

The Process of Institutionalisation of the Term 'State-Protecting Buddhism' between 1945-2018

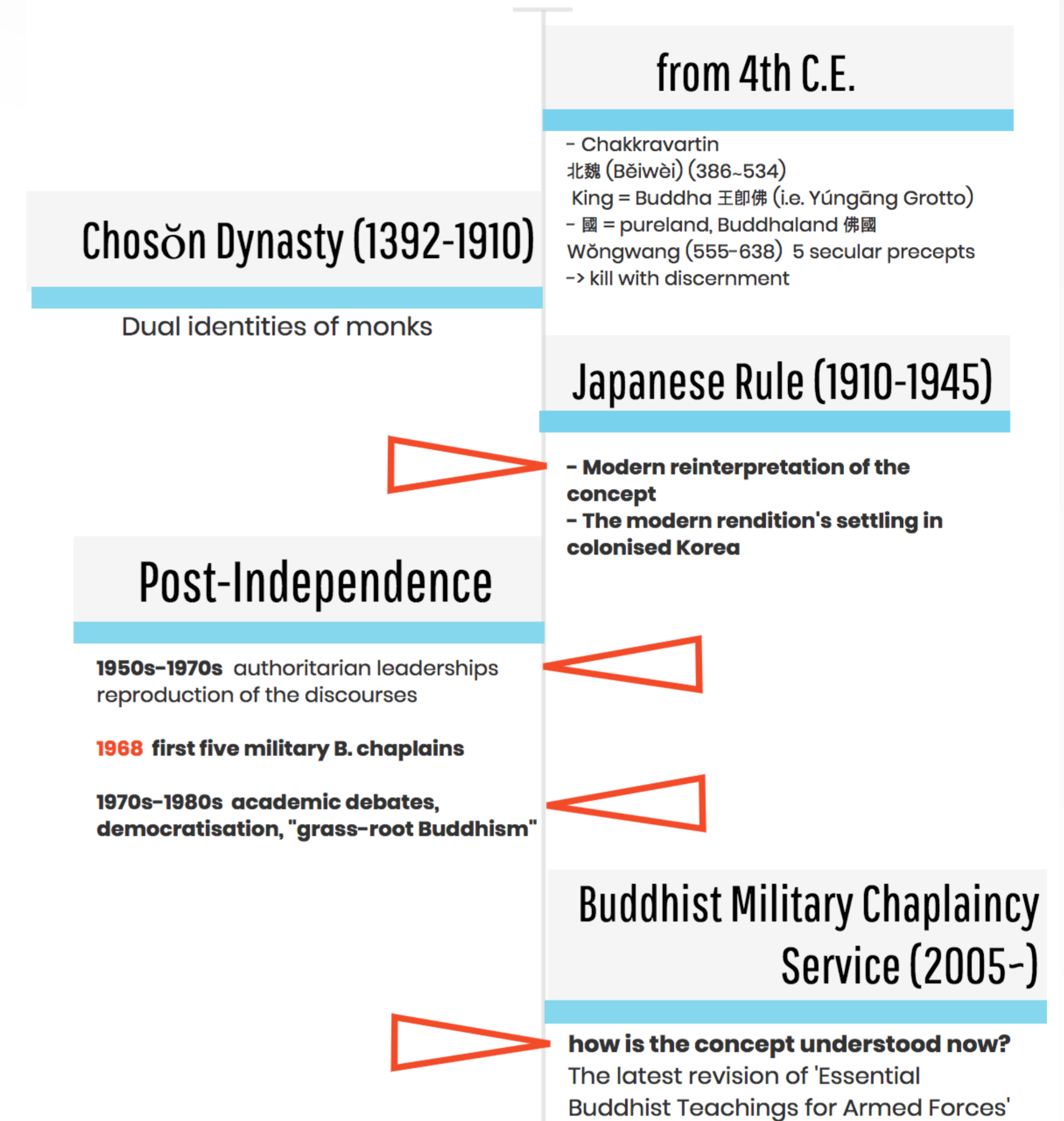
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Introduction

What is State-Protecting Buddhism (SPB)?

- A concept which denotes that one of the major functions of Buddhism is serving the state when in need. This concept existed in East Asian countries in different forms throughout the pre-modern time.
- Modern rendition: during the Meiji period (1868-1912), the convergence of polity and Buddhism in East Asia was framed as 'state protecting Buddhism' by Japanese Buddhologists (Jorgensen 1997, 209-10).
- Korean historians and Buddhist intellectuals integrated this concept into nationalistic discourses when the concept was reintroduced in a modern context during the Japanese colonial rule of Korea (1910-1945).
- After independence, as the nationalistic sentiments in SPB aligned closely with the ideologies of the authoritarian regimes during Syngman Rhee and Park Chunghee's leaderships (1948-79), the concept carried increasing influence (Mohan 2006; Sorensen 2008).
- In the 1970s -1980s however, there were debates against the discourses on SPB and the associated ideology. For one, with increasing social movements to achieve democracy in South Korea, 'grass-root Buddhism' received attention as a new notion. In addition, Buddhologists reassessed characteristics of Korean Buddhism within the pan-East-Asian cultural sphere and criticized the term SPB harshly, mainly for its colonial provenance.
- Yet, the concept survived and still has a significant presence in media, school textbooks, and especially in military initiatives by Chogye Order of Korean Buddhism. In 2005, Buddhist Military Chaplaincy Service was established in cooperation of Chogye Order and Ministry of National Defense with this very concept as its institutional ethos (Editorial Board of Buddhist Chaplain Service 2008).

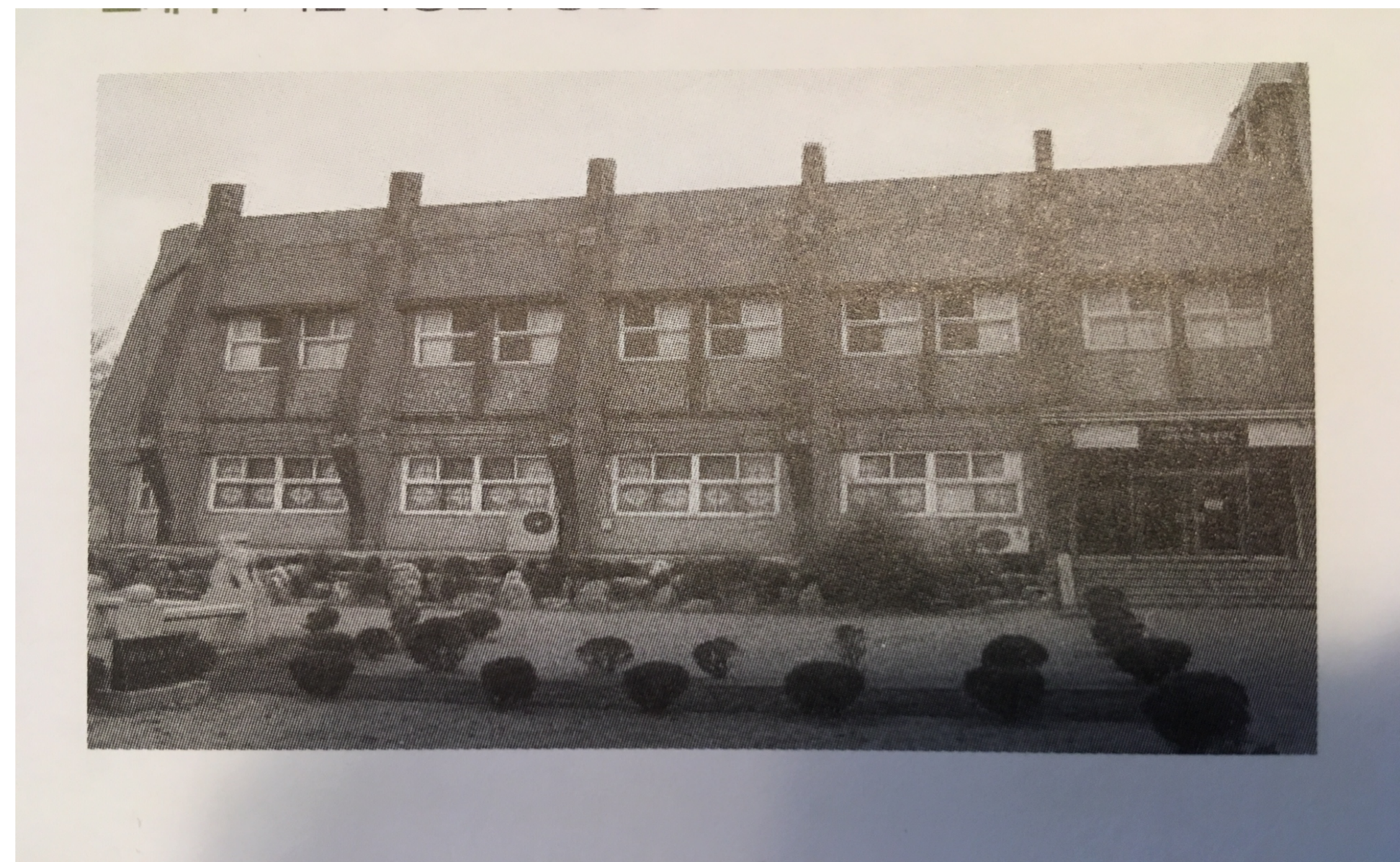
State-Protecting Buddhism 護國佛教



Research Questions and Project Aim

1. How did 'state-protecting Buddhism' become the tenet of the Buddhist Chaplaincy Service?
2. How have the meanings, implications, and applications of 'state-protecting Buddhism' as a concept changed?
3. What kind of process did SPB undergo to be fully institutionalized, both normatively and phenomenally?

> To identify and analyse mechanisms which explain circulation and reinterpretation of SPB discourses



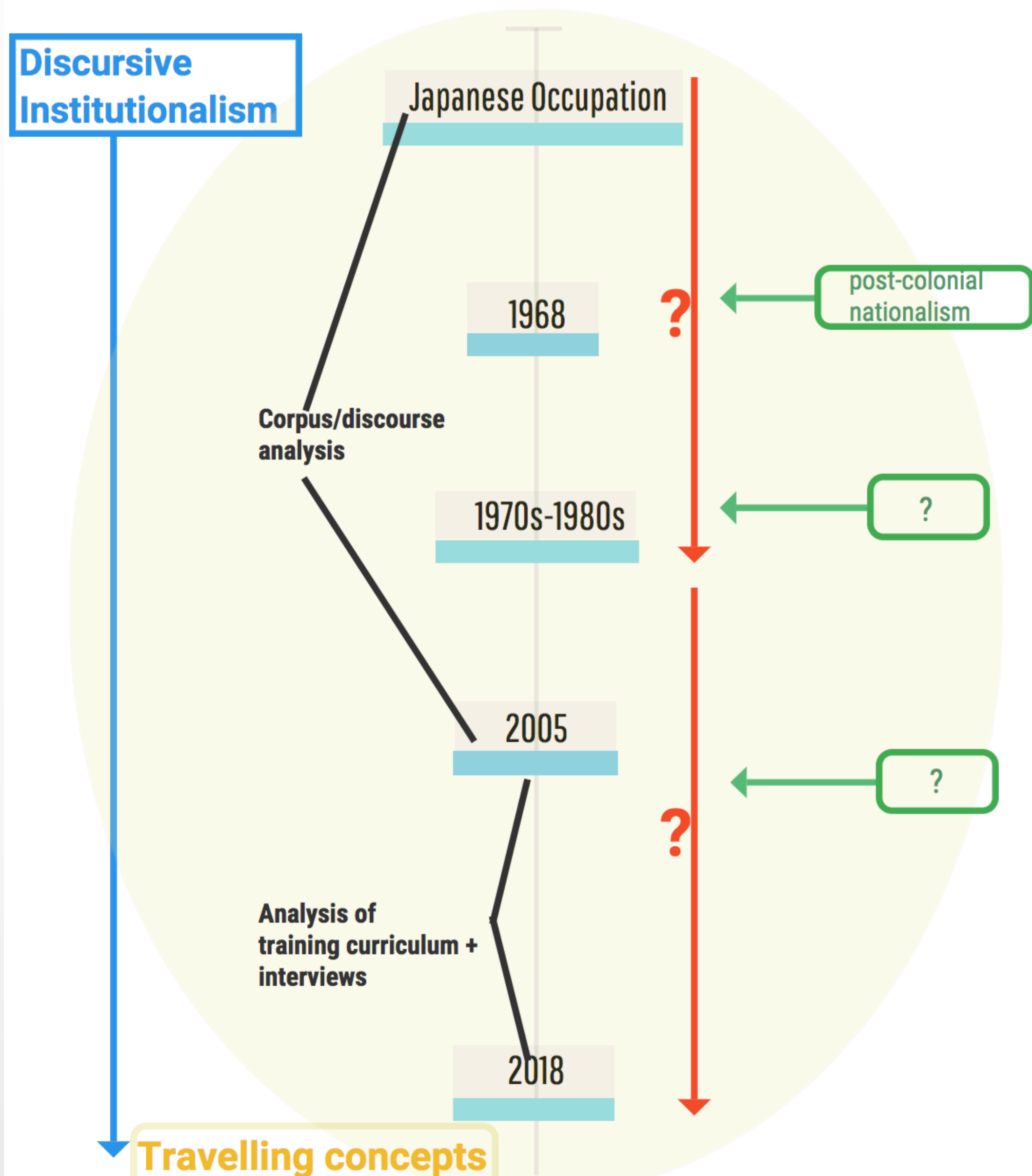
Hoguk won'gwangsa temple in Seoul, 1969, one of the first Buddhist military temples
© Editorial Board of Buddhist Chaplain Service 2008

Materials and Methods

- Print media, governmental documents, and major academic works written by opinion formers in which the term SPB appears
- the curriculums of educational training for aspiring Buddhist military chaplains
- semi-structured interviews with Buddhist military chaplains and aspiring chaplains.

The context-specific nuance of primary sources will be examined closely through textual analysis, while the bigger picture of the data will be drawn with aids of Python with a focus on co-occurrence words

Research Design



Theoretical Considerations

Analytical framework

Ideational power: power through ideas, power over ideas, and power in ideas

> to understand how power of discourse relates to other forms of power (Carstensen and Schmidt 2016)

Ideas as coalition magnets

: idea's capacity to appeal to a diversity of individuals and groups, and to be used strategically by policy entrepreneurs to frame interests, mobilize supporters and build coalitions. (Béland and Cox 2016)

- > balance between agency and structure
- > accounts for why some ideas become influential while others never reach that level of significance in society.

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