



Tübingen Korean Studies Lectures

튀빙겐 한국학 특강

Propitiatory Rites and Religious Norms in Contemporary South Korean Buddhism

Professor Florence Galmiche

University Diderot-Paris 7, France

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in Cooperation with the King Sejong Institute in Tübingen

Abstract: Praying for worldly benefits is an intrinsic element of religion in Korea, and Buddhism is no exception. Nowadays though, in Buddhist temples, monks and lay practitioners endeavor to constitute and claim a religious identity based on an “authentic Buddhism” which is constructed in particular on the rejection of the so-called “prayers for luck”. While prayers for the university entrance examination or for the wellbeing of one’s family, for instance, remain welcomed and even encouraged in temples, lay believers are exhorted to participate in some of the multiplying educational programs in order to learn the doctrinal basis of Buddhism and “the correct way of praying”. This talk will present how “learning how to pray correctly” has become a part of the lay practitioners’ socialization into the temple’s life and activities, and how they articulate their search for this-worldly benefits through prayer with their wish to be “modern and religiously educated Buddhists”. This questioning will lead to examine the relationship between lay and monastic forms of Buddhist practice and between asceticism and prayer.

Florence Galmiche's research interest lies in examining the place and role of religion in contemporary Korean society. She received her Ph.D in sociology at the EHESS in 2011 with a dissertation on urban Buddhism in South Korea. She is now maître de conférence (associate professor) in Korean Studies at the University Diderot-Paris 7. She is a member of the research units CESSMA (Centre d'études en sciences sociales sur les mondes africains, américains et asiatiques) and CCJ (Chine, Corée, Japon).
