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Practice, Profit, and Public Good: Temple Economies and Social Enterprises in Korean Buddhism

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Abstract

In contemporary Korea, particularly within the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, temple revenue relies on two primary sources: donations and production activities. With declining religious participation, donations alone are no longer sufficient for temple sustainability. In response, many temples have diversified into non-religious economic ventures—an approach that, while controversial, has historical precedent. Pre-modern Korean temples actively contributed to local economies and public welfare through various productive roles. A notable recent development is the rise of Buddhist social enterprises, which aim to reconcile financial sustainability with core Buddhist values. This paper examines two interrelated dimensions: first, the historical role of Korean Buddhist temples as economic actors and social welfare providers; second, the emergence of Buddhist social enterprises as a modern model for sustainable temple economies. The paper highlights their potential to balance spiritual integrity with economic viability while acknowledging the challenges they face in achieving broader institutional and public support.

Keywords: Korean Buddhism; temple economy; historical precedents; productive Buddhism; social enterprises; monastic sustainability

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Academic Editor: Song-Chong Lee

Received: 24 July 2025
Revised: 20 August 2025
Accepted: 28 August 2025
Published: 31 August 2025

Citation: Kwon, Junghyun. 2025. Practice, Profit, and Public Good: Temple Economies and Social Enterprises in Korean Buddhism. *Religions* 16: 1139. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16091139

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1. Introduction

Buddhism is often perceived as incompatible with economic activity. During the time of the historical Buddha, the sangha—the monastic community established around the Buddha—was strictly prohibited from engaging in any form of productive labor or economic activity, including farming, trade, or business operations. They were also forbidden from accumulating wealth, carrying money on their person, or even touching it with their hands. The sangha was founded on principles of renunciation and was intended to embody a "non-economic" way of life, sustained entirely through alms from lay supporters. Donations have served as a vital economic foundation, creating a moral and spiritual exchange in which monastics provide the Dharma while lay supporters contribute material resources. At the heart of this relationship lies the doctrine of merit, which frames economic giving not merely as charity, but as a spiritually significant act that binds the lay and monastic communities. As a result, Buddhist temples and monastics have often been viewed as institutions that deliberately eschew material concerns in favor of spiritual practice. This has contributed to the widespread perception that monastic Buddhism, in particular, is fundamentally incompatible with economic engagement.

This view, however, overlooks the historical reality that the sustainability of monastic life has always depended, to varying degrees, on economic activity. From the earliest periods of Buddhist history, donations and gifts from state and individual patrons were not

merely received but actively managed. In some cases, these endowments were loaned out to others, generating interest as a source of monastic income (Schopen 1994). The practice of monastic lending became widespread throughout Central and East Asia (Gernet 2000). In China, large Buddhist temples engaged in pawnbroking and money lending, and the first pawnshops, dating back to the 5th century, were established, owned and operated by Buddhist temples. (Walsh 2015, p. 1277). In Korea, during the Goryeo Dynasty, Buddhist temples were granted large tracts of farmland by the state and royal families and sought to expand their wealth through the management of monastic funds (*bo*). In the Joseon Dynasty, following a shift in state policy that was increasingly unfavorable toward Buddhism, temples adapted by organizing cooperative associations (*gye*) to ensure financial sustainability. In both periods, temples engaged in a variety of productive economic activities. These efforts were not solely intended to support temple operations but also functioned as forms of social service aimed at benefiting the broader community.

In contemporary Korean Buddhism, especially within the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism (hereafter, the Jogye Order), the revenue structure of most temples can generally be divided into two main categories: primarily donations and, to a lesser extent, production activities (Cho 2024). Temples continue to rely heavily on donations from the laity; however, recent decades have seen a growing diversification of temple income, as some temples actively engage in economic production. While these developments may appear to represent a modern adaptation, they are in fact rooted in longstanding historical precedents. The temple economy of Korea has evolved and developed in response to its given environment and challenges within the broader social context. And temples have not only served as religious institutions but have also functioned as centers of economic activity and public welfare, contributing to local communities through farming, education, healthcare, and financial assistance. One recent notable development is the establishment of social enterprises as a means of temple-based production. A social enterprise is a business that adopts a market-oriented approach to addressing unmet social or environmental needs. It occupies a space between profit-driven corporations and non-profit organizations, incorporating elements of both models. Buddhist social enterprises are regarded as effective alternatives that support temple economies while addressing the problems associated with profit-driven production.

This paper examines two interrelated dimensions: first, the historical role of Korean Buddhist temples as economic actors and social welfare providers; second, the emergence of Buddhist social enterprises as a modern model for sustainable temple economies. The paper highlights their potential to balance spiritual integrity with economic viability while acknowledging the challenges they face in achieving broader institutional and public support. To do so, this study employs a historical-comparative and conceptual methodology. It traces the evolution of Korean Buddhist temple economies from pre-modern to contemporary periods, drawing on primary historical sources and secondary scholarship. Conceptual categories such as productive Buddhism and Buddhist social enterprise are used to analyze the continuity and transformation of monastic financial strategies. This study also includes illustrative case examples from modern Buddhist social enterprises to explore the practical application of these concepts in present-day Korea. The significance of this work lies in closing a major gap in research by elucidating the reciprocal shaping of Korean Buddhism and its economy.

2. Historical Precedents of Buddhist Temple Economy

After the Buddha's parinirvāṇa, the focus of devotion shifted to the stūpas enshrining his relics, and this led to a fundamental transformation in the Sangha's previously "non-economic" mode of life. The conservative Sthavira (Theravāda) school maintained

the original principle of non-economy, arguing that offerings made to the relic stūpas were dedicated solely to the Buddha. Therefore, even if these items were left exposed to the elements, members of the Sangha had no right to use or consume them. In contrast, the more progressive Mahāsamghika school adopted a form of economic rationalism. Rather than letting stūpa offerings go to waste, they chose to invest these goods in worldly enterprises to generate profit, or in some cases, to lend them on collateral and collect interest, thereby seeking the limitless growth of the principal (Lee 1993, p. 16). Gregory Schopen (1994), in his article on monastic loans and contracts, defines the first Sanskrit word as 'permanent', referring to a donation or gift given by a donor to a community of monks. The condition of the donation is that the principal amount is not to be touched or must remain permanently intact in perpetuity. In order to sustain the monks' needs, this principal amount must be loaned out and the interest earned is what they can use to spend. The Buddha's instruction on loan can be found in the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, a monastic code compiled in the first or second century ACE.[1]

The practice of monastic lending became widespread across Central and East Asia, where monastic banks were commonly established and operated (Gernet 2000). Since the introduction of Buddhism to East Asian countries, land has served as a fundamental material and economic foundation for temples. Wherever a temple was founded, temple-owned land naturally followed. Most of these estates were donated by kings, aristocrats, or lay devotees. The surplus generated from farming on these lands was often invested in monastic lending. Historical records indicate that both monks and nuns—or their appointed administrators—at medium- and large-scale temples regularly provided loans, a practice that continued from the initial transmission of Buddhism to China until the emergence of modern banking systems in the nineteenth century (Mitchell 2019). These loans were a way that Buddhist monastics maintained a relationship with society beyond the walls of the monastery and enabled Buddhism to flourish, while at the same time, they often boosted the local community economically. One type of loan was pawning or pledging an item in exchange for a loan, like today's pawnshops. Another type of loan offered by monasteries was aimed at poor villagers and farmers. These individuals borrowed wheat, millet, hemp, or other seeds from nearby monasteries. Borrowers planted the seeds, tended the crops, and repaid their loan in seeds or grains with the harvest. Temples charged no interest to the borrower who was a temple serf (Gernet 2000). In addition, Buddhist temples in East Asia were also involved in a type of microfinance known as mutual aid or financing associations, which would have included monks and nuns as well as laypeople, were instrumental to the popular spread of Buddhism in China (Gernet 2000).

Buddhism was first introduced to Korea during the Three Kingdoms period—specifically to Goguryeo and Baekje in the 4th century CE, and later to Silla in the 6th century CE. From its early transmission, Korean Buddhism developed strong ties to state power. This relationship was rooted in the state's strategic efforts to establish a highly centralized system of governance, ensure national prosperity, and promote the welfare of the people through the support and legitimizing force of Buddhism (Kim 1992, pp. 247–53). The establishment of most temples during this period was sponsored by the state or royal families. According to the Legends and History of the Three Kingdoms of Ancient Korea (*Samguk Yusa*), the farmland that served as the material foundation for monastic life was granted by the state (Lee 1993, p. 19). This land provided the basis for sustaining temple communities and their religious activities. This led to a reliance on the labor of temple slaves. However, although they were referred to as temple slaves (*sawon nobi*), historical records indicate that some of them were actually members of the highest social classes who became slaves as a form of punishment. This suggests that they were not the same as ordinary slaves in terms of social status (Lee 1993, p. 22). Detailed records of specific economic activities related to

temple estates during the Three Kingdoms and Unified Silla periods are scarce, and most of the available documentation begins only after the onset of the Goryeo Dynasty.

In the Goryeo Dynasty (918–1392), Buddhism was designated as the official state religion and became deeply embedded in the kingdom's social and political structures. Buddhist temples significantly expanded their agricultural landholdings, engaged in the production and sale of various goods, and sought to increase their wealth through the management of monastic funds known as *bo* (Lee 1976). One of the key reasons Buddhism received absolute protection from the Goryeo Dynasty was its association with the ideology of protecting the nation (*Hoguk Sasang*). The strong alliance between the Goryeo state and Buddhism, grounded in the ideology of national protection, is evident in several key examples. One example is the Theory of Fortification through Pagodas and Temples (Bibo Satap Seol), which employed geomantic principles or Fengshui to reinforce the security of the state. The term *bibo*, meaning "to supplement what is lacking," expressed the belief that when the configuration of mountains and rivers revealed weaknesses in the earth's virtue or displayed inauspicious formations, such deficiencies could be remedied by constructing temples, pagodas, or Buddha images. This idea was systematized in the late ninth century by National Master Doseon (827–898) during the Unified Silla period (For more on Bibo Satap Seol see Choi 1989; Vermeersch 2007; Yoon 2017). Another is the Ten Injunctions (*Hunyo Shipjo*), a set of royal precepts traditionally attributed to King Taejo (r. 918~943), founder of the Goryeo dynasty. Framed as guidance for his successors on statecraft and moral governance, the injunctions emphasize reverence for Buddhism, attention to geomancy in site selection and landscape management, care for the people's livelihood and just administration, prudent diplomacy and defense, and the maintenance of political stability and continuity. Notably, three of the ten explicitly underscore the importance of Buddhism. Temples played a significant financial role in society in this period. They generated substantial income, which was used for various purposes both within and beyond temple grounds. Temple finances were managed not in isolation, but in collaboration—and at times in competition—with other economic entities of the period.

The sources of temple wealth during the Goryeo period were diverse, including land-based income, loan operations, commercial activities, donations, and fundraising campaigns. Among these, land was the most common and stable source of revenue. Temples acquired land through various means. Some retained land inherited from earlier periods, especially after the Three Kingdoms era, when Buddhism gained widespread support and temples accumulated significant holdings (Lee 1992a). Land donations from devout Buddhist kings, nobles, and even commoners were also frequent (Lee 1992b). Additionally, temples expanded their estates by clearing new land, purchasing property, or receiving royal land grants, which enabled them to develop and enlarge their farmland. The scale of land controlled by temples during this period was considerable. During the reign of King Seongjong (r. 981~997), Jangansa Temple in Mount Geumgang held 1050 *gyeol*[2] of land. Under King Hyeonjong (r. 1003~1009), Hyeonhwasa Temple was confirmed to have 1240 *gyeol*. In the time of King Gongmin (r. 1352~1374)'s reign, Unamsa Temple received 2240 *gyeol*. Large temples typically owned around 500 to 1000 *gyeol* of land. Based on the land regulations from the late Goryeo period, the income generated from this land would have been equivalent to about 1000 to 2000 *seok* (1 *seok* = 180 L) of grain. By the end of the Goryeo dynasty, temple-owned land is estimated to have totaled around 100,000 *gyeol*, accounting for roughly one-eighth of all land in the country (Lee 2009).

Loan operations known as *sikri* allowed temples to acquire short-term wealth (Lee 2009, p. 145). The legal interest rate was one-third of the principal, which may seem high by today's standards. Monastic loan operations involved large quantities of grain and cloth, but they differed significantly from those of laypeople. While secular lending was

primarily aimed at generating interest, temple-based loan activities served different purposes. These loans were often categorized under the name monastic fund such as scriptural fund, bell fund, memorial day fund, eight precepts fund, education fund. Each was managed with the intention of funding Buddhist projects and rituals. Those who paid interest likely believed they were participating in these religious undertakings. For this reason, repayment rates were probably significantly higher for temple loans than for secular ones. Paying interest meant that a significant amount of wealth flowed into the temples, but it also had another side: for the common people, temple loan operations provided crucial support, especially during the spring famine season. By borrowing grain or seeds from temple loan assets, the people were able to sustain themselves and support agricultural reproduction. Furthermore, temple loan operations contributed to the broader economy by stimulating the circulation and exchange of goods throughout society.

The eminent monk Jingak Guksa Hyesim (1178~1234)[3] viewed monastic loan activities positively and implemented them through eleven affiliated branch temples (Lee 2010, p. 348). He emphasized that these operations would be conducted according to the national standard. Criticizing the prevailing practice of high-interest lending—where the wealthy charged borrowers interest amounting to one-and-a-half or even double the original loan, thereby deepening social inequality—he pledged to conduct temple lending in accordance with regulated standards. Hyesim proposed reducing interest rates and allowing borrowers to measure the grain themselves when repaying loans, clearly stating that he would not operate at excessive rates beyond the national standard. While the interest collected would be lower than that of typical usurious lending, he did not reject the practice of *sikri* altogether. At the time, monks generally did not view such activities as immoral or sinful; instead, they actively participated in them (Lee 2009). Meanwhile, the practice of preserving the principal and taking only the interest (*Jonbon Chwisik*) as advocated by the monastic loan system carried significant ideological weight in economic practice. Both the state and laypeople operated their assets according to this principle, and as a result, the management of the monastic fund contributed to the spread of the endowment-based financial system during the Goryeo period. Temples stood at the center of these economic activities.

During this period, temples actively engaged in commercial activities. The favorable attitude of Buddhist doctrines toward commerce contributed to the close relationship between temples and merchants, serving as a background for temples' active participation in trade (Lee 2010, pp. 349–50). Temples were both major buyers and sellers of goods. They purchased materials for temple construction, supplies for making Buddhist ritual objects, items needed for religious ceremonies, and personal goods for monks. At the same time, they sold surplus goods they owned and manufactured items. Furthermore, temples participated in trade to actively pursue profit. Records indicate that they traded agricultural products such as rice, tea, garlic, and green onions; handicraft items like textiles and roof tiles; as well as goods like honey and salt (Lee 1998). Temples also functioned as central hubs of commercial activity with large crowd gathering since Buddhist ceremonies were frequently held during this period (Lee 2010, p. 351).

While temples secured financial income through farmland management, loan operations, and commercial activities, they also demonstrated a strong sense of social responsibility by actively engaging in various relief efforts (Kwon 2004). The Buddhist community's generosity toward secular society was primarily expressed through aid to the poor. Monks themselves often took direct action to assist the impoverished, and temples frequently served as places where food was provided to those in need. Due to the temples' active role in poverty relief, the state would sometimes entrust them with official responsibilities for providing aid during times of crisis. Temples also provided accommodations

and assistance to travelers. Travel during that period was fraught with difficulties. Travelers often had to cross rivers, swamps, and mountains, sometimes passing through long stretches without a single household in sight. Along these routes, they risked encounters with wild animals or bandits seeking to steal their possessions—and in many cases, not just valuables but even their lives were lost. As a result, many temples were established along transportation routes to offer shelter and support to travelers, playing an important role in ensuring their safety and well-being. Not little monks possessed exceptional medical skills. One such monk renowned for his healing abilities was Wonheung Guksa Hakil (1052~1144), who treated all who were ill, regardless of their social status, demonstrating great compassion and skill in the practice of medicine.

The elevated socio-economic status of temples during the Goryeo period was largely enabled by institutional support from the state. However, the monastic economy's excessive expansion and the deep entanglement of monastics in financial matters drew significant criticism. The transition from Goryeo to Joseon was an undoubtedly complex process, and the question of how Buddhism's legacy was continued or curtailed during this period remains one of the most contested issues in premodern Korean studies. Traditional narratives, often drawing on Neo-Confucian critiques such as Jeong Dojeon (1341~1398)'s *Bulssi Japbyeon* (Array of Critiques Against Buddhism), have emphasized the corruption and excesses of the late Goryeo monastic establishment as decisive factors leading to Buddhism's suppression in the new dynasty. More recent scholarship, however, has challenged this view, suggesting that such accusations must also be read as part of a broader ideological reordering in which wealth and religious merit were redefined and ultimately cast as incompatible (Ahn 2018). Taken together, these perspectives reveal that the suppression of Buddhism in early Joseon cannot be reduced to a single cause, but rather must be understood as the outcome of intersecting political, social, and intellectual transformations.

After the founding of the Joseon Dynasty in 1392, no immediate large-scale measures were taken against the temple economy or Buddhism as a whole. It was only during the reign of 3rd King Taejong (r. 1400–1418) that comprehensive reforms were implemented to abolish temple landholdings. In 1406, the state confiscated temple lands and slaves from all Buddhist temples across the country, except for 242 temples belonging to 11 officially designated sects. Approximately 30,000 to 40,000 *gyeol* of temple land and 80,000 slaves were nationalized. While this dealt a severe blow to the temple economy, it did not amount to a complete suppression of Buddhism; temples were not forcibly demolished, nor were monks compelled to return to lay life (Kim 2011).

Continuing the anti-Buddhist policies initiated during King Taejong's reign, the early years of King Sejong's (r. 1418–1450) rule also saw intensified suppression of Buddhism (Kim 2011, p. 7). In 1424, the existing Buddhist sects were consolidated into two: *Seon* (meditation) and *Gyo* (doctrinal) schools. Only 36 temples—18 from each sect—were officially recognized. The number of monks permitted at these state-sanctioned temples was also strictly limited: 1950 for the *Seon* school and 1800 for the *Gyo* school, totaling 3750 monks. Furthermore, the amount of officially sanctioned temple land was reduced. While temples held over 11,000 *gyeol* of land under King Taejong, this figure was reduced to approximately 7900 *gyeol*—about 4200 for Seon temples and 3700 for *Gyo* temples—under King Sejong. In addition, the *Seungnoksa*, the government office responsible for overseeing monks and temples, was abolished. In its place, two *Dohoisos*, administrative centers for the *Seon* and *Gyo* sects, were established at Heungcheonsa and Heungdeoksa temple in the capital. As a result, the power and status of the Buddhist establishment were further diminished, and the remaining temples—those not among the officially recognized 36—faced severe economic hardship. The land and slaves that had formed the most important foundation of temple

finances in the late Goryeo period were largely confiscated and nationalized during the early Joseon period, dealing a major blow to the socio-economic base of Buddhism.

In the late Joseon period, the destabilization of the rigid class system brought significant changes to the Buddhist community. Following the two invasions from Japan and the Qing, many commoners sought refuge from the heavy burden of state-imposed labor by becoming monks (Kim 2007, p. 169). Regardless of whether they held official monastic certificates, these individuals entered the monastic life primarily as a means of survival. As the number of monks from commoner backgrounds increased, social perceptions of monks deteriorated further. They came to be viewed as outsiders or deviants excluded from the official Confucian social hierarchy of scholar, farmer, artisan, and merchant. Amid this social marginalization, the Buddhist community was subject to various forms of forced labor and exploitation. Among these, one of the heaviest burdens was the paper tax or *jiyeok* (Kim 2000). While temples had been required to offer goods as tribute since the early Joseon period, this obligation significantly intensified following the implementation of the *Daedong* Law, which standardized local tribute collection. In addition to official public duties, temples were often subjected to private requisitions and exploitation by local officials and influential elites. Located deep in the mountains, temples had access to rare herbs, fruits, and handcrafted goods, which made them prime targets for the excessive demands and exploitation of yangban bureaucrats (Han 2011, p. 211).

In the context of the impoverished economic conditions of the late Joseon period, temple-based mutual aid associations, or *gye* began to emerge. A *gye* is a cooperative group in which individuals with shared intentions contribute a fixed amount of money over a set period, either for mutual assistance or to achieve a common goal (Kim 1966, pp. 41–97). While similar forms of organization existed during the Silla and Goryeo periods, it was not until the Joseon period that *gye* became widespread. *Gye* played a significant role in the social and economic aspects of feudal society and has long attracted the attention of sociologists. It embodies the dual nature of both a communal society and an interest-based association, serving as a mechanism for mutual support as well as collective economic benefit.

Based on investigations of historical temple records, reconstruction accounts, wooden plaque inscriptions, and stele inscriptions, a total of 264 cases of temple-based mutual aid associations have been identified from the late Joseon period. These include a wide range of such associations formed from the mid-16th century up until 1910. Among them, the most frequently established types were *gapgye*, an association formed by monks of the same or similar age, and *yeombulgye*, an association formed for Buddha-recitation (Lee 2003; Han 2011). *Gapgye* became especially prominent after the 18th century, spreading across the country and playing a central role in sustaining temple finances. *Yeombulgye*, on the other hand, functioned as a widespread devotional organization that included both monks and laypeople, leading the popularization of recitation practice. Temple-based mutual aid associations were typically composed of both clergy and lay participants. Even temples with few resident monks could gather resources and conduct Buddhist projects, such as constructing a new Buddha statue, with the support of lay members through these associations. And they emerged with a dual purpose: to overcome the economic hardships brought about by state suppression of Buddhism and to foster collective solidarity for the advancement of Buddhist practice and devotion. A total of 264 cases of such associations from the late Joseon period have been identified so far, and they can be broadly categorized into two types: those for religious activities and those for Buddhist projects. Of these, associations established for Buddhist projects account for 208 cases, comprising approximately 80% of the total.

One of the most important aspects in the development of temple-based mutual aid associations was the participation of laypeople as members. In most cases, there were few

restrictions on who could join. Only certain types such as associations formed exclusively by monks, by specific temple officials, or by disciples under the same teacher—imposed membership limitations. Apart from these, the majority of temple-based mutual aid associations were open to the general public, with laypeople actively participating in their formation and activities. In fact, lay participants often played leading roles in establishing temple-based mutual aid associations or contributed as donors, forming the very foundation that sustained Buddhism during the late Joseon period.

Unlike during the Goryeo period, temples in the Joseon era, having become socio-economically marginalized, could no longer function as an integral part of society and the economy. Nevertheless, charitable activities by monks did not disappear entirely. Monks of this period provided shelter for travelers, offered relief to the starving, cared for those suffering from various illnesses, and performed difficult tasks related to funerals (Lee 2023, pp. 173–211). The decline in the social engagement of temples and monks reflects a broader shift in the role and status of Buddhism during the Joseon dynasty.

During the Japanese colonial period (1910–1945), Korean Buddhism faced the challenging process of modernization as external pressures from colonial rule converged with internal demands for reform. Buddhist communities had to balance competing imperatives: preserving doctrinal and ritual traditions; selectively adopting elements of Japanese Buddhism and other new cultural currents; and, where possible, participating in broader movements resisting colonial rule and asserting national sovereignty. Japanese colonial rule imposed a new legal architecture that redefined how Korean temples held, managed, and monetized property. The 1911 Temple Ordinance (*Sachalryeong*) and its enforcement regulations, as a way for the Japanese government-general to regulate the entire Korean monastic community, centralized oversight of temple governance and finance, recognized the abbot as the legal representative, and subjected key transactions to government approval (Kim 2012, pp. 318–39; Nathan 2018, pp. 69–74). Studies of colonial-era Korean Buddhism have comprehensively traced the law's broader implications for the exercise of state power and colonial control over the Buddhist community, and the practical impact of the laws and regulations on Buddhism has been widely examined (Nathan 2022, pp. 327–28). Beyond the binary of negative or positive interpretations, it marked a shift from customary control and dispersed patronage to a more centralized and bureaucratic structure (Kim 2012, pp. 318–19).

Within the Temple Ordinance's seven articles, four specifically address temple economic management (Kim 2012, p. 319; Nathan 2022, p. 328). Article 3 required each temple to establish internal laws, subject to approval by the Japanese Governor-General. These laws regulated all aspects of monastic governance, including organizational structure, administrative offices, abbot qualifications and appointments, and the financial administration of both head monasteries and their branch temples. Article 4 mandated the appointment of an abbot as the temple's official legal representative, responsible for overseeing property and assets as well as conducting religious ceremonies and rituals. Article 5 prohibited the disposal of any temple property, including land, trees, buildings, statues, and other valuables, without prior approval from the governor-general. Finally, Article 7 required abbots to submit periodic reports detailing all temple assets, along with any increases or decreases in their value.

The Temple Ordinance, its Enforcement Regulations, and the required temple laws simultaneously enhanced the efficiency of temple administration and the protection of Buddhist property, while also strengthening the Governor-General's supervisory and control powers and stripping the Buddhist community of autonomy over the preservation and management of its cultural heritage. Requiring the Governor-General's approval to sell or alter temple assets also, paradoxically, shielded Buddhist property, curbing pre-

Ordinance encroachments by local elites and some Protestant groups (Kim 2006, p. 7). Conversely, by strengthening head-abbot authority, the Government-General displaced the longstanding collegial deliberation system that had safeguarded temple assets, thereby undermining Korean Buddhism's autonomy in preserving and managing its cultural heritage (Hwang 2015).

Overall, the temple economy during this period faced mounting difficulties for multiple reasons (Kim 2021). First, the drive to modernize and popularize Buddhism through propagation led temples to establish modern schools, which in turn generated mounting debts (For more on propagation, see Kim (2018, pp. 231–75), on modern institutions see Park and Kim (2024)). Second, temples also had to cover the living expenses of an increasing number of married monks (More on married monks see Park (2008); Nathan (2018, pp. 86–94)). Third, temple-owned land was frequently incorporated into sites for newly constructed public buildings, roads, and bridges. In addition, because the Temple Ordinance concentrated excessive authority in head abbots, abuses in financial decision-making were not uncommon, resulting in significant losses of temple assets. Amid institutional controls, shifts in internal governance, rising expenditures, and asset outflows, the temple economy during the Japanese colonial period came under structural pressure and persistent strain. Moreover, as the system moved to a centralized, report-driven regime, both institutional autonomy and fiscal soundness of Korean temples were greatly challenged.

Post-liberation, Korean Buddhism's economy exhibited strong path dependence from the colonial era: a state-managed regime of regulation and reporting persisted, later reframed through the 1962 Buddhist Property Management Act and, from 1987, cultural-heritage statutes that paired subsidies with tighter controls. Governance continued to centralize around head temples and abbots, improving standardization while constraining local financial autonomy. Land reforms (1949–1950), war damage, and litigation costs weakened traditional rent-based income, pushing a gradual shift toward urban, cash-based revenues from propagation, education, publishing, and events.

3. Buddhist Temples and the Productive Economy of Today

According to Article 20, Clause 2 of the current Constitution of South Korea, religion and politics are separated, and like all religious organizations, Buddhism is fundamentally non-profit in nature. Today, donations from lay followers are an important source of income for Korean Buddhist temples. The Budget and Accounting Act of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism (hereafter, the Jogye Order) classifies and regulates income from lay donations into the following categories: income from devotional services, offering box income, income from ceremonial events, funds raised for Buddhist projects, and other miscellaneous income. According to data released by the Jogye Order on 4 April 2016, income from devotional services accounted for the largest share of revenue at four major temples, comprising between half and two-thirds of their total income (Cho 2024, p. 212). Donations from lay followers still constitute a substantial share of temple income, but they no longer suffice on their own to sustain many temples. The core issue is not a single-year percentage, but a long-run contraction of the religiously affiliated population and weaker participation in religious activities, both of which shrink the donor base. Official census data show that the share of South Koreans reporting a religious affiliation fell from 52.9% (2005) to 43.9% (2015), with Buddhists declining from 22.8% to 15.5% over the same period.[4] More recent large, rolling national surveys estimate Buddhists at roughly 17% of adults (with about half the population unaffiliated), consistent with a smaller but stable pool relative to 2005 rather than a recovery.[5] Another survey conducted in 2021 reports that 35.8% of Koreans participated in organizations such as social groups and religious organizations for the past year, falling by 30.3% from 66.1% in 2019.[6] South Korea's religious landscape is marked by

long-term decline and aging across major traditions, but this should not be read as linear "secularization" alone. Alongside disaffiliation, a re-religionization of culture—a process whereby religious practices are increasingly viewed through the lens of consumer culture and individual preference—has expanded outside (or at the periphery of) institutional life. In Buddhism, both smaller affiliated cohorts and lower-intensity participation, shift from regular to occasional involvement, have weakened donation-driven temple finance.

Many temples are now actively seeking to secure income through productive activities, which can be categorized as non-religious income. At individual temples, income from productive activities can be classified into categories such as income from basic assets, business income, education and training income, admission fees, special income, membership fees, and other income (Cho 2024). Income from basic assets may include revenue from farmland, rental income, rental deposit income, and forest income. Business income can include revenue from various operations such as temple-run stores, temple-run parking lots, and vending machines. Education or training income refers to revenue generated from educational programs held at temples, such as Buddhist colleges and cultural lecture courses. Admission fee income includes income from cultural heritage admission fees and temple museum admission fees. Additionally, income from operating cafes, selling food, and selling health products also falls into this category. It is evident that such income varies greatly depending on the size of the temple itself or the scale of its land and assets.

Today, Korean Buddhism tends to take productive Buddhism for granted. Productive Buddhism can be defined as the monastic community securing financial resources through physical labor or commercial activities in addition to receiving donations from lay followers. This trend arises from the reality that it has become difficult to sustain the Buddhist community solely through lay donations. Productive Buddhism has been the subject of various criticisms in modern times (Cho 2024). First, it can create a gap between the monastic community's labor activities and the Buddha's original teachings. Second, it may lead to the increased secularization of the sangha. Third, it can result in economic inequality within the monastic community. Fourth, it may lead to a structure in which the sangha operates independently, relying solely on its own economic activities for its sustenance. A potential alternative to address some of the criticisms of productive Buddhism by reducing reliance on lay donations is social enterprises. Social enterprises established by temples can serve not only as a way to secure temple income but also promote communal well-being. In this context, social enterprises have emerged as a new avenue that addresses common criticisms of productive Buddhism while supporting the financial sustainability of the Jogye Order and individual temples.

4. Buddhist Temple Economy and Social Enterprise

Social entrepreneurship is commonly defined as entrepreneurial activity driven by an embedded social purpose (Austin et al. 2006). In the profit-driven private sector, public awareness of social purpose and responsibility has increased, thereby strengthening the concept of Creating Shared Value (CSV) in corporate practices (Porter and Kramer 2006). Social enterprises, positioned between the public and private sectors, are specifically designed to pursue both social and economic objectives—generating profit through market mechanisms while simultaneously promoting social aims. Social goals here can be compatible with sustainable development goals declared by UN, which include no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions, and partnerships

for the goals (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2023). Although social entrepreneurs usually start with small initiatives, they often target problems that have a local expression but global relevance, such as access to water, promoting small-business creation, re-integration of individuals into the work-force or waste management. Social enterprises constitute an increasingly relevant form of organizing across different contexts, reflected in becoming an important economic phenomenon at a global scale (Dacin et al. 2010).

In Korea, social enterprises have been certified and promoted under the Social Enterprise Promotion Act, which came into effect on 1 July 2007. According to this law, a social enterprise is defined as "an enterprise that pursues social objectives, such as providing social services or jobs to disadvantaged groups to improve the quality of life of local residents, while also engaging in business activities such as the production and sale of goods and services. The definition of social enterprises varies somewhat across countries depending on their historical, social, and institutional contexts. However, there are several characteristics commonly shared worldwide (Kwon 2011). Social enterprises, as businesses, engage in activities related to the production of goods and services and participate in both market and public sectors. They aim to contribute to various social goals, such as job creation, vocational training, and the provision of essential community services. Furthermore, they are characterized by social ownership and democratic management in their ownership structure and operational methods. According to the *2021 Performance Analysis of Social Enterprises*, there are a total of 3063 social enterprises in South Korea, with the majority organized as commercial corporations under the Commercial Act or as cooperatives (Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency 2022, pp. 13–15). Although official data on the distribution of social enterprises by religious affiliation is limited, it is estimated that Christian-affiliated organizations account for over 10%. The Christian community has taken a particularly active role, exemplified by initiatives such as the "One Church, One Social Enterprise" campaign [7].

It has not been long since the Buddhist community began to take an active interest in social enterprises. Buddhist social enterprises gained their momentum in 2011, when the Jogye Order's Central Lay Association established a Social Enterprise Promotion Center. During this period, lay Buddhists founded Buddhist social enterprises and formed networks, but their profits did not flow back to temples. From 2014 onwards, institutional interest in the Buddhist social economy grew within the Jogye Order. The Education Department of the Order began incorporating social economy education into monastic training programs, leading to the gradual emergence of enterprises founded by monastics and temples. Subsequently, the Jogye Order's Department of Projects provided consulting, education, and startup support for monks and temples, and from 2020 onwards, the establishment of Buddhist social economy enterprises accelerated. Currently, around 40 such enterprises are in operation. In the forum organized by the Jogye Order's Business Department in 2022, participants discussed strategic directions for the role of Buddhist social economy in fostering temple economies, to share information and successful strategies through case presentations of Buddhist social enterprises run by temples, and to prepare for building networks to promote exchange and cooperation among temples operating Buddhist social enterprises[8]. During the forum, one social enterprise expert stated that Buddhist social economy enterprises aim to realize Buddhist teachings of compassion, sharing, and coexistence through business initiatives that address social problems. The development of Buddhist social economy enterprises will greatly contribute to alleviating temple financial difficulties and revitalizing propagation activities.

Recently, there has been a growing recognition of the need for productive Buddhism as a means to alleviate the financial difficulties temples face due to secularization and

declining numbers of lay followers. Productive Buddhism arises from a shift in perception within the Buddhist community toward securing financial resources through means other than lay donations. Unlike ordinary for-profit enterprises, productive Buddhism must maintain its religious identity. In other words, while upholding core Buddhist teachings and engaging in profit-making and fair distribution, temple enterprises should ultimately be guided by the fundamental Buddhist goal of alleviating the suffering of all sentient beings.

In July 2023, the Jogye Order launched the Buddhist Social Economy Network Council, with participation from eight affiliated organizations. In November 2024, it also took part in an interfaith network meeting alongside Christian and Catholic groups. The main agenda of the meeting was to explore ways to promote the growth of social enterprises and expand the provision of quality social services through resource sharing and collaboration among religious communities. A 2023 survey conducted by the Jogye Order's Secretariat Business Department on temples operating Buddhist social enterprises found that the primary business models focused on temple cuisine, environmental initiatives, and meditation programs. The primary motivations for establishing these social enterprises included supporting vulnerable groups, providing alternatives for charitable activities, overcoming financial difficulties in temple management, and creating new avenues for propagation activities. The meeting of social enterprises, which lie at the intersection of profit-seeking and the realization of social values, and Buddhism, which aims for the practice of benefiting oneself and others, suggests an ideal direction for a Buddhist economy. Buddhist capitalism seeks to address the shortcomings and problems of market capitalism while resolving conflicts over wealth distribution through fairness and compassion. To achieve this, it calls for the principle of dependent origination capitalism, which requires actors within markets, governments, and welfare systems to think and act in ways that address problems equitably, respond to change, and uphold interconnectedness and mutual benefit (Chang et al. 2018, p. 135).

Buddhist social enterprises serve as practical and ethical tools for realizing Buddhist capitalism. Rather than engaging in consumptive acts of compassion alone, these enterprises embody the Buddhist philosophy of coexistence by aiming for shared benefit through compassion, mutual support, generosity, active participation, and equitable distribution of profits. Buddhist social enterprises prioritize compassionate sharing over competitive profit-seeking, functioning as communities of mutual flourishing. Thus, they integrate the management philosophy of social enterprises with Buddhist management, which seeks to maximize collective happiness (Kwon 2012). To illustrate contemporary Buddhist social enterprises, this study examines three representative cases: Vegenarang Kitchen of Happy Village Cooperative, the Dhamma Cooperative of Seonunsa Temple, and the Mind Food Cooperative at Suwolam Temple. These enterprises have been recognized by the Jogye Order as successful models that exemplify the integration of Buddhist values with social entrepreneurship (Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism's Secretariat Business Department 2024).

Happy Village in Geochang, South Gyeongsang Province, was established as a nonprofit incorporated association in 2008 and now operates a social enterprise—Vegenarang, a vegan restaurant with three locations. Beyond the restaurant, Happy Village is a community where monks and laypeople live and practice together. It also co-manages the Narang Meditation Center and various village enterprises promoting self-sufficiency. Together, these efforts embody and promote a lifestyle grounded in right livelihood and a spirit of practice that fosters connection and community[9]. These initiatives reflect a lifestyle rooted in right livelihood and communal practice. The Happy Village Cooperative attracts young people to the area, helping to address regional development imbalances and offer-

ing an alternative model for diverse, sustainable living[10]. *Vegenarang* Kitchen primarily uses produce grown by the community or sourced from local farmers and provides temple cuisine education to residents, promoting mindful, sustainable eating. By welcoming new residents and visitors, Happy Village is emerging as a viable model for revitalizing rural communities.

The Dhamma Cooperative, established by Seonunsa Temple in Gochang, North Jeolla Province, was officially registered as a cooperative in 2021. Originally formed to operate the Seonun Education and Cultural Center, it now runs a variety of facilities and programs, including a bakery café, vegetarian restaurant, art gallery, study café, and meditation center. Aligned with its social mission, over half of its staff are local seniors employed in partnership with the Gochang Senior Club. The cooperative promotes community revitalization, environmental sustainability, and shared social value. It supports local farmers by sourcing ingredients locally and offers educational and cultural programs. Additionally, 10% of the bakery café's revenue is allocated to youth scholarships and community development projects.

Unlike larger organizations such as Happy Village and the Dhamma Cooperative, the Mind Food Cooperative at Suwolam Temple in Seoul is a social enterprise run by a small urban temple. Established in 2021, the cooperative aims to promote temple cuisine more broadly and foster greater public engagement. Buddhist nuns and lay followers who are certified temple cuisine chefs joined as founding members. The cooperative primarily carries out its initiatives in partnership with local governments and public institutions[11]. Each year, the cooperative hosts a program for local seniors, where participants cook temple food together, share a communal meal, and receive meal kits to take home. One monastic member reflects, "At first, participants from other religious backgrounds are often hesitant, but seeing them enjoy the experience of cooking together makes me feel that sharing temple cuisine in this way is truly meaningful"[12].

These three initiatives illustrate how temple-led social enterprises can bring Buddhist values into everyday life. By creating jobs for marginalized groups such as the elderly and people with disabilities, Buddhist social enterprises embody compassion and directly address social suffering. They offer innovative alternatives to traditional welfare systems, contributing to the evolution of the welfare state. Labor-integrated models support rehabilitation and income security through meaningful work, while Buddhist social enterprises provide unique services not offered by the public or private sectors. These approaches create new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, offering fresh solutions for governments traditionally dependent on income transfers and standard welfare programs.

Buddhist social enterprises in Korea are frequently discussed as vehicles that mobilize local stakeholders, facilitate social exchange, and secure resources within the social economy; in doing so, they are associated with community revitalization and organizational sustainability beyond donation-only models, while maintaining religious identity and public service (Kim 2015; Kwon 2012). At the same time, the field remains at an early stage of development, and prior studies converge on several recurrent challenges. First, public recognition and understanding of Buddhist social enterprises remain limited; studies highlight the need for deliberate communication and community outreach embedded in temple-based educational and cultural programs (Kim 2015, p. 506). This may be achieved through targeted communication strategies, community outreach programs, and the integration of these enterprises into temple-based educational and cultural initiatives. Second, organizational capabilities in marketing, branding, operational efficiency, and innovation are often underdeveloped; capacity-building tailored to religiously affiliated enterprises is repeatedly recommended (Chang et al. 2018, p. 138). Third, funding models tend to be narrow; research underscores the importance of diversified and sustainable rev-

enue strategies, including partnerships with government, local communities, and broader social-economy networks (Kim 2015, pp. 506–7). This includes forming partnerships with government agencies, local communities, and networks within the broader social economy. Fourth, a critical task is the cultivation of professionals who are equipped with both a deep understanding of Buddhist ethics and practical expertise in social enterprise management (Kwon 2012, p. 296; Jeong 2019, p. 1170). These individuals will be essential for the effective planning, operation, and support of Buddhist social ventures. Finally, religious identity emerges as a persistent concern (Kwon 2012, p. 296; Cho 2024, pp. 226–27). Maintaining a distinct Buddhist orientation—operationalized through compassion, interdependence, and non-appropriation at both the cultural level and in day-to-day decisions—is identified as critical to mission integrity.

For Buddhist social enterprises to become an ideal model of "productive Buddhism," the most crucial factor is the attitude and mindset of the monastic members who participate in these enterprises (Cho 2024, pp. 224–26). Baekjang Huaihai (百丈懷海) of the Tang Dynasty established the *Baizhang's Pure Rules (百丈清規, Baizhang qinggui)*, declaring, "A day without work is a day without food." This marked the beginning of the non-duality of meditation and labor. The non-duality as a skillful means of practice has been stressed in East Asian Chan/Seon Buddhism. While engaging in productive business, monastics carefully observe their own greed and uphold the precepts. In this light, establishing and working within a social enterprise—founded on principles of communal ownership and collective benefit—can be seen as aligning with the philosophy of the nonduality of labor and spiritual practice. Any business undertaken by Buddhist social enterprises must be lawful and ethically appropriate; even if it generates profit, it should not be pursued if it is not in accordance with the Dharma. This principle reflects the ideal of right livelihood as taught in the Noble Eightfold Path.

In any organization, production and profit are inevitable, and without financial transparency, the risk of corruption significantly increases. For Buddhist communities, transparency entails a clear and accurate understanding of the financial status of both the broader order and individual temples. Profits arising from productive Buddhism must be managed in accordance with the principles of ownership and distribution established by the Buddha for the monastic community. In this respect, social enterprises—legally required to uphold financial transparency—are well aligned with the communal and ethical values of Buddhism.

The foundational structure of the Buddhist community, as established by the Buddha, is based on a division of roles: monastics dedicate themselves to spiritual practice, while lay followers offer material support. In this context, it is appropriate that laypeople serve as the primary agents of productive Buddhism. For this to be realized, active lay participation in the management and operation of the Buddhist community is essential. However, lay involvement remains largely passive in the current setting. Social enterprises, which focus on creating employment opportunities for marginalized groups within local communities, offer a promising alternative. In this regard, Buddhist social enterprises represent a desirable model of productive Buddhism, as they emphasize the active engagement of lay practitioners without requiring monastics to directly participate in production activities.

5. Conclusions

Historical reality makes clear that the sustainability of monastic life in Korea has always depended on a blend of direct and indirect economic engagement. The conventional dichotomy between material and spiritual domains in Buddhism is misleading. Rather, it was precisely through economic means that monastics were able to fulfill their spiritual functions and societal roles (Walsh 2015, p. 1296). In particular, within the

broader East Asian Buddhist tradition, productive Buddhism has become an essential aspect of monastic life. From state-supported landholdings and monastic lending in the Goryeo dynasty to mutual aid associations during the suppressed Joseon era, Korean Buddhist temples adapted continuously to socio-economic pressures while preserving their religious mission.

In the present day, Korean temples—particularly those within the Jogye Order—face a dual imperative: to uphold spiritual responsibilities and to achieve economic viability amid declining lay participation. This has necessitated renewed attention to transparency, accountability, and alignment with core Buddhist values such as right livelihood and communal ethics. Transparency is achieved when income and expenditure details are accurately documented and made publicly accessible (Lee 2010, p. 360). Unlike profit-oriented businesses, temples must justify their income and expenditure on religious grounds. This means that the direction, methods, and scale of financial activity should be rooted in Buddhist teachings. A serious inquiry is needed into what constitutes right livelihood and the proper use of resources according to Buddhist scriptures—prompting reflection on which income and spending practices genuinely align with the Dharma (Cho 2024, p. 231). It may also be worth considering that monastics maintain a certain distance from financial management. Given the historical instances in which monastics became entangled in financial issues—leading not only to defamation but also to the structural suppression of Buddhism—it is necessary to adopt a system in which laypeople oversee temple finances, while monastics manage expenditures in accordance with established guidelines. Such a system would free monastics from undue financial concerns, allowing them to focus on their primary role as religious practitioners.

In this context, Buddhist social enterprises are emerging as both an ethical and practical response, offering a sustainable, value-driven model for temple economies while also addressing pressing social issues such as regional decline, employment inequality, and the need for welfare innovation. By operating social enterprises in partnership with laypeople, the monastic community can maintain a distance from direct financial management and instead approach the endeavor as a form of practice—an expression of "living the Dharma through action". As demonstrated by exemplary cases like Happy Village's Vegenarang Kitchen, the Dhamma Cooperative, and the Mind Food Cooperative, these models are not only feasible but also spiritually coherent.

To fully realize the potential of Buddhist social enterprises, several challenges must be addressed: building public awareness, enhancing operational capacity, ensuring financial sustainability, cultivating ethically trained professionals, and safeguarding a distinct Buddhist identity. Furthermore, there is a pressing need to articulate a robust conceptual framework for Buddhist social responsibility. The integration of Buddhist ethics with frameworks such as Creating Shared Value (CSV) can offer a promising theoretical foundation for this endeavor. (Jeong 2019, p. 1172).

Future research should examine how foundational Buddhist doctrines such as karma, dependent origination, and the paired commitment to benefiting self and others can be operationalized in the organizational design and governance of social enterprises. Doing so would enable Buddhist communities to develop models of engagement that are both economically viable and spiritually grounded, meeting contemporary social needs while remaining faithful to their lineage.

Beyond social enterprises, subsequent work should also map alternative revenue models within the temple economy, especially the attraction and heritage economies with which contemporary Korean Buddhism is deeply engaged (e.g., pilgrimage festivals, heritage tourism, templestay and wellness programs, museumization, and digital patronage). Building on Justin Thomas McDaniel's analysis of spectacle and leisure in Buddhist

spaces, such research could clarify how these arrangements redistribute authority and risk among the monastics, lay associations, and the state; identify governance safeguards including transparency, ring-fencing of sacred funds, and conflict-of-interest rules needed to prevent mission drift; and specify how doctrinal commitments such as generosity, non-appropriation, benefiting self and others might guide revenue design (McDaniel 2017).

Funding: This work was funded by the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea and the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF-2021S1A6A3A01097807).

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Notes

1 T23, no. 1442, p. 743b27-c10. 世尊告曰 若為僧伽應求利潤(…) 若與物時應可分明 兩倍納質書其券契 并立保證記其年月安上座名及授事人字 (The Buddha says, "if it is for the sake of the Sangha, it is proper to seek profit. (…) When providing goods, all matters must be made clear: a pledge of twice the value should be taken, a contract must be written, and a guarantor appointed. The document should record the year and month, the name of the senior monk, and the name of the person receiving the goods.").

2 *Gyeol* (결) was a traditional Korean unit for measuring land area based on its grain-producing capacity, used since before the Unified Silla period. Although it is difficult to calculate its exact equivalent in today's measuring system, estimates suggest the following approximate conversions: 1 *gyeol* of 1st-grade land is about 2700-*pyeong*; 2nd-grade about 3200-*pyeong*; 3rd-grade about 3900-*pyeong*; 4th-grade about 4700-*pyeong*; 5th-grade about 6800-*pyeong*; 6th-grade about 11,000-*pyeong*. 1 *pyeong* approximately equals to 3.3 square meters.

3 Hyesim received a seal of approval from Jinul just three years after ordaining, and later gained final recognition through a dialogue on the *Muja hwadu* (無字 話頭) and the "Ten Kinds of Illnesses". His emphasis on Ganhwa Seon (看話禪) is most clearly reflected in his representative work, the *Seonmun Yeomsongjip* (Collected Verses of the Seon Gate).

4 Statistics Korea released the *Results of the 2015 Population and Housing Census* in 2016. (https://sri.kostat.go.kr/board.es?act=view&bid=11747&list_no=361147&mid=a20108070000&utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on 17 August 2025); According to the Korean Statistical Information Service (KOSIS), the 2015 census reports religious-affiliation data for 49,052,389 individuals. (https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?sso=ok&returnurl=https://kosis.kr:443/statHtml/statHtml.do?tblId=DT_1PM1502&orgId=101&utm_source=chatgpt.com&, accessed on 17 August 2025).

5 Korea Research 'Public Opinion in Public Opinion' Religious Awareness Survey (2023–2024): Buddhists ≈ 17%, Protestants ≈ 20%, Catholics ≈ 11%, unaffiliated ≈ 51%. (https://hrcopinion.co.kr/en/archives/28464?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on 17 June 2025).

6 Statistics Korea released the *2021 Social Survey (Welfare, Social Participation, Leisure, Income & Consumption, Labor)*. (https://kostat.go.kr/board.es?act=view&bid=11761&list_no=415867&mid=a20111050000&ref_bid=&tag=&utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on 17 August 2025).

7 https://www.gospeltoday.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=12315, accessed on 29 June 2025.

8 https://www.beopbo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=312448, accessed on 15 June 2025.

9 https://www.ibulgyo.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=414472, accessed on 15 June 2025.

10 https://www.hyunbulnews.com/news/articleView.html?idxno=300300 accessed on 15 June 2025.

11 https://www.seouland.com/arti/society/society_general/17389.html, accessed on 16 June 2025.

12 See Note 11.

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