

# A Study on the Relationship between Kang Jeongsan and Jo Jeongsan Described in Chapter Two of *Progress of the Order*

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## Abstract

Although English-language academic materials on Kang Jeungsan (강증산/姜甞山 1871–1909) are steadily increasing, the same cannot be said of Jo Jeongsan (조정산/道主 趙鼎山 1895–1958) who remains under-researched as figure of profound significance to the Korean new religion Daeseon Jinrihoe (대순진리회/大巡眞理會). Furthermore, in materials produced by Daeseon Jinrihoe that are later translated into English, the connections that exist between Kang Jeungsan and Jo Jeongsan are often reduced to a few representative examples, when, in fact, many additional examples could be provided for a more comprehensive understanding. Comprehending the basis for the first succession in the three-figure orthodox religious lineage of Daeseon Jinrihoe is crucial to task of properly differentiating Daeseon Jinrihoe from seemingly similar Korean new religions that enshrine Kang Jeungsan as their Supreme God. The research presented in this article, “A Study on the Relationship between Kang Jeungsan and Jo Jeongsan Described in Chapter Two of *Progress of the Order*,” will provide readers with a thorough overview of the basis for Jo Jeongsan’s successorship in the orthodox religious lineage of Daeseon Jinrihoe, through an in-depth exploration of Chapter Two of *Progress of the Order* from Daeseon Jinrihoe’s main scripture, *The Canonical Scripture*. Furthermore, this article will include special explanatory notes to ensure that it can be easily read even by non-specialists.

**Keywords:** Daeseon Jinrihoe; Kang Jeungsan; Sangje; Jo Jeongsan; Doju; Progress of the Order; *The Canonical Scripture*; religious lineage

## Introduction

Over the past decade, there have been numerous significant milestones achieved in promoting Daesoon Thought to the English-speaking world. Some examples include Daejin University hosting the 2016 CESNUR (Center for Studies on New Religions, Turin) Conference, hosting the inaugural World SangSaeng forum in 2017, publishing the Scriptures of Daesoon Jinrihoe in 2020, and the launching the English-language international academic journal, *Journal of Daesoon Thought and the Religions of East Asia*, in 2021. Naturally, the foundation of Daesoon Thought in Korea comes much earlier in history as it was built through the nine-year Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth undertaken by Kang Jeung-san (강증산/姜甞山, 1871–1909), the 50 years of spreading Kang Jeung-san's teachings carried out by Doju Jo Jeong-san (도주 조정산/道主 趙鼎山, 1895–1958), and the establishment of Daesoon Jinrihoe (대순진리회/大巡真理會 the Fellowship of Daesoon Truth) by Dojeon Park Wudang (도전 박우당/都典 朴牛堂, 1917–1996).

In terms of the academic development of Daesoon Thought, it can be traced back to at least the time of the opening of Daejin University in 1991 and the concurrent establishment of the Daesoon Academy of Sciences that same year. Naturally, one of the greatest breakthroughs in the academic pursuit of Daesoon Thought occurred in 1992 when a collection of research papers were gathered for a compiled release titled *Academic Papers on Daesoon Thought* (대순논집/大巡論集). This project evolved into the domestic Korean-language academic journal, *Journal of the Daesoon Academy of Sciences* (대순사상논총/大巡思想論叢), which released its first issue in 1996, was selected by National Research Foundation of Korea in 2017, and was formally listed by KCI (Korean Citation Index) starting in 2019.

Although English-language academic resources on Daesoon Thought have gained considerable traction in recent years, studies on the second figure in the lineage, Doju Jo Jeong-san, are still quite scarce in terms of what is available to English-speaking readers. With this in mind, the connection between Kang Jeung-san and Doju Jo Jeong-san will be described in this article to reveal how Jo Jeong-san came to be recognized as the bearer and successor of the religious orthodox as recorded in *The Canonical Scripture* (전경/典經, 1974), the main scripture of Daesoon Jinrihoe. To this end, explanatory notes showing how certain verses relate in the original Korean scripture will be provided, as certain connections were accidentally obscured, or even lost entirely in the text, after its translation in English.

The life of the historical figure, Jo Cheol-Je (조철제/趙哲濟), is known in greater detail than is usually discussed when examining his later actions as Doju Jo Jeong-san in a religious studies context. For instance, and with regards to his early life prior to his religious calling, it is known that he showed great patriotism (DIRC 2015). At age 13 (15 in the Korean age-counting system) on June 15 1909 (4/28 via the traditional lunisolar

calendar), Jo Jeongsan and his family fled Korea to Manchuria (*Progress of the Order* 2:4) to continue contributing to Korea's national sovereignty restoration movement. As for the frequently omitted details from his early religious activities, one year after he began his nine-year period of spiritual cultivation, he married Ye Jong-Rin, the eldest daughter of the prominent patriot, Ye Hangi, in 1911 (Kim 2009, 2,515-2,516), and later in life they would go on to have three sons, Jung-Rae, Yeong-Rae, and Seon-Rae (Shin 2010). Tradition holds that after completing his nine-year period of spiritual practice in 1917, he received a divine revelation from the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven who called upon Doju to return to Korea and retrace the acts of the Supreme God's human avatar, Kang Jeungsan, whose life ended in 1909.

Doju Jo Jeongsan was the first of two figures who succeeded Kang Jeungsan in the lineage of religious orthodoxy recognized and honored in Daeseon Thought. Many numerological references are linked to the life of Jeongsan and chief among those would be that at age fifteen (Korean age-counting system, thirteen using standard counting), he received the 'Bongcheon<sup>1</sup> Myeong (Mandate to Serve Heaven)' which began his 50-year Holy Work (*gongbu* 공부/工夫) which would last the rest of his life. While the main significance of fifty is that it is the number of years needed for the completion of a holy work prophesied by Kang Jeungsan, this particular prophecy will be explored later in this article. Fifteen, on the other hand, has a variety of special meanings in Daeseon Thought and a couple representative examples can be summarized in the following paragraph.

On a 3x3 magic square, typified in the East Asian context by the Luo River Inscription (*nakseo* 낙서/洛書), the numbers 1-9 appear in the segments positioned such that the of each vertical, horizontal, or diagonal combination of numbers equals fifteen in any direction. Hence, the highest number shown by the Luo River Inscription is nine (associated in Daeseon Thought with the Ninth Heaven and the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven (*gucheonsangje* 구천상제/九天上帝) and the revealed number, in any direction, is fifteen (associated in Daeseon Thought with both the True Lord (*jinju* 진주/眞主 - considered to be Doju Jo Jeongsan) and Yeongdae Shrine (*yeongdae* 영대/靈臺), which enshrines a total of Fifteen Holy Positions (*shinwi* 신위/神位). The origin of the term True Lord and its numerological value of fifteen comes from a the most popular form of gambling during the Late Joseon Dynasty, *Tujeon* (투전/鬪錢). A common variation of this game was True Lord Gambling (*jinjunoreum* 진주노름/眞主노름, also known as *jinjudobak* 진주도박/眞主賭博). In that version of the game, 'jinju (True Lord)' occurred when a player's pips added up to fifteen. This would end the game as the player who scored fifteen was taken as the victor.

In the Daeseon Jinrihoe context, the life of Doju is recorded in chapter two of *Progress of the Order* in *The Canonical Scripture*. This source asserts that Kang Jeungsan imparted his lineage of religious orthodox to Doju Jo Jeongsan via divine revelation. Which is to say that it is not claimed that the historical figure, Kang Jeungsan, met in

person with Doju Jo Jeongsan. Instead, it is asserted that the lineage was transmitted through a mysterious revelatory interaction. Some scholars have observed that this is quite similar to the connection between Jesus and Paul the Apostle. In his research, Massimo Introvigne wrote, “I believe that the most fruitful parallel for understanding in a perspective of comparative religion the role of Jo Jeongsan (1895–1958), the “second founder” of the tradition leading to Daesoon Jinrihoe, is with Paul of Tarsus, who, as we have seen, is the original model for all discussions about the relationships between a first and a second religious founder.” (Introvigne 2021) There is certainly fertile ground to make such a comparison and doing so allows individuals familiar with Christianity to understand Daesoon Jinrihoe more quickly by making inferences. Furthermore, the notion that Jo Jeongsan can be seen as a ‘second founder,’ in sense first coined by German Lutheran theologian William Wrede (1859–1906), is also of great use to researchers in their exploration of Daesoon Jinrihoe and the figures that make up its ‘Fountainhead (*yeonwon* 연원/淵源)’ and its lineage of religious orthodoxy (*jongtong* 종통/宗統). While these two connections have considerable merit, this article will not add to that avenue of research because the focus will be on analyzing orthodox understanding of the relatedness of Kang Jeungsan and Jo Jeongsan as observable in Daesoon Jinrihoe’s main scripture, *The Canonical Scripture*.

Given the significance of Chapter Two of *Progress of the Order in The Canonical Scripture* this article will examine the connection between Jeungsan and Doju based on the records contained therein. In the account from this chapter of *Progress of the Order*, all of Doju’s achievements can be understood in Daesoon Thought as the unfolding of Kang Jeungsan’s Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth and the Work.

Focused on those records, this article will shed new light on the nature of the position of Doju (Lord of the Dao), in the context of Daesoon Jinrihoe, wherein he is understood to be the figure who succeeded Jeungsan in the lineage of religious orthodoxy. It is through this endeavor, that issues such as specific timing and parallelistic content in verses across different chapters of *The Canonical Scripture* can be highlighted without having to shift attention to other focuses common to English-language research on Jo Jeongsan, such as comparative research into multiple religions or philosophical ideologies. Instead, Jo Jeongsan’s significance and function as understood strictly within Daesoon Thought will be analyzed to provide details that have not been covered before in English-language research.

## **Succession in the Religious Lineage through Revelation and the 50-year Holy Work of Spreading the Teachings**

In this section, verses about Kang Jeungsan from *The Canonical Scripture*, will be juxtaposed with verses about Jo Jeongsan taken from chapter two of *Progress of the Order*, a chapter in the same book of scripture. This will be done to define and explain

certain terms and concepts while also showing connections between verses which might not be apparent to non-specialists.

### The End of the Fifty-Year Holy Work

At the temple headquarters from the Hour of Ja (11pm -1am) on the 21st day of the 11th month of the Jeongyu Year (1957) to the third day of the third month of the Musul Year (1958), Doju finished the 100-day Degree Numbers without any sleep or rest. On the fifth day of the third month, he was in terrible pain. A doctor of Oriental medicine and a doctor of Western medicine were brought in. However, Doju said, “That time has passed.” The next day, after having all of the officials stand up outside at the Hour of Mi (1-3pm), Doju told Dojeon Park Han-Gyeong to come close and then ordered him to manage the comprehensive affairs of his religious order, with his hand on Dojeon’s head. He added, “This is the year that the Fifty Year Holy Works are completed and the ultimate energy arrives now; in April [五十年工夫終畢至氣今至四月來]. I must leave now. Do not lose heart at all despite my absence. Keep doing as you have been ordered to do up until now.” Then he called out towards the outside of the door three times, “Thief!” and finally he passed, aged 64, into Heaven. It was at the Hour of Mi on the sixth day of the third month in the Musul Year, or April 24, 1958 in the solar calendar. (*Progress of the Order* 2:66.)

It is of special interest that the record of Kang Jeungsan writing ‘Fifty Year Holy Works for Edification Shall Be Completed at Last [布教五十年工夫終畢] can be found in the third edition of *The Canonical Scripture of the Great Itineration* (*Daesun Jeongyeong* 대순전경/大巡典經, 1947), a hagiography of Kang Jeungsan that proceeded Daesoon Jinrihoe’s *The Canonical Scripture* (1974). Naturally, this record also occurs prior to the passing of Doju Jo Jeongsan in 1957. That is why in Daesoon Thought, the verse above and the exact 50-year period between the passing of Kang Jeungsan and Jo Jeongsan is considered a compelling proof of the connection between these two figures in the Fountainhead.

The year 1958 was when Jo Jeongsan passed into heaven after declaring the completion of his 50-year Holy Work.

One day in the sixth month, after finishing a Reordering Work of Heaven and Earth, Sangje burned the paper on which He had written “Fifty Year Holy Works for Edification Shall Be Completed at Last [布教五十年工夫終畢].” (*Reordering Works* 3:37)

This time frame perfectly fits with what Kang Jeungsan had foretold before his own passing when he wrote and then burned a piece of paper which had the following written on it: Fifty Year Holy Works for Edification Shall Be Completed at Last [布教五十年工夫終畢].’ (*Reordering Works* 3:37) Jo Jeongsan spent 50 years performing Holy Works in order to spread the teachings of Kang Jeungsan. The statement in the above verse, *Progress of the Order* 2:66, is a record marking the end of that 50-year period. 1958 is shown as the completion year of the 50-year Holy Work,<sup>2</sup> and that would mean that the Holy Work began in 1909, which was the year when Kang Jeungsan passed into heaven. Where 1909 is concerned another verse can be examined:

### The Start of the Fifty-Year Holy Work

On the 28th day of the fourth month in the Giyu Year (1909), 15-year-old Doju and his family fled his homeland for the foreign land of Manchuria (滿洲, Full Continent) and settled down there. (*Progress of the Order* 2:4)

Although it might be slightly tangential, for the sake of greater clarity, some of the conventions used in the English version of *Jeon-gyeong* (전경/典經 1974), *The Canonical Scripture* (2020), will be provided here to make the rest of this article easier to understand for non-specialists. Dates in *The Canonical Scripture* appear in accordance with the traditional East Asian lunisolar calendar. For the convenience of readers, the years are also glossed with Gregorian Calendar years. However, it should be understood that the months and days do not transfer over directly. For example, the date in the verse above, the 28th day of the fourth lunisolar month of the Giyu Year would have been June 15 1909 according to the Gregorian Calendar. Some English-language research on Korean historical topics treat the lunisolar months as Gregorian months and then write ‘lunar’ in captions at the end. For example, the 28th day of the fourth lunisolar month of the Giyu Year might be written as “May 28 1909 (lunar).” Since the event actually occurred in mid-June, that could be quite misleading. As another translation convention, the research team that produced the English version of *Jeon-gyeong* opted to include the literal meaning of place names and occasionally other proper nouns because it is known that sometimes the original Korean verses included double meanings (or even numerous meanings), and the provision of brief English glossings was seen as the best way to produce an English translation that would read similarly to the Korean. As for the rest of the verse above, it is fairly straightforward.

The Giyu year corresponds to the year 1909 in the Gregorian Calendar, and adding 50 years to that year would result in the year 1958. This indicates that Jo Jeongsan carried out religious achievements in accordance with what was foretold by Kang Jeungsan. In Daesoon Thought, Jo Jeongsan having carried out the work of spreading the teachings



of Kang Jeungsan for 50 years is taken as one proof of his succession in the lineage of religious orthodoxy.

In the following verse, Jo Jeongsan received a divine revelation from the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven while Jeongsan was working on a Holy Work on a mountain in Fengtian, Manchuria.

### The Realization and Dao-attainment of Doju

During this time, Doju came to profoundly sense and realize the truth of Sangje's Great Itineration (Daeseon 大巡) of the Three Realms in the Jeongsa Year (1917), which was at the end of a nine year-long Holy Work. (*Progress of the Order* 2:6)<sup>3</sup>

The verse above contains the term *gamo* (감오/感悟), rendered above in the official translation as 'profoundly sense and realize.' In the secondary scripture, *Essentials of Daeseon Jinrihoe* (대순진리회요람/大巡眞理會要覽 1969), which predates the publication of the primary scripture by five years, this event is recorded slightly differently, and the term *gamo* is fleshed out such that it was written *gamo-deukdo* (감오득도/感悟得道), and in the official translation of that scripture, this was indicated as 'awakened to and attained (the Daeseon Truth of Sangje Kang Jeungsan).' In both translations, the research team had been encouraged to avoid phrasing that would sound overly Buddhist because, generally speaking the first instinct of translators familiar with East Asian religious thought would be to treat *gamo* as 'achieved enlightenment (awakening, etc.)' and *deukdo* would typically be taken as 'attain the Dao.' Recently, when the translation of the exhibits for the Museum of Daeseon Jinrihoe was compiled, *gamo-deukdo* was re-translated as 'realization and Dao-attainment.'

With this in mind, as an extra insight or point of nuance, perhaps it is best that researchers who primarily rely on English-language resources while studying Daeseon Thought and Daeseon Jinrihoe know that composing effective rhetoric in scriptural or liturgical Korean often involves the use of traditional religious language; however, new religions, such as Daeseon Jinrihoe, have their own unique identity. Even when terms are borrowed from Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, or other sources, researchers should be aware that these terms might be imbued with new meanings as they are being applied to a religious world view with different axiomatic assumptions than the previous context in which those terms were used.

### The Incantation of Serving the Lord of Heaven

One day, while Doju was practicing Holy Works with all his energy in his cultivation chamber, a man of divine power appeared and, showing him



a sheet of paper on which something was written, said, “If you recite this incantation, you shall save the world from chaos and relieve people of their despair.” The moment Doju was about to respectfully bow to him, the man disappeared and was seen no more. The following incantation was written on paper: 侍天主造化定 永世不忘萬事知 至氣今至願爲大降 [Si-cheon-ju-jo-hwa-jeong Yeong-se-bul-mang-man-sa-ji Ji-gi-geum-ji-won-wi-dae-gang. In serving the Lord of Heaven and being unified with the divine order, I wish to never forget and to know everything. May the ultimate energy descend abundantly now!] (*Progress of the Order* 2:7.)

Doju gained enlightenment to Sangje’s Daesoon Truth of the Three Realms, which revealed that the divine avatar of the Supreme God was the historical figure, Kang Jeungsan. For the sake of saving the world and relieving people from suffering, Kang Jeungsan and Jo Jeungsan united their minds in singular intention and the result appeared as an incantation. This particular incantation had also been revealed in Korean history at an earlier period as well; however, at that time, the verses had a different order, and the name of the incantation was likewise not the same. On May 25 1860 (4/5 lunisolar), the founder of the Donghak (동학/東學), Choi Suwon (최수운/崔水雲 1824–1864), received what was known as ‘The Three-Seven Incantation (*samchil-ju* 삼칠주/三七呪)’ during a religious experience.<sup>4</sup> In the Donghak usage of the incantation, the verses are ordered as follows:

至氣今至願爲大降侍天主造化定永世不忘萬事知 [Ji-gi-geum-ji-won-wi-dae-gang Si-cheon-ju-jo-hwa-jeong Yeong-se-bul-mang-man-sa-ji. May the ultimate energy descend abundantly now! In serving the Lord of Heaven and being unified with the divine order, I wish to never forget and to know everything]<sup>5</sup>

Even in the early Donghak context, this incantation had other names, such as the Incantation of Serving the Lord of Heaven (*sicheon-ju* 시천주/侍天呪), and the Incantation of Longevity (*jangsaeng-ju* 장생주/長生呪). In fact, although it would be tangential to explain in detail here, in Donghak there were even verses from within this incantation that could be chanted on their own as separate incantations which were given their own respective names.<sup>6</sup>

Shifting back to Daesoon Thought, Kang Jeungsan was known to use this incantation (via the reordered version) since at least 1907, (*Progress of the Order* 1:19-1:20) and the incantation was revealed to Doju in 1917 as recorded in the passage above. This is understood as a holy interaction between the Supreme God and a human, wherein the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven, who had recently incarnated into the world through his human avatar, Kang Jeungsan, met with the human, Jo Jeungsan.

Divine revelations from the Supreme God Kang Jeungsan continued from that point onward, and the next such revelation was a command for Jo Jeongsan to travel to Taein in Joseon (Korea) and find Kang Jeungsan (i.e., retrace the actions of Jeungsan). This divine revelation was meant to inspire Jo Jeongsan to seek out the sites where Kang Jeungsan performed the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth.

### Doju's Devotional Offering to Sangje

On an autumn day in the Muoh Year (1918), while Doju was practicing Holy Works in the Singular Universe House (Wuyiljae), he held a devotional offering for Sangje and then went to the Copper Valley clinic via Court-Plain (Wonpyeong) Village, accompanied by Lee Jeong-Ryul and two other men. Doju said, "I have followed Sangje's order to go forth to Court-Plain Village of Golden Embankment (Gimje), and this route has led us to step on the trail of Reordering Works that Sangje achieved after nine years." (*Progress of the Order* 2:10)

In the historical Korean context, a devotional offering, known in Korean as *chiseong* (치성/致誠), indicates a variety of rituals in folk religious practices that center around praying, bowing, and making offerings with utmost sincerity. Popular forms of the ritual include 100-day devotional offerings (*baekilchiseong* 백일치성/百日致誠) and devotional offerings to mountain deities (*san-chiseong* 산치성/山致誠). Although the rituals described as *chiseong* can vary greatly, typically they include food offerings of purified water, side dishes, and rice. Rice is so central to these offerings that one alternative name for *chiseong* is '*nogume-seong* (노구메성/노구메誠),' a rice offering (Choi 1991). Later in Daeseon Jinrihoe, a highly specific ritual held on occasions such as sacred remembrances (memorials, birthdays, and achievement days of key figures), seasonal observances (equinoxes, solstices, etc.), anniversary days of shrine installations, and initiations would also come to be known as *chiseong*.

### Retracing the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth

In the tenth month of that year, Doju went to Great Court Temple (Daewon-sa) in Mount Mother (Moak-san), and led Gwon Tae-Ro and some others. Doju proclaimed, "I am the one who will spread forth the Degree Number of the Later World of Fifty Thousand Years, and you are the ones who will attain the Dao. What could be better?" He had Lee Jeong-Ryul acquire a house at the Stork Hamlet (Hwangsae-maeul, 翟村) in Court-Plain (Wonpyeong) Village, moved Doju's family there, and he stayed at Great Court Temple for several months. (*Progress of the Order* 2:1)

The verse above shows Jo Jeungsan traveling to Daewon-sa Temple, the site of Kang Jeungsan's opening of the great Dao of Heaven and Earth in 1901. Likewise significant to retracing the Reordering Works of Heaven and Earth and close by Daewon-sa Temple is the location of Donggok Clinic. The verse below details some of the preparation for the opening of the clinic which began in May (the fourth lunisolar month) of 1908.

One day in the fourth month of the Mushin Year (1908), Sangje brought 1,000 nyang of money from Baek Nam-Shin to open a clinic in Copper Valley (Donggok) Village. To equip the clinic, He called a carpenter, Lee Gyeong-Mun, to provide instruction on how to make an apothecary chest, which instruments would be necessary for the task, and what instrument sizes should be used. Sangje designated the due date for the work and decided to set up the clinic in the house of Jun-Sang, Gap-Chil's elder brother. (*Reordering Works* 2:7)

The verse above introduces readers to the apothecary chest that went on to be empowered by Kang Jeungsan. There was an effort by Jo Jeungsan to recover the apothecary chest (also translated as the apothecary cabinet) in 1919; however, the attempt was ultimately unsuccessful (*Progress of the Order* 2:17). Below is a record of Kang Jeungsan's opening of the great Dao of Heaven and Earth:

In the fifth month of the Shinchuck Year (1901), Sangje traveled to Great Court Temple (Daewon-sa) at Mount Mother (Moak-san) in Jeonju (Perfected Territory) County and, there, occupied a quiet room that had personally been prepared by Abbot Park Geum-Gok. Sangje asked to be left alone in order to practice a Holy Work uninterrupted, even so far as going without food or rest. Geum-Gok grew increasingly worried as Sangje stayed entirely devoted to His work for 49 days. On the fifth day of the seventh month, Sangje finally opened the great Dao of Heaven and Earth, and as He did so, a great wind was blown by the Five Directional Dragons. (*Acts* 2:12)

The reference to 'great winds being blown by the Five Directional Dragons (*oryong-beopung* 오룡허풍/五龍嘯風)' during Kang Jeungsan's religious activities at Daewon-sa Temple can be traced back to the earliest strata of hagiographies on Jeungsan. This phrase can be found in both Records of the Reordering Works of Celestial Master Jeungsan (Lee 1926, 7) and the first edition of *The Canonical Scripture of the Great Itineration* (Lee 1929, 3:1). In the eyes of many, this is a curious phrase that is not easily comprehended; however, since at least 1965 (Taegyeukdogyohwabu) and likely prior, Daesoon Thought already made sense of it in a compelling way that eluded many other traditions. The fifth day of the seventh lunisolar month (August 18th) in 1901, was

a *mujin* (무진/戊辰 fifth heavenly stem and fifth earthly branch in the sexagenary cycle used in time-keeping) day. This has correspondences with the five phases (*obaeng* 오행/五行) such that it would correspond with yellow, earth, and center which means it fits the precise correspondences of the directional deity of the yellow dragon, one of five dragon-deities associated with the four cardinal directions, and the additional ‘direction’ (relative location) of center. Going back from that day in 12-day increments, all of the other dragons can be found. The 22nd day of the 6th lunisolar month was a *byeongjin* (병진/丙辰) day with correspondences to red, fire, and south; the precise qualities of the red dragon. In twelve-day increments, one by one the dragons can be shown via the dates 6/10, 5/28, and 5/16 which respectively have the qualities of the remaining green, black, and white dragons (Cha 2018). In East Asian thought, there are other potential meanings for the ‘five dragons’; however, given that the consensus<sup>7</sup> ending day of the Kang Jeungsan’s religious experience was the fifth day of the seventh lunisolar month, a *mujin* day, and thereby, a yellow dragon, this interpretation of the five dragons, first recorded in 1926 but only decoded via Daeseon Thought in 1965, seems highly likely.

Kang Jeungsan once lived in Gimje, Wonpyeong, and that is what originally led Jo Jeongsan to visit there. Once in Gimje, he began religiously interacting with Donggok Clinic and Daewon-sa Temple. Jo Jeongsan also came to meet Kang Jeungsan’s sister via an introduction from Lee Chi-Bok. Kang Jeungsan’s sister, Yul (율/栗 1880/1881–1942), who was known in scriptures only as the ‘Lady of Seondol,’ provided Doju with a sealed chest of documents that Kang Jeungsan had set aside for Doju. This was the first case wherein Jo Jeongsan received a revelation from a living person who was part of Kang Jeungsan’s bloodline.

## Spreading of the Teachings in Relation to the Keepsake from Jeungsan

Here, Yul gives Jo Jeongsan not only a sealed chest of documents but also conveys that the Transformation Chest was an object that Kang Jeungsan empowered for a specific purpose the full potential of which Jo Jeongsan could bring into realization.

One day, the Lady of Seondol asked Doju, “The Transformation Chest (*dungwei* 遁櫃), which was installed by Sangje in the Copper Valley Clinic, is an agent of re-creation and changes of the universe in which a Degree Number of Heaven and Earth is set. In my opinion, we must find it as soon as possible. What do you think?” (*Progress of the Order* 2:14)

The verse above provides a context for how Jo Jeongsan and his followers understood the Transformation Chest at the time they retrieved it (1919). Below is an additional verse explaining the origination of the chest towards the end of Kang Jeungsan’s lifetime in 1908:

Sangje made two chests: The larger one, which He named the “Creation Chest,” was placed in the Copper Valley (Donggok) Clinic and the smaller one, which He named the “Transformation Chest (dun-gwei 遁櫃),” was left in Shin Gyeong-Su’s house after He used it as the chest of the Seventy-twofold Art of Transformation (chilsipyi-dun 七十二遁), corresponding to the Seventy-Two Sages, while practicing Holy Works. (*Reordering Works* 3:10)

Jo Jeongsan took the Transformation Chest from Bocheon-gyo and used it for a Holy Work that he saw to completion without any breaks or even sleep. This was meaningful in that Jo Jeongsan received a keepsake, which is related to a previous Heavenly Work that was carried out by Kang Jeungsan. Jo Jeongsan enabled the artifact to continue being used to achieve a series of divine actions. This was different from his previous activities of spreading the teachings in accordance with the revelation he received from the Supreme God, and it was also different from the act of inheriting a keepsake that had been set aside for him. Spreading and serving the teachings of Kang Jeungsan through relic from previous Reordering Works enacted by Kang Jeungsan makes clearer the will of Jo Jeongsan which was to continue realizing the Holy Works that had been set in motion by the Supreme God during the life of his human incarnation, Kang Jeungsan. In addition, Jo Jeongsan succeeded in retrieving the Transformation Chest, a divinely empowered item once used by Kang Jeungsan.

## **Jo Jeongsan’s Explanation of the Dao and the Foundation of a New Religious Order**

Later, Jo Jeongsan revealed the contents of the Dao in the context of Daesoon Thought. He preached Daesoon Truth, the Great Dao of Infinite Fortune, and the Resolution of Grievances for Mutual Beneficence. He gained mastery of all of these principles when he awakened to the true nature of the Supreme God Kang Jeungsan and his divine plan for the universe (the Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity). The verse below records a teaching that Jo Jeongsan gave in 1919 which explained to his followers the unprecedented nature of the specific Dao found in Daesoon Thought, and he further informed them of the blessings gained from the Resolution of Grievances for Mutual Beneficence (*haewonsangsaeng* 해원상생/解冤相生).

### **The Great Destiny of *Mugeuk***

One day, in the memorial house of Qualified Literatus Hamlet (Tongsa-dong), Doju said, “My Dao has never been heard either now or in the past, so it is hard for you to believe in it and cultivate yourselves.” And gathering many followers, he preached to them about the truth of resolution of grievances

for mutual beneficence, which embraces limitless great fortune, enlightening them to the Dao. (*Progress of the Order* 2:18)

In the following verse, Kang Jeungsan also speaks about how blessings have become available despite the degenerate nature of that day and age:

“Since it is now the degenerate age, the great destiny of Ultimatelessness shall be opened. Be careful in all matters not to provoke any grudges from other people, and stay away from transgressions. And take part in the court of Heaven and Earth with pure minds.” (*Prophetic Elucidations* 17)

In the above verses, Jo Jeongsan not only revealed his Dao, but went further to serve in the Reordering Works of the Supreme God Kang Jeungsan. Although not apparent in the official English translation, both Kang Jeungsan and Jo Jeongsan speak about the great destiny of Ultimatelessness (*mugeuk-daeun* 무극대운/無極大運<sup>8</sup>); because in the first verse it is written as ‘limitless great fortune.’ There is perhaps a problem or at least room for improvement with the English rendering of *mugeuk* (무극/無極) as ‘ultimatelessness.’ In East Asian thought, *mugeuk* is meant to describe monism outside of or prior to (depending on metaphysical interpretation<sup>9</sup>) dualism (*taegeuk* 태극/太極 understandable as yin and yang in balanced harmony). The research team that translated *The Canonical Scripture* felt confident that *taegeuk* could be rendered as ‘ultimate’ or ‘ultimateness’ and as a consequence, its opposite, *mugeuk*, became ‘ultimatelessness.’ The problem is that while ultimate and ultimateness sounds like something powerful and useful, ultimatelessness, rather accidentally, sounds weak, and its potential utility is difficult to imagine.

Although it might be difficult for it to be made to fit all intended uses, it would probably be more accurate to think of *mugeuk* as ‘limitless potential’ and *taegeuk* as ‘realized potential.’ Limitless potential can be directed at an infinite range of aims, and thereby its utility is immediately evident. Realized potential has clearly achieved something to its complete extent but likely does not apply to all aims so much as it applies to whatever specific aim or aims it has fulfilled.

Returning back to the subject at hand, in the next verse that will be highlighted, Jo Jeongsan is recorded as having resolved the energy that lingered in an incomplete state at Daewon-sa Temple where the Supreme God Kang Jeungsan previously carried out a Reordering Work. As a point of theological nuance, Jo Jeongsan is understood as having done this through his own ability.

## Recalibrating Degree Numbers

Doju had the disciples recite the Sutra of the Seven Stars (Chilseong-gyeong 七星經), and then he went to Great Court Temple (Daewon-sa) and finished a 100-day Degree Number. The day he finished was the seventh day of the seventh month of the Shinyu Year (1921). Only then did the disciples realize his intention behind having them recite the Sutra of the Seven Stars. Meeting them, Doju said, “This is the very place where Sangje judged the divine beings of Heaven and Earth. I have released their energy which was still attached to this place.” (*Progress of the Order* 2:21)

The above verse shows Doju Jo Jeongsan successfully recalibrating a degree number in a manner reminiscent of his predecessor, Kang Jeungsan. That Jo Jeongsan was able to do this through his own power, is an example of his worthiness of the position of successor within the lineage of religious orthodoxy.

Later, Jo Jeongsan carefully relocated the holy skeletal remains of Kang Jeungsan to his base of operations and performed a ritual ceremony everyday while carrying out a Holy Work. In order to appreciate the relocation of Kang Jeungsan’s holy skeletal remains, the following verse regarding Kang Jeungsan’s passing can provide useful context:

Eung-Jong thought it strange that the room in which Sangje was staying was too quiet and looked into it. He found Sangje calmly laying down. When he drew close to Sangje and put his cheek on Sangje’s now cold countenance, he realized that He had already passed into Heaven. (*Acts* 5:35)

The above verse informs readers that Kang Jeungsan died while his disciples were out elsewhere, and the quickness of his passing caught many of them by surprise. The next verse reveals details regarding the disciples’ actions in the aftermath of their master’s passing:

The disciples finished the funeral with the money stored in the chest and sent the remainder to the house of Sangje’s family. (*Acts* 5:36)

In the next verse, Jo Jeongsan moves beyond enshrining Kang Jeungsan’s holy skeletal remains and performing ritual ceremonies, by establishing the religious order, Mugeukdo which enshrined and worshiped Kang Jeungsan as the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven:



## Enshrining Kang Jeungsan as the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven

In the Eulchuk Year (1925), a temple was established at Dao Prosperity Hill Path (Dochang-hyeon) in Great Benevolence (Taein) County. It was then that Doju founded Mugeuk-do (Limitless Dao) Order, enshrined Sangje as Gucheon Eungwon Nwehseong Bohwa Cheonjon Sangje [九天應元雷聲普化天尊上帝 the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven, Celestial Worthy of Universal Creation through His Thunderbolt, the Originator with Whom All Beings Resonate]. (*Progress of the Order* 2:32)<sup>10</sup>

The verse above indicates that Doju Jo Jeongsan started the process that transformed the teachings of Kang Jeungsan into formal religious doctrines that could be comprehended and tangibly put into practice by both clergy and laity.

## Revealing the Status of Jo Jeongsan

Then, Jo Jeongsan announced in the Declaration of Awakening (*poyumun* 포유문/布喻文) that it was he, himself, who was the successor in the lineage of religious orthodoxy. He was the one qualified to serve the will of the Supreme God Kang Jeungsan and lead humanity to eternal paradise. Also, a mysterious event transpired at Maha-sa Temple in Busan when an icon of the Buddha lowered its head while Jo Jeongsan was carrying out a Holy Work. Jo Jeongsan went on to unfold that Holy Work in accordance with Kang Jeungsan's Reordering Work of transferring the God of the Imperial Ultimate. The two verses below both cover contents related to the God of the Imperial Ultimate, the first verse involving Jo Jeongsan in 1954 and the second verse referring to a Reordering Work performed by Kang Jeungsan in 1908:

### The God of the Imperial Ultimate

Sangje once said to His disciples at Crouching Dragon (Waryong) Village of Primordial Hill (Gobu) County, "The god of the Imperial Ultimate (Hwangeuk 皇極) should be brought here in order to rectify this chaotic world. The god stays in Emperor Guangxu of the Qing Dynasty. The reason for its transfer to Joseon (Korea) resulted from Song Wuam (Song Si-Yeol) building the Mandong Shrine." Sangje commanded His disciples to recite the Incantation of Serving the Lord of Heaven (Sicheon-ju 侍天呪) every night in a specific rhythm. He said, "This sound is the same as that which people articulate while carrying a bier. The wails that mourners make while carrying a bier is eo-ro; eo (御) can also mean 'king' and ro (路) can mean 'road.' That is, it is a road upon which a king walks. Now, the god of the

Imperial Ultimate has been moved here.” At that time, Emperor Guangxu passed away. (*Reordering Works* 3:22)

The passage above shows Kang Jeungsan’s enshrinement of the God of the Imperial Ultimate, and the passage below records Jo Jeongsan visiting that site over four and half decades later and a mysterious event said to taken place shortly thereafter:

In the third month of the Gaboh Year (1954), Doju went to Blue Stream (Cheongcheon) Township accompanied by Ahn Sang-Ik and four others, and looked all around the ruins of the Mandong Shrine where the god of the Imperial Ultimate (Hwanggeuk 皇極) had been enshrined by Sangje. The moment he was about to turn around to leave, it started raining, and at night, a great thunderbolt and storm occurred as if the mountains were crashing down. There was a closed stone tablet on the left side of the lower rockwall under the Observatory Crag (Cheomseong-dae), on which Emperor Chongzhen’s handwritten calligraphy 非禮不動 (birye-budong, do not act contrary to the rules of propriety) was carved. There was a rumor that the next day the closed stone tablet had been split into two pieces and the characters of 玉藻冰壺 (okjo-bingho, the imperial jade bead-pendants and ice-pot) and 萬曆御筆 (manryeok-eopil, the handwriting of Emperor Wanli) had been found on the backside of the pieces. (*Progress of the Order* 2:50)

## The Ocean Seal

In the verse below, Jo Jeongsan explained the meaning of *Haein* (the Ocean Seal) in the context of how it was related to Unification with the Dao, and he interpreted the Godship of Kang Jeungsan. In its original Buddhist context, the Ocean Seal (*haein* 해인/海印) is usually short for the meditative concentration of the ocean seal (*baeinsammae* 해인삼매/海印三昧 and in Sanskrit as *sāgara-mudrā-samādhi*), a concept introduced in the Buddhist scripture, *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*hwaoem-gyeong* 화엄경/華嚴經 also known in English as *The Flower Garland Sutra*). In Buddhism, the meditative concentration of the ocean seal can be understood as entailing meditative observation of the past, present, and future simultaneously while in a state of profound tranquility (Xingyun 2014). It is clear in Jo Jeongsan’s usage that he uses the name ‘ocean seal,’ but has a different meaning in mind which relates to traditional East Asian cosmology and also to the qualities of Kang Jeungsan as *Gucheon Eungwon Nwehseong Bobwa Cheonjon Gangseong Sangje* (구천응원뇌성보화천존 강성상제/九天應元 雷聲普化天尊姜聖上帝, the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven, His Holiness Kang, Celestial Worthy of Universal Creation through His Thunderbolt, the Originator with Whom All Beings Resonate) as known through revelation specific to Daesoon Thought but also with certain inputs

from a 12th or 13th century scripture, *The Scripture of the Jade Pivot* (Pregadio 2009) (*okchubogyeong* 옥추보경/玉樞寶經) which describes a deity with nearly the same title.<sup>11</sup> In Kang Jeungsan's usage of the ocean seal, the meaning is explicitly specified.

On the next day after Doju came back from Haein-sa Temple (Ocean Seal Temple), he gathered many disciples and said, "Even though Sangje defined the Ocean Seal as a seal, it is wrong for you to take it as a tangible object. The Ocean Seal is not far but close at hand. The origin of the principles of all things in the universe lies in the ocean. So, there are sayings of 'the Ocean Seal' and 'a Perfected Being on an ocean island.' Take a look at the sea water. It is all electrified. Water flows down but has the characteristic of ascending. Originally, all things are generated and grow by absorbing the energy of water. There are 36 Heavens in the sky and Sangje governs them. As he presides over electricity, rules, and nurtures all nature in Heaven and Earth, He is, accordingly, Nwehseong Bohwa Cheonjon Sangje [雷聲普化天尊上帝 The Supreme God, the Celestial Worthy of Universal Creation through His Thunderbolt]. Since the electricity of Heaven is in the ocean water, all things are surrounded by electricity." (*Progress of the Order* 2:55)

According to Sangje's order, Hyeong-Ryeol marked the Sixty-Four Hexagrams and wrote down the names of the Twenty-Four Directions on paper and gave it to Him. Sangje went out of the door with the paper and said, burning it towards the sun, "Stay with me." Turning His face to Hyeong-Ryeol, He said, "I will give the Ocean Seal (haein 海印) to those who believe in Me firmly." (*Progress of the Order* 1:62.)

"I will send the line of Dao-unification (dotong 道通) to the great head. He will instruct people in the ways of Dao-unification. When it is the right time, all the gods of Dao-unification from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism shall gather enabling people to achieve unification with the Dao, according to their degree of individual cultivation. Therefore, how could I justly preside over it and carry it out by Myself," asked Sangje. (*Progress of the Order* 1:41)

The verse above contains Kang Jeungsan's explanations about the Ocean Seal (*haein*). In Daeseon Thought, this is understood as being related to Jo Jeongsan's emergence as the Great Leader prophesied by Kang Jeungsan to become the successor in the line of Dao-Unification.

## Conclusion

Jo Jeongsan passed away in 1958 after telling his followers that that year marked the completion of his 50-year Holy Work (*Gongbu*). This time frame is consistent with Kang Jeungsan's writing 'Fifty Year Holy Works for Edification Shall Be Completed at Last.' Jo Jeongsan went to areas where Kang Jeungsan previously resided such as Wonpyeong in Gimje, Donggok Clinic, and Daewon-sa Temple. Jo Jeongsan also met Yul, the sister of Kang Jeungsan, through Lee Chi-Bok and from her he received a sealed chest of documents.

Jo Jeongsan went on to use objects previously empowered by Kang Jeungsan such as the Transformation Chest in religious activities that Daesoon Thought honors as a continuation of the divine acts of Kang Jeungsan. With regards to the Transformation Chest it can also be understood as a keepsake that Jo Jeongsan obtained which was related to a Reordering Work performed by his predecessor in the lineage, Kang Jeungsan, and Jo Jeongsan kept the artifact as an instrument that facilitated heavenly achievements. Episodes and connections of this nature demonstrate Jo Jeongsan's ability to continue the salvific actions of Kang Jeungsan.

Jo Jeongsan enshrined Kang Jeungsan's holy skeletal remains, but also went further by performing ritual ceremonies and founding the religious order, Mugeukdo. Jo Jeongsan led this religion which enshrined and worshiped Kang Jeungsan as *Gucheon Eungwon Nwehseong Bobwa Cheonjon Gangseong Sangje*, a divine title that had not previously been associated with Kang Jeungsan although other religions also apotheosized Jeungsan under different titles.

When Jo Jeongsan went to Maha-sa Temple in Busan to further retrace the actions of Kang Jeungsan, a mysterious event transpired- an icon of the Buddha lowered its head while Jeongsan was engaged in a Holy Work. This can be shown to be connected to Kang Jeungsan's previous Reordering Work of transferring the God of the Imperial Ultimate.

Lastly, Jo Jeongsan taught about the Ocean Seal to show its relation to the attainment of Unification with the Dao and the Godship of Kang Jeungsan. In Daesoon Thought, the connections between Kang Jeungsan and Jo Jeongsan's teaching on the Ocean Seal are further support for Jo Jeongsan's emergence as a Great Leader who the Kang Jeungsan foretold would emerge as the first successor in the line of Dao Unification.

## Conflict of Interest

Ko Namsik has been on the Editorial Board of *JDTREA* and Jason Greenberger has been the Managing Editor of *JDTREA* since July 2021 but neither had any no role in the decision to publish this article. No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Bongcheon (봉천/奉天 ch. Fengtian) has multiple meanings here: it is the place name, Fengtian in Manchuria where Jeongsan's family moved to live in exile, and bongcheon, written the same way in Chinese characters, also means to 'serve heaven.' The *myeong* (명/命) at the end means 'mandate' or 'command.'
- <sup>2</sup> Understandable as a fifty-year Holy Work that included other Holy Works, or as a fifty-year period of Holy Works (plural). This nuance is an issue created by the English translation, which does not exist in the original Korean wherein either is possible and the difference is insignificant.
- <sup>3</sup> In passages from *The Canonical Scripture*, Sangje (상제/上帝), literally meaning 'the Supreme God,' refers both to the Supreme God of the Ninth Heaven and to his human avatar, Kang Jeungsan.
- <sup>4</sup> encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0026906
- <sup>5</sup> I have reproduced the translation (and transliteration) from *The Canonical Scripture* here and only swapped the order of the verses to match the order used in Donghak. It is entirely possible, highly likely in fact, that Donghak (now Cheondo-gyo 천도교/天道教) see a different meaning in the incantation. As such, the English translation here should just be used as a basic reference point. Even in the Daesoon Jinrihoe context, translating the meaning of incantations is considered taboo. Incantations have a broad range of possible meanings, and according to believers, more crucial than the meaning is the sound of the incantation and the power that it holds.
- <sup>6</sup> encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0026906
- <sup>7</sup> Agreement on this date is common among Lee Sang-Ho's hagiographies, *Records of the Reordering Works of Celestial Master Jeungsan* (1926) and *The Canonical Scripture of the Great Itineration* (1929) and all scriptures associated with Daesoon Thought. An alternative date, seventh day of the seventh month (August 20th), was first proposed by the religion, Odongjeong-gyodan, in *The Canonical Scripture of the Dragon Flower (Yonghwajeongyeong 용화전경/龍華典經 1972)*, and this date was also adopted by Jeungsando in their scripture, the Dojeon (도전/道典 'The Dao Canon' 1992).
- <sup>8</sup> 'Mu,' in the context of *mugeuk*, is sometimes provided in Chinese characters in *The Canonical Scripture* as the variant character 无 rather than the character 無 which is more standard. In the original Korean, when *mugeuk-dae*'un in the above two examples has the *mu* as 无 in Progress of the Order 2:18 and as 無 in Prophetic Elucidations 17.
- <sup>9</sup> As a tendency, Neo-Confucians take the phrase 無極而太極 from the *Taegeuk Diagram* (太極圖) of Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤 1017–1073) and parse it as '*Mugeuk* and *Taegeuk*,' whereas Daoists parse it as '*Mugeuk* and then *Taegeuk*.' The result is that Neo-Confucians describe both metaphysical principles as phenomena to be examined and juxtaposed. On the other hand, Daoists, due to their assumption of sequence, describe an emanationist creative cycle wherein *Mugeuk* proceeds (and becomes) *Taegeuk*, which in turn becomes the five phases, which in turn become all myriad phenomena.
- <sup>10</sup> *The Canonical Scripture*, Progress of the Order 2:32. In other contexts, this divine epithet is altered slightly to include the family name Kang Jeungsan and appears as *Gucheon Eungwon Noeseong Bobwa Cheonjon Kangseong Sange*: His Holiness the Supreme God Kang of the Ninth Heaven, Celestial Worthy of Universal Creation through His Thunderbolt, the Originator with Whom All Beings Resonate.
- <sup>11</sup> In that scripture, the title of the deity is *Gucheon Eungwon Nwehseong Bobwa Cheonjon* (구천응원뇌성보화전존 / 九天應元雷聲普化天尊, the Celestial Worthy of the Ninth Heaven, of Universal Creation through His Thunderbolt, the Originator with Whom All Beings Resonate) and when apotheosizing and enshrining Kang Jeungsan, Jo Jeongsan added *Gangseong Sangje* (강성상제/姜聖上帝) to this name to additionally convey the qualities of the deity being 'the Holy (One) Kang' and 'the Supreme God.'

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