data in the *SGYS* regarding the above three Esoteric Buddhist masters as suggestive. This means that while it is possible that there were important thaumaturges such as Milbon, Myöngnang and Hyet'öng expounding some form of Esoteric Buddhism in Silla during the 7th century, in the light of the absence of contemporary sources which can corroborate the *SGYS*'s account, it is just not possible to accept these three monks as historical facts. The fact that the *SGYS* later claims that they were considered the founding fathers of the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools does little to establish them as

5 I have previously noted that there is considerable resemblance between the *SGYS*'s account of both Milbon and Hyet'öng with the manner in which the Indian *acarya* Vajrabodhi (669 - 741) is presented in the *Song gao-seng chuan* 宋高僧傳 (The Song Accounts of High Monks; hereafter *SGC*), T. 2061.50, p. 711c. It would seem that Iryŏn, or whoever compiled the story on Milbon had taken over the healing element from the account in the *SGC*, and used it just as an almost identical account appears in the section discussing Hyet'öng. See Sørensen, *Esoteric Buddhism in Korea*, pp. 79 - 80.

historical persons. Hence, while it should not be doubted that Esoteric Buddhism was being practised during the 7th century in Korea, no sources exist with may be taken as proof that the Sinin School actually existed as an independent Buddhist denomination during the Silla. There simply are no reliable historical sources to substantiate such a claim.

This is especially clear when surveying the primary material on the Korean monks who studied under the four great *ācāryas* Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi (669-741), Amoghavajra (705-774) and Huiguo 惠果 (?-805). While it is clear that many Korean monks studied Zhenyan Buddhism in the 8-9th centuries in Tang China, as well as authoring a number of significant works on Esoteric Buddhism, surprisingly little is actually known about their activities in Unified Silla (Sørensen, 1994:81 - 85). It is possible that many lived most of their lives in China and were of marginal importance in their home country. Nevertheless, on the basis of indirect and indeed circumstantial evidence, we may postulate—with some degree of probability—that Esoteric Buddhist practices relating to the Zhenyan School were being carried out in Korea during the late Unified Silla.<sup>6</sup> To what extent these practices achieved any degree of popularity is uncertain, however. This takes us back to the discussion of the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools. In my view it is likely that the Esoteric Buddhist practices which flourished in the late Unified Silla—most likely in various unsystematized and trans-sectarian forms—did serve as the foundation for the type of Esoteric Buddhism which flourished during most of the Koryŏ. There can be little doubt that rituals and beliefs associated with main-stream Zhenyan Buddhism of Tang China had penetrated Korean Buddhism by the late 9th century, and that these continued to be practised under the early Koryŏ. It is possible that it was under the Buddhist reforms of King T'aejo (r. 918-943) that Esoteric Buddhism was elevated to a higher and perhaps more institutionalized status, and that the Sinin School was founded as a separate denomination of Esoteric Buddhism as claimed by the *SGYS*. However, the exact nature of this development

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6 For a list of surviving works by these Korean Zhenyan monks, see *HMSY*, pp. 636 - 637.

is somewhat oblique. Here it must suffice to say that Esoteric Buddhist practices were part and parcel of Buddhism of the late Unified Silla, and that these practices were carried over into the Koryŏ, under which they appear to have been credited with greater importance than previously. At least this is what we may conclude on the basis of the surviving sources.

## II. The Sinin School

One of the problems we encounter in working with Esoteric Buddhism from the Koryŏ is the appearance of the name Sinin School 神印宗 which was used to designate a school of Esoteric Buddhism.<sup>7</sup> This school is claimed by tradition to have been founded by Myŏngnang during the middle of the 7th century, but as we have previously pointed out the *SGYS*, the main source for this tradition, is not reliable. The text says that “Myŏngnang entered the palace of the dragon from which he obtained the divine seal (Kor. *sinin* 神印).” (HPC, 6-356a). Here it is interesting to note that the text speaks of a seal and not of a *mudrā*. The *SGYS* continues with a rather fanciful account of the establishment of Hyŏnsŏng Temple 現聖寺.<sup>8</sup> According to this account in 936 A.D. King T'aejo commanded the two, otherwise unknown monks Kwanghak 廣學 (n.d.) and Taeyŏn 大緣 (n.d.) to establish Hyŏnsŏng Temple as a center for the Sinin School (HPC, 6-356b - 357a). Again it must be borne in mind that no other source, including the *Koryŏ sa* 高麗史 (The History of the Koryŏ Dynasty; hereafter *KS*),<sup>9</sup> mentions this relatively important event, if indeed it ever took place. The way in which the event is obviously meant to signal the formal founding of the

7 For a discussion of the Sinin School, see Sŏ Yŏn'gil, “Koryŏ Milgyo sinang ūi chŏngae wa ku t'ŭksŏng (A Discussion of the Characteristics of Esoteric Buddhist Faith during the Koryŏ),” *PH* 19 (1982), pp. 228 - 230. See also his recent study, *Koryŏ milgyo sasang sa yŏn'gu* (A Study of the History of Esoteric Buddhist Doctrine in Koryŏ), Pulgwang pulhak ch'ongsŏ 4, Seoul: Pulgwang Ch'ulp'anbu, 1993, pp. 251 - 297.

8 For a brief record of this temple, see *Han'guk sach'al chŏnsŏ* (Collected Works on Korean Temples; hereafter *HSC*), Vol. 2., comp. Kwŏn Sangno, Seoul: Tongguk Taehakyŏ Ch'ulp'anbu, 1979, p. 1104ab.

9 *Koryŏ sa*, 3 vols., ed. Han'gukHak munhŏn Yŏn'gu, Kochŏn taehak kangdok kyochae 7, Seoul: Asea Munhwasa (reprint, 1990).

Sinin School as an independent Buddhist denomination. However, I tend to see this as yet another anachronistic fabrication. Most likely Iryŏn inserted the account into the *SGYS* as a way to bolster the historical lineage of the Sinin tradition. In any case I am of the opinion that the connection between Hyet'ŏng and Myŏngnang—both of whom may very well turn out to be legendary figures—was fabricated by monks associated with the Sinin School in order to claim a prominent spiritual ancestry link with important monks of the Silla period.

For historical verification of the existence of the Sinin School, we shall have to turn to the *KS* which mentions Esoteric rituals conducted in temples supposedly under the control of members from this denomination (*KS*, ch. 9, ch. 16 etc.).

Sŏ Yun'gil 徐閏吉, an acclaimed specialist on Esoteric Buddhism in Korea, appears to believe that the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools were different in both scope and the types of Esoteric Buddhist practices they advocated. He claims that the former specialized in the use of *mudrās* while the latter focused on *dhāraṇīs* and *mantras*.<sup>10</sup> Sŏ apparently arrives at his understanding of the Sinin School through an interpretation of the term *munduru* 文豆婁, which occurs in the *KS* in connection with a type of Buddhist ritual, the *Munduru toryang* 文豆婁道場 (Munduru Ritual) that is said to have been performed by monks belonging to the Sinin School.<sup>11</sup> The problem with this interpretation is that Sŏ fails to realize that the apocryphal *Guanding jing* 灌頂經 (Scripture of Consecration),<sup>12</sup> the source of this ritual, is chiefly a books of spells and incantations. This means that the *mudrās*/seals it promotes most certainly were used in conjunction with *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs* (Michel

10 Sŏ Yun'gil, *Hanguk milgyo sasang sa yŏn'gu* (Studies in the History of Thought of Korean Esoteric Buddhism), Pulgwang pulhak ch'ongsŏ 3, Seoul: Pulgwang ch'ulp'anbu, 1994, pp. 301 - 313. See also his, "Esoteric Buddhism," in *Buddhist Thought in Korea*, ed. The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, Seoul: Dongguk University Press, pp. 281 - 283.

11 Sŏ's discovery in this regard is not his own, however. Most of his arguments have in fact been developed on the basis of work done by Pak T'aehwa's old and greatly out-dated study, "Sinin chong kwa Ch'ongji chong ūi kaechong mit paltal kwachŏng ko (Concerning the Origin and Development of the Sinin and Ch'ongji Schools)," in *HMSY*, pp. 253 - 294 (see esp. 262 - 266).

12 T 1331.21, pp. 515a - 517b. For a discussion of this important Esoteric Buddhist scripture, obviously an apocrypha of Chinese origin, see Strickmann, "The Consecration Sūtra: A Buddhist Book of Spells," pp. 75 - 118.

Strickmann, 1990:75 - 118). Hence to understand the Munduru Ritual as having being based on the use of *mudrās* alone is in my view incorrect. However, what is really interesting is that the Korean Buddhists apparently took the *Guangding jing* to heart and utilized at least some of its teachings.

On the basis of information found in the *Guangding jing*, an apocryphal Buddhō-Taoist scripture, Sō reads *munduru* as a transliteration of the Sanskrit word *mudrā* which in the texts indicates a “seal.” He correctly interprets its meaning not as a *mudrās* according to the normal Esoteric Buddhist meaning of hand gesture, but as “contracting seal” (Kor. *chöllin* 結印) in accordance with traditional and indeed pre-Buddhist Chinese belief (Sō, Yun’gil, 1994a:304). While Sō is correct in understanding of *wentoulou*/ *munduru* as a magical seal, he is in my view wrong in his reading of the Chinese, probably because he reads it in Korean transliteration as “*munduru*” and not in the Chinese “*wentoulou*”. Confusion over the meaning of *wentoulou* comes from a small note inserted into the text of the *Guangding jing* itself which reads, “*Wentoulou* in the Barbarian tongue means ‘divine seal’ in the language of Jin (i.e. in Chinese).” (T.1331.21.515b). However, *wentoulou* is not a transliteration of the word “*mudrā*”, in fact it is not even “barbarian language”, it is actually straight-forward Chinese. We should bear in mind that the *Guangding jing* is an apocryphal scripture, therefore its supposed transliteration of Sanskrit is apocryphal too. Hence the actual meaning of the word is as follows: *Wen* 文, i.e. “script or text”, *tou* 頭, i.e. “head” (and not *dou* 豆, probably an old scribal mistake?) and *lou* 婁 “to wear”. In other words *wentoulou* or *munduru* should read “script or text for wearing on one’s head.” This reading of the term is further borne out in the scripture itself where we read:

[...] Buddha addressed Indra [saying]: “These are the names of the Spirit Kings of the Five Directions. If in the Dharma-ending Age the four kinds of disciples experience days of peril, they should take the written names of the Spirit Kings of the Five Directions above to protect their households and write them on a round [piece of] wood. This is called the Wentoulou Method

文頭婁法。” You should only practise in accordance with this meaning.” Indra asked: “How big should one make the round piece of wood with the script for wearing on one’s head?” The Buddha said: “You should make it seven by seven *fen*.” Indra said: “What kind of wood is the most suitable?” The Buddha answered: “Gold, silver and precious jewels are the best. Next follows sandal wood with all kinds of different fragrances, and out of this one fashions the shape of the script for wearing on one’s head... If there are those from among the Buddha’s four kinds of disciples who wish to practice [the method] of this divine seal (i.e. *sinin* 神印), they should first wash their bodies and put on fragrant and clean clothes (T.1331.21.515b).

From the context of this passage and all the following examples in the *Guanding jing* it is quite clear that the so-called “*mudrā*” it talks about is in fact a wooden tablet or disk on which is written in Chinese the names of the Spirit Kings of the Five Directions or other protecting spirits (T.1331.21.515b - 516a). In other words we are here dealing with a talismanic seal of the classical type, i.e. a *fuyin* 符印, and not a Buddhist *mudrā* in the usual meaning of the term as ritual “hand-gesture.” Evidently, whoever composed the *Guanding jing* had seen the Sanskrit term used in other Buddhist texts, or perhaps heard the word mentioned, without understanding its proper Indian Buddhist meaning as a seal formed with one’s hands, but instead understood it to be a magical seal in the Chinese meaning of the term. i.e. as a talismanic seal. Since talismans and talismanic writing is part and parcel of the Taoist tradition in China, in particular in the context of ritual practices for protection against enemies, evil spirits, disease etc., it is only natural that the mistake as to the meaning of *yin* 印 should also occur in a Chinese Buddhist apocryphal scripture containing copious Taoist elements. Other non-Indian scriptures related to the formation of Esoteric Buddhism in China also make the same mistake or rather confuses the *mudrās* formed by the Esoteric Buddhist adepts during rituals with the holding of talismans.<sup>13</sup> It is only in later translations and scriptures of mature (and orthodox) Indo-Chinese

Esoteric Buddhism that we find the use of *mudrās* described in their proper meaning as hand gestures. Although by then it would seem that the term *wentoulou* had long since fallen out of use in the meaning of *mudrā*. Since we do not encounter the Wentoulou Ritual as such in the context of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism during the Tang (or later for that matter), it would appear that it was not widely practised, at least not under this name. It is highly possible that the formation and growing importance of orthodox Zhenyan Buddhism under the Tang caused the earlier and more Sinicized Esoteric Buddhist traditions to decline. In any case it is clear that many of the unorthodox Esoteric Buddhist practices—including many of those that had come about through influence from Taoism—mainly continued to be practised within the framework of popular religion.<sup>14</sup>

However, in the context of Korean Buddhism, the situation would seem to have been rather different. As I have mentioned elsewhere the first printing of the Korean Tripiṭaka during the 11th century was to have a lasting impact on the further development of Korean Buddhism as such, and on Esoteric Buddhism in particular.<sup>15</sup> It would seem that during the Koryŏ the masters of Esoteric Buddhism mined the Tripiṭaka for scriptures that might assist them in protecting the nation from foreign threats, and in the course of this process they stumbled upon the *Guanding jing*, which indeed contains numerous prescriptions against disasters and adverse fortune.<sup>16</sup> As it is highly unlikely that the Koreans

13 Among these are *Ruyilun wang monituo biexing fa yin* 如意輪摩尼陀別行法印 (separate Methods of Practice of Cintāmāṅcakra King Mañibhadra with Seals), *Taishō zuzō bu* 大正圖像部 (Taishō Iconographical Supplement), Vol. 6, p. 672a; and the *Guanshiyin pusa fuyin* 觀世音菩薩符印 (Talismanic Seals of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva), S. 2498 (1). Both are undoubtedly apocryphal or at the very least heavily modified texts. See also Henrik H. Sørensen, "On the Use of Talismans and Talismanic Seals in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism," 2000 (unpublished manuscript).

14 For numerous examples of the popularization of Esoteric Buddhist practices influenced by Taoism, See Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et Mandarins: Le Bouddhisme Tantrique en Chine*, Paris: Gallimard, 1996; and his *Chinese Magical Medicine* ed. Bernard Faure, Asian Religions & Cultures. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

15 Apparently a considerable number of the ritual scriptures—mostly of Esoteric Buddhist provenance—were transmitted to Korea as texts only without the proper oral instructions from an acarya. Likewise, much of the associated ritual implements including images, paintings and other objects were not brought to Korea in conjunction with the transmitted scriptures. This is so much more clear in the case of the early Song Tripiṭaka from 983 A.D., the first printed Tripiṭaka to arrive in Koryŏ. See Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism in Korea," pp. 87 - 88.

were basing themselves on a living transmission from China since we find no mention of the actual practice of the ritual in question in any of the Tang or later sources. Hence, it is my view that it was the monks of the Sinin School, and possible those belonging to the Ch'ongji School as well, who re-invented—or re-cast as it were—the ancient Buddho-Taoist Wentoulou Ritual as the Munduru Ritual for the protection of the Koryŏ kingdom.

A survey of the *KS* and the *KSC* reveals that as little as five Munduru Rituals were recorded to have taken place during the entire Koryŏ dynasty. The first recorded ritual was performed at the Sach'ŏnwang Temple 四天王寺 in the Eastern Capital (Kwangju) in 1074 A.D. (*KS*.I.186b). Moreover, it appears that the reign of King Kojong (1213–1259), during which two Munduru Rituals were performed, represents the height of popularity of this rite. All in all this data indicates that the Munduru Ritual was not a popular one. The extent to which the data found in the *KS* and the *KSC* as regards the Munduru Ritual can be taken as indicative for the activities of Sinin School is an open question which I prefer to leave unanswered. However, in the light of the meagre data available to us as regards the court sponsoring of the rite in question, I would tend to see it as having been relatively unimportant. Especially if we compare it with other Buddhist rituals performed at or for the Koryŏ court. In my view this constitutes the most convincing argument against seeing the Munduru Ritual as the over-all representative of the practices of the Sinin School. In this connection it is noteworthy that Sŏ, Yungil himself provides evidence that the Munduru Ritual was performed in temples that did not belong to the Sinin School (Sŏ, Yun'gil, 1993:282 - 283). This indicates that the ritual in question was not considered a Sinin ritual exclusively, but one performed by monks from different Buddhist denominations (I shall return to this issue below).

We have at least one other primary source to shed light on the

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16 Given the early date of the text it is of course possible that the *Guanding jing* circulated in some form in Korea under the Unified Silla, but so far no evidence for this can be found. In any case, it is not until well into the Koryŏ period that we begin to find traces of this apocryphal scripture.

Munduru Ritual. This is the *Sōgyōng Kūmgang sa Munduru toryang mun* 西京金剛寺文豆婁道場文 (Text for a Munduru Ritual at Kūmgang Temple in the Western Capital) (*Koryō myōnghyōn chip* 高麗名賢集, 1. 417) written by the prominent Buddho-Confucian official Yi Kyubo 李奎報 (1168 - 1241). The text reads: “[...] Its transformations can not be fathomed, and there is nothing which the extensive, wonderful power of its shrines will not be being able to overcome. The gate of the honoured and divine seals [together with the] intoned words [...]” (*Koryō myōnghyōn chip* 高麗名賢集, 1. 417). Here Yi clearly refers to the use of talismanic seals together with accompanying *mantras* or spells. The text also mentions “the divine penetration of its responding army.” (*Koryō myōnghyōn chip* 高麗名賢集, 1. 417). This indicates the heavenly host of protecting spirits, i.e. the Spirit Kings of the Five Directions, believed to come to the assistance of those who perform the Munduru Ritual (see the translated passage above). From this it is clear that both the seals and *mantras* were used as part of the ritual’s invocation of the divine powers. Moreover, Yi’s text shows that the ritual proceedings of the Munduru Ritual followed closely the instructions of the *Guanding jing*.

Names of monks associated with the Sinin School are curiously absent from the records. I have no explanation for this absence except that it may be seen as an indication that they were not too prominent. The only name I have come across is that of a certain Kogan 古澗 (fl. 14th cent.), a monk from the late Koryō, said to have belonged to the Sinin School. However, beyond referring to him as a lecturer on Buddhist scriptures, nothing further is known.<sup>17</sup>

### III. The Ch'ongji School

The other Esoteric Buddhist sect the name of which appear in Koryō records is the Ch'ongji School 總持宗 or Dhāraṇī School, which takes its name after its headquarters, the Ch'ongji Temple 總持寺.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See *Han'guk pulgyo inmyōng sajōn* (Biographical Dictionary of Korea Buddhism; hereafter *HPIS*), ed. Yi Chōng, Seoul: Pulgyo Sidaesa, 1993, p. 25b. See also Chōsen jinmyō jishō (Shakubu: Section on Monks), p. 1896c.

Again the *SGYS* presents us with a wholly fictitious line of transmission extending back to Hyet'ong mentioned previously. The *KS* abounds in references to rituals conducted in temples belonging to this school. However, none of these records pre-date the 12th century. It appears that several Ch'ongji monks achieved prominence during the later part of the dynasty, something to which we shall return below. Unfortunately detailed historical and doctrinal source materials are wanting.

Korean scholars who have discussed this school disagree on its history and development. The traditionalist scholars, following the information of the *SGYS*, see it as having come about due to the orders of King T'aejo as discussed above. In contrast the more historically adept scholars, including Hō Hongsik and Sō Yun'gil, tend to understand the Ch'ongji School as an Esoteric Buddhist off-shot of the mid-Koryō Chogye School. The reason for this may be seen in the fact that many of the reliable references to monks associated with the Ch'ongji School—or rather its practices—are found in texts that originated with monks belonging to the Chogye School (Hō, Hūngsik, 1986:523 - 535 ; Sō, Yun'gil, 1993:151 - 156, 284 - 290).

Trustworthy historical data on the Ch'ongji School is even harder to come by that relating to the Sinin School, and what little there is, does not yield much information. Nevertheless, here and there the *KS* graces us with useful data that gives us a hint of the historical reality of this Esoteric Buddhist tradition. One such piece of information mentions the monk Hūichōng 壞正 (fl. 12th cent.), a master of Esoteric Buddhism and the abbot of Ch'ongji Temple. The text passage in question reads:

On a *myohaeng* day of the eight month, Hūichōng 壞正 (fl. 12th cent.), the abbot of Ch'ongji Temple 總持寺 was summoned [to court]. On the journey he enjoyed the forrest resthouses, and while resting there he composed two poems [in the form of] prayers for blessings. While in seclusion he was interrupted by exclamations from the inspecting minister of the State. The retinue [consisting

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18 For a brief record of this temple, see *HSC*, p. 1104ab.

of] one hundred officials and soldiers, and who were suffering from the hardships of traveling in the woods and [crossing] a great many streams, uttered sighs of lament. Only by relying on his mantras Hūichǒng silently obtained their favour. Without this common monk the crowd would have been seeking the official in charge so that in order for all to advance quickly, he would have had to increase their payment. Otherwise their lowly greed would not have been satisfied (*KS.I.368a* (x2)).

Although this brief account does not provide us with any additional information on Ch'ongji practice in addition to its reliance on the use of mantras, it shows that its leading practitioners were credited with miraculous powers. In addition it also links Hūichǒng with Ch'ongji Temple and provides us with a definite date, the 12th year in the reign of Ŭijong, i.e. 1158 A.D.

The *KS* also records that in the 16th year of the reign of Myǒngjong, i.e. 1186 A.D., Budhoṣṇāsa rituals for averting calamity were held at Kwangǒm Temple 光岳寺 and Ch'ongji Temple, while lectures on the *Renwang jing* 仁王經 (Benevolent Kings' Scripture) (T.243.8) were given in the Myǒng'in Hall 明仁堂 of the royal palace. These events were evidently caused by belief that the planet Saturn was causing disturbance for the Koryǒ kingdom (*KS.II.38b*). Note that the Esoteric Buddhist rituals in question were performed in two temples associated with the Ch'ongji School.

One of the important texts associated with Esoteric Buddhist ritual and the Ch'ongji School (or rather practitioners of rites associated with the Ch'ongji School) is the *Pōmsǒ Ch'ongji chip* 梵書總持集 (Collection of Mantras<sup>19</sup> from Sanskrit Books; hereafter *PCJ*) from 1219 A.D..<sup>20</sup> It was compiled by a certain Hyegŭn 惠謹 (fl. early 13th cent.), a monk from Kŭmsan Temple 金山寺 who bore the rank of *taesa* 大師.<sup>21</sup> From the

19 I translate *Ch'ongji* 總持 (lit. holding or maintaining) here in the sense of "holding mantras," i.e. intoning mantras.

20 For a detailed study of this ritual manual, see Chŏn Tonggyŏk, "*Bōnsō sōji shū* kara mita Kōrai mikkyō no sekikaku (The Nature of Esoteric Buddhism under the Koryō Dynasty as seen Through the *Pōmsō Ch'ongji chip*)," *Taishō Daigaku Sōgo Bukkyō Kenkyū Nempō* 11 (1990), pp. 47 - 64.

21 According to the ranking system of the mid-Koryō, *taesa* was the second rank used for monks

colophon attached to the surviving copy of the *PCJ* we learn of the background for its compilation and subsequent printing. The text reads:

The disciple of the Buddha, the Great Master, the monk Hyegŭn from Kŭmsan Temple in the Koryŏ Kingdom, while giving rise to a sincere mind, prays that the lifespan of our Sovereign will last eternally, that the realm may enjoy peace, that the armies of neighbouring [countries] be eternally stopped, that the one hundred grains will all prosper, that the Dharma Realm will give rise to the destruction of difficulties, that if suffering occurs, bliss will ensue from this vow. A skilful artisan was invited to carve the woodblocks with Siddham letters for one set of the Great Tripiṭaka. Printed at Kŭmsan Temple so that it would never be being exhausted. The time being a certain day in the 7th month of the 6th year of the Zhengyou reign (i.e. 1219 A.D.). Carved by hand at Kaet'ae Temple by the Great Master Inhyŏk.<sup>22</sup>

In the light of the fact that Kŭmsan Temple was a well-known stronghold of the Chaŭn School of Koryŏ Buddhism, I find it unlikely that its abbot should have been a follower of another Buddhist denomination, i.e. the Ch'ongji School.<sup>23</sup> I would rather see him as a Chaŭn master who specialized in Ch'ongji practices. Moreover, Kaet'ae Temple, the home of Inhyŏk 仁赫 (n.d.), the monk who carved the blocks for the *PCJ*, was also controlled by the Chaŭn School.<sup>24</sup> While the exact affiliation of these two monks may be debated, it is in any case clear that in the case of Hyegŭn we are dealing with an expert in Esoteric Buddhist rituals. Note also the strong element of *hoguk pulgyo* 護國佛教 (nation-protecting Buddhism) ideology in the colophon.

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of all Buddhist schools such as Sŏn, Hwaŏm, Ch'ŏnt'ae, Chaŭn etc. See Hŏ Hŭngsik, *Koryŏ pulgyo sa yŏn'gu*, p. 365.

22 The Chengyou 貞祐 was the first reign period of the Jin 金 ruler Xuanzong (r. 1213 - 1224) and it lasted from 1213 - 1217 A.D. In other words the reign-period only lasted five years. Hence, the date given in the *PCJ*'s colophon is wrong by one year. This indicates that the writer of the colophon did not know that the Zhengyou period had ceased a year earlier. Cf. Chŏn, "Bŏnsŏ sŏji shŭ kara mita Kŏrai mikkyŏ no sekikaku, p. 48.

23 See *Han'guk pulgyo sach'al sajŏn* (Dictionary of Korean Buddhist Temples; hereafter *HPSS*), ed. Yi Chŏng, Seoul: Pulgyo Sidaesa, 1996 pp. 86b - 88a.

24 Also known as Togwang Temple 道光寺. It was founded in 936 A.D. See *HPSS*, pp. 32 b - 33a.

I shall not go into a discussion of the contents of the *PCJ* except to note that we must take for granted that the mantras and *dhāraṇīs* used in this work reflect the type of ritual practices engaged in by the monks who used it. This means that the Dual Maṇḍalas, i.e. the Dharmadhātu Maṇḍala of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* (T.850.18) and the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala based on the several scriptures making up the *Vajraśekhara*-cycle,<sup>25</sup> were the foundation.<sup>26</sup> This indicates that by the middle Koryō Esoteric Buddhist practices in Korea were following a course resembling that of the Japanese Shingon tradition, of course with certain cultural modifications.

#### IV. Esoteric Buddhism as an Integrated Element of Koryō Buddhism

On the basis of the decidedly meagre historical records on the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools available to us today, we face considerable problems in trying to document their importance and the prevalence of their doctrines and practices. Hence, we are forced to delve into all sorts of texts and sources in order to gather enough material with which to establish a more or less reliable historical basis. Interestingly enough, when looking for traces of the two Esoteric Buddhist schools in the primary material relating to the other Buddhist schools of the Koryō, I was surprised to find a substantial amount of evidence which indicate that practices and beliefs of the types normally associated with the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools, were in fact common to the other Buddhist denominations as well.

25 There are several texts making up the *Vajraśekhara* cycle including, T.865.18, T.866.18, T.1004.19, T.1122.20, T.1133.20, T.1145.20 etc. Amoghavajra's *Jingangding jing yuqie shiba hui zhigui* 金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸 (The *Sarvatathāgatattvaśaṅgraha*'s Classification of the Yoga [Scriptures] into Eighteen Classes) is central to our understanding of the formation of this text-cycle. See T. 869.18.

26 Chōn Tonghyōk identifies four main scriptures as constituting the basis for the *PCJ*, i.e. T. 850.18 ascribed to Śubhākarasiṃha; its derivative T. 853.18 by Faquan 法全 (fl. 9th cent.); T. 851.18 also by Śubhākarasiṃha; and T. 873.18 by Amoghavajra. See Chōn, "Bōnsō sōji shū kara mita Kōrai mikkyō no sekikaku, pp. 49 - 53. However, in the light of the fact that none of the three first works were included in the Korean Tripiṭaka of 1253 A.D., i.e. the Second Korean Tripiṭaka, I am somewhat reluctant to accept this. Probably a whole range of works relating to the *Mahāvairocana* and *Vajraśekhara* cycle may have been used by Hyegūn, the compiler of *PCJ*.

In his attempts at defining the practices of the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools, Sō Yun'gil provides a lengthy discussion of a letter, the *Chinyōmōm Sōnsa Chuyun wae tae sōnsa kyosō* 持念業禪師祖猷爲大禪師教書 (Letter Written to the Great Sōn Master and Teacher, the Sōn Master Chuyun, Cultivating the Holding [of Mantras] and Invocation)<sup>27</sup> written by the scholar-official Ch'oe Cha 崔滋 (1188-1260) (*Han'guk inmyōng tae sajōn*, 958b - 959a). As stated in its title, the letter in question was addressed to the otherwise unknown monk Chuyun 祖猷 (fl. 13th cent.). Due to Ch'oe's reference to "holder of mantras and invocation" (Kor. *chinyōm ōp* 持念業) supposedly a reference to the most prevalent method of *mantra*-practice (Kor. *Ch'ongji pōp* 總持法) in the Ch'ongji School, Sō gives the impression that he considers Chuyun as belonging to this denomination (Sō, Yun'gil, 1994a:308 - 309). However, the letter clearly states that monk in question was a master of Sōn Buddhism residing at Naksan Temple 洛山寺 (HPSS, 96 - 98b). Moreover, the text also refers to the conjoined practice of *samādhi* and *prajñā*, a method taught within Chinul's Susōnsa 修禪社 (Association for the Practice of Sōn), and not one associated with Esoteric Buddhist practice *per se* (Sō, Yun'gil, 1994a:308).<sup>28</sup> Note also that the letter from Ch'oe was occasioned by Chuyun's being promoted to the rank of Great Sōn Master (Kor. *tae sōnsa* 大禪師), a title normally bestowed on monks belonging to the Sōn and Ch'ōnt'ae 天台 schools of Buddhism only (Hō, Hūngsik, 1986: 365 - 366). And lastly, ever since the Unified Silla Naksan Temple, Chuyun's residence, had been associated with Sōn Buddhism.<sup>29</sup> For these reasons I fail to see any direct connection between Chuyun and the Ch'ongji School apart from the fact that he was also a practitioner of Esoteric Buddhist rituals. There is nothing strange in that, as I have previously argued. Many Esoteric Buddhist practices had been absorbed into the other Korean Buddhist schools as early as the late Unified Silla

27 The passage in question is translated in Sō, *Han'guk milgyo sasang sa yōn'gu*, pp. 308 - 309.

28 For Chinul's advocacy of this practice, see Buswell, *The Korean Approach to Zen*, pp. 61 - 64.

29 It was the residence of Pōmil 梵日 (810 - 889), the founder of the Mt. Sagul School 闍崛山門 of early Korean Sōn Buddhism. For additional information on the history of the temple, see *Naksan sa* (Naksan Temple), ed. Han'guk pulgyo yōn'guwōn, *Hanguk ūi sach'al* (Korea's Temples) 14, Seoul: Ilchisa, 1978. This work also elaborates on the connection between Pōmil, the founder of the Sōn community at Kulsan Temple and Naksan Temple. *Ibid.*, pp. 19 - 21.

(Sørensen, 1994:84 - 85). Hence, we can safely assume that Chuyun was not a member of the Ch'ongji School, but a Sŏn monk proficient in its practices. Here it should also be remembered that many Sŏn monks from the second half of the Koryŏ were practitioners of *nyŏmbul* 念佛, the chief practice in the Pure Land tradition, as well.<sup>30</sup> The fact that Sŏn monks engaged in conjoined practice of Sŏn and *nyŏmbul* hardly makes them Pure Land monks as such. If that was the case Chinul would also qualify as belonging to the Pure Land tradition.

We also find a connection between Esoteric Buddhist practices and the Chaŭn School 慈恩宗.<sup>31</sup> Thus we find in the material connected with the master Poja Hyeyŏng 普慈惠永 (1228-1294)<sup>32</sup> references to him lecturing on the *Renwang jing* (CKS, I. 597). Moreover, he is known to have transmitted a ritual text, the *Paek ūi Kwanŭm yech'am mun* 白衣觀音禮懺文 (Text for the Repentance Ritual of the White Robed Avalokiteśvara) (HPC, 6-411b - 417a) which contains mantras and invocations.

That Esoteric Buddhist practice was indeed part of the Susŏn's rituals is further borne out in the extant material of Chinul's successor Chingak Hyesim 眞覺慧謙 (1178-1234).<sup>33</sup> In his recorded sayings we find the following exchange between the master and a monk, who may have been an adherent of the Ch'ongji or Sinin schools:

The master asked a monk: "What are you actually doing Sir?"<sup>34</sup> The monk said: "[I chant] *dhāraṇīs*!" The master said: "There are *dhāraṇīs* with many characters, with one character and with no characters. In any event somewhat redundant. How about the *dhāraṇī* of no characters?" The monk answered: "[That is] the character *a* (Kor. *a* 啊)."<sup>35</sup>

30 Buswell, *The Korean Approach to Zen*, pp. 70 - 1, pp. 91 - 97.

31 Known during the Unified Silla as the Pŏpsang School 法相宗. For a survey of this school, see Hō, *Koryŏ pulgyo sa yŏn'gu*, pp. 209 - 223. Its doctrines and beliefs was originally focused on *yogācāra/vijñāptimātra*-philosophy as inherited via Tang China, but by the mid-Koryŏ it had absorbed a wide range of practices as well including Pure Land worship and Esoteric Buddhist rituals. On Esoteric Buddhist practices by members of this school, see Sō, *Koryŏ milgyo sasang yŏn'gu*, pp. 251 - 272.

32 For his stele inscription, see CKS, I, pp. 596 - 598.

33 Additional data on Hyesim can be found in *HPIS*, pp. 345b - 346a.

34 Litt. "what are the affairs of an *ācārya*?"

The master said: “That is one character!” The monk had no answer. The master said: “You are now manifesting the True Way!” (HPC, 6- 22c).

Apart from the classical *mundap* 文答 structure of this dialogue, and its stress on enlightenment beyond words and concepts, it is interesting for shedding light on how an Esoteric Buddhist practitioner during the Koryŏ saw himself and his chanting of mantras. Furthermore, despite Hyesim’s questioning as to the different kinds of *dhāraṇīs*, it is quite clear that he was familiar with these practices.

The stele inscription raised for the important Sŏn monk Iryŏn 一然 (1206–1289)<sup>36</sup> also reveal that Esoteric Buddhist practices were being practised within the Chogye School (*HKC*, II. 1067 - 1077). During Iryŏn’s period of training at Podang Hermitage 寶幢庵 on Mt. P’o 包山 we are told that the young monk “chanted the *Munsu ōja chu* 文殊五字咒 (Mañjuśrī’s Five Character Mantra),” i.e. the mantra *A ra pa ca na* 阿羅波左那 (var. 阿囉跛者囊) (*FDC*, 2. 1076c - 1077a) which is both found in the *Jingangding chaoqheng sanjie jing shuo Wenshu wuzi zhenyan sheng xiang* 金剛頂超勝三界經說文殊五字真言勝相 (Mañjuśrī’s Five Characters Mantra of Superior Marks Spoken in the *Vajraśekara Sūtra* Vanquishing the Three Worlds)<sup>37</sup> and in the *Wuzi tuoluoni song* 五字陀羅尼頌 (Five Character Dhāraṇī Hymn) (T.1174.20.716a.).<sup>38</sup> The text further states that Mañjuśrī appeared to Iryŏn in response to his chanting of the said mantra (*HKC*, II. 1068). While the stele inscription does not elaborate on whether Iryŏn was performing the extensive ritual connected with Mañjuśrī’s Five Character Mantra according to the above *sūtras* or not, it is sufficiently clear that belief in the efficacy of Esoteric Buddhist practices was widespread beyond the Sinin and Ch’ongji Schools during the later half of the Koryŏ dynasty.

35 I.e. the first character in the Sanskrit alphabet, said to be the essence of Mahāvairocana, the Cosmic Buddha of the Esoteric Buddhist tradition. Cf. *Foguang da cidian* (Foguang Great Dictionary; hereafter *FDC*), Vol. 4, comp. Foguang dazang jing bianxiu weiyuan hui, Gaixiong: Foguang chubanshe, 1988, p. 3609c.

36 For biographical information, see *HPIS*, pp. 248b - 250a.

37 This short text is devoted to a full explanation of the meaning of each syllable of the mantra. T. 1172.20, p. 709ac.

38 See also T. 1171.20, p. 705a; T.1175.20, p. 722c.

Further evidence that Esoteric Buddhist practices were both well known and well integrated into the ritual make-up of Sŏn Buddhism during the first half of the 13th century can also be found in the *Haedong Chogye Pokam hwasang chapchŏ* 海東曹溪宓庵和尚雜著 (Miscellaneous Writings of the Korean Chogye [Monk] Ven. Pokam) (HPC, 11-369a - 385b), written by the Sixth patriarch of the Susŏnsa tradition, Wŏngam Ch'ungji 圓鑑沖止 (1226-1292) (HPC, 6-410a - 411a).<sup>39</sup> Here we encounter an interesting piece entitled *Ch'uk taega Sojae Inwang Ch'ŏnsu Chiron sajong pŏpsŏk ch'ŏn* 祝大駕消災仁王千手智論四種席撰 (Prayers Composed on the Occasion of the Four Kinds of Dharma Feasts, the Removal of Calamities Great Carriage, the Benevolent Kings, the Thousand-armed [Avalokiteśvara], and the Wisdom Treatise) (HPC, 11-374ab). The “four kinds of Dharmas” referred to here are Removal of Calamities, a ritual based on the *Da weide jinlun foding Chishengguang rulai xiaochu yiqie zainan tuoluoni jing* 大威德金輪佛頂熾盛光如來消除一切災難陀羅尼經 (The Great Majestic and Virtuous Golden Wheel Uṣṇīṣa Tejaprabha Tathāgata Averting All Calamities and Hardships *Dhāraṇī Sūtra*) (T.964.19), or the *Chi shengguang da weide xiaozai jiyang tuoluoni jing* 熾盛光大威德消災吉祥陀羅尼經 (Tejaprabha's Great Majestic, Virtuous and Auspicious *Dhāraṇī Sūtra* for Averting Calamities).<sup>40</sup> The “Great Carriage” referred to in the text refers to Tejaprabha's cosmic vehicle on which he journeys through the universe.<sup>41</sup> The Ritual of the One Hundred High Seats according to the *Renwang jing*, the worship of the Thousand-armed, Thousand-eyed Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva according to the *Nīlakaṇṭhaka sūtra*, and what appears to have been a lecture on the *Māhāprajñāpāramitā* as explained in the *Dazhi du lun* 大智度論 (Treatise on the Liberating Wisdom) (T.1509.25). The Ritual for the Removal of Calamities was one of the

39 See also *HPIS*, p. 311ab.

40 T. 963.19. It is most likely that it was this later translation of the scripture which served as the basis for the Koryŏ rituals in question.

41 No Koryŏ paintings with this image is currently known to exist, but there are several extant examples from the states of Liao, Jin and Xixia. However, Tejaprabha paintings from the mid to late Chosŏn are fairly common. For a brief introduction to this iconographic theme, see Henrik H. Sørensen, *The Iconography of Korean Buddhist Paintings*, *Iconography of Religions* XII,9, Leiden: Brill, 1989, p. 20, pl. XLV. See also Henrik H. Sørensen, “The Worship of the Great Dipper in Korean Buddhism,” in *Religion in Traditional Korea*, ed. Henrik H. Sørensen, SBS Monographs III, Copenhagen: Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1995, pp. 71 - 105.

most important Buddhist rituals performed during the 13th century in Korea, and to perform it correctly would have involved a thorough knowledge of astrology including the lore of the moon's phases, the movements of the heavenly bodies and the ability to predict how the influence of the planets would effect the world of humans.<sup>42</sup> This not only provides us with evidence that Esoteric Buddhist rituals were being performed within the context of the Susōnsa tradition, but that Sōn Buddhism as such had embraced Esoteric Buddhist lore on a deeper level than hitherto. It is likely that the great emphasis which the royal court placed on Buddhist rituals stimulated a general interest in ritual performances among all the Buddhists schools, and that even the anti-scriptural Sōn tradition can be seen as having followed this general trend by the middle of the Koryō.

In the course of the dynasty Esoteric Buddhist practices also became adopted by the monks of the Ch'ōnt'ae School which was especially strong during the middle of the dynasty. It is not clear to what extent the Esoteric Buddhist practices influenced Ch'ōnt'ae doctrine, but it was most likely significant in its rituals.<sup>43</sup> While the White Lotus Association 白華社 founded by Wōnmyō Yose 圓妙了世 (1163-1245),<sup>44</sup> and his disciples propagated both the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikā sūtra* as well as rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitābha Buddha, it is also clear that Esoteric Buddhist practices were being carried out by its members (Ch'ae, Sangsik, 1991:69 - 99). An early study by Sō Yun'gil has revealed that Yose himself was a devotee of the goddess Chundi, a major Esoteric Buddhist divinity.<sup>45</sup> This information provide us with a good idea of the presence of Esoteric Buddhist practices within

42 A discussion on the Ritual for Removing Calamities can be found in Henrik H. Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhist Rituals at the Royal Court under the Koryō Dynasty," in *Han'guk pulgyo sasang ūi pobyōn sōng kwa t'ūksu sōng* (The Nature of the Spread of Korean Buddhist Thought and Its Distinct Nature) ed. Kim Youngho (forthcoming, 2005). See also Sō, *Koryō milgyo sasang yōn'gu*, pp. 194 - 195.

43 For a lengthy discussion of Esoteric Buddhist practice in Ch'ōnt'ae Buddhism, see Sō, *Koryō milgyo sasang yōn'gu*, pp. 224 - 241.

44 For the text of his stele inscription, see CKS, I, pp. 590 - 593.

45 See Sō Yun'gil, "Yose ūi suhaeng kwa Chunje chu song (Yose's Cultivation and Recitation of the Chundi Mantra)," *Han'guk pulgyo hak* (Studies in Korean Buddhism; hereafter *HPH*) 3 (1977), pp. 63 - 76.

mid-Koryŏ Ch'önt'ae Buddhism.

Moreover, the above examples seem to indicate that Esoteric Buddhist rituals were part and parcel of mainstream Koryŏ Buddhism, and as such may be considered trans-sectarian in the manner in which they were utilized.

This leads us to the closing period of the Koryŏ, a time when Sŏn Buddhism was entering its long period of dominance. At that time the Chogyŏ tradition of Korean Sŏn as represented by Chinul's lineage had by and large lost its vitality, and the newly transmitted teachings of Linji Chan (Kor. Imje Sŏn 臨齊禪) from Yuan China were carrying the day. In the recorded teachings of one of the three great Sŏn masters from this time, Naong Hyegŭn 懶翁惠勤 (1320-1376),<sup>46</sup> we find sufficient data to the effect that Esoteric Buddhism not only continued to play an important role within Koryŏ Sŏn, it even appears to have become more pronounced than earlier in the dynasty.<sup>47</sup> Hyegŭn's works reveal considerable influence from Esoteric Buddhist practices, some of which he had undoubtedly learnt from his Indian master Dhyanabhadra (1236-1363) (Sørensen, 1993b:67 - 81 (esp. 75)).

## V. The Fate of the Sinin and Ch'ongji Schools

It is somewhat ironic that when the names of the Sinin and Ch'ongji actually occur as proper schools alongside the other prominent Buddhist traditions at the time of their merger during the early Chosŏn, this was in effect the first and last time they were referred to as such in the historical sources. It is possible that by the late Koryŏ both had attained the status as separate schools of Buddhism, but whatever the case neither the Sinin School nor the Ch'ongji School survived the Koryŏ dynasty. It is also noteworthy that most of the important Korean Buddhist rituals were entirely Esoteric Buddhist in nature by the end of

46 For additional data on this monk, see *HPIS*, pp. 340a - 341a.

47 Cf. Sørensen, "On Esoteric Practices in Korean Sŏn Buddhism During the Chosŏn Period," in *Han'guk chonggyo sasang ūi chae chomyŏng: Chinsan Han Kidu paksa hwagap kinyŏm* (Further Illumination on the Thought of Korean Religion: Festschrift for Professor Chinsan Han Kidu; hereafter *CHKPH*), ed. Chinsan Han Kidu paksa hwagap kinyŏm non munjip kanhaeng wiwon hoe, Iri: Wŏngwang Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anguk, 1993, pp. 523 - 526.

the dynasty. In 1407 A.D., when King T'aejong 太宗 (1400-1418) of the Chosŏn dynasty effected the merging of all the Buddhist schools in the country into the two denominations of Sŏn 禪<sup>48</sup> and Doctrinal Buddhism (Kor. *kyo* 教), the Ch'ongji School became part of the former, while the Sinin School was merged with the latter.<sup>49</sup> Most importantly this data reveals that both of the Esoteric Buddhist denominations had continued to exist well into the early Chosŏn. Furthermore, the combined Chogye and Ch'ongji School is said to have controlled as many as 70 temples, while the Sinin together with the Chungdo School 中道宗 at the time of the merger controlled 30 temples (Tüigyöngdang ch'önsö, 4. 340 - 341). In the light of the foregoing it difficult to have a qualified opinion as to why the Ch'ongji School was considered more in alignment with Sŏn, while the Sinin School was seen as closer to the traditions of doctrinal Buddhism. It is possible that it was the extent to which their respective or derived rituals had become incorporated into the ceremonial apparatus of the other Buddhist schools that made the difference, but in any case this is mere guesswork. Probably we shall never know.

Here attention should be directed to an interesting passage in the *Yijo sillök* 李朝實錄 (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty) dated to 1418 A.D. which contains the following information:

In the 2nd month in the reign [of King T'aejong] a royal decree stated: The Ch'ongji School only occupies itself with matters pertaining to esoteric lore. It [thereby] conceals the primary [function of Buddhism] which is to assist people, and just makes sacrifices. This is not the right for monks and [ordinary] men. As it (i.e. the Ch'ongji School) does not know its place [in society], I now revoke its privileges

48 In reality Sŏn indicated the reformed Chogye School of the late Koryŏ, while Kyo meant the Hwaŏm School. See *Yijo sillök pulgyo ch'öjo* (Collected Documents on Buddhism in the *Yijo Sillök*), ed. Kwŏn Sangno, in *Tüigyöngdang ch'önsö* (Complete Works of Ven. Tüigyöng), Vols. 4, Seoul: Tüigyöngdang ch'önsö kanhaeng wiwŏn hoe, 1988, pp. 351 - 352.

49 See *ibid.*, Vol. 4, pp. 340 - 341. For further information on the merger of the Buddhist denominations during the early Chosŏn dynasty, cf. U Chöngsang and Kim Young'ae, *Han'guk pulgyo sa* (The History of Korean Buddhism), Seoul: Chinsudang, 1970, pp. 134 - 136; Hö, *Koryŏ pulgyo sa yŏn'gu*, pp. 522 - 535. See also Cf. Sørensen, "On Esoteric Practices in Korean Sŏn Buddhism During the Chosŏn Period," in *CHKPH*, pp. 526 - 528.

[enjoyed by its] temples and abbots.” No effectuation actually came of this [decree] (Tüigyöngdang ch'önsö, 4. 390).

From this text passage we learn that up to 1418 A.D. the Ch'ongji School was both active as a distinct tradition of Korean Buddhism, and that it had its own temples and succession of abbots appointed by the court. This should lay to rest any speculations as to the historical reality of the Ch'ongji School as a proper school of Buddhism. It also informs us that the monks belonging to this school were merely seen as ritual specialists steeped in Esoteric Buddhist lore who did not propagate the Dharma for the common people as was the custom in most other schools of Buddhism at that time (at least that is what the decree accuses the Ch'ongji monks of). This might be seen as an indication that by the late Koryŏ the Ch'ongji monks were primarily functioning as ritual specialists for the court. If this view can be further substantiated, it may also explain why the days for these monks were over. If their primary function was to perform rites for and on behalf of the court, it would naturally bring them into conflict with the rising class of Confucian officials, who saw themselves as the true keepers of the royal rituals. In this new climate there would be no more room for Buddhist ritual specialists.<sup>50</sup>

The end of the Koryŏ signaled the end for Esoteric Buddhism as an independent tradition. However, it was certainly not the end of Esoteric Buddhist practices as such. They continued as an integral part of Chosŏn Buddhism, where Esoteric Buddhist rituals and practices have continued—if not unbroken then at least in modified form—down to the present as amply documented by the many sources at our disposal. There is good reason to assume that the Esoteric Buddhist practices of

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50 I do not intend to claim that Buddhist rituals at the early Chosŏn court were curtailed and discontinued over night. In fact the sources indicate otherwise. What I believe took place was that the special Buddhist functionaries at court were gradually supplanted by Confucian court officials (which is indeed what the sources reveal). A complete change in the ritual functions at the Chosŏn court was a long process which lasted several reign-periods. For a discussion of this, see Han T'akkün, “Chosŏn wangjo choki e issösö üi Yugyo linyöm üi kwa sinang-chonggyo (Confucian Principles of the Practice of Invocation and Faith - Religion at the Early Royal Chosŏn Court),” *Han'guk saron* 3 (1976), pp. 147 - 228 (esp. 204 - 219). Thanks to Prof. B. Walraven of Leiden University for pointing out to me this important study.

monks associated with the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools were still strong and vital until well into the dynasty. In any case, Esoteric Buddhism has left a lasting imprint on Korean Buddhism as such. Especially the Sŏn Buddhist tradition of the mid-Chosŏn was greatly influenced by Esoteric Buddhist practices (Sørensen, 1993a:521 - 546).

### Conclusion

On the basis of what has been shown here, I believe that we may safely dismiss the idea that the doctrines and practices of the Sinin and Ch'ongji denominations differed significantly as claimed by Sŏ Yun'gil (Sŏ, Yun'gil, 1994b:281 - 283). In my opinion both denominations used mantras, *mudrās*, *dhāraṇīs* as well as visualization-practices and *maṇḍalas*. In other words both were full fledged schools of Esoteric Buddhism, and as such comparable—at least as far as their general practices went—with their counterparts in late medieval China and Japan. Probably the main differences lay in their respective lineages and the temples they controlled. Historically there is a tendency that the Sinin tradition was dominant during the first half of the Koryŏ, whereas we find more references to the Ch'ongji School in the material from the second half of the dynasty.

As regards the *Guangding jing* and the Wentoulou Ritual there is little evidence that either enjoyed much popularity in China after the 7th century. Moreover, the scripture itself was most certainly no longer in use by the end of the Tang if not earlier. Exactly why and how this apocryphal scripture became so important under the Koryŏ is hard to say. As it was no longer in use in China, and never appears to have enjoyed any importance to speak of in the context of Japanese Buddhism either, it is highly possible that it was re-discovered by the Korean Buddhists in connection with the printing of the first Koryŏ Tripiṭaka during the 11th century. Whatever the case, the Munduru Ritual as we know it from the Koryŏ sources, would appear to have been a purely Korean invention. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that the *Guangding jing's* Buddhō-Taoist contents was found to fit well

with the great interest in omens, divination, *p'ungsu* 風水 and quasi-Esoteric Buddhist magic which characterizes the spiritual climate during the second half of the Koryŏ dynasty.

When assessing whether or not the Ch'ongji tradition actually qualifies as a *bona fide* Buddhist school in the institutional sense we are essentially faced with two options. Given the fact that proper historical documentation is lacking, and that what we know is largely based on circumstantial evidence, such an evaluation really hinges on how we interpret the available material.<sup>51</sup> While acknowledging the tenuous historical basis for the existence of the Ch'ongji School as a separate institutional entity on a par with the Ch'ŏnt'ae, Chaŭn, Chogye etc., Sŏ Yun'gil nevertheless boldly speaks of the existence of the Chinyŏm-ŏp as a kind of sub-sect under the Ch'ongji School coming into existence some time during the 12-13th centuries. In other words, the Ch'ongji School existed as an institutional reality prior to that. Since we have very little concrete evidence for this, I would personally prefer to take the view that the Ch'ongji School as an institutional reality was a mid-Koryŏ phenomena which gradually became more influential as the dynasty wore on. Sŏ dates the rise of the Chinyŏm-ŏp rather precisely to 1234 A.D.<sup>52</sup> Now, as I have shown above, "Chinyŏm-ŏp" should not be read as indicating a special Buddhist school or sect, but the name should simply be taken in the meaning of a group of practitioners of Esoteric Buddhism, who may otherwise formally have belonged to any of the Sŏn and doctrinal Buddhist schools in vogue during the Koryŏ. Hence, the Ch'ongji School and the Chinyŏm-ŏp are not necessarily related, although it may be that the monks classified as belonging to both denomination were essentially carrying out the same type of rituals.

51 Sŏ refers to data on the Ch'ongji School as far back as the 11th century, but unfortunately only uses secondary sources to substantiate his claims. Cf. his *Koryŏ milgyo sasang sa yŏn'gu*, pp. 287 - 288.

52 *Ibid.*, pp. 155 - 156. See also Suh, Yoon-kil (Sŏ, Yun'gil), "Esoteric Buddhism," in *Buddhist Thought in Korea*, ed. The Korean Buddhist Research Institute, Seoul: Dongguk University Press, 1994 pp. 284 - 285. This lengthy essay is an attempt at rendering the Korean text of the above article into English with various minor alterations. However, the result is replete with both formal and informal errors, hence caution is recommended when perusing it.

Among the several unanswered questions pertaining to the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools is that of missing or lacking material evidence. While it is well-known that the number of surviving Buddhist paintings from the Koryŏ is relatively small, few scholars have noted the fact that among them are no paintings which may be directly, or even indirectly, linked with Esoteric Buddhist practices. Given that religious paintings are central to Esoteric Buddhist rituals, it is somewhat strange that none have so far been identified. Likewise, if we exclude the many, largely generic images, of Vairocana Buddha of which many are known from the Koryŏ, there are virtually no explicitly Esoteric Buddhist images such as wrathful protectors or other distinctly Esoteric Buddhist divinities. Is this because they have all been lost, or is it possible that they never existed? In any case it is peculiar that among the extant cultural relics of Koryŏ Buddhism, only minor pieces and fragments relating to Esoteric Buddhism can be found.<sup>53</sup> When seen in relation to the great number of Esoteric Buddhist rituals performed at or for the Koryŏ court, one would at least expect the existence of some sort of material evidence such as paintings and icons. However, this is simply not the case. Clearly further research in this area is required.

As already mentioned at the beginning of this essay, the most problematic point as regards the historicity of the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools is the scarcity of informative, primary sources. Despite the fact that the *KS* and *KSC* do contain occasional references to both denominations, most of the material found in these primary histories is brief and terse. Moreover the fact remains that not a single stele inscription remains which may indisputably be associated with a leading representative of either denomination. This would seem to indicate that none of the monks belonging to these schools ever became sufficiently important to merit a stele. Otherwise one such would undoubtedly have been found. In other words, no monks clearly identified as having belonged to the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools are known to have become

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<sup>53</sup> I am here mainly thinking of ritual and utilitarian objects such as *vajras*, bells, gongs, incense burners, water jugs (Skr. *kuṇḍīka*) etc. For a presentation of some of this material, see *Bukkyō bijutsu den: Kankōku Myōen bunka zaidan* (Buddhist Exhibition: The Korean Myōen Arts Foundation). Kyoto: Shōkōku-ji, 2000, pls. 18 - 19, 26 - 30.

national or royal preceptors. This again may give us a hint as to the relative status of monks belonging to the Sinin and Ch'ongji schools which in any event do not appear to have been as prominent as masters from the Sŏn, Hwaŏm, Chaŭn or Ch'ŏnt'ae schools. Future research may yield new information on their role and function of Sinin and Ch'ongji adherents within the larger Korean Buddhist tradition during the Koryŏ, but for the moment we shall have to remain satisfied with what has been presented here.

## Glossary

*ācārya* 大師 / 法師

Avalokiteśvara 觀世音

Chaŭn School 慈恩宗

Chinyŏm-ŏp 持念業

*Chi shengguang da weide xiaozai jiyang tuoluoni jing*

熾盛光大威德消災吉祥陀羅尼經

Chogye School 曹溪宗

*chöllin* 結印

Ch'ongji 總持

Ch'ongji School 總持宗

Ch'ŏnt'ae 天台

Chungdo School 中道宗

*Da weide jinlun foding Chishengguang rulai xiaochu yiqie zainan tuoluoni jing*

大威德金輪佛頂熾盛光如來消除一切災難陀羅尼經

*Dazhi du lun* 大智度論

*dhāraṇī* 陀羅尼 / 總持

Dharmadhātu Maṇḍala 法界曼荼羅

*fuyin* 符印

*Guanding jing* 灌頂經

Iryŏn 一然

*hoguk pulgyo* 護國佛教

Hwaŏm 華嚴

*Jingangding chaoqheng sanjie jing shuo Wenshu wuzi zhenyan sheng xiang*

金剛頂超勝三界經說文殊五字真言勝相

- Koryŏ myŏnghyŏn chip* 高麗名賢集  
*Koryŏ sa* 高麗史  
*Māhāprajñāpāramitā* 摩訶般若波羅密  
*Mahāvairocana sūtra* 大日經  
*Mahāyāna* 大乘  
*maṇḍala* 曼荼羅 / 輪  
*Mañjuśrī* 文殊  
*mantra* 真言 / 神呪  
*mudrā* 印契  
*Munduru toryang* 文豆婁道場  
*Munsu ōja chu* 文殊五字咒  
*nyōmbul* 念佛  
*Paek ūi Kwanŭm yech'am mun* 白衣觀音禮懺文  
*Poja Hyeyōng* 普慈惠永  
*Pōmsŏ Ch'ongji chip* 梵書總持集  
*prajñā* 慧  
*Renwang jing* 仁王經  
*Sach'ōnwang Temple* 四天王寺  
*Saddharmapuṇḍarikā sūtra* 妙法蓮華經  
*samādhi* 三昧 / 定  
*Samguk yusa* 三國遺事  
*Siddham letter* 悉曇字  
*Sinin* 神印  
*Sōgyōng Kūmgang sa Munduru toryang mun* 西京金剛寺文豆婁道場文  
*Sōn* 禪  
*Susōnsa* 修禪社  
*tae sōnsa* 大禪師  
*Tripitaka* 三藏  
*Vairocana Buddha* 毘盧遮那佛  
*Vajradhātu Maṇḍala* 金剛界曼荼羅  
*Vajrasākhara-cycle* 金剛冠輪  
*Wentoulou Method* 文頭婁法  
*Wuzi tuoluoni song* 五字陀羅尼頌  
*Zhenyan* 真言

## Abbreviations

CHKPH	<i>Han'guk chonggyo sasang ũi chae chomyōng: Chinsan Han Kidu paksa hwagap kinyōm</i>
CKS	<i>Chōsen kinseki sōran</i>
CPT	<i>Chosōn pulgyo t'ongsa</i>
FDC	<i>Foguang da cidian</i>
HKC	<i>Han'guk kŭmsōk chōnmun</i>
HMSY	<i>Han'guk milgyo sasang yōn'gu</i>
HPC	<i>Han'guk pulgyo chōnsō</i>
HPH	<i>Han'guk pulgyo hak</i>
HPIS	<i>Han'guk pulgyo inmyōng sajōn</i>
HPS	<i>Han'guk pulgyo sasang sa</i>
HSC	<i>Han'guk sach'al chōnsō</i>
HSSY	<i>Han'guk sōn sasang yōn'gu</i>
KJ	<i>Korea Journal</i>
KS	<i>Koryō sa</i>
KSC	<i>Koryō sa chōryo</i>
KCHPS	<i>Koryō chun · Hugi pulgyo sanon</i>
KHPCS	<i>Koryō hugi pulgyo chingae sa ũi yōn'gu</i>
KHPCY	<i>Koryō hugi pulgyo chingae sa ũi yōn'gu</i>
PH	<i>Pulgyo hakbo</i>
PHN	<i>Pulgyo hak nonjip</i>
S.	<i>Stein Collection, British Library</i>
SGYS	<i>Samguk yusa</i>
T.	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i>

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