Studying the history of religion in Korea is never an easy task. This field of study includes parties affiliated with a specific religion who compete with each other to furnish the authoritative account on the value and influence of religion over time in Korea. Religious parties exhaust their energies to ensure their interpretations of the past become hegemonic in order to authorize and legitimize religious claims and truths in the present. In particular, certain parties, especially those related to Christianity, study Korean religious history as a trajectory of events and developments with a beginning, middle, and end that is preordained by a higher being. Religious parties study the past in this way with the hope of finding the signs that will guide them to their predetermined, brighter future. They rely on history to produce and sustain truths that help shape the contours of religious belief and faith. For these religious parties, historical investigation is a process for crafting a narrative of events and developments that will buttress a specific spiritual cause and enforce religious orthodoxy.

This milieu for studying and writing about religion in Korean history has hampered drives for critical, full inquiries on the development and evolution of religious ideas, practices, and institutions. First, religious parties have tended to focus on the heroic, spiritual aspects of a religion to show its value, influence, and strength. Second, they deemphasize change within the religion to show its power of continuity from the past to the present. Focusing on the gallant periods of a religion’s history gives a narrow picture of a religion in which all of its sides cannot be comprehensively exposed and understood, while stressing continuity over change ignores the influence of a person’s agency and social happenings over a religion’s development. Failing broadly to socially contextualize the development of religion has curbed discussions on Korean religious history.

With the exception of scholarship on the history of Buddhism in Korea by academics such as Jin Y. Park and Robert Buswell and works on new religions by George Kallandar and Carl Young, the inability of academic scholarship to fully study the development of religion in relation to material events, interactions, especially from the economic realm, only intensifies this incomplete understanding of Korean religious history. What these works fail to appreciate and take into account is the “lived religion” approach to studying Korean religious history. This paradigm of analysis views “things as a result of social processes” in that religious ideas and practices originate and gain meaning and value in the context of social relationships, interactions,
and events (Taves and Bender 2012: 10). In particular, the lived religion approach emphasizes practices as processes and calls attention to “its embeddedness and relations within a range of settings and concepts” rather than studying practice as an isolated object of study (ibid.: 13). Lived religion’s emphasis on practice not only allows for a full explanation on how religions change over time and are related to economic, political, and cultural processes, but it also enables engaging and viewing religion as more than just about personal belief and spirituality.

Nowhere is the absence of the lived religion paradigm of analysis seen more than in academic publications on the history of Christianity in Korea. Scholars who study Protestant Christianity, such as Sung-Deuk Oak and Timothy S. Lee, have published many works on church history that primarily emphasize the spiritual value of and promote Christianity. The perspectives and methodologies of missiology guide the writing and research of these scholars. A number of works approach the study of the history of Catholicism in Korea with a very narrow focus in that they fail to connect religious developments with social processes. Consequently, these works prevent the study of religious issues from becoming a platform for understanding larger issues and themes, such as modernity, capitalism, authoritarianism, and gender inequality. Their narrow ways of studying Christianity have only diverted readers’ attention away from how Christianity has negotiated and changed in relation to material transformations and developments in modern Korea and has only sustained the substandard approach to studying not only Christianity in Korea, but also Korean religious history.

These traditional ways of studying religion in Korean history have ultimately framed religion as nothing other than just as a means for spiritual belief and experiences. Yet, in closely studying religious developments between 1876 and 1910—a time when Koreans experienced the gradual loss of their political independence and immense ruptures in their lives because of the various forces of modernity—it becomes quite apparent that religion’s value and significance extended well beyond the realms of the spiritual and the sacred. At that time, the Treaty of Kanghwa (1876) linked Korea to the capitalist world system and ushered in diverse forces and processes from the outside that tested the strength and influence of established beliefs, customs, and institutions. The forces of capitalism, imperialism, democracy, immigration, and science and industry widely influenced people’s daily happenings from cities to the countryside. As outside powers fought for control of Korea, the new and the old collided to forge an environment of powerful social changes. From Korea’s opening to the outside world to its colonization by Japan in 1910, this time period represented a frenzied moment in history in which nothing, including religion, was left untouched.

This frenzied backdrop from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century invites a careful consideration of how religions fared and negotiated the milieu of social change. Religions, at that time, were not isolated things, but instead they were embedded in society and lived out within a wide range of settings. Figures from established and new religions were creating and reconceptualizing sacred languages, practices, symbols, and institutions in order to adapt their respective religions to the dynamic social processes that were playing out in society. What was clearly evident during this period was an urgent drive by religious leaders and followers to not only survive this time of change but also to make religion a relevant tool to represent and give meaning to the maelstrom of changes. Koreans from all types of backgrounds sought ways to give meaning to their new experiences because established forms of knowledge and belief failed to do so. Responding to this new demand, religious leaders crafted powerful languages, practices, and customs that could overcome the limits of established belief systems. Many Koreans adopted these fresh forms of representation and relied on them to ground their identity, make sense of new sensations, mediate social relationships, and evaluate and negotiate their daily happenings. During this period, religion was more than just a medium for spiritual experiences;
it also served as a medium for valuing things, structuring behavior, enhancing and sustaining power, and increasing wealth.

Studying religious developments from 1876 to 1910 in relation to material developments and social processes requires being mindful that religions were embraced and practiced for various reasons other than for just encountering the sacred. Alongside being aware of different motivations for embracing religion, it is just as important to pay careful attention to religion being a lived process that has been shaped by realms of power, which has been understudied by scholars of Korean religious history. In large part, the inability of scholars to embrace various forms of theory, especially from the fields of cultural studies and post-colonial studies, has prevented a complete picture on how power dynamics inside and outside of religions determined spiritual language and conditioned the direction of religious groups and institutions. In particular, as religions became more institutionalized, struggles over defining orthodoxy between groups within religions led to campaigns to eliminate heterodoxy and thus differences. Being conscious of power influencing and shaping religion in the history of Korea helps us to avoid assuming that “religion is a transhistorical constant—whether defined in terms of belief, feeling, or symbolic meanings” and to start instead viewing religion as “historically distinct social forms and forces” (Boy 2011).

Legacy: a brief survey of religion before 1876

The religious landscape of Korea before 1876 featured Koreans primarily following Buddhism, Shamanism, or Daoism. Each of these religions was popular because of its power of valuation. Religions furnished people with languages and signs with which they could use to evaluate the importance of something. This process of valuation gave people a framework through which to cultivate desires, make decisions and act creatively, and structure their behavior in relation to others—thus informing and undergirding people’s agency. The state’s ruling philosophy during the Chosŏn Dynasty (1392–1910) was Neo-Confucianism, but it allowed people to practice any religion as long as they never countered or challenged Neo-Confucianism on any large scale. The state lacked elaborate surveillance, punishment mechanisms, and institutional forms of violence, but it was always committed to using any resources it had toward wiping out any dissent.

The state showed that it would never tolerate religious opposition and dissent through the way it cracked down on Buddhism. Buddhism entered Korea from the middle to the late part of the fourth century and steadily grew popular among people and rulers of kingdoms on the peninsula. Koryŏ Dynasty (935–1392) leaders showered Buddhist monks and monasteries with tax-free lands and servants and money and gave key monks unfettered access to the courts to be advisors. Blaming Buddhism for weakening the finances of the state, leading leaders astray, and breaking down the Koryŏ political order, Chosŏn leaders and bureaucrats swiftly withdrew the institutional support Buddhists had received from the previous state and conducted campaigns to suppress Buddhist influence starting in the early 1400s. Some of the more aggressive actions against the Buddhist establishment included confiscating temple land, decommissioning hundreds of temples, forcing temple servants to become soldiers, and preventing monks from entering Seoul and crossing the border to China. By the middle of the eighteenth century, there were nearly 1,500 temples—down from over 2,200 temples during the end of the Koryŏ period (Kim 2012: 24–45). Yet, in spite of these crackdowns, Buddhist groups tried to survive and maintain their influence in society through creating new institutions and organizations, such as Temple Fraternities (sach'algŏ)—voluntary organizations that engaged in economic activities to raise money for Buddhist activities and for the maintenance of rituals and temples.
Chosŏn kings and government hounded Buddhism because they categorized it as heterodoxy. Defining Buddhism as heterodoxy grew out of a fear of it weakening and delegitimizing Neo-Confucianism as the authoritative system of knowledge to explain the workings of the universe and how things should be in order for a harmonious social order. There was a genuine fear among statesmen and Neo-Confucian scholars that digressing from the practice of Neo-Confucian principles would lead to social breakdown and disorder and even the collapse of the universe—thus ruining the potential for the establishment of an ideal present and future. Because the state was the guardian of the ruling philosophy, it feared that Buddhism’s delegitimization of Neo-Confucianism would also undermine its own authority and legitimacy.

In maintaining Neo-Confucianism as the authoritative mechanism for knowing and valuing, the Chosŏn state required people to rely on Neo-Confucianism to make sense of their desires and emotions—to validate or invalidate them. Yet, what happened when certain occurrences and feelings could not be made sensible and explained by Neo-Confucianism? Were people’s feelings about death, spirits, and the supernatural simply considered invalid and left alone because Neo-Confucianism refused to incorporate mystical and otherworldly elements into its cosmology? Shamanism played a significant role in people’s lives in filling in the void left by the inability of standard Neo-Confucian language and concepts to address certain topics. Through its elaborate cosmological order that was inhabited, directed by, and controlled by deities, Shamanism gave people the knowledge to make sense of the unknown and to undergo new encounters and experiences to resolve tensions in their daily lives. For example, during periods of droughts during the Chosŏn era, shamans (mudang) on the behalf of farmers would perform elaborate ceremonies that called for spirits to bring rain. Women from the landed gentry (yangban) also turned to shamans to help them communicate with spirits in order to find the spirit of a deceased family member or resolve a child’s illness. Shamanism gained value as a means for people to overcome their disconcerted feelings of the unknown and any anxieties resulting from them (Walraven 1999: 185).

Shamanism was an extremely popular religion, but the Chosŏn state never waged an all-out battle to limit the influence of Shamanism like it had done with Buddhism. It tried to control shamans by requiring them to register and pay taxes and banning them from performing state-sponsored rituals and from entering the capital, but these measures were hard to enforce. Some local government officials took it upon themselves to limit the power of shamanism through violent measures, such as Yi Hyŏn-san—the governor of Cheju Island who ordered the destruction of 129 shamanistic shrines in the early eighteenth century—but there were never any violent campaigns of persecution conducted by the central state. Even if the state had wanted to wipe out Shamanism, it would have been extremely difficult due to it being an unorganized religion with no system of authority and organization over shamans that could be easily identified and dismantled. Authorities recognized that Shamanism gave relief to people in areas that Neo-Confucianism could not sufficiently address and that shamans were far from being radical leaders who called on followers to reject Neo-Confucianism. Consequently, authorities mostly let people practice Shamanism freely.

For the most part, people in the Chosŏn period formed their own moral bricolages, which involved combining beliefs and practices from many religions to develop their own systems of belief, that people relied upon to inform their worldviews. As long as Koreans developed their own moral bricolages or practiced Buddhism or Shamanism while still carrying out Neo-Confucian practices, the state paid little attention to them. In fact, the state had little to fear in people rejecting the ruling ideology and organizing religious-inspired rebellions as long as the state continually pursued the construction of an ideal Neo-Confucian and cared for the welfare of the people. Yet, starting in the eighteenth century, Chosŏn authorities entered a period of
flux that featured ideological and social instability as natural disasters and outbreaks of diseases worsened social and economic conditions and as certain Neo-Confucian traditions and structure began to erode due to the rise of new forces, such as capitalism. As social conditions deteriorated, the state struggled to uphold its traditional Neo-Confucian responsibilities of protecting and leading because it lacked money and resources.

The breakdown of the Neo-Confucian order led to the rise of new religions that drew people seeking relief from the disorder. For example, Maitreyan millenarian movements, which featured the belief that Maitreya—a Buddhist Messiah—will appear and create a utopian world after the existing world had fallen into a disorderly state, drew people who desired changes that would “save the common people from starvation, epidemics, and oppression and exploitation by the ruling class” (Ro 2002: 35). Other people turned to movements guided by the goals outlined in Chŏnggannok, which promised a Taoist savior creating a new world and capital for the people. Finally, Catholicism rapidly grew after Yi Sŭng-hun, a scholar who was baptized in Beijing in 1784, returned to Korea to spread the new religion and its promise of salvation to all people regardless of their standing in the social hierarchy system. It was such a popular new religion that there were nearly 4,000 followers of Catholicism even before the arrival of the first Catholic missionary to Korea from China in 1794. Like Buddhism and Shamanism, these new religions offered to people alternative forms of knowing that gave them a sacred interpretation of the transformations in society and new values through which to make sense of feelings that resulted from the breakdown of the long-standing order.

Unlike Buddhism and Shamanism, what was particularly striking about these new religions was their power to lead people to question Neo-Confucianism’s legitimacy through public acts, such as the burning of ancestor tablets by two Catholics in 1790, and armed rebellions against the state, such as the Kyŏngnae Rebellion of 1812. Through their experiences of these new religions, people underwent a process of forging new identities that sprung forth awareness that things were not right and were not going to improve. This process unleashed a potent form of agency among followers of these new religions, which inspired them to use violence to overcome the imbalance and instability in society. This historical moment of new religions questioning Neo-Confucianism and rebelling against the state largely arose because of 1) the vast changes threatening customs and structures of traditions and 2) the state being without enough resources to uphold the Neo-Confucian system and wipe out the new religions. The state had crushed Catholicism through persecution campaigns in 1801, 1815, 1846, and 1866, but it was unable to wipe out all of the new religions that were popping up daily. Into the 1870s, there was a growing popularity for new religions among the people because the state was unable to keep up with all of the changes in society and carry out reforms that would align what is (material reality) with what should be (the ideal vision of material reality) as it had done in the early and middle periods of the Chosŏn dynasty.

Religion and modernity in late Chosŏn Korea (1876–1910)

The rise of modernity in the late nineteenth century sprung forth even more ruptures and changes in society that led to a sharp increase in the number of new religions that tried to bridge the disjuncture between what is and what should be. In the context of late nineteenth century Korea, the modern should be understood as a chronological category that became staged or imagined through ideological processes as a universal period of history that had its origins in the West and was considered the crucial step toward achieving progress and the highest state of being. The features of the modern period that had distinguished it from earlier periods became the chief elements of a model of development that many Koreans and non-Westerners believed
they needed to adopt in order to reach the modern stage of history. For many Koreans at that
time, the process of becoming or achieving the state of being modern required the adoption
and cultivation of particular features, especially capitalism, industrialization, and urbanization.
This normative view of the modern or modernity became dominant among leaders in the state
and intellectuals after Japan had used gunboat diplomacy to force Korea to sign the Treaty of
Kanghwa in 1876, which officially opened up Korea to the outside world. To King Kojong
and nationalist leaders, such as the leaders of the Independence Movement, the threat of
Western and Japanese imperialism to Korea’s independence added urgency to becoming
modern, which for them was a process that mostly involved adopting ideas, customs, and
institutions from the West.

Starting in the early 1880s, the challenge for King Kojong and state officials was to balance
the new changes that resulted from modernization with the preservation of the Neo-Confucian
order. Despite embracing modernity, the state never rejected Neo-Confucianism as its ruling
ideology. It clung to traditions while introducing vast reforms that threatened the survival of
traditions because the reforms brought changes to the political, economic, social, and cultural
realms. The growth of capitalism further threatened the survival of Neo-Confucian practices
and customs. Historical evidence has shown that the agrarian economy featured new develop-
ments starting in sixteenth-century Chosŏn society that signified the emergence of capitalism
in Korea. At that time, agricultural productivity increased through technological innovations
and new farming techniques. These developments resulted in surplus crops that were sold at
markets, which grew as important sites of vibrant commercial activity. At these markets, new
forms of currency, such as silver and cloth, aided the process of selling and exchanging agri-
cultural goods. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the countryside showed signs of a
growing agricultural market with a certain level of rural cultivators moving away from self-
subsistence farming. These capitalist developments gave way to many instances of elites turning
away from their traditional responsibilities for the pursuit of wealth, yangban landlords mistreating
their peasant tenants by replacing them with more productive tenants or unwilling to provide
welfare in the case of natural disasters, and people moving up and down the social hierarchy
system with wealthy merchants and farmers purchasing the yangban social status from yangban
who were in debt. The indigenous capitalist forces combined with the new forces of
modernization to create an uneven society that looked nothing like the ideal society that had
been envisioned by Neo-Confucianism.

The changes caused from the top and below sharpened the disjuncture between what is and
what should be. This new milieu demonstrated that Koreans were starting to enter a period of
“breakdown”—“when people are expelled from their old forms . . . before they can find their
way in the new structures” (Taylor 2002: 99). Koreans on a mass scale turned to new religions
for guidance through and relief from this phenomenon of breakdown. Many people turned to
new religions that had emerged near the turn of the century, but other Koreans grew enchanted
with the teachings of new religions that were growing popular after 1860. The “old” and “new”
new religions were similar in many ways in that they were usually founded by a charismatic
person and syncretistic. Yet, new religions after 1860 distinguished themselves from established
new religions through the mechanisms they created to spread, promote, and institutionalize
their religious principles and practices. These mechanisms facilitated the circulation of
information, knowledge, languages, sentiments, and desires between individuals nearby and far
away from each other. In this capacity, these mechanisms fostered vibrant networks of intimacy
that forged links and exchanges between people, which positioned them to experience new
types of social relationships, develop and reflect over their identities, and design different forms
of organization. For many followers of new religions, these networks of intimacy became the
chief mediums through which to organize people toward realizing their visions of an ideal society that embodied the beliefs of their religion.

Among the new religions, Tonghak (Eastern Learning) became the most effective new religion to forge vibrant networks for exchange and mobilization. Tonghak originated from what many people perceived as the strange thought and behavior of Ch’oe Che-u (1824–1864). The combination of his own personal problems and the changes erupting throughout society, especially the threat of foreigners coming to Korea, appeared to cause Ch’oe to be without direction and full of anxiety and confusion. Confucianism, for Ch’oe, no longer helped him understand his personal problems or the problems in Chosŏn society. Feeling distressed and disoriented, Ch’oe had an experience one day in April 1860 that fundamentally changed his life. According to Ch’oe, he heard the voice of Sangje, who told him to teach humankind about the way (pŏp) and relieve humanity from sickness. To do so, Sangje gave Ch’oe a symbol that was an “elixir of life” and told him to teach it to others. Sangje promised Ch’oe a fulfilling immortal life if he performed this mission. Ch’oe took the symbol, wrote it on a piece of paper, and consumed it. Immediately, Ch’oe wrote that he grew healthier and stronger and that his “illness” had disappeared.

Using his experience with Sangje as a source of inspiration and direction, Ch’oe spent the following months articulating and defining the tenets of his new religious message, especially the meanings and roles of Sangje and Chigi (Ultimate Energy). Ch’oe eventually named his new religion Tonghak (Eastern Learning) in 1861 and often stated that it was a mixture of many religions in that it melded together tenets from other systems of knowledge, such as Catholicism and Confucianism, to produce a religion that truly addressed the needs of the people. From Buddhism, he adopted the ideas of benevolence, and he borrowed ideas about God from the Catholic meaning of God (Ch’ŏnju). From Confucianism and Daoism, respectively, he appropriated the idea of ideal human relations and ethical principles and the concept of changing the internal spirit in order to cleanse oneself from negative elements.

Among the most important elements of the Tonghak religion that Ch’oe created and developed was the concept that humans can connect to and become part of Ultimate Reality, which Tracy describes as the force that was the “origin and end of all Reality” and “from which all comes and toward which all moves” (Tracy 1987: 89). Because Ultimate Reality was a force immanent and residing in all, Ch’oe concluded that all individuals possessed the power to become part of and one with Ultimate Reality. Unlike the Christian concept of God as a distant and transcendental being who possessed only divine nature, Ch’oe believed that Ultimate Reality resided within humans, who thereby could connect with this divine force; Ch’oe often heard Ultimate Reality reaffirming the fact that as the main force in the universe, it resided in humans.

Ch’oe’s message drew a large following of people who found comfort in the Tonghak message in the midst of change. Ch’oe’s proselytization campaigns unsurprisingly concerned government officials. Worsening social, economic, and political conditions had already begun to expose the contradictions in the Confucian world order and had therefore undermined the state’s power and authority to order reality. The growing popularity of Tonghak and the state’s inability to decipher it caused the state to become uneasy about Ch’oe, and he was arrested with other Tonghak leader and executed in 1864 for spreading a heterodox religion. Succeeding Ch’oe, Ch’oe Si-hyŏng started the process of transforming Tonghak into an organized religion with established doctrines, rites, and rituals and a comprehensive structure of governance. In order to immortalize and spread the founder’s messages, Ch’oe oversaw the compilation and publication of Ch’oe Che-u’s essays and poems in the early 1880s. Next, Tonghak leaders ordered followers to carry out various acts, such as attending a weekly public worship service. Finally, they demanded followers to abide by certain rules, such as abstain from drinking and smoking.
Ch’oe, in particular, told followers that the principle of treating and respecting each individual as divine (sainyŏch’ŏn) should ground their behavior and actions.

These reforms and developments were expected to establish disciplined environments that would reinforce belief among followers. Yet, Ch’oe Si-hyŏng and other Tonghak leaders understood that belief could not be sustained by sacred rules and practices alone. It also required the creation of an effective leadership structure. Ch’oe Si-hyŏng built a top-down leadership organization in which central Tonghak leaders selected and appointed other leaders to oversee local chapters. Through this system, the top leadership maintained surveillance and control over the local areas. The central leadership of the Tonghak group further solidified its control over local areas and established a more efficient organizational structure through the implementation of the p’o system in 1884. Under this system, the supreme leader of the Tonghak was at the top. Under him and his assistants was a regionally based organization (p’o). At the bottom, in villages and local communities, was a local congregation (jup). A leadership council presided over regional and local congregations. The council was made up of a chief (kyojang), a teacher (kyosu), a chief administrator (tojip), a judge (chipgang), a counselor (taejong), and a censor (chongjong). This council served as the leadership structure in regional offices and local villages wherever Tonghak members lived and thus maintained a disciplined environment in which Tonghak doctrine was practiced.

There is no doubt that the process of transforming Tonghak into an organized religion was expected to structure and punish followers in ways that would sustain their belief and make them into ardent followers. Yet, more than just experiencing a system of discipline, Tonghak followers also encountered a system of circulating knowledge that exposed them to ideas that gave meaning to and ordered the changing world around them. As followers performed rituals communally and abided by the same rules, it organized their everyday lives and informed social relationships and identities. Equally important, it laid the foundation for a sacred community that could easily share information and exchange goods. Unsurprisingly, then, this system became a valuable resource to organize movements when a number of Tonghak followers started a rebellion against the Chosŏn state in the 1890s over their disgruntlement over the conditions of society and the government’s persecution of Tonghak followers. In early 1894 in the southwestern province of Cholla, Chŏn Pong-jun, a Tonghak leader, mobilized enough followers and resources to capture most of the areas in the Cholla provinces by May 1894. Along the way, many slaves, daily workers, and peasants joined this movement. An examination of the demands made by the Tonghak leadership shows that their main grievances were against the state and thus not a class-centered movement. They demanded abolition of unfair taxes, punishment of corrupt local officials, and the prohibition of grain exports. The rebellion had gained steam with its success against the Korean army, but Tonghak forces were ultimately stopped by a combined force of Japanese and Korean troops in December 1894.

There are still many debates whether or not the Tonghak Rebellion was a religious-inspired movement. Indeed, despite originally being started by Tonghak members and later supported by the main leaders of Tonghak, the Tonghak Rebellion was less about achieving a new spiritual kingdom based on Tonghak beliefs and more about establishing religious freedom and overcoming foreign imperialism. In fact, the main participants in the revolution were non-Tonghak individuals who did not see the movement through religious lenses. Even the Tonghak core leadership, such as Ch’oe Si-hyŏng, never thought of starting a mass social movement to create a new world where the ideal spiritual state could unfold; only after Japan threatened Korea’s sovereignty did Ch’oe support the emerging rebellion. What is less debated is the fact that Tonghak leaders organized the religion in a way that supplied new networks for communication, exchange, and organization for people.
The end of the rebellion drove many participants toward other new religions that promised the birth of a better world. Many people turned to Ch'ungsan-gyo, which was a new religion created by Kang Il-sun. Ch'ungsan-gyo promised salvation for anyone in a new world who had “refrain[ed] from mistreating anyone, stay[ed] away from sin, and ke[pt] a pure heart” (Ro 2002: 43). It became a popular new religion, but it lacked the organizational power of Tonghak and therefore never became a significant religion. One of the new religions that had become just as powerful and influential as Tonghak was Protestant Christianity. Unlike Tonghak and other new religions, it was not founded by a single charismatic leader and syncretic. Yet, Protestant Christianity’s appearance in 1884 with the arrival of Dr. Horace Allen, a Presbyterian missionary, gave Koreans another alternative system of belief to established religions—thus becoming a new religion. In fact, it eventually developed a larger presence than Tonghak, especially because it was supported by the Chosŏn state. After the arrival of Horace Underwood (PCUS) and Henry Appenzeller of the Methodist Episcopal North Church (Methodist North Church) in 1885, King Kojong and his advisors steadily supported Protestant Christian missionaries with the hopes of them helping to modernize Korea by introducing Western medicine, technology, and education.¹

Contemporary Protestant Christian leaders in Korea will often attribute the popularity of Christianity in late nineteenth-century Korea to powerful spiritual influences. Yet, looking closely at how the religion was organized and spread enables anyone to see that Christianity grew because it offered new religious language to make sense of the changes in society and created institutions that introduced mechanisms for spreading Christianity and fostering networks. Occurrences at the P’yŏngyang Revival clearly show why so many Koreans grew enamored with Christianity. By all accounts, the P’yŏngyang Revival in 1907 became the watershed moment that fundamentally transformed the future of Protestant Christian activities in Korea. In January 1907, missionaries organized several large tent meetings and prayer meetings in P’yŏngyang, which was considered the center of Christianity in Korea. At first, the revivals evoked very tepid responses from people who attended the various meetings, leaving both missionaries and Korean Christian leaders deeply disappointed and with heavy hearts. The mood of the revival, however, quickly transformed into a state of euphoria when five to six hundred individuals participated in an all-night prayer meeting and “man after man would rise, confess his sins, break down and weep, and then throw himself to the floor and beat the floor with his fists in a perfect agony of conviction” (Lee 1907: 34).

Throughout the P’yŏngyang Revival and other subsequent revivals, missionaries consistently called on Koreans to confess their sins and ask God for forgiveness because they believed that sin was the root of all social problems. Koreans responded to this call and revealed the transgressions they had committed against God. Some Christians asked for forgiveness for petty crimes, such as stealing. Many men confessed to hating others, adultery, misuse of funds in churches, pride, envy, murder, and lusting after women (Lee 1907: 34; Ladd 1908: 107–109). The majority of people, however, confessed to sinning against the colonial occupiers by having “hatred of the Japanese, and even . . . murderous thoughts and plans towards them” (Ladd 1908: 107–109). According to observers, the environment at the revival meetings was like a huge storm in which Koreans spent days and nights publicly confessing their sins and seeking God’s forgiveness and approval. One observer described the heightened state of emotion in the revival meetings: “He [a Korean man] beat the hard wooden flooring till his hands bled, he shrieked and begged for mercy. ’Is this what sin is?’ said the awe-stricken multitudes. ’We never knew it was so awful. We had thought it a trifle, but, behold, here is what God thinks’” (Gale 1909: 209–210). To Koreans, it was sin that was causing their pain and suffering; it was the root of all of their problems and separated them from God.
Urging Koreans to declare their sins and ask for forgiveness publicly, missionaries made sin into a symbol that explained why Korean society was in a poor state and Koreans were suffering so much. At the time of the P’yŏngyang Revival, Koreans lived in a state of trauma in which all the political, social, and economic events and changes, especially the 1905 Protectorate Treaty, could not be explained by existing signs and symbols. The existing languages failed to explain the origins of the turmoil in Korean society. Unable to supply reasons for their current predicament, people, according to historical accounts, suffered and were in a state of confusion and disarray. By telling Koreans to concentrate on revealing their sins and transgressions, religious leaders enabled Koreans to make a connection between their individual sins and the overall state of their country; humans were alienated from God and therefore were separated from his love because of sin.

With this meaning of sin, Koreans were able to name their suffering and pinpoint its origins. Knowing the root cause of their problems gave Koreans the opportunity to endure their current predicament. As Clifford Geertz points out, religious symbolism enables humans to cope with suffering by “placing it in a meaningful context, providing a mode of action through which it can be expressed, being expressed understood, and being understood, endured” (Geertz 1973: 105). The revival meetings became a time when individuals learned a new language with which to speak of their suffering and were able to identify the source of their problems. Through this process, people could overcome the unknown and were now equipped with the knowledge not only to overcome their confused, traumatic state but also to endure and engage present concerns and future possibilities.

The P’yŏngyang Revival and the overall revival movement became a defining moment for Protestant Christians because they showed Koreans the value of Christianity in helping them negotiate the challenges in their lives, which helped legitimize Christianity in society. As church leaders preached about sin and the need for repentance, Koreans encountered Christianity not only through the 321 churches that had been built by 1905, but also through the number of Protestant institutions throughout the peninsula that had been established by Protestant institutions. Protestant groups, for example, expanded health services in Korea by introducing Western medicine and establishing medical facilities. They also established institutions to create an elaborate social service structure. Building schools and Bible institutes became a priority because educational institutions would be the main means to disseminate religious ideas and beliefs and introduce knowledge and subjects taught in Western schools. PCUS and Methodist North missionaries led the introduction of a new and elaborate educational system in Korea by establishing primary, secondary, and high schools as well as colleges. Both Presbyterians and Methodist missionaries and the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) built technical schools called Industrial Education Departments (IEDs) that taught Koreans about industrial labor and industrial capitalism. Missionaries decided that industrial work was the most suitable means to teach the work ethic because both missionaries and Koreans thought of industrialization as a requirement to become civilized and enlightened. Transforming Koreans into productive industrial workers was a process open to both young males and females, but it was anything but equal. IEDs taught vocations to males that involved machinery, while women were expected to learn occupational skills that would require only the use of their hands.

Practicing what students learned took place in factory-like settings in buildings that housed IEDs. Because IEDs in the Anna Davis School, the John Wells School, and the Songdo Textile Department taught students how to manufacture textiles, these IEDs set up rows of hand, foot, and power looms on the main floor of the IED buildings. Alongside technical skills, the IEDs also taught students rudimentary business skills. At the John Wells School, students learned how
to use the abacus and perform simple arithmetic and elementary bookkeeping. Teachers at the school also taught students “modern business methods.” The YMCA IED offered lectures on such themes as “the dignity of labor,” “the value of money,” and “methods in the modern business world.” These classes and lectures provided a definition of success and showed how business transformed a person into an upstanding Christian.

As students in IEDs prepared to establish an industrial capitalist society in Korea by learning how to operate a business, manufacture commodities, and market their goods, IEDs also enabled students to conceptualize Korean society as an economic system for producing and exchanging goods and services for money and profit. In fact, IED students could probably imagine the entire world, not just Korean society, as an intertwined economic system as they watched the goods they produced exported abroad. The students encountered new social imaginaries that viewed society as the main space for the performance of capitalist activities. Like the Physiocrats and Adam Smith, IEDs helped promote the belief that “the most important purpose and agenda of society [is] economic collaboration and exchange” (Taylor 2002: 105). Moreover, IED students would have believed that these ideas about economics and society were “correct” since they were validated by religious principles, which were considered the most authoritative and authentic principles.

IEDs furnished young Korean students with the knowledge, practices, and language needed to anchor their everyday lives and helped inform the kinds of social relationships they would develop. In fact, in IEDs as well as in churches and other Protestant institutions, Koreans developed new social relationships that led to new commercial developments. Merchants and figures in commerce also found opportunities to come together at church and organize groups to invest in companies throughout the peninsula. In 1911, merchants and commercial figures in the Presbyterian Church started the P’yŏngyang Chŏkŏm Chohap (P’yŏngyang Saving Cooperative) and supplied capital for a silk-reeling company. Alongside the P’yŏngyang Chŏkŏm Chohap, the Kunkŏm Chŏch’uk Siksan Chohap (Cooperative for Thrift, Saving, and Industry) originated in 1917 through the efforts of Korean Christian leaders, missionaries, and Korean lay leaders, who invested in a factory that manufactured socks.

The Protestant Church furnished diverse networks for all types of organization—even for nationalistic purposes. Inspired by the life of Jesus Christ, several well-known nationalist leaders not only fully gave themselves to the church but also used their resources and power to organize nationalist campaigns to strengthen Korea politically, economically, and socially. Nationalist figures who were devoted Christians, like An Ch’ang-ho and Sŏ Chae-p’il, believed that Christian principles should inform a new civic morality or public virtue for Koreans and organized movements that embodied Christian values. Attributing America’s greatness to Christianity, Yun Ch’i-ho (1864–1945), a well-known Methodist, spoke out about the need of Christian-based educational and social reforms to produce a stronger national community. An, Sŏ, Yun, and others like them believed that by embracing Christianity and adopting Western-based reforms, Korea would become a modern, powerful country that would be able to resist Japanese imperialism. Perhaps no one at that time was more willing to carry out this model of religious and social development than Yi Sŏng-hun (1864–1930). Yi is known for his nationalist activities in the Sinminhoe (New People’s Association) and for promoting Christianity through various institutions, such as Osan Academy (1907), which he founded as a Christian school. As a leading merchant, Yi played an active role in organizing a number of business ventures with fellow Presbyterians. In 1908, for example, Yi helped start Sangmudonga, one of the first general merchandise stores in Korea. In 1909, Yi also led the movement to start joint-stock companies through the P’yŏngyang Chagi Chusik Hoesa (Pyŏngyang Porcelain Company), which raised
60,000 won and employed sixty-one Koreans by the time it closed in 1919. Behind all these business ventures was Yi’s hope that Korean companies would be able to compete with Japanese businesses coming into Korea and resist Japan’s takeover of the economy and the country.

Despite these nationalistic efforts, the majority of Christians and most missionaries were against the intersection of religion and politics. Contrary to contemporary studies that mythologize Western missionaries and Korean Christians as figures who fought against Japanese imperialism, missionaries, in particular, “conceived as the ultimate goal of their missions the saving of souls, not the amelioration of Korea’s social or political ills” (Lee 2000: 127). Because nationalist activities and sentiments by followers could jeopardize the church’s relationship with the Japanese and divert the church from its main priority of converting Koreans, Protestant missionaries not only kept out of nationalist politics but also exhorted followers to avoid worldly affairs like anticolonial struggles. Moreover, they spoke out little, if at all, against the problems caused by modernization, especially poverty and the dislocation of people’s lives. Homer B. Hulbert, Dr. Frank W. Scofield, and a few other missionaries criticized Japanese colonialism, but the majority of missionaries and Korean Christian leaders called for followers to cultivate their personal relationship with God. For the Christian community, the transformation of Korea should take place first in the individual and not in society.

From the late nineteenth century into the first decade of the twentieth century, religious language was valued for its power to interpret and make sense of the transformations occurring in society, while religious institutions, practices, rituals, and rules were well regarded for structuring behavior and everyday life and creating diverse forms of organization and community. The language coming out from the new religions, in particular, became a means for people to talk about modern mystifications and put them into a meaningful framework that could produce an informed awareness and a calm sensibility of the new social milieu. Especially as the forces of modernization and government policies like the Kabo Reforms (1894) and King Kojong’s Fourteen Article Oath (1895), which officially dismantled the Neo-Confucian order, eroded traditions, customs, and long-standing social relationships, the new religions laid down a system of norms, values, and networks that could reground people’s identities and everyday lives that had been shaken by all of the changes. The popularity of new religions among Koreans arose from the desires for systems of knowledge to help them negotiate the social, economic, and political processes erupting around them and visualize the direction and make-up of the present and future.

Religion, power, and belief (1900–1910)

The waning of Neo-Confucianism and the rise of new religions contributed to the construction of a pluralistic religious milieu with competing values and belief systems. Koreans in late Chosŏn society even saw diversity within religious groups themselves as followers and leaders held different interpretations of key religious texts and what constituted as sacred practices. Leaders of religions tried to push followers into believing in and abiding by a common set of beliefs and practices, but followers always found spaces of autonomy where they could work out different religious views and encounter diverse experiences. Into the first decade of the twentieth century, however, followers faced a growing trend of religious organizations centralizing power. Whether out of the need for survival or to crush dissent, certain religious organizations started to streamline their organizations by forging a centralized system of authority, demarcating what was orthodoxy and heterodoxy, and establishing surveillance and disciplinary systems to ensure compliance of new rules. The new forms of power threatened spaces of autonomy and narrow differences
in thought and practice. As such, structures of power were in place to determine attitudes, sensibilities, desires, and ultimately what and the way followers should believe—thus showing that matters of belief are far from just private and internal.

Tonghak underwent significant reforms after the Tonghak Rebellion that led to the dismantling of the existing leadership structure and the renaming of the group as Ch’ŏndogyo in 1905. The execution of Ch’oe Si-hyŏng left a power vacuum in Tonghak leadership between Son Pyŏng-hŭi and Yi Yong-gu. Both men fought over the direction of Tonghak and what Tonghak stood for in society. Son, in particular, sought to align Tonghak activities with the Chosŏn state’s modernization programs and develop Korea into a civilized and enlightened country, while Yi had come to support pro-Japanese organizations. Differences over the interpretation of religious doctrines further divided both individuals. The internal power struggle led to Yi leaving Tonghak to form Sich’ŏngyo and Son to lead Ch’ŏndogyo as each group professed to be the true inheritors of Ch’oe Che-u’s legacy.

Following the establishment of Ch’ŏndogyo, Son consolidated the former Tonghak community by issuing strict rules and reforms. He issued the Charter of Ch’ŏndogyo in 1906—a new organizational plan that centralized decision-making power in the leader and established a new bureaucracy that included an office of religious inspectors who communicated the leader’s commands to local followers and required followers to be obedient to the leadership. What was emerging under Son’s leadership was a distinct view and authoritative interpretation of traditional Tonghak language that needed to be followed in order to be identified and recognized as a Ch’ŏndogyo believer; it was a system of interpretation and identification that was backed up by disciplinary mechanisms. Dissent was met with power and punishment.

For Buddhism, differences were being narrowed through the new linkages being established between the state and established Buddhist groups. The inflow of Japanese Buddhist groups to the peninsula for the purpose of proselytizing to Koreans and the desire to be free from abuses by yangban and corrupt officials led Buddhist leaders to ask the government for a new regulatory body to oversee Buddhism. In 1902, the Chosŏn state issued the Temple Ordinance that put Buddhist temple and sect under that Bureau of Temple Administration, which was overseen by the Department of the Royal Household. The ordinance established a new administrative structure that supervised the temples and monks. It also instituted new laws and regulations, such as conferring ranks on monks and requiring them to be certified as monks by the state. If any monk disobeyed the new laws, they were to be punished and disrobed (Kim 2012: 154–157). The ordinance provided new forms of protection for Buddhists, but it also opened it up to the possibilities of limiting diversity in Buddhism. The 1902 Ordinance concentrated power under a central authority—that is, the state—who had the means to uniformly organize and develop Buddhism in a particular way, which had not been the case in the late nineteenth century. It is unclear as to how many monks and followers of Buddhism were punished for holding and spreading different views and thus going against the ordinance, but what surely arose was a new system to make sure that Buddhism was organized, practiced, and believed in a singular way. In fact, as more Korean Buddhist temples forged alliances with Japanese Buddhist temples after the Japanese Resident-General’s Office issued the 1906 Regulations on Religion that regulated Japanese Buddhist missionary activities on the peninsula, Korean Buddhist groups became easy targets for outside actors with their own motivations for changing the make-up of Buddhism. Through the 1902 Ordinance and alliances with Japanese Buddhist temples, Korean Buddhists encountered centralized systems of power that threatened the diversity of Buddhism.

The first wave of Protestant Christian groups centralizing activities occurred in the first decade of the twentieth century. Immediately following the ’Pyŏngyang Revival, the Presbyterian Church solidified its presence in Korea by establishing an independent Presbytery of Korea on
September 17, 1907. Though this form of reorganization gave the Presbyterian Church a better way to coordinate activities and eliminate the competition to attract Koreans among the various Presbyterian groups, it did lead to the standardization of Presbyterian doctrines and practices. In particular, evangelicalism became the dominate theology in the Presbyterian Church. Imported from the United States, evangelicalism in Korea aimed to simplify the Christian messages by plainly stressing that people were in a natural condition of sin and therefore salvation could be procured only through their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their savior. Moreover, Presbyterian missionaries, especially Samuel A. Moffett, stressed that followers needed to live a pure moral and ethical life and never subject the Bible to any forms of deeper theological investigation because it was directly from the mouth of God. Most importantly, missionaries demanded that followers convert others to Christianity.

Evangelicalism promoted this simple message as the crux of Christianity instead of emphasizing theological investigation and social activism to fight political, economic, and social injustice as central to Christian faith. Evangelicals considered the world a place of evil and a breeding ground for sin. Therefore, in order to maintain and preserve their moral life, evangelicals called for followers to refrain from getting involved with political and socioeconomic issues and to focus instead on cultivating one’s moral and religious life and spreading the Christian message. They reinforced this message through forms of punishment, such as demanding that followers spread the message to others as a precondition of baptism and church membership. For those Korean followers who valued Christianity as a vehicle for combating social and economic ills and political oppression, they encountered a Presbyterian establishment that denied them access to Presbyterian services and institutions and tried to limit their influence inside and outside of the church. Influenced by the conservatism of evangelicalism, missionaries and Korean Christian leaders tried to limit the growth of liberal, progressive forms of theology, which were popular among Canadian Presbyterian missions to Korea, and to eliminate dissent.

From the 1910s to the 1930s as Koreans experienced Japanese colonialism and mass economic, social, and cultural problems that resulted from the forces of modernity, progressive Korean Christians battled with conservative Christians over the meaning and purpose of Christianity and the church’s resources and institutions for the hope of realizing their respective visions of the nation-state. In fact, this conflict between progressive and conservative forces was found in most religious circles—both established and new. Conservatives and progressives both valued religion because it ordered the world and grounded their daily lives and identities. Yet, they fought over how to incorporate change into religion and adapt religious traditions to the present. Gaining an edge in this conflict was extremely challenging in light of the Japanese colonial state heavily regulating religion and sometimes waging all-out wars against religion, like it had against Shamanism since the 1910s because it was an “irrational” religion. During and after colonialism, the challenge for many progressive religious groups was to make sure religion remained as an open source of enchantment, exploration, and imagination and to prevent it from becoming an unchanging force of closure, discipline, and punishment that only features narrow thoughts and practices.

Religion today in South Korea remains a powerful force that continually influences political, economic, social, and cultural structures at a time when many Koreans are seeking various systems of belief for guidance and support with rapid changes happening around them daily—just like many Koreans had in the late Chosön period. Continuously studying the relationship between religion and social trends and processes in society allows for greater understanding of how religions change over time. Yet, more importantly, it enables for great clarity as to why religion remains popular among Koreans and serves as a valuable tool to negotiate modernity despite long-standing arguments by intellectuals that religion would lose significance with the rise of modernization.
and secularization and the decline of spiritual belief. In short, studying the relationship between religion and social processes serves as a vital vehicle for raising provocative questions and drawing up answers about the human condition under modernity and the role of religion in creating values and mechanisms through which to negotiate and makes sense of the myriad social, economic, political, and cultural forces surrounding modern subjects.

**Glossary**

**Tonghak (Eastern Learning):** Tonghak was one of the first major new religions that was founded in 1860 by Ch’oe Che-u. As a nativist religion, the main principles of Tonghak were drawn from traditional Korean religious and philosophical systems, such as Confucianism and Shamanism. It is mostly known as one of the primary forces behind major peasant rebellions in the 1890s that became known as the Tonghak Rebellion.

**Ch’ŏndogyo (Religion of the Heavenly Way):** Ch’ŏndogyo became the new name of Tonghak in 1905. During the period of Cultural Rule (1920–1927), it was an influential institution that had a major role in shaping the political, economic, social, and cultural landscapes in new directions through publications such as Kaebŏk (Creation) and Nongmin (Peasant) and social movements that included its rural reconstruction campaigns (1925–1937). The Ch’ŏndogyo church linked religious principles to social activism and became a significant nationalist force under Japanese occupation.

**Ch’ŭngsan-gyo:** Ch’ŭngsan-gyo was a new religion created by Kang Il-sun in the late nineteenth century. It grew in popularity in the aftermath of the Tonghak Rebellion. Former Tonghak followers and new believers were drawn to its message of the imminent arrival of a utopian world. It promised salvation for all in this new world as long as individuals lived a moral and upstanding life that avoided the mistreatment of others. It became a popular new religion, but it lacked the organizational power of Tonghak and therefore never became a major organized religion.

**Ultimate Reality:** Ultimate Reality is a religious term coined by David Tracy that generally refers to a sacred force that is the creator and mover of all existence. As the creative and preserving force that exists in all objects and beings in the universe and the everyday world, Ultimate Reality, according to Tracy, refers to specific forces in religions, such as God in Christianity.

**Tonghak Rebellion:** This rebellion was one of the largest peasant rebellions in Korean history and lasted from early 1893 to December 1894. Inspired by Tonghak (Eastern Learning), peasants sought to achieve economic security and to expel foreigners, especially the Japanese, who threatened Korea’s independence. Though peasants had successfully battled government troops, a combined fighting force of Japanese and Korean troops put an end to the rebellion.

**1902 Temple Ordinance:** The 1902 Temple Ordinance was a series of reforms of Buddhism carried out by the Korean government. The government set up the Bureau of Temple Administration to supervise and regulate temples. State reforms were set up as way to centralize temple activities in order to thwart the advances of Japanese Buddhism in Korea.

**P’yŏngyang Revival:** The P’yŏngyang Revival consisted of a series of revival meetings held throughout P’yŏngyang and other parts of Korea in 1907. Strong turnout and the outpouring of emotions at the meetings led to the P’yŏngyang Revival energizing evangelicalism in Korea. The revival inspired Western missionaries and Korean Christian leaders to organize new campaigns to convert Koreans to Christianity.
**1906 Regulation on Religion:** The 1906 Regulation on Religion was issued by Japanese authorities in Korea in December 1906. The regulation stipulated strict controls over Buddhist missionary activities in Korea. Among the number of stipulations, Japanese Buddhist sects in Korea were required to register with the Government General’s Office and receive approval for missionary activities. This regulation further centralized Buddhist affairs in Korea and placed them under government supervision.

**Industrial Education Department (IED):** Industrial Education Departments were spaces in Protestant missionary schools where Koreans were taught the merits of industrialization and learned skills appropriate for industrial occupations. IEDs took place in factory-like settings where male and female students worked with machinery, such as power looms. Western missionaries used these spaces to discipline Koreans physically and mentally, who they perceived as “lazy,” in order to transform them into productive workers and to indoctrinate them with the belief that modernity could only be achieved through industrialization.

**Ch’oe Si-hyang (1827–1898):** Ch’oe Si-hyang followed Ch’oe Che-u as the leader of Tonghak. He was widely credited with turning Tonghak into an organized religion by consecrating the teaching of Ch’oe Che-u and setting up institutions that would spread Tonghak teachings. Following the Tonghak Rebellion, he was executed by the government.

**Son Pyōng-hui (1861–1922):** Son Pyōng-hui was the third leader of Tonghak, who oversaw its transition to being renamed Ch’ŏndogyo. In addition to setting up a new bureaucratic structure, Son established a printing house to publish and spread Ch’ŏndogyo writings. A firm believer in the concept of Civilization and Enlightenment, Son argued for industrialization, military expansion, and educational, health and sanitation programs. His views on Civilization and Enlightenment were challenged by Ch’ŏndogyo figures, such as Yi Tong-hwa, starting in the 1920s as they reconceptualized the meaning of modernity.

**Yi Seung-hun (1756–1801):** Yi was the first baptized Korean Catholic in China. He returned to Korea to promote Catholicism, which was growing as a new religion. He was later executed by the government in 1801 for spreading Catholic teachings.

**Yi Sŏng-hun (1864–1930):** Yi is known for his nationalist activities in the Sinminhoe (New People’s Association) and for promoting Christianity through various institutions, such as Osan Academy (1907), which he founded as a Christian school. As a leading merchant, Yi played an active role in organizing a number of business ventures with fellow Presbyterians. In 1908, for example, Yi helped start Sangmudongsa, one of the first general merchandise stores in Korea. In 1909, Yi also led the movement to start joint-stock companies through the P’yŏngyang Chagi Chusik Hoesa (Pyŏngyang Porcelain Company). Behind all these business ventures was Yi’s hope that Korean companies would be able to compete with Japanese businesses coming into Korea and resist Japan’s takeover of the economy and the country.

**Ch’oe Che-u (1824–1864):** Ch’oe Che-u founded Tonghak in 1860. As a fallen elite, Ch’oe characterized Tonghak as mixture of various religions. He melded together tenets from other systems of knowledge, such as Catholicism and Confucianism, to produce a religion that would address the contemporary needs of the people. He adopted the ideas of benevolence from Buddhism while he borrowed ideas about God from the Catholic meaning of God (Ch’ŏnju). Ch’oe appropriated the concept of ideal human relations from Confucianism and, from Daoism, the idea of changing the internal spirit in order to cleanse oneself from negative elements. The government found him and his teachings a threat to the Confucian order and had him executed in 1864.
Notes

1 The following denominations came after the arrival of Allen, Underwood, and Appenzeller: the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) (1892), the Methodist Episcopalian South Church (1896), the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, Australia (1889), and the Canadian Presbyterian Church (1898).

2 In P’yŏngyang, Presbyterian North missionaries built the Caroline Ladd Memorial Hospital in 1905, while other Presbyterian North missionaries worked to construct Severance Medical College and Nursing School in 1905. In many mission stations, such as Canadian Presbyterian missions, small medical facilities existed that offered basic medical services to local people.

3 PCUS missionaries built a number of primary schools and established secondary schools for girls, such as Sungui Girls Academy (1912), and secondary schools for boys, such as Sungsil Academy (1897) and Sungin Academy (1907). In Seoul, Methodist North missionaries constructed a vast array of schools, including Paejae Boys’ School in 1885 and Ewha Girls’ School in 1886, which later became Ewha University.

4 The new Presbytery included the Presbyterian North, the Presbyterian South, the Canadian Church, and the Australian Church.

References


Bibliography


