YOGA AND MEDITATION IN KOREA

Kwangsoo Park and Younggil Park

Introduction

Many historical records and writings mention mind and body practices for physical and spiritual wellness, and these days in Korea it is easy to find centres for the practice of yoga, meditation, breath control and nurturing vital energy. This, along with Koreans’ exposure to other beliefs—such as Christianity, for example—means that contemporary Korea ‘offers individuals a vast array of goals and techniques to choose from when they embark on a spiritual quest’ (Baker 2008: 144). First, under the broad topic of yoga and meditation in Korea, we will briefly review the various traditions of practice and meditation in their historical context. This chapter will then examine the acceptance and development of yoga in Korean society, such as the current status of research in colleges, the activities of associations related to yoga studies, trends in yoga federations, and the challenges and outlook for yoga and meditation in Korean society.

‘Yoga’ and ‘meditation’ have various meanings, with the applications of the latter term being manifold. Meditation generally implies mentally observing, contemplating and analysing a particular object or target in the mind. However, this is a narrow interpretation since it tends to exclude all practices beyond the acts of observing, thinking or analysing. For the purposes of this chapter, a more comprehensive conception of meditation is required—one that encompasses the practice of the mind beyond analytic language and the world of reflecting. Thus, various forms of practice could be included under ‘meditation’, such as śamatha and vipāśyana (지관, 止觀, ‘tranquillity and insight’) to reach nirvāṇa (涅槃,열반) in early Buddhism, silent prayer in Christianity or Sufi dance in Islam.

Traditions of practice and meditation in Korea

Although Asian religions share some teachings and practices, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism value human nature in different ways and have developed their own unique philosophies and practices.

Confucianism in Korea

Confucianism was introduced into Korea during the Three Kingdoms period (57 BCE–668 CE) in the fourth century CE, which eventually came to provide the framework for individual and social ethics. During the Joseon dynasty, neo-Confucianism, as the state religion, was firmly
Kwangsoo Park and Younggil Park

established as the political and ideological foundation of the Korean government for nearly 500 years and its values permeated all aspects of society (Park 1997).

The Confucianism of Confucius (孔丘) and Mencius (孟子) was systematically developed by Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200) into neo-Confucianism (性理学) and by Shou-jin Wang (王守仁, 1472–1528) into the Yangming school of philosophy (阳明学) (Zhu Xi 2010). The Confucian academic focus on the mind is called Mind Studies (心学); this is the common link between neo-Confucianism and the Yangming school of philosophy. In general, neo-Confucian scholars criticised the attitude and ideas of Buddhism, while the Yangming school accepted the Buddhist concept of the mind and developed a system of Mind Studies. The Mind Studies of Confucianism considered the mind as the central pillar of the behavioural functions of the body. Confucianism tends not to view human emotions such as joy and sorrow negatively, but pursues happiness by ‘following nature’ (soleung 솔성, 率性) and controlling the mind and emotions by following a path of moderation (中庸). In chapters 1–4 of his book Tōng Shu (通書), Dunyi Zhou (周敦潁, 1017–1073) viewed sincerity as the source of wisdom and the original creative force (C. qianyuan, 乾元) (Chan 1963: 465–480). In relating the sources of the cosmos and sagacity to sincerity, he proposed a way of practice based upon his philosophy.

Korean Confucian scholars, i.e. Hwang Yi (이황, 李滉, 1501–1570) and I Yi (이이, 李珥, 1536–1584), considered sincerity and reverence to be important virtues in cultivating oneself and attaining the learning of the sages. Regarding the interaction between sincerity and reverence, I Yi asserted that ‘reverence is the way to accomplishment, and sincerity the ground to harvest it; thus sincerity can be attained from reverence’ (Yi 2007). He viewed sincerity as the basis of reverence, and reverence as the application (用) of sincerity in practice. Conversely, Hwang Yi stressed the close relationship between sincerity and reverence but placed more emphasis on reverence. Yi’s ideas on the origins of the mind were construed from the Theories on Nature and Conduct (성명론, 性命論), and the correlation between the nature of the mind and the seven emotions was identified in the debate of Sadanchiljeong (사단칠정론, 四端七情論, the Four Beginnings and the Seven Emotions) in Korean Confucianism. In particular, Hwang Yi promoted these spiritual values and practical and ethical principles. In The Ten Diagrams of the Sages’ Learning (Seong-hak Sip-do, 聖學十圖) he emphasised that one could come to respect everyone by cultivating an attitude of reverence as if one is present before the Lord on High (Kalton 1988: 178). Therefore, it is important for the Confucian practitioner to practise sincerity and reverence as important virtues in cultivating oneself and attaining the learning of the sages.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, ruling conservative Confucian scholars tried to preserve their traditional governing system in the face of reform efforts. The academic Confucian Silhak movement aimed to modernise the social institutions of the Korean Confucian literati. In doing so, these pioneering neo-Confucians expected the prevailing social and political structures in Korea to be changed as well. However, the Silhak movement’s campaign was ultimately rejected by an entrenched elite resistant to change. At that time, the government of the Joseon dynasty considered Catholicism to be a heterodox and anti-government organisation that was tied to western imperialism. For that reason, they began to persecute Catholics. There was a massacre in 1866, which included some famous Silhak Confucian scholars (Park 1997: 11). Although Confucianism lost its strong influence in contemporary Korea after the fall of the last Joseon dynasty (1910), the legacy of Confucianism is still found in Korean customs and values. Also, many renowned Confucian private schools or communities, called ‘Seowon’ (서원, 書院), are found throughout the country, either for education or for rituals to honour distinguished Confucian scholars and statesmen.
Yoga and meditation in Korea

Daoism in Korea

Daoism, unlike Confucianism and Buddhism, values not only the mind but also the vital force (정기, 精氣) in the body, which is viewed as the power that maintains life. In the Tao Te Ching (道德經, The Book of the Way and its Virtue), Laozi (老子) said, ‘You could become soft like a new-born baby if you focus on your vital force’ (精氣致柔能嬰兒乎). The body is the house of the vital force (정기, 精), which is closely related to Heshang Gong’s (河上公) interpretation of the body in the Tao Te Ching. In the Commentary of Heshang Gong on the Tao Te Ching (老子道德經河上公章句), Laozi states there are five types of spirits (신, 神) that exist within the organs in the human body. In Spirit of the Valley Does Not Die (곡산불사, 谷神不死), he explained that ‘the liver and bowels keep the soul (혼, 魂); the lungs, vigour (백, 魄); the heart, vital spirit (신, 神); the kidneys, vital force (정기, 精); and the spleen, aspiration (지, 志). If the five organs are ruined, the five spirits will leave your body’ (Lee 2005: 63). According to Laozi’s Nature of Non-Action (무위자연, 無為自然) principle, Daoism values life in harmony with nature, and aims to reach the state of perennial youth and long life (불로장생, 不老長生) or perennial youth and immortality (불로불사, 不老不死) by maintaining the spirits in the body through training (양생법, 養生法).

The traditional techniques of Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism that were popular in Korea mostly focused on prāṇāyāma (breath control) – with the method of cultivation in Chinese Daoism or qigong (기공, 氣功) also emphasised. This method of cultivation is based on the theory ohaeng (오행, 五行): the movement of five elements. Ohaeng is a theory that addresses changes in Mother Nature, the human body and the mind, based on the incompatibility and interdependence between the five elements that make up the universe, including wood (목, 木), fire (화, 火), soil (토, 土), iron (철, 金) and water (수, 水). According to this theory, a weak water energy, for example, can be supplemented with controlled breathing. Some of these ideas, along with a belief in improving one’s health by breath training and retreats to the mountains, still resonate in Korea today, along with the concepts of dosa (도사, 道士), qi (기, 氣) and practice (수행, 修行).

The concept of dosa – ‘one who practices the Way (도)’ in nurturing the mind and body – reflects the Korean view of practice or practitioners well. Although there is no historical link, the concept of dosa is very similar to those people understood as nātha and siddha in medieval India. Dosa took hold in modern times, after the Joseon dynasty and its dominant Confucian social order had ended. Stories about dosa who chanted spells like ‘sūrīsūrīnasvari’ (सूरीसूरीनासवरी) and performed Daoist magic were passed down orally across the countryside until the 1970s. There was a feeling of admiration toward dosa (siddha) and sinseon (신선, 神仙, ᄋᆡ), which is corroborated by the fact that the seonmu (선무도, 禪武道) of Buddhism were popular among college students in the 1970s. Methods of practice such as kukseondo (국선도, 國仙道) and danhak (단학, 丹學) gained tremendous popularity in the 1980s, and books on the topic were bestsellers. The reverence for practitioners also extends to the places where dosas stayed or practised, which are viewed as sacred. Gyerongsan, a mountain in the central region of South Korea, is still perceived as a place where Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist adherents practise (to achieve spiritual enlightenment), a place to meditate or a place where dosas reside.

Buddhism in Korea

Buddhism was formally introduced to Korea during the Three Kingdoms period (372 CE in Goguryeo; 384 CE in Baekje; and formally recognised in 527 CE in the Shilla kingdom,
Kwangsoo Park and Younggil Park

after the martyrdom of Ichadon). Yogācāra and Madhyamaka are the significant transmissions to Korean Buddhism. In Korea, Woncheuk (원측, 圆測, 613–696) developed Yogācāra in a new way through books such as the Commentary of Samdhinirmocanasūtra (解深密經疏). Wonhyo (원효, 元曉, 617–686), who represents Korean Buddhism, embraced pan-Buddhist philosophies and practices including Hue-yen, T’ien-t'ai and Pure Land philosophies. He systematised the ilche-yusim (일체유심, 一切唯心, everything depends on the mind) philosophy during the Unified Shilla dynasty (seventh to tenth centuries). During the Goryeo dynasty (고려, 高麗, 918–1392), Buddhism was declared the state religion, which served as a catalyst for it to be developed across Korea. Jinul (지눌, 知諦, 1158–1210), the National Preceptor (보조국사, 善照國師), contributed to the establishment of Seonjong (선종, 禪宗, dhyāna school) (Buswell 1983). He elaborated on the practice of mind cultivation, called sushim (수심, 修心), and gave teachings on methods such as ganhwaseon (간화선, 看話禪, word contemplation meditation) and practices such as dono (돈오, 頓悟, sudden enlightenment) and jeomsu (점수, 漸修, gradual cultivation).

Although Buddhism was regarded as the state religion during the Goryeo dynasty (918–1392), its viability was seriously challenged when Confucianism was declared the state religion in the Joseon period (1392–1910). The Joseon dynasty placed restrictions on Buddhist properties, and Buddhist monks were expelled from the capital to the mountains. Although there were a few kings, such as Sejong and Sejo, who favoured Buddhism, it was generally persecuted. Despite this, Buddhist beliefs remained strong among the mass population, particularly among women (Nahm 1996: 108–109).

When Korea was invaded by the Japanese between 1592 and 1598, the Buddhist Master Seosan (西山), Hyujeong (休靜) and other Buddhist monks organised warrior monks to defend against the Japanese, based on the spirit of bodhisattva and the desire to improve the status of Buddhism. Hyujeong is considered the central figure in the revival of Buddhism during the Joseon dynasty, and his followers maintained Buddhist thought and practice until the end of the nineteenth century. When the Joseon dynasty was unstable during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was forced to open the country, beginning with the Treaty of Kanghwa Island (Ganghwa-do-joyak) with Japan in 1876, the United States in 1882 and with other European nations shortly afterwards. The Joseon dynasty collapsed after Japan’s victory over Russia in 1904/5 and the entire country was annexed to Japan in 1910 and was colonised by other European nations shortly afterwards. The Joseon dynasty placed restrictions on Buddhist properties, and Buddhist monks were expelled from the capital to the mountains. Although there were a few kings, such as Sejong and Sejo, who favoured Buddhism, it was generally persecuted. Despite this, Buddhist beliefs remained strong among the mass population, particularly among women (Nahm 1996: 108–109).

Today, there are several modern revival Buddhist orders in Korea, including Jogye, Taego, Cheontae and others that inherited the Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions. The Jogye Order (조계종, 曹溪宗) represents Korean Buddhism is Seonjong (Dhyana school), which focuses on ganhwaseon for contemplation meditation. Ganhwaseon is the most ancient practising tradition in Korea, but it is generally for Buddhist monks. A master and his disciples exchange questions and answers, and publicly recognised topics (Gongan, 공안, 公案) are used as points of meditation (hwadu, 화두, 話頭) to search for the wisdom of enlightenment. In general, Korean Buddhist monks cut themselves off from the outside world and train their minds through meditation. They gather in a meditation room (선방, 禪房) designated by each order during a three-month summer meditation retreat (하안거, 夏安居) and a winter meditation retreat (동안거, 冬安居). For example, during the winter meditation retreat in 2018, a total of 2,032 monks
Yoga and meditation in Korea

Won Buddhism as a new religion in Korea

Won Buddhism (원불교, 圓佛教) has been one of the most successful new religious movements in Korea (Cozin 1987: 171). It was established by Jungbin Pak (박종빈 朴重彬, 1891–1943, aka Sotaesan) as a new religious movement in 1916. The relationship between Buddhism and Won Buddhism is a complex one. While Won Buddhism clearly finds resonance in Buddhism, it is also careful to differentiate itself from traditional Korean Buddhism. Sotaesan’s main purpose in the reformation of Buddhism was to apply Buddhism to the contemporary secular world. He proposed (1) to open up Buddhism from the few to the majority; (2) to reform the monastic system to make Buddhism accessible for monks and lay devotees; and (3) to eradicate gender discrimination in Buddhism.

Won Buddhism maintains a visible presence in the modern Korean religious landscape (Baker 2008: 128). Sotaesan believed that one way to find the path to salvation and to realise paradise in the mind (心樂園) is to find the Buddha-nature within the inner world of each individual and to reveal it (Park 1997: 22–34). Sotaesan approached deliverance from a social perspective. He sought to lead those who suffer into the paradise of the Great Opening of Subsequent Heaven (후천개벽, 後天開闢). He foretold the coming of a truly civilised world (三千年, 三千年) where moral philosophy and science are advanced together, and individuals, families, societies and nations open their boundaries and are ‘interfused’ with one another. The Threefold Study in Won Buddhism comprises three methods for ‘completing’ an individual’s personality. It places great importance on the following practices: cultivating the spirit (事理研究, 精神修養), enquiry into human affairs and universal principles (사리연구, 人事研究) and choice in action (작업취사, 作業取捨). Cultivating the spirit can be achieved through reciting the Buddha’s name (念佛) and seated meditation (坐禪). Enquiry into human affairs and universal principles (사리연구, 事理研究) can be attained through scriptures (經書, 經典), lecturing (講演, 講演), conversation (話話, 會話), cases for questioning (疑問, 質疑), and the principle of nature (性理, 性理). Choice in action can be carried out using methods such as keeping a daily diary (日常日記, 常時日記), heedfulness (注意, 注意) and attention to deportment (操行, 操行) (Park 2007; Won Buddhism 2016).

In general, the reformative focus in Won Buddhism is evident in its practices, which is where it most differs from traditional Buddhism. The iconography of traditional Buddhism – such as statues of buddhas and bodhisattvas – is replaced with the simple form of a circle, a symbol called Irwon-sang. Won Buddhism’s clerical system differs from traditional Korean Buddhism as well. Won Buddhism rejects the age-based hierarchy of Buddhist clergy; while a hierarchical structure of leadership is maintained, it is based on spiritual achievement and leadership ability. Won Buddhism also rejects gender discrimination between nuns and monks. Whereas nuns in traditional Buddhism have a greater number of vows and seem to be subject to a ‘glass ceiling’ when it comes to leadership roles, priests and nuns in Won Buddhism are perceived as equals and are required to keep the same number of vows (Park 1997: 240–276). Furthermore, as Cozin comments, Won Buddhist nuns have advanced to esteemed positions, and in fact gathered at ninety-four meditation temples. Buddhist monks were highly respected during the Three Kingdoms period and the Goryeo dynasty, and many sons of the ruling class became Buddhist monks and influential spiritual leaders in Korean society. However, when Buddhism was supressed during the Joseon dynasty, few became Buddhist monks and nuns and their social status was one of the Eight Socially Degraded Groups (Pal Ban). Nowadays, Buddhist monks and nuns are generally revered, and the temples provide meditation programmes for Koreans and foreigners, who can easily join meditation retreats.
Yoga in Korea

Although yoga has flourished in Korea in the twenty-first century, it is not a recent phenomenon. Yoga techniques based on āsana, prāṇāyāma and mudrā were established in the 1980s and 1990s, when the yogi in the Korean public imagination was not so much an ‘asana practitioner’ as a ‘breathing practitioner’ or a ‘meditation practitioner’. Yoga techniques that came into the spotlight around 2000 were mostly centred on postures, but it is the professional structures of transnational globalised forms of yoga which particularly contribute to their popularity in contemporary Korean culture. Popular Korean breathing techniques concentrate on the lower abdomen, such as such as bosikhohup (복식호흡, 複式呼吸, abdominal breathing) and danjeonhohup (단전호흡, 丹田呼吸, hypogastric breathing). Using bosikhohup, the abdomen rises when inhaling, and the stomach becomes flat when exhaling. Using danjeonhohup, the lower abdomen (around five centimetres below the belly button) rises when inhaling, and the stomach is further lowered when exhaling. It is deemed important to pull air (apānavāyu) upward, but this is believed to cause side effects called ‘sanggi-byeong’ (상기병, 上气病), the abnormal rising of qi (氣), the vital energy. For this reason, Korean techniques mostly focused on concentrating energy in the lower abdomen. However, some breathing practices appear to have been influenced by yogic techniques, such as ēndhvrātas: vital air (prāṇa) is concentrated on the lower abdomen and is pulled upward through the spine to fill the crown of the head. In the 1980s, hathayoga techniques such as jalaṃdhara, mūlabandha and udī ṣyanabandha were also widely adopted. As new light was shed on Korea’s traditional breath-based practices, books related to danjeonhohup (hypogastric breathing) entered the bestseller lists. During this period, publications by modern Indian philosophers such as Krishnamurti, Ramakrishna and Maharishi also became commercially popular. These books contributed to the boom in Koreans traveling to India in the 1990s and to the increased popularity of yoga in the 2000s. From the 1990s onwards, Vipassana, a Theravada meditation technique used in Myanmar and Thailand, also took hold in Korea. Vipassana was first introduced by graduates who majored in Theravada Buddhism at university and who then had short-term monastic training. They offered programmes that, although small-scale, eventually yielded high numbers of practitioners.

There is debate about when yoga was first introduced to Korea. Some say that yoga was introduced by the Beobsang School (법상종, 法相宗) in the Unified Shilla dynasty (seventh to tenth centuries), a Buddhist state; others argue that interest in yoga occurred spontaneously in the early twentieth century as Koreans became exposed to foreign literature. In a narrow sense, yoga appears to have been introduced in the 1950s, and the first yoga centre was opened in Seoul in 1955. There were several pioneers and associations, and Taehyuk Jeong (1922–2015) in particular contributed greatly to the popularisation of yoga and was highly influential in the field (Sim 2015: 18–21). Jeong undertook Buddhist studies and indology in Japan between 1961 and 1966. During that time he exchanged ideas with Masahiro Oki (J. 沖正弘) and Sahoda Tsuruji (J. 佐保田鶴治), and seemed to have taken the opportunity to learn about yoga. Furthermore, his studies were likely influenced by publications from Indra Devi and Sivananda. After returning from abroad, Jeong published multiple translations and books, and operated a yoga centre in Seoul (Sim 2015: 27–30). He also worked as a professor in the Department of Indian Philosophy at Dongguk University, mentoring students who majored in sāṃkhya and pāṇīṇajñayoga.

The tradition of yoga introduced by Jeong was further developed by one of his disciples: Taeyoung Lee promoted hatha yoga focused on asana, pranayama and mudrā. Until

outnumber priests (Cozin 1987: 171). Won Buddhism is also actively involved in the social and educational spheres and is widespread in Korea.
Yoga and meditation in Korea

At the time of writing, there were at least ten large-scale nationwide yoga federations in Korea, and they pursue various types of yoga, such as therapy yoga, Hatha Yoga and hot yoga. Federations that predate over at least 100 training centres include the Korea Yoga Federation, the Korea Yoga Association, the Daehan (Korea) Yoga Association, the Korea Therapy Yoga Association, the Korea Yoga Masters Association and the Korea Yoga Instructor Association. There are other small-scale organisations that have propagated their own yoga practices, such as Yogakorea, the Korea Dhammayoga Association and the Korean Branch of the Association of Himalayan Yoga Meditation Societies International. Aside from these, yoga programmes are provided in after-school classes in elementary schools in Korea, and ‘yoga classes for citizens’ operate in almost every community centre and city hall cultural centre. The discussion of ‘yoga’ here is directly related to Indian traditional thought and practices of yoga meditation. One also finds the term ‘Dhan Yoga’ in Europe and the United States, which, although originating from Korea, is not really ‘yoga’ but rather a syncretic adoption of traditional Korean Daoist practice. The term ‘DhanYoga’ is generally not used in Korea and is not considered to be traditional yoga.

Common issues shared by national yoga organisations include establishing a system of state-certified yoga instructors and offering yoga classes as a regular subject in elementary, middle and high schools. Resolving such issues is essential for the development and future of yoga in Korea, but – considering that the philosophy and practice principles of yoga have yet to be firmly founded – the horizontal integration of these organisations in society will take some time. In addition, there is no standard to integrate the various modified techniques of modern yoga. Recently, however, a body of literature on hathayoga has been translated, and related studies have been conducted, which requires further academic discussion. Yoga in Korea is generally commercial and secular. Of course, health and therapy are important, but there are only a few organisations that adhere to the main goal of traditional yoga practice: mokṣa (liberation). Most organisations only emphasise on ‘secular prosperity’, which could be attributed to a lack of study and discussion of historical hathayoga in Korean.

**Current status of academic study of yoga in Korea**

At the time of writing, there were a total of seven colleges and graduate schools in Korea that opened yoga departments or courses to train yoga specialists. One of them is the Department of Indian Philosophy at Dongguk University. The department has designed its curriculum to focus on reading Sanskrit texts. It has produced graduates who majored in the six (‘orthodox’) systems in Indian philosophy (śaṅdarśana) – including vedānta, nyāya and yoga – and Indian Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism such as Abhidharma, Madhyamaka and Yogācāra. When Jeong translated the Yogasūtrabhāṣyā of Vyāsa into Korean in 2010, the influence of the department increased. The department has also produced PhD graduates in Saivism and Tantrism, although its overall focus has been on pāṇijnalayoga and not on hathayoga. In 2000, when yoga in Korea was becoming widespread, Wonkwang University opened its Department of Yoga under the Graduate School of Asian Studies in order to research yoga and to educate practitioners. The department has
produced a large number of graduates from its master’s degree programme within a short period of time, and some graduates have pursued doctoral research. In its early years the curriculum focused on ayurveda and related studies based on classical Indian philosophy, but recently the department has added Sanskrit classes and produced researchers and translators who can read original texts in Sanskrit. Other graduate schools that provide courses related to yoga include the Department of Mind-body Healing at Seoul University of Buddhism; the Department of Naturopathy at Dongbang Culture University; and the Department of Naturopathy at Sunmoon University. For undergraduates, the Department of Yoga Meditation at Wonkwang Digital University and the Department of Yoga at Choonhae College of Health Science offer courses related to yoga. The number of master’s and doctoral degree theses that were attained before the year 2000 did not exceed thirty, and they were mostly studies on religion related to āñṭāñṭayoga and mysticism (Kwak 2018: 125–128). Since 2000, graduate theses have branched out into areas including physical education, social science and natural science. However, the share of philosophical and philological graduates has been low, and among doctoral degree theses this discrepancy has been even more pronounced. Remarkably, the number of doctoral theses on original yoga texts has decreased over this same period.

Academic research on yoga dates back to 1986 when the Korean Society for Yoga Studies was first established. Back then, however, the organisation was more of a social community of yoga instructors and specialists of texts such as āñṭāñṭajalayoga, Bhagavadgītā and Vedic Upaniṣads. Except for a few lectures, other academic activities were barely organised. In the 2000s, however, as yoga’s popularity rapidly grew, the number of those who majored in yoga in graduate schools also increased, which created a need for specialist journals. In 2006, the Korean Society for Yoga Studies declared the re-foundation of the society, and held various symposiums, facilitating a forum for academic discussion on yoga. As a result, the first issue of the Journal of Yoga Studies was published in 2011, and twenty issues have now been published (as of October 2018). As this journal was ranked high in the evaluation of journals based on the citation index, which was performed by the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF) under the Ministry of Education, its status was raised to ‘an approved journal’. Aside from the Journal of Yoga Studies, essays on yoga have been published in other approved journals on liberal arts, sociology, medicine, etc. The following table shows the number of papers that were published from 2011 to 2017 (Kwak 2018: 125–128):

As the statistics in Table 22.1 show, yoga has been researched in various fields, but many of these studies were in yoga studies itself – or rather, they were conducted in physical education or other related areas. Limited numbers of papers on yoga philosophy have been published in the Korean Journal of Indian Philosophy, the Critical Review for Buddhist Studies, the Journal of Yoga Studies, the Journal of Indian Studies and the Journal of Buddhist Studies. Studies on āñṭāñṭayoga are now at an early stage in Korea, and as yet there are only a few philological research projects.

In recent years academic interest in yoga has sharply increased. Numerous yoga practitioners and instructors have been to graduate school to investigate the philosophical or textual origins of their practice, with a primary interest in āñṭāñṭajalayoga. In 2015, however, the publication of ‘An Annotated Translation of Hathapradīpīka-based on Brahmānanda’s Jyotisnā’ – translated with the support of the Korea Research Foundation – shifted the attention of graduate students from āñṭāñṭajalayoga to historical literature on āñṭāñṭayoga. Accordingly, the most immediate challenge for Korean academia today is to translate, research and introduce more published research on āñṭāñṭayoga. Still, it is encouraging to see that the Korean Society for Yoga Studies has strengthened its support for translating Sanskrit texts into Korean, and that Wonkwang University has led efforts to fill gaps through academic exchanges with the Haṭha Yoga Project (SOAS University of London). At the time of writing, a total of eight books on āñṭāñṭayoga are being translated.
Yoga and meditation in Korea

These are scheduled to be published from 2020. In addition, there are critical editions and Korean translations of the Yogabīja and Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati in progress. Furthermore, Sanskrit classes are slowly growing in number, as is the publication of Sanskrit grammar books for non-academic audiences who want to read primary sources in Sanskrit. Recently, a number of scholars of Buddhism have been translating the Pali Buddhist scriptures. Indeed, many Buddhist and yoga practitioners are publishing general or popular books on the practice of meditation and yoga. However, only a few professional scholars in yoga studies are involved in the translation of the classical yoga literature. Academic networks for researchers of yoga and meditation thus need to be expanded globally to promote joint studies between researchers at home and abroad, and to facilitate further academic developments.

Bibliography


Kwangsoo Park and Younggil Park


