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**Footprints of the Wildgoose: Horak hongjo or Hodong sorak ki by Kumwon**

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EDITORIAL NOTE

James Gale’s translation of Kumwon’s *Footprints of the Wildgoose* is a curiosity. His draft, in typescript, was found among the papers kept by his son, Mr George Gale of Montreal. The only complete text of the original that I have been able to discover is the one printed during 1917 and 1918 in three installments in Ch’ oe Namson’s magazine *Ch’ongch’un* (No. 11 November 1917 pp. 138-147; No. 12 March 1918,pp. 89-96; No. 13 April 1918, pp. 84-88). This text is entitled *Horak hongjo*, literally ‘footprints of a wildgoose from the provinces to the capital,’ though Kumwon at the end of the work says she has called it *Hodong sorak ki*, ‘from the eastern provinces to the western capital’.

The latter is the title by which the book is more commonly known, although Yi Nunghwa used *Horak hongjo* for the extracts he printed in *Choson Yosok Ko* (Seoul 1927, pp. 150-2). The text of these extracts differs in detail from that printed in *Ch’ongch’un*, and Gale’s translation agrees precisely with neither of them. Yi Nunghwa suggests that a manuscript was possessed by Chijae Kim Won’gun, a teacher of Chinese at Chongsin Girls’ School in Seoul who was certainly known to Gale. Another of Gale’s friends was Kim Tohui (1849-1924) who,like Kumwon’s husband, was a Kyongju Kim.

Gale included extracts from Kumwon in his diary of a visit to the Diamond

\* Although this work is not primarily about Seoul,at one point it does give us a picture of parts of Seoul through the eyes of the concubine of a government official in the mid-19th Century.

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Mountains in September 1917, so he must have translated the work before its publication in *Chongch’un* unless he added these extracts to his 1917 diary at a later date. The diary was not printed until it appeared in the Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society in 1922.

Chang Chiyon, editor of *Taedong sison* (1918), says that Kumwon’s family name was Kim. Although modern biographical dictionaries give her date of birth as 1804, it is clear from her own writing that it must have been about 1816. Yi Nunghwa says that she was taken as concubine by Kim Tokhui in it must have been about 1816. Yi Nunghwa says that she was taken as concubine by Kim Tokhui in 1830, though she herself does not make the date clear. Yi also consistently gives the wrong Chinese character for the hui in Kim Tokhui’s name, palgul hui instead of kippul hui. Some information about Kim is found in *Ch ‘ongun po* and other places. Kyundang, ‘hall of the literature star,’ was his literary style. He was born in 1800, and related to many powerful political figures. He married first a daughter of Cho Myong- ch’o1, later a daughter of Yu Ch’igap. He passed with third-class grade in the higher civil service examination of 1835, subsequently rising to fairly high rank in the Ministry of War. He was appointed governor of Uiju in the last moon of 1844, January or February 1845, and was replaced in the fourth moon of the following year (May 1846). This was an average length of tenure for those days.

Gale’s draft has many imperfections, including puzzling typographical errors, and I have substantially rewritten it. His versions of the poems included in the work are so free that I have attempted more accurate translations. He omitted two short passages that occur in the *Ch’ongch’un* one of them at least by inadvertence. His occasional additions to the *Ch’ongch’un* text appear to be due to his customary exuberance,though for Kumwon’s somewhat obscure account of the fifty-three Buddhas of Yujom-sa he substitutes a longer account derived from other sources. I have brought the translation generally into line with the *Ch’ongch’un* text, except where the latter contains manifest misprints.

The book is not now well known in Korea, though parts of it have been anthologized. ‘Wildgoose footprints’ is a symbol drawn from Su Tung-p’o, and suggests transience because such footprints are soon obliterated in snow or mud. Kim Won,gun called Kumwon ‘a Szuma Ch’ien of the women’s quarters.’ She was certainly unusually well-read for a woman of her time: she refers to Chinese works not included in the commoner Korean anthologies, and she knew something of Chinese topography. Her verses are competent, and are the most widely-quoted part of the book. It is usually assumed that [page 59] she wrote most of it when she was fourteen, but at least a quarter of the book, and probably rather more, was written much later. Her only other published writing is her postface, written in 1851,to the collected poems of her friend Chukso.

Gale’s version, with its repeated adjectives—’beautiful, ,’fantastic,’ ‘too wonderful for words,’ reads like a girlish rhapsody. Some of her comments have honesty and tartness, and occasionally her vignettes are of startling vitality or lyricism. The whole breathes the most romantic spirit of nineteenth-century Korea,not least the closing passage of haunting melancholy, suggesting that ‘the footprints of the wildgoose’ would disappear.

FOOTPRINTS OF THE WILDGOOSE

It is a blessing to be born a man; yet if a man does nothing while he lives that is worthy of fame, although he be a man I would not call him that, but rather a woman with a beard. It is sad to be born a woman; but if a woman, on the other hand, does something worth while, though she may be considered a mere woman, I would not call her that, but rather a hero.

Man has his place between heaven and earth as one of the three divisions of creation,and woman shares it with him. Yet she is hidden away in the inner quarters,buried out of sight. When she goes out she covers her head and wears a girdle by which her limbs are always bundled. She is not at liberty to go out by herself; she is like a prisoner, unconvicted of any wrong, yet locked up for life. She may have no part or lot in the flowers of the morning, the moonlight of the evening sky,and all the happy times of earth; the hills and streams are shut out from her view, though they lie just beyond her door. Her parents’ sole wish is that she may grow up a good and virtuous woman. This too was my desire. Nothing is allowed a girl beyond this limited horizon; to become a virtuous member of imprisoned womankind. Yet she has a heart and soul that yearns to break free from every bond and become something more in the world than a mere kitchen drudge. Why should these meaningless restrictions be put upon her? Queen Chindok of Silla1 had her poems woven into the silken fabric she made, and Ho-ssi, Nansorhon, went in her dreams to the Kuang-sang Hills, and became a famous poet.2 Even heroes find fame no easy prize to win; yet these women won it. Their fame is assured for ever.

I was born at Wonju near the Diamond Mountains, and named Kumwon, ‘Brocaded Garden.’ When I was a child I was frequently ill, so my parents took pity on me and gave me no arduous tasks. To amuse me they taught me[page 60] Chinese characters, and I learned rapidly. Before many years had passed I was able to read the classics and histories, and my one desire was to make the ancients my model. In happy moments I wrote verses about flowers and the moonlight; I was thankful I had been born into the world as a human being,not as a bird or a beast; not a savage like the outlying tribes, but a member of a nation of refinement and culture. I was sorry I was a girl, not a boy, and that our family was poor. Heaven had given me a heart that appreciated culture and tenderness. It also gave me eyes and ears. Other girls did not care, but I wanted to enjoy the hills and streams. Heaven had given me a sense of their delights, so why should I not enjoy my wonderful country? But I was a girl. Must I be imprisoned and be satisfied behind the bars? Born of a poor man in an obscure home, must I follow the usual path and be buried from sight forever? There was no great diviner Chan-yin3 to direct me and help me, like Ch,li,4 to know my way, but he himself had said “Augury has limitations,while man’s good sense is unbounded.” One’s own judgement is best. I felt I could decide for myself,and did so in the year before my hair was pinned up. I intended to see something of the world at once. When Tien wanted to bathe in the famous springs that gave health,to breathe the air on the high sweet peaks of the hills, and to write down his impressions, Confucius gave his consent.5 Hence my plan was made, and I spoke many times to my parents about it. After a long delay, they agreed. How happily my heart beat at the thought, like an eagle freed from captivity and soaring away into the sky, like a highly-strung horse loosed from bit and bridle that makes off over the plain.

That very day I had a boy’s suit made. We got our baggage together and set out in the direction of the Four Central Prefectures.6 It was April 1830, and I was just fourteen years old. I sat in my palanquin like a boy with plaited hair. The two sides and the back were curtained with blue gauze, and the front was left open so that I could see. Thus we made our way to Lake Uirim8 in Chech’on prefecture. Pretty flowers smiled, and the greensward stretched away like clouds; the leaves were just out and the hills encircled us like silken canopies. Already my heart was refreshed beyond words and my lungs cleansed by the fresh, pure air.

The lake,we found, had a circumference of about ten li. Its green waters shone, beautiful as the finest Chinese silk; watercress was sprouting fresh leaves, some beneath the surface and some resting on the water; countless willow catkins bent their tassels, half over the reflecting surface and half over the land. A pair of orioles flitted from branch to branch, their golden plumage flashing in the sunlight as they called sweetly to one another. A startled seagull shot off into the sky. I laughed at him and said, ‘Don’t you know the [page 61] saying:

Seagull, why this hurried flight?

Am I not your well-tried friend?9

That is how I feel.’

We heard a faint singing coming from afar,among the surrounding wil-lows. Then we saw an old man with a wide straw hat and a cape of reeds, holding a fishing-rod over the water in the distance. He was catching silver- coated fishes, a flashing foot or so long,out of the ripples. I asked that we should go by boat to find where the singing came from. The breeze was soft and the water smooth as a mirror, so the boat did not rock as we floated out on the glistening water of the lake. Reeds, lotus,water-lilies and caresses, water-plants and water-fowl were reflected with the sky and clouds一a won-derful picture.

At length we made fast the boat by the fisherman’s landing, and gave one or two cash for a fish. We had it prepared and served for supper, and surely no perch of the famous Sung-kiang was ever its equal. We gathered watercress and then went to a little thatched hut near the lake, where an old lady received us with smiling face and showed us how to prepare it, by poaching it a little while in hot water; then serving it with omija soup.10 The flavour was fresh and sweet. I wonder whether Chang Han11 ever tasted better.

The lake is famous. When peach blossom is out in the springtime, boats sail over the reflected sky; in summer the full-blown lotus flowers wave gently beside the cottages; in autumn the reflected moon lies deep in the lake as though in a crystal bottle; in winter it becomes a jade mirror sprinkled with snow. The scholar would regard this as the lake where Chuang-tzu became an immortal;12 the pretty girl, should she come here, would think it the spot where Hsi-shih13 spent her days. It is so wonderful that a whole year’s stay could not exhaust its joys. We lingered with no thought of leaving, and I wrote a stanza to preserve the memory of the place:

Green willows droop beside the lake

As though depressed by springtime melancholy.

Yellow orioles call overhead

And cannot bear the sadness of farewell.

We stayed half the day, and then continued our journey. The birds in the trees and the gulls of the shore added their cries to the sorrow of our departure.

From there we went to Tanyang, through the narrow windings of the hills, passing before the three Sonam, the fairy rocks. They were like a paduk [page 62] board,14 black and white, crossed and squared, the hills behind like two old men bending over, intent on a game. Hence they are named after the immortals, whose ways have always been mysterious. The four immortals of Shang-shan15 played paduk in the mountains, then came out to look at the earth, but I never heard that they returned to the hills. Two other immortals of ancient days came out of a huge pomelo, in which they had played paduk, but I never heard that they went back into it. I imagine that all six of them came here, where their chequer boards stand ever ready for a game.

There was a woodman long ago who went into the hills. Suddenly he came upon some immortals playing paduk. For a time he stood and watched. When he picked up his axe, the handle had decayed and fallen away. He returned home: the hills and streams were just as they had been when he left, but the people were all different. He did not know how many years had gone by, till he discovered that the master of the house was a man of the fifth generation after his own. Now the chequerboard of the immortals was before my eyes. I saw its mottled squares, but where were the immortals? If I waited too long I might see them, and then the ages would speed by. I hastened to get away before I fell under their spell.

The valley was deep, with resounding corridors, overlooked by great bald peaks, some like lotus flowers carved from stone, others like embroidered silk screens that blocked the way and forced the road to swing hither and thither to find openings between the rocks. Waterfalls and streams went rushing by; peaches were in bloom, perfuming the air; mingled pink blossom and blue sky showed through the green foliage; idle bees and jaunty butterflies hummed and flitted hither and thither; pretty birds, unknown to me, vied with each other in song; all the dusty cares of the world were completely forgotten.

When T’ao Ch’ien wrote of the peach-blossom vale,he told of its deep enchanting vistas,cut off from every touch of humankind.16 Nowadays, peo-ple who have never seen such a garden,but only read the story,think that immortals really live in some such remote place, yet here before my eyes was the fabled garden itself. Why should I look for something far removed and out of reach, and lament that I have not seen the peach-blossom vale? I wrote this song:

The springtime stream has led me to the fairy peach vale

No need to ask if it is east or west;

Wafted fragrance beguiles me all day long

Amid the embroidered magic of these emerald hills. [page 63]

Entranced by the sight, I stood rooted to the spot, but too soon I had to leave. I realized that earth’s purest blessings are transient.

We continued till we came to the Sain-am, the official’s rocks. These rocks, though standing high in the air, looked like broken jade chimes. On the one hand they seemed to support the heavens, on the other they turned toward the little river rippling by. The stretch of white sand looked like spotlessly clean raw silk thread laid out to dry; the mountains appeared among the mists as though made of clouds themselves, high and lofty; the brilliance of the evening sun filtered through the thick leafage of the trees. It was a wonderful view, with the wild birds each glad in its own way, but my gladness the greatest of all. I was not yet sixteen, so I could hope to see it again sometime, and thus had no need to shed tears on leaving: other sights were beckoning us on, and I came away with only a general impression in my mind.

Our steps were directed next to Yongch’un, to see the two caves of the immortals Kumhwa and Namhwa.17 The morning was still a-shimmer with mist when we reached the river, called for a little boat, and followed the current till we came to the caves and made fast there. By the light of torches we stepped over the great stone that served as threshold. Inside was a deep pool of dark water. The rocks took on the forms of creatures, or of iron pillars. One was called the Bell Rock. I struck it, and a bell-like echo rang through the cave. At the entrance of P’eng-li in China there is a mountain called Stone Bell Mountain. Li Tao-yuan wrote that the water pounding on the cliffs resounded like the ringing of a bell, hence the name. Li Po found two rocks nearby and struck them: the one on the south side gave a deep muffled sound,while the one on the north rang clear and sharp. Su Tung-p’o18 wrote about the place and said Tao-yuan was correct. He derided Li Po’s idea, but I was unconvinced. Now that I had seen this stone and had definite proof that rocks can sometimes ring as clear as bells, I was sure that Li Po was correct, and wished I could see Tung-p’o just once to set him right. There were also many stalactites. I broke one off to take away with me, but it crumbled in my hand like spring snow melting in sunshine. I found the two caves much alike, both wonderful to see.

We next went towards Ch’ongp’ung to see Oksun-bong, jade bamboo- shoot peaks. A little boat like a leaf took us aboard and we sailed for a distance against the stream. The peaks stood up like coral brush-pens in a holder or like open white lotus-flowers in a golden pool. Were not these the stones that Nu-wa Shih19 placed squarely when she propped up the sky? They are wonderful. Perhaps they are the hills that Yu20 transplanted from elsewhere. Delighted above measure I lingered gazing at them till a light rain began to [page 64] fall sprinkling the trees. Birds hurried home to shelter among the rocks, and the white moon came out; soft breezes kissed us, fragrance of flowers and leaves was wafted across the water; the distant peaks that rested against the sky began to disappear from sight in the approaching dusk. It was a living moving picture of mountain and stream. We turned the boat and landed. I thought over all I had seen, and was sorry only that I could not spend more time enjoying one by one all those marvellous sights. I lay down, but could not sleep, so I wrote a stanza:

Moon and wind can never rest within the poet’s home.

So God, jealous of man, sends them to the mountains.

The wild birds know nothing beyond these hills,

And say all the joys of spring are in their woods.

I had now seen the famous sights of the Four Prefectures, and we turned our steps towards the Diamond Mountains. On we went till we reached Tanbal-lyong, Haircut Pass21, whence I could see the whole range of mountains一 twelve thousand white-topped peaks like piled jade tipped with snow. No drifted snow in the Western Hills of Peking could surpass this, yet the Western Hills are Peking’s most famous sight. They are said to sweep down from behind the Wan-shou range, full of recesses and terraces where immortals live, with peaks beyond their snow-capped peaks and behind them still more peaks again. ‘Snow on the Western Hills’ is one of the Eight Views of Peking. 22 The Diamond Mountains, however, with their terraces and peaks, belong among the clouds. White snow is seen there at all seasons, and their lofty peaks are one of the wonders of the world. They are called ‘a painting of faery land.’ I do not know what faery land is like, but these hills surpassed any painting that could be made.

Spring is tardy in those mountain paths: the leaves were green,but few flowers were out as yet. Cuckoos were calling, making a sad sound in the traveller’s ear. At the entrance to Changan Temple there was a space covered with slender golden grasses, where tall pines reach up to heaven. The high- storeyed halls of the Buddha bore heavily on the earth,each part built large and massively proportioned. The master of the temple was an old man with a face like a mountain-spirit, who leaned on a staff tipped with shining metal. He received us with kindly reverence and showed us to a room, where he had dishes of mountain herbs prepared and brought to us for our noonday meal. It was refreshing beyond words, and tasted delicious.

Later we went out to Sinson-nu, the pavilion of the fairies, and Okkyong- dae,Jade Mirror Rock. The hills seemed to close us in,and scattered rocks[page 65] stood around, barring the way; but we wound in and out among them till at last we reached a little open space, with the Sokka-bong, Sakyamuni’s Peak, standing to the south. Before us was a wonderful wall of rock, half a hundred paces wide, that shot up high into the air, as smooth as the face of a millstone and broad as the sail of a ship. It glittered like glass or polished white jade, dazzlingly bright. Hence it is called Myonggyong-dae, Bright Mirror Rock, or Opkyong-dae, Karma-mirror Rock.

Before it lies a pool with deep, yellowish water, called Hwangch’on-gang, the River of the Yellow Shades. On its south side is the rock called T’ogyong-dae. The name was carved on it in characters filled with vermilion ink. I sat on the rock and looked down on Kyoktam,the Closed-in Pool, so called because a low stone wall with trees surrounds it. I went to see it and found the gate-opening, wide enough for two people to walk through abreast, called Chiok Mun, the ‘gate to hell.’ They say that at the fall of Silla the crown prince escaped to this place and built a fort and palace behind Myong-gyong-dae. This ‘gate to hell’ was his exit and entrance. He wore sackcloth and ate nothing but herbs till the day of his death. The buildings had mouldered away when I was there, but the foundation stones remained.

Then we wended our way to Pyohun Temple, with Chunghyang-song, the ‘Sukhavati Fortress’,23 on our right and Chijang-bong, “Ksitigarbha Peak,”24 on our left. It was a quiet, deep, stony pathway, very steep, that led us over a dangerous bridge made of a single log. At last we saw before us the gate pavilion of the temple, called Nungp’a-ru, the Pavilion of Crossing Beyond the World’s Waves. We looked at the main hall of the temple and the smaller buildings, then ascended Paegun-dae, White Cloud Summit. As we went up we clung to a great chain,as thick as a man’s arm, and I was very frightened. I felt as though I was climbing to heaven; when I looked down I saw a thousand feet of yawning abyss below, with temples here and there playing hide-and-seek among the clouds and mist. It was a view of astounding beauty.

There was a cave, too, called Podok, under Mugal, the limitless peak. Over the cave stood a small temple, with one side resting on a projecting rock and the other on stones built up from the ground. Beneath it were brazen pillars with beams laid across them on which the temple rested. Iron chains dangled from the little temple so that people could lay hold of them and climb. The chain shook and swung in such a terrifying way that my legs trembled and my heart failed me. I did not dare to look down. In the temple was a small marble figure of the Buddha, and before it a large censer made of dark metal, so huge that no one could lift it. They told us that Princess Chongmyong25 [page 66] presented it to the Buddha. Though the hall is very small, the materials used in building it must have cost uncountable thousands. The temple folk told us that a nun had lived in the cave, and as she sat meditating she was rapt away. Her disciples built the temple in her memory and named both it and the cave Podok, great virtue.

At the side is a waterfall that glides gently over a flat rock. Projections catch the drift and hold it in two pools, one round and one square; the spray and foam from the falling water rise in clouds, so cold that one cannot go very near it. Beside it countless streams flow off in foaming torrents towards the valleys. They have cut ridges in the rocks and finally at the foot they have hollowed out a great green pool, Myong-yon, the Singing Pool.

A short distance further on we came to Pyokha-dam, Blue-Cloud Lake, and Pip’a-dam, Harp Pool, which adjoin each other. The water comes down a slanting course and breaks into spray like powdered jade. The scene grew more wonderful as we went further: some of the rocks on the bank of the stream had openings in them from which water bubbled out; others stood high,with caverns beneath them where there was ample room to escape from rainstorms. It was all fascinating.

We continued till we came to a small pool called Paengyong-dam, White Dragon Pool. Its waters are remarkably clear, but it is not included in the list of the Eight Lakes.26 A few paces further on was a waterfall that rushed down a slope and found its destination in an inky pool called Hungnyong-dam, ‘Black Dragon Pool.’ Sometimes we passed great flat rocks with hollows in them like rice mortars filled with water,called sesubun, washbowls. Still further on was a cascade with light blue water,and a pool beneath it called it called Ch’ongnyong-dam, ‘Blue Dragon Pool.’ This is the source of the Eight Lakes of the Diamond Mountains.

All that day we were among waterfalls: they sounded like mountains crumbling or rocks crashing into the valleys. We saw many strange flowers, plants and birds,and animals that scuttled away. I cannot begin to tell how entrancingly wonderful it all was. We passed between Oson-bong, ‘peak of the Five Immortals,’ and Hyangno-bong,’Censer Peak,’ with water leaping from shelf to shelf and circling from this point to that till it settled in a whirling pool at a place called Manp’ok-tong, Valley of Ten Thousand Waterfalls. A great rock at the side had eight Chinese characters chiselled on it:

*Pong nae p’ung ak won hwa tong ch’on*

“P’eng-lai hills, maple-covered mountains,creation nearest Heaven.” They say that these characters were written by an immortal, Yang Pongnae. They [page 67] look like silver hooks on steel hawsers,or dragons and serpents on the wing. Beyond this was a screen rock with six characters written on it in the square style by Kim Sogun:

*Ch’on ha che il myong san*

“The finest mountains in the world."

Between Oson-bong and Ch’onghak-tae, Blue Crane Terrace,is a space filled with high rocks that form a gateway called the Diamond Gate, Kum- gang-mun.28 Ch’onghak-tae rose storey upon storey,like huge kimch’i pots or woven baskets piled high. On top of the peaks were pointed rocks, like the shrines that enclose Buddhist statuettes. Some were like ceremonial hats. There were white spots on the rocks that appeared to be the droppings of crows. It was indeed a place where the birds of the immortals might build their nests. There is a tradition that in days gone by blue cranes29 nested and reared their young there, but Yang Pongnae’s inscription destroyed their power, so they flew away and were never seen again. I had my name cut in the rocks at the side.

Transported to this fragrant place,this land of new wonders,

Where shattered blossoms lie in the grass,I grieve for the tired world.

These matchless trees paint a picture of springtime;

The sound of countless streams makes the valleys glad.

I see the moon has reached its fifteenth evening,

Which makes me think of home and proves I have not transmigrated.

Day dies, deep in the mountains,and the flapping cranes

Are what I have seen in dreams at night.

We went on till we reached the Sumeru pagoda.30 It stands beneath Sumeru Peak,Sumi-bong,which looks like bales of black and white silk piled layer upon layer, rising high in mid-air. Before it was a great smooth rock with water flowing over it. Snow and ice still lingered there.

We passed on to Chongyang Temple and went up into the gate-tower, called Ho1song-dae, Guest-Awakening Terrace. From this outlook the whole Inner Diamond Range can be seen. As far as the eye can see there is no hindrance in any direction—twelve thousand peaks extending on and on: some white-capped, as though with snow; some like a Buddha seated in meditation; some decked with pins and ornaments; some holding swords aloft; some like lotus buds, ready to open; some like plantain leaves; some bowed with folded hands; some stooped and bending low; some looking down, some gazing up; some standing, some sitting down—ten thousand shapes and attitudes, beyond my powers of description. [page 68]

To the south were Changgyong-bong, Peak of Eternal Blessing,Kwanum- bong ‘Avalokitesvara Peak,’31 the lower Peak of Chijang, and Sokka Peak. To the southeast were the upper peak of Chijang, Paengma-bong, White Horse Peak; Siwang-bong, Ten Kings Peak; Solli-bong and Ch’ail-bong, Sun- Hiding Peak; on the west were Manggo-dae, Orphan Terrace; Miruk-bong, Maitreya Peak; Hyolmang-bong and Sogung-bong,Stone Falcon Peak. Beneath Manggo-dae was the little temple of Songna-am, Pine and Turnip Hermitage, while Heneath Sogung-bong was the temple of Unjang-am, silver storehouse, and beneath Paengma-bong the little hermitage of Yongwon, spiritual source. The peaks behind this were those of the five immortals, Oson- bong. ,

The many peaks to the northeast make up Chunghyang-song. If one could only see them among the changing leaves of autumn, with evening light glinting through the branches like lamplight athwart red silk curtains and pictured screens, what a sight of wonder, beauty and delight they would be.

To the west of Chunghyang-song is Yongnang-ch’ am, a rest-house; to the east of Sumi-bong is Piro-bong ,Vairocana Peak,32 the highest of them all; also Kasup-pong, Kasyapa Peak,33 and Saja-bong, Lion Peak, just below it. Beneath Chunghyang-song are Paegun-dae,Paegun-am,White Cloud Her-mitage, and Manhoe Temple. Beyond Saja-bong are the greater and lesser Hyangno-bong. To the west is Ch’onghak-tae, but the direction only was indicated to me; I could not see it clearly. It was like being told what dragon’s flesh tastes like.

The ruddy morning sun came riding up from beneath the tinted clouds and all the air seemed sweetened and refreshed by its presence. It was like the autumn moon reflected in the mirror of a lake. The silvery surfaces of the granite rocks glinted and sparkled. Now I knew the truth about the mountains of the immortals that lie beyond the ocean,34 and Wu-shan, the mountain of the fairies, where the Lake of Gems35 is found. Though I saw neither phoenix nor unicorn I saw all sorts of marvellous birds and beasts. It was as though I was walking the pathways of P’eng-lai with their fairy groves and vistas. My wits forsook me and my soul was intoxicated with joy, so I wrote a poem:

Holsong Terrace pierces the heart of heaven:

At this threshold of the hills I stand in a painted forest.

My finger points to a thousand lovely sights,

Lotus peaks without number,ten thousand shaded crags.

In the temples was a priest called Sorak, Snowy Peak, an old man of ninety- seven, seated in recitation of the sutras. His only food was pine-nut soup, but [page 69] he had ceased even from that for nearly three years. He was like one of the Immortals, or a Buddha.

We went up to Kaesim-dae, Outlook of the Open Heart, and gazed towards Chunghyang-song. The hills seemed to jostle each other as though striving for position. The longer I looked, the more wonderful they seemed, like sharply-broken white jade fragments or pointed lotus buds. Light was reflected from them towards the stars; all the loveliest colours of heaven and earth seemed assembled here with the added charms of mountain and stream. It cleared the mind and made the heart sing: I wanted to spread my wings like a fairy and ride away to heaven on the clouds.

At last the sun sank slowly toward the west, and evening shadows, like crimson silk, settled over the valley. I cannot begin to describe the wonderful approach of night. We reached Maha-yon, where a small temple stood at the feet of Chunghyang-song. The windows of the meditation house were thrown wide open, and I looked out to where Taehyangno-bong seemed as though it lay just beyond the moon. Hyolmang-bong and Manggo-bong seemed to be just by my window. Hyolmang-bong, Gate of Hope, was tall, straight and handsome, as it were dressed in watered silk, half hidden among the trees. Its name comes from an opening like an arched gateway, big enough for a man to pass through on the crest of the hill Manggo-bong and Hyolmang-bong are joined like brothers, only the summits standing apart Kasup-pong stands behind, a wonderful shape. I gazed up at Chunghyang-song, and its peaks crowded closely upon me, right up to my door, like Buddhas with white shaven heads, startling at first sight. The loveliness of the surroundings, the neatness of the temple, and the mystery of deep valleys and mighty rocks with pines overshadowing them assuredly make this one of the finest views within the Diamond Mountains region.

We walked about a li36 till we came to pass called An-mun, Goose Gate. I climbed it and found that the top,which stands at the boundary of Hoeyang and Kosong counties, was quite flat. It is also called Naesan-ch’am, Inner Mountain Rest. From this point many of the Inner Diamond Mountain peaks are visible,37 a fantastic sight. Piro-bong stands out high above the others, massive and magnificent, white and shining with reflected light. It is the chief peak of the inner group. Ilch’ul-bong and Wolch’ul-bong,peaks of the rising sun and rising moon, stood pure and white on either side.

We crossed a dangerous bridge made of a single decaying log, and came to Pulchi-am, ‘Buddha’s Finger Rock,’ shooting high into the air above a precipice a thousand feet deep. On the wide face of the rock is carved Naong’s portrait of Manjusri,38 stern and distinguished, full of massive force [page 70] and power. By the side of the road is a bunded outlook with a stone lantern which is lighted on sacrificial occasions, when prayers are offered. A rapid stream flowed past, leaping from rock to rock like silver threads flung out, so that the face of the current looked like a skein of white silk laid out to bleach. Had Li Po ever seen this he would never have written as he did about Lu-shan falls.39

Beside Pulchi-am is a spring of water called Kamnosu, Sweet Dew.40 It tastes fresh and satisfying, and is said to cure all earth’s ills. I had an attack of indigestion, so I drank some. Afterwards I felt so much refreshed and better inside that I entirely understood its reputation.

We arrived at Chijang Temple. Several monks, all wearing white habits, jostled each other as they hurried down the dozen steps of the staircase to greet us with polite bows. One of them was an old monk, over seventy, of the Ch’unch’on Yi clan, who ordered another monk to bring a bowl of noodles, which I ate with relish, because we had walked over the mountain and I was hungry.

We stayed there three days. Every morning and evening the monks chanted their service. The sound of bells echoed back and forth till one lost all thought of the ordinary world. The temple was full of beautiful things. I realized how true was the saying that ‘All the valuable things are in mountain temples.’41

We found that Ch’ongnyon-am, Blue Lotus Temple, was inhabited by nuns. It was spotlessly clean, and the food they prepared, fruit and vegetables, was so fresh and appetizing that we greatly enjoyed it. I learned that two palace maids-in-waiting were staying there to drink the medicinal waters,so I waited to see what they were like; but they were very common women, not worth bothering about.

Passing through Wongt’ong valley, we went to Saja-bong, before which is a pool called Hwaryong-dam, Fire-Dragon Pool, shaped like an ancient dragon coiled up. It receives the waters of the Eight Lakes, and the rush of the rapids sounded like muffled thunder. The peaks on either side were lost in the clouds. I had my name cut on the rocks by Hwaryong-dam.

A little further on we came to a pretty lake called Chinju-dam, Pearl Pool A stone beside it had the inscription Suryom-dong, Water Curtain Vale. This is the finest of the Eight Lakes.

After this we went to Yujom-sa, the chief temple of the Outer Diamond Mountains.42 It has been burnt down several times,and they said it was not so splendid as it used to be, but I could not imagine anything more magnincent. To the east of the main hall is a well called Ot’ak-chong,’the well where the [page 71] crow pecked.’ Its water is sweet and clear. There was no well at the temple till one day the monks saw a crow come and peck the ground They dug in the place thus indicated. and water came gushing out, a great stream, always full and overflowing. Hence the well’s name.

King Sejo once visited Yujom-sa, and on that account his successors Yejong and Songjong gave fields and lands to the temple, with title deeds under the royal seal. A special house was built to house the tablets of the three kings and the royal letters patent. When the temple was burnt,this building escaped damage.

On the throne of the Buddha was a carving of many branches, like deer antlers. Seated on these were fifty-three tiny Buddhas, not more than a few inches high, all said to have been made in Silla times. The great monk Man-jusri made fifty-three bells to be sounded in the service of the Buddha, but they were all transformed and began to fly about, so Manjusri sent them off over the sea to the country of Tukhara. The king of that country, wanting to find the proper place for the bells, put them in a stone boat and sent them back to sea. They arrived at Kosong, where they were changed into fifty-three Bud-dhas, and set among the rocks,where the ‘bell-hung cliff now is. At that time a monk dreamed that there was an old nun on the road, following a white dog and a grey roe-deer at the places now called Kuryong, Dog Pass, and Changnyong, Roe Deer Col. The monk thought the dream strange, and traced the path through the pine woods. The magistrate of Kosong, No Ch’un, heard about this,went out with his men to meet the monk,and discovered that the fifty-three Buddhas had flown from their places in the rocks and were sitting on the limbs of a zelkowa tree beside a big pool. King Namhae43 was informed and a temple was built for the Buddhas, called Yujom, Zelkowa Resting-place, because the Buddhas had been on the zelkowa tree. There were nine dragons in the great pool. A priest of great spiritual power prayed for three days and three nights, and the dragons departed into the hils, but the pool is still called Kuryong-yon, Nine Dragon Pool.

An image was made of No Ch’un in a red robe, black hat and golden belt, with a sceptre in his hand. Beside him are little wooden men and horses to represent the equipage that joined him in the search. To this day sacrifices are offered to him. His wife followed him, but failed to overtake him and became the guardian spirit of a mountain pass.

Later on, three of the Buddhas were lost and the monks made imitation ones to take their places. It became known in a dream, however, that these three were distasteful to the others, so they were removed and the monks set out among the mountains to find the original ones. At last they succeeded in [page 72] restoring the missing statues to their places. This story is related by the Koryo scholar,Min Chi,44 who was a great lover of Buddhism, and was so much misled by it that he gave himself the name of Pophuija, he who rejoices in the dharma. His words are untrustworthy; what he says cannot be relied on.

Queen Inmok copied out with her own hand the Mit’a Sutra, and the book is now kept at Yujom-sa. She did the work while she was a prisoner in the West Palace, and at the end she added a brief note that reads: ‘May my parents and relatives and my son, Prince Yongch’ang, all be blessed in the next world.’ Princess Chongmyong also presented to Buddha many precious things adorned with gems embroidery.45

In the main courtyard is a beautifully carved pagoda of twelve storeys and a bronze cauldron big enough to hold a hundred measures of rice. At specially great sacrifices, such as those offered for all sentient creatures of land and sea, this cauldron is filled to the brim, and though the fire is fed with pine branches there is never any smoke. It is called the smokeless cauldron, and regarded as a great wonder. All the temples of the Inner and Outer Diamond Mountains have similar great cauldrons.

The sun set behind the mountains and the moon came out,bright as day, illuminating all the features of the hills like a monochrome ink-painting; the bells sounded clear and sweet. I wrote a poem:

A single monastery hangs on the scarp high in heaven,

And bells on the north mountain are echoed by the south;

A snowy cloud floats idly out of the valley,

The moon rises to shine on the still deep pool.

I am awakened to understand the floating dream of life,

As though in the silence I heard the words of the ancient Buddha;

In this pure world of the fifty-three statues

My soul penetrates the kalpas,lit by wisdom’s lamp.

We crossed Kuryong and saw Unson-dae, Outlook of a Hermit Immortal. High mountains shut out the north west view—how high I do not know, but they were dark green, almost black. The place is called Hyoun-dong, Dawn Cloud Valley. Water rushed over the rocks like cloth hung out to bleach, tum-bling down a course called the Twelve Cascades. Medicinal my appointed fate.

The day faded toward the west, and evening mists gathered in the valleys. Rain fell softly on the woods; the colours of the landscape changed as the moon rose clear and full, like the white jade of Lan-t’ien46 or the Ts’ang- hai pearl shining as in a glass bottle.47 It was a sight utterly out of this world. [page 73]

Next morning we climbed the high cliffs of the enclosing wall and made our way through flowering bushes. Sweet fragrance scented my clothes and fresh breezes caressed me. From the summit I could see the ocean stretching away, seemingly one with the sky: I felt it would be delightful to sail off into space, riding on the wind. I have never seen the landscape of China, but I have read a poem by a Chinese who longed to see the Diamond Mountains of Korea, and I cannot imagine that any place in the world could be more beautiful. Looking at the sea, I wrote:

A hundred streams are lost in the eastern sea,

So deep and wide, a boundless expanse.

I see the heavens and earth so vast,

Yet I have my place among them.

The Diamond Mountains have many names: Kumgang-san, Vajra Mountains; Chunghyang-song, Sukhavati Fortress; Yolban, Nirvana; Kaegol, Bare Bones; Fungak, Autumn Foliage Rocks; and Pongnae, Faery Land; but the usual name is Kumgang-san. The Inner and Outer Ranges are filled with rocks and peaks in all sorts of odd formations, and waterfalls of every description make their way over the heights. The inner range is steep and precipitous, bluish- white in colour; the outer range is gentler in formation and more blue than white. The finest peaks are Piro-bong, Chunghyang-bong, Tae-hyangno-bong, So-hyangno-bong, Ch’onghak-pong, Kwanum-bong, Oson-bong, Manggo- bong and Hyolmang-bong. The most famous pools are Manp’ok-tam, Hungnyong-dam, Pyokha-dam, Punsol-tam (Drifting Snow Pool), Chinju- dam and Kwi-dam (Turtle Lake, i.e. North Lake). The most interesting rocks are Myonggyong-dae and Myogilsang-dae. Holsong-nu and Paegun-dae are the best view-points; the valley leading to Changan-sa is the prettiest valley; Pyohun-sa, Podok-kul and Mahayon-am are the most famous temples in the inner mountains; Ch’ilbo-dae,Outlook of the Seven Treasures; Pulchong-dae, Buddha’s Brow Rock; Songmun-dong, Stone Gate Valley; Ch’aeun-bong, Bright Cloud Peak; and Chipson-bong are all especially beautiful. Son-dam with its rushing waters like fluttering phoenix wings and white spray like fine jade is the loveliest lake, but Kuryong-yon, with its waves and torrents, is the most impressive stretch of water among all the twelve thousand peaks. Yujom-sa,standing with other famous sights in the outer range,is the most interesting of the temples.

The charm of the Diamond Mountains lies less in their rocks and streams than in their colour: a mysterious white. I could never guess how many peaks there are. They suggest innumerable shapes, colours and forms: seven out of [page 74] ten have some sort of resemblance - an old monk, a temple bell, a drum, and so on. There was no place of interest in the inner and outer ranges that I did not go to see. In the thick woods and among the rocks where the water rushes by there must be tigers and leopards, but no one had ever feared them in the Diamond Mountains, which shows how truly the gentle spirit of the hills is in control.

Among the records in the temples is one that tells how a Chinese monk named T’an-wu-chieh48 came and sat on Chunghyang-song and attracted 12,000 disciples whom he taught there, until he became a Buddha and the disciples turned into 12,000 peaks. Even today one great peak is pointed out as the metamorphosed T’an-wu-chieh. Such a foolish notion!

The circle of the inner range is sixty li in circumference, that of the outer range is 100 li or more. The outer range is mainly in Kosong county,but some of its northern ramifications extend as far as T’ongch’on.

Thus I had seen the Diamond Mountains. Now I wanted to see the Eight Views of Kwandong49 so I started for Kumnan-gul, Golden Gown Cave, going towards T’ongch’on until we reached Ch’ongsok-chong, Clustered Stone Pavilion. It stands on the face of a high peak,the giddy pathway leading to it carpeted with flat stones shaped like pillar bases. Before us was the harbour facing north,with great stones of hexagonal shape,as though cut by human design, standing on the shore in a dozen or so crowded groups. Each cluster consisted of seven or eight huge stone pillars thirty or forty feet high, looking just as if they were made of dark crystals set row upon row. Each had six sides without any shadow of irregularity, as smooth as surfaces trimmed with great skill by a mason’s chisel. If one takes a boat and rows out to sea,one has a better view of their peculiar formation, and can see how they are arranged. Some groups stand a hundred kil high and have forty or fifty stones in them. We passed one cluster to find still others. Those at the south stood high facing those at the north. I do not know how they could all have been formed so much alike and bunched so closely together. The clusters that stood in the water in front were like a thousand great bamboos; those on the shore behind looked like an artificial screen. The distance between the clusters is five or six paces. From ancient times men have tried to count them,but have always failed, so no definite number can be given for them, nor for the many similar stones that stand out at sea. Some of them, both on the shore and in the sea, are called wach’ongsok, recumbent stone clusters. They lie in perfect order each form fitting the other, the whole bound together like a sheaf, and all with six sides. By what power were they formed?

In records of the world’s famous places I can find nothing that corre-[page 75] sponds to these hexagonal pillars, and yet here they are on our own east coast—an extraordinary sight. If Chuang-tzu had seen them he would have laughed and said,“God told Nu-wa the earth goddess to build a jewelled palace with them, but she never finished it.” If King Ling of Ch’u,50 Ch’ in Shih-huang51 had seen them, they would have called the people of the earth and had the clusters pulled apart and dismantled to build the Chang-hua Palace, the A-fang Palace,and the Po-liang Palace. Pines are said to differ from other trees in that when cut down they do not grow again,but if these stony clusters are broken off they are said to shoot up and live again like great trunks-a very strange thing.

Hae-gumgang, the Diamond Mountains of the sea, are rocky peaks beneath the water that resemble the Diamond Mountains on land. On a fair day if you pour fish oil on the sea you can look down through the waters and see these wonders. The day I was there the weather was beautiful. The great sea lay before us, limitless except where it met the sky. We went out by boat and saw the 12,000 peaks that lie submerged below the water—storeys, terraces and stratified sections wonderful to behold, blue and white like the graded tones of an ink picture. They are difficult to describe, but they must be acknowledged as one of the worlds’s wonders. The mighty skill that built the Diamond Mountains playfully added these beneath the sea. So great a power is wonderful and awesome. I wrote a poem about the stone clusters:

Clusters of dark gem-stone stand

High in the sky,deep in the sea;

Ten thousand hexagonal pillars

Hewed and shaped by a mystic adze.57

We left and went on to Kosong, to a place called Samilp’o, where there was a great forest of pines, through which we could see the reflection of sunlight on the sea. To the north was a heaving expanse of blue, to the west massive ranges of mountains rising high above each other; great rocks shot out like bamboo shafts, and shining sands covered the ground like bleaching silk—a world of dreams.

On the back of a huge rock ahead of us I saw carved the characters samlip’o, Three Day Lake, and on the front cheil hosan,the finest scenery in the world. We put out in a boat and found we were in an arm of the sea that comes in from the northeast. The water was green as grass and the waves shone like mirrors; gulls and egrets sat undisturbed as we passed by; seaweed moved about in the having of the swell. The water was not more than five feet deep in the deepest places and three where it was shallower. Here and there [page 76] were islands of white stone with green trees dotting their surface; some thirty- six peaks encircled us,which seemed to dance and smile as we sculled along. The rocks had varied shapes like huge rice-cauldrons or great temple-bells, and all had their faces turned inward. Each group had a beauty of its own, like a girl who is pretty because of her own natural beauty rather than because of ornament or dress. One longed to touch them.

It used to be said that the west lake was the chief beauty of Hang-chou,and I can say the same of Samilp’o among the Eight Views of Kwandong. We made fast the boat and went up to the belvedere,which is named Sason-jong, Pavilion of the Four Immortals, after the four hwarang,53 Yougnag, Sllang, Ansang and Namsok, who in Silla times came and visited this place. The lake is called Samil,Three Days, because that was the length of time they stayed there. The inscribed rock is an island in the midst of the water and the pavilion sits on top of it. Huge rocks are piled about it: some like tigers ready to spring. Some like an eagle dropped from the sky, some like tortoises and some like carp, they all surround the pavilion and protect it.

The pavilion is four kan in area54 and its pillars are hexagonal stones. The inside is simply paved with stone, without flooring or rooms. The water all around is only two bowshots wide, yet it is said to be forty li in circumference. In such a spot as this we grubby people of the dusty world are cleansed and purified; had I stayed there I should have grown wings and become an immortal.

Many boards inscribed with verses hang in the pavilion. The best is by Ch’oe Ip.55 The rocks to the south have inscribed on them SuNang-do, Sul-lang’s Company, and Nam-sok-haeng, Namsok’s Band. On the south-west wall in large characters was written Yang Pong-nae.56 We went down from Hyon-jong-am, Hanging Bell Rock, to the shore level. Green woods and wide fields were bordered with rocks and craggy peaks; streams and rivulets adorned the way, and rugosa roses were in bloom at the side of the road. We walked on soft sand that crunched as you trod on it,so it was called myongsa, singing sand.57 The roses of the singing sands are famous:

When the flowers of spring have all faded,

The sea-rose alone blooms red.

Then when the rose too is shattered,

Spring is past,past and gone.

We now made our way to Kansong and visited Ch’onggan-jong, the Pavilion of the Clear Stream. It is on the edge of the sea, and why they should have named it after a stream I do not know. [page 77]

In the sea before the pavilion are some rocks that look like great turtles and are called Kwi-am, ‘turtle rocks’. Among them is one called Chama-sok, Self-grinding Stone. Below and around it are small stones that look as though they have passed through the hopper, the largest about the size of a ginkgo leaf, the smallest like a piece of cash. They are said to be the self-grindings of the big rock, which actually consists of two rocks one poised above the other, with a space between. How they ever manage to grind without touching I do not know, but if you write on one of them in ink the writing is entirely ground away in a day or two. I cannot explain this.

We sat in the pavilion to watch the moon rise. In the morning after cockcrow the windows of the sea suddenly lit up, and a half-moon, peerless as ice or polished jade, slowly rose. For a time it seemed to play hide-and-seek, till at last it came up clear and free,splendid as a jewel on the border of a cloud, like a great lotus bursting from the sea, or a globe of rock-crystal gleaming in the sky. A soft fresh breeze blew and one’s mind was clarified like an immortal’s. Though the night was far spent I had no desire to sleep, but called my boy and bade him bring me tea. Then I ground the ink on my inkstone and wrote:

The blue-black heavens lighten at the edge

And all creation wakes anew.

My boy has gone to make the tea,

Drawing clear water where moonlight drips through the pines.

The scene changed and the rays of the rising sun shot forth. Birds chattered under the eaves. I dozed for a while,then woke and looked out at the sea: the clouds and mist were gone. The sea is so wide,I do not know how wide, only that it is the greatest thing on earth, and we humans are not so much as a grain of millet in its boundless space.

Next we went to Naksan Temple in Yangyang county. Pines grew thick and green upon the dark mountains round us as we reached Naksan-sa, the temple of Kuan-yin58 by the sea. One side of the temple was built on a crag and the other stood on pillars over the water, across which beams were placed with the hall built on top of them. The statue of Avalokitesvara was protected with white ramie cloth. Through an opening in the floor one can see the tides coming and going below, rolling an the rocks with heavy thunder, I opened the windows to see better, and there the great expanse of ocean stretched off to heaven,unreal,like a vast picture reflecting hills and trees. White gulls were flying around

I noticed that the girls who live by the seashore have faded hair and sun- [page 78] burnt legs because they gather seaweed for a living. Junks laden with merchandise were constantly coming and going. The village houses had rice mortars made of whalebone, from which one can guess how huge the whales must be. Great numbers of seals came out and sat upon the rocks. Their coats are black, their shape like dogs, and they bark when they see people approaching, but dive into the water when you come near.

We went up to the Uigyong Pavilion to see the sun rise. The cocks of the neighbour-hood began to crow as I looked out over the broad sea, all dark in its clouds and mists. We waited for an hour but there was no sign of dawn. My feelings rose in resentment against the evil spirits that oppose the dawn. In the days of Han, Li hsin59 said that when morning was about to break fresh breezes blew and the dark atmosphere of earth fell prostrate before them. Those who try to observe the sunrise across the ocean usually find their view blocked by mist and clouds. I expect these are the dark negative atmospheres of night lying heaped up and impeding the rising of the sun. Clouds originate in water: the spirit of the deep, shot through by the sun’s rays, forms a cloud, which opposes the light and struggles with it, but at last I saw a great red mirror come up from the underworld, hanging from the edge of the clouds, a bright fiery crimson as it mounted little by little on its way, illuminating the sky like a monster pearl set on a jade stand. Beyond the blue of the harbour a vast rosy silk umbrella opened its folds, and all the mottled vapours of the morning fled before it as the ruddy disc rode triumphantly above. I was beside myself with joy, and sang and danced madly. The light was reflected off the surface of the sea till the clouds were all iridescent, and the sunshine reached the land, lighting heaven and earth till everything was bright.

The crimson disc dispels the gloom of night And rises free to run its course again. The villagers come out to gather wood and water, While fleeting mists bedew the dusty earth.

Next we bent our steps to Kyongp’o-dae at Kangnung, a decorated pavilion built high above a lake whose still water is as clear as a freshly-washed mirror. It was so clear that one could count the very grains of sand. The green hills were embroidered silk,the sandy beach was powdered jade; tall pines rose in stately grandeur, green willows hung humbly down; yellow orioles called to each other, red roses opened their buds. The calm and lovely lake was beyond description. Kangnung is a great city with many honorific red gates before the houses of loyal and filial subjects. In the days of Yao and Shun every house was the home of a good man;60 I judged that Kangnung was [page 79] like that.

We left for Ulchin and ascended Mangyang-dae, ‘Ocean Outlook,’ which faces the sea and has an unobstructed view. I sat and gazed at it all day long, unable to exhaust wonder. I saw the spouting of whale, like drifts of snow in the air, or like the Milky Way dusting down from the sky. The island seemed to shake with the mighty reverberations of the deep, as the loud thunder of the sea joined the rushing sound of the waters. There is an old saying that when the sea is angry the Marquis of Yang stirs up the waves.61 I saw boats that put out to sea rise high on the crests of the waves, then drop down and disappear from sight. It looked most dangerous, and I trembled lest they should be engulfed .

Now we left for Wolsong-jong, ‘the Pinetree Pavilion’ in P’yonghae prefecture. The wind was low and the water without a ripple. The distant islands seemed to flicker in and out of view, as the sea merged imperceptibly with the sky in a great veil of haze. I was moved by this, and overcome with melancholy: it seemed to be a picture of life.

After this we visited Chukso-ru, Pavilion West of the Bamboos, at Samch’ok. It is said that fifty streams issue from the T’aebaek hills and rush towards this eastern sea. The beauty of the place was wonderful. I forgot the time and that the day was growing late. Beautiful birds flew by in pairs, but I did not know their names: in this lovely place even the birds and animals seemed different.

Before one has seen and compared them it is hard to think of the hills and the sea as being equally attractive, but this tour of hundreds of li proved to me that they are twins in splendour: the hills with their countless peaks and the sea with its inlets and promontories. All the beauties of sea and land are locked up in such places—sights to make the good and wise glad and happy.62 One must see the Eight Views of the East Coast to know the world.

Although we had seen all the Eight Views of Kwandong, I was still not satisfied, so we went to Inje prefecture in search of Sorak-san, Snow-Peak Hills. There the land climbs up towards heaven with peaks and rock-shafts everywhere, and the bald snow-white ridges give the hills their name. Terrace upon terrace they stand, with countless steams gushing forth from them, cool and refreshing, as we crossed and recrossed the streams on our winding way, peaks vied with each other for glory, and great trees shut out the sky. Cranes called below the pines and deer fled off over the creeping vines. Surely I was seeing the Lake of Gems and the P’eng-lai Hills of the Immortals. Rhododendrons were in bloom on both sides of the stream, crowded together with green foliage and other flowers, their colours reflected in the water like the lights of [page 80] the rainbow. They were as lovely as the rainbow of Yu-ch’uan beneath the hills behind Peking, where the water drops gems of sparking light and is called Fan-hsueh-ch’un,’Snow Drifting Spring,It forms a pool three kil wide that is one of the Eight Views of Peking,formerly called Ch’ui-hung, hanging rainbow, but now called Yli-ch’uan Pao-t’u, Galloping Rapids. There is a stone there inscribed The most beautiful spring in the world.’ I have never seen it, ut I cannot believe that its hanging rainbow can equal the wonders I saw in Sorak-san.

The mountains reached the very sky. We climbed them, inch by inch, to the brow of a giddy peak. A cascade there called Taesung63 seemed to poise in mid-air and then drop down, down, down—how many hundred feet I could not tell, pearls and jade fragments dancing along its sparkling way. Its rolling thunder greeted us, the sunshine glinted on it, the air was filled with fine spray. Such mystic beauty and wonder must surely equal and even surpass Li Po’s Lu-shan. Which was finer, his waterfall or mine? Mine, I am sure. Three thousand feet is nowhere near its height. It is like the Milky War dropping in flashes of foam from the ninth heaven; comparisons with bleaching silk or drifts of snow would be altogether too mundane. It belongs with the Yu-lung-yao, ‘Jade Dragon Belt,’ and Yin-ti-tung, Silver Rainbow.64 I put on rain clothes, covered my head, and went in close beneath the falls. Flying spray drifted over me, and rattled on my headwear like hailstones. I knew it was only water, yet the sound of it nearly frightened me out of my wits.

In the morning, mists covered the hills, so that we could see nothing but the tips of the peaks showing through the clouds like jade-green gems on screens. After a little, the mist lifted and the moon came slowly up while soft breezes swept clear the peaks, chasms and rocks. It was lovely beyond description.

A thousand peaks rise high to pierce the heavens;

Such soft-spun mist no artist could depict.

How magnificent the sights of Sorak-san.

Yet Mahay ana stream surpasses all.

We went to see Paektam-sa, White Lake Monastery, and rested for a while before making our way to Suryom-dong, Water-Curtain Valley ,where the views are very beautiful. There formerly stood Yongsi-am,Long Arrow Hermitage, where Kim Samyon65 used to stay, and Ose-am, Five-Year-Old Child Monastery where Ch’onghan-ja66 spent his days. Today only the sites remain, so I never saw either of them, but because of those two famous men the Sorak hills—which are as high as the Diamond Mountains—have won lasting fame. [page 81]

Having now seen all the famous mountains and sea-views, I wanted to visit a great city, and turned my steps towards Seoul. Looking towards Hanyang I sang:

Like dividing duckweed I float far from friends.

Journeying many days, never stopping to rest;

My heart turns in eagerness as my chair is borne along

To where the royal city shines bright from dawn to dusk.

Hanyang has been the capital of the kingdom for centuries, a blessed site of happiness and prosperity. I should glimpse it as though seeing a tiger between the bamboo stems, an imperfect impression, yet enough for me to sense its splendour and its vigour. Its peaks and hills, some low some high, are like dragons and crouching tigers; some sharp like raised swords or standing spears. To the north are Samgak-san, Three-Horned Mmountain, and Paegak, North Summit, whose immense weights stabilize the fortunes of the capital. To the south is Mongmyok, Namsan, shaped like a low reading desk or table; to the left Wangsim-ni guards the eastern walls, and to the right Malli-jae props up the western sky. The River Han surrounds the city like a silver girdle, its three ports67 spreading out their markets where boats and junks crowd together. Their bustling life, with heaps of produce from sea ana land, is impressive in its intensity.

When Koguryo was a weak state centred on P’yongyang, King Yang of Sui raised a huge army but failed to conquer it.68 His own army was destroyed instead, and in those days the Chinese used to say, “Spare us that we be not sent to die in Liao-tung (Korea)”. Even the valour of T’ai Tsung of T’ang gave out before the city where his warriors went back defeated.69 If things went thus in Koguryo days, what could any army expect today in crossing the river before the golden city of Seoul?

I climbed Namsan and looked across toward the northern palaces, where dragon towers and phoenix halls rose among glinting gossamer mists.70 As I gazed on the city with its maze of long streets. the whitish city walls and their serrated battlements seemed alight with splendour. Magnificent dwellings joined roof to roof and house to house; hurrying east and west vied with one another for rank and riches in the rusty dust of the royal streets; gay young men on white horses, showing off their splendid caparisons, went in companies to meet the dancing-girls in pavilion and drinking-hall; a happy world with gaiety and joy abounding. I,who had been brought up in the quiet countryside, laughed to think of my provincial attitudes and narrow experience, as I went here and there among these wonders, moved and impressed beyond words. [page 82]

Outside the north west gate I visited Segom-jong, ‘the Sword-Washing Pavilion,’ that stands, several kan in size, above the stream. It was most beautiful the rapid water flowed swiftly by; the green mountains, crowding about us, reflected one another’s colours. Long ago there was a general who won a great victory and then washed his sword here, so the name-board, Segom- jong, was written by the king’s own hand, and stands wrapped round with yellow silk, its characters shining like light. The passage of time will never dim its glory. At the side,on a great rock, is written hil kye, ‘rejection of warning,’ but the characters have been worn away by winds and rain till they are hard hard to read.

Then we went to see T’angch’un-dae, ‘Wide Spring-time Outlook’, where the mountains are high, and massive strong fortifications defend the approaches to Pukhan, reminding later generations of the might of former kings.

Following a narrow bridle-path we came to Samgye-dong, Three Stream Village, where Kim Sangso72 has his summer home. The little house is hidden among the trees in clean and pleasant surroundings, a delightful place for him to rest and refresh himself. The pavilion is called Paeksok-sil, White Stone Hall. Clear streams flow through the gardens on all sides,and there is a bridge of white stone. The fallen blossoms were like unswept snow in the courtyard, and the wicket gate stood open to admit us into this picture or quiet and seclusion.

Further down the valley we found another pavilion by the water. On the rocks were carved three characters Ch’on su do, a thousand peach-trees. This reminded me of Liu Yu-hsi’s Hsuan-tao-kuan.73 The air in the deep valley between the high hills was filled with soft fragrance; there was a little waterfall; all the birds sang in concert; and streamlets rippled among the flowers. It is beyond my powers to relate the beauty of the scene.

The small pavilion shines among the morning flowers;

Footsteps are turned into light-winged sounds.

Thoughts of immortals kindle in my soul

As mists of morning shimmer in the hills.

We walked over orchid buds and cupped the limpid water in our hands; the breeze billowed my coloured coat. The immortals’ little dogs bark at the passing clouds, hills and streams have no owner, wind and moonlight are free to all: they belong to him who comes to see and rejoice in them.

Continuing our search for fine scenery we went out on the second day to see pavilions and beauty spots beyond the Little East Gate. The rocks and [page 83] ravines about Chong-nung were very interesting. We climbed a hill from which we could see Wangsim-ni with its close-packed streets and wards, and the innumerable villages of the plain stretching out into the distance.

Springtime showers, spring breezes, do not cease, yet springtime joys continue in the sound of rain. Looking up, I feel that I am owner here: Where’er I wander,everywhere’s my home

Our next outing was beyond the Sungnya-mun, the Great South Gate, where we visited the temple of Kuan Yu, the god of war.74 Several rows of willows, with catkins hanging like golden threads, stood before the entrance; and Namsan behind it was covered with great shady pines. The red gates and galleries of the temple loomed through the mist; the roof was covered with blue tiles; there were three gates in front, but only one of the side gates was open. The gateman wore a felt hat, and carried a short whip with which he kept the rabble out. I noticed that he took a fee from all who entered.

Just inside the main entrance was a paling, and behind it a fierce and for-bidding image of Chou Ts’ang75 holding the bridle of the horse Red Hare. Further inside was an artificial mound with an old pinetree lying on its side and a stone tiger glaring fiercely beneath it. Azaleas were in bloom in the small garden behind the temple, and in front of them was a hall of the ten kings of the Buddhist hells, with bodhisattvas seated in a row beside them. On the walls of the outer corridors were scenes from The History of the Three King-doms, and I noticed Nan-p’ing-shan, Ch’ang-pan-ch’iao, and Hua yung tao.76 The memorial stone of the pavilion bore an inscription written by King Yongjong77 telling all the great deeds of Kuan Yu.

The main hall itself was large and imposing. The guard, who wore a black cap and magpie coat, danced ahead to show us the way; and we entered not by the main entrance, which was was closed, but by a side door. To one side was a statue of a sage, sitting in great dignity with a string of 108 beads round his neck, glistening like icy jade. It may have been an image of Pouching, the master of the Yu-ch’uan Hills-78 On either side stood generals clad in armour and helmets. Beneath a red canopy was a curtain of embroidered silk. This was drawn aside and I went forward and looked up with wonder at Kuan-ti on his dragon throne. He wore a royal crown and robe and held a ruler’s scepter. His silkworm eyebrows and phoenix eyes sparkled like running autumn streams; power shone from his eyes, impressive as the everlasting hills; his face was heavily painted, dark red; his magnificent beard was divided in three; and his expression was severe as winter snow and frost. His [page 84] loyalty and valour and valour are unequalled by the past or by ages to come,his righteousness is above everything, his faultless spirit and noble soul will shine for ever,not only in this country,where temples are built in his honour, but in China, where every home offers him sacrifice and prayers. How great he is.

I had fruit and wine brought and offered before him. As this was done, the guard gave a long-drawn cry: ‘Chi-i-i-n!,’ ‘Go forward!’ I bowed with joined hands before the awesome presence and withdrew. There was a large set of the Spring and Autumn Classic before him, and in front of that a big holder from which lots were drawn.

Kuan Yu was endowed with a spirit that soared to heaven, and his faithfulness outshone the sun, yet he fell before the kingdom of u. His grief and pain have filled the whole world, and he moves through the clouds, leading his spirit armies. Whenever there is war he comes down to earth and helps the good and wards off their enemies. So men of all stations in life offer him worship and devotion.

In the invasions of 1592 he appeared, rebuked the storms that threatened Korea, and wiped away the filth that defiled the state. He first appeared south of the city, and finally disappeared beyond the East Gate; so a temple was erected to his honour in both places. The image in the south temple is red and represents his appearance while he was alive; that in the east temple represents his appearance after death, so the image is yellow. These shrines are modeled on the temples of China.

I have read also that in the reign of Chia-ch’ing, in 1821, when there was trouble with rebels, the general Lin Ch’ing was unable to subdue them because the rebel chief used magic arts and called spirit armies from the air, so that the Manchu armies were constantly defeated. Suddenly Kuan-ti’s banner was seen among the clouds,the rebels were scattered and their so-called spirit army fell to the ground like autumn leaves. To prevent the spread of superstition the rebels were beheaded outside the Wu-men at Peking, and their blood flowed like a river. All these miracles are recorded in military histories, and make me reverence Kuan-ti with even greater awe and joy.

We had seen all the sights of the capital when I suddenly remembered the dress I was wearing, and thought of my strange situation. I said to myself, “A girl in a boy’s dress is unheard-of. I suppose that the ambitions of the heart can never be satisfied, but the superior man knows when he has had enough and is willing to moderate his desires; only an inferior man rushes beyond bounds in indulging the greedy thoughts of his soul.”

The wonders I had seen had satisfied me, so I decided to end my travels [page 85] and return to my proper life as a girl. I put off my boy’s clothes, resumed my skirts and became a young unmarried woman again, with a queue down my back and no hairpin.

The pipes of Tzu-chen79 attracted the fairy crane by their enchanting notes and Szuma Hsiang-ju’s lute80 summoned the phoenix. Likewise Kim Kyudang took me as his concubine, and we lived together many happy years.

In the early spring of 1845 he was appointed governor of Uiju, and we made ready for the journey. I rode in a palanquin,completely hidden by beaded curtains. We left Seoul by the Peking Pass and made our way to Songdo,where we arrived at evening time. Twilight mists were gathering over Mangwol-tae, Full Moon Terrace, making a sad and tearful picture. There also was the Sonjuk bridge, with the faithful bloodmarks still upon itᅵ"a place where loyal subjects will always weep.81

We passed the Ch’ongsok-kwan, where we entered a valley ten li or more long. The mountains were high and rugged, almost shutting out the sky. In 1636 the invading Manchu army was afraid lest there were troops in ambush at this place, and considered beheading the guide for leading them by such a dangerous way. We still feel lasting regret, because had a few hundred guards been stationed there the Manchus would never have got through. We went by Ch’ongsu, where large characters written by Chu Chih-fan82 are said to be carved on the rocks,but I could not see them from the confinement of my chair. Riding by Hwangju we saw the Wo1p’a-ru, ‘Moon and Waves Pavilion,’ standing in the mist at the water’s edge. It seemed as though we were moving through a picture.

We approached P’yongyang by a path through a forest, ill we reached the Taedong river, beyond which pavilions and towers made a painted panorama. Crossing the river,we entered through the East Gate and went a hundred paces south-west to a pavilion called Yon’gwang-jong, ‘Glistening Splendour,’,which had a river passing so closely underneath it, one could lean over and spit in the water. Sands as white as fine silk had the long expanse of water for a companion; a belt of thick trees stretched a dozen li, and green fields extendend into the distance as far as the eye could see; the view was full of peaks and horn-shaped hills, with sparkling streams and bright rivulets. Written on the gateposts of the hall where we stayed was the couplet:

On one side the far-reaching city and flowing stream;

On the other distant plains and crowding hills.83

This was a true description of the place. The island of Nungna sits in the midst of the stream like the ‘gauze picture’ from which it takes its name; the [page 86] Pubyok Tower stands guard to the east beneath Peony Peak,where the highest hills are; Yongmyong Temple stands west of the Pubyok Tower, and its outlook is called Tugwo1, ‘winning the moon,’ because it is the first of the riverside pavilions to catch sight of the moon.

The market streets of P’yongyang are full of bustle, and the houses crowded so closely there is no space between them. Firewood and soy pots are piled up on their roofs. Blue curtains, red gates and sounds of flutes give evidence of the dancing-girls’ quarters. All day long the sounds of laundering and the creak of the water-carriers’ yokes come from the river-bank. It is indeed a justly celebrated place, where Tan’gun and Ch’i Tzu made their capitals, thousands of years ago.84 The outer walls still enclose traces of Ch’i Tzu’s well-fields, and his tomb.

We left by the Pot’ong Gate,and eventually reached Anju, another fine city. We ascended its Paeksang-nu, Tower of Good Luck, and looked out towards Myohyang-san, the Incense Hills, that stand to the north-east. These famous and massive ‘Mountains of the Road to the West’ possess great dignity. Rocks and boulders of wonderful beauty abound there,and deep valleys strike through them, among which are Tan’gun’s Cave, the Golden Fairy’s Terrace, and other marvellous sights. I could go there in spirit only, for I was swiftly borne over the Ch’ongch’on river, the long belt of water that divides P’yongan province into its north and south parts. Two famous singing-girls, Chongnam-wol and Kangnam-wol, played and sang very sweetly for us in Anju.

After reaching Kasan,we crossed Hyosong-nyong, ‘Morning-Star Pass,’ where the hills are rough and steep,the rocks dark and uncanny, a fitting place for a rebellion like Hong Kyongnae’s. Then we passed Chongju and reached Sojang-dae, the ‘West Outlook’ famous as the scene of the uprising of 1812. Those events seemed to come before my eyes in all their details.

At last we stopped at Pakkot-kwan, the first stopping-place within the prefecture of Uiji,and the point where entering and retiring officials meet and greet. We found that all the attendants and retainers of the governor had come out to this place and were waiting for us.

The following day a great parade took place, with banners, spears and soldiers in uniform,like one of the great military occasions in Seoul. Dancing-girls, dressed in felt hats and uniforms with short-sleeved long coats,rode ahead in pairs on thoroughbred horses with silver-decorated saddles. They looked impressive with their fine hat-ornaments, red skirts and green jackets. At the call of the trumpet they mounted their horses and stood waiting for orders. Uiju is a great frontier station, where even girls know how to ride [page 87] and wield a sword, and on the arrival of each new official they give a display of their skills. Those who watch are unwittingly captivated by the show.

The runners who went ahead wore fresh,clean uniforms and their line stretched all ten miles to Uiju. They were of unusually fine appearance and bearing. When we reached the town I went into Yonsik-chae, Swallow’s Resting-Place, the inner court of the yamen, where I found that many of the furnishings were Chinese artifacts, very pretty and interesting. Uiju stands between the two countries and is the Great West Gate of Korea,a big,rich city where wealth is evident on all hands.

I received a great number of requests to use my influence with the governor. Matters of government, however, had nothing to do with me, and if I had begun to take the smallest part in such affairs, the ill savour of it would have been beyond endurance. I therefore told the servants that they should decline to see anyone from outside. I gave them a stern lecture, and also insisted that not the least thing belonging to the inner quarters could be used without my express permission. Thus our place became a respected household.

When I visited Mansin-nu I wrote a poem:

Martial music cannot vie with springtime in Uiju:

The riverside willows and flowers are thick with new buds.

In daytime ease officials loll in the grassy courts,

Deep in the night the moon will lave the place in light.

Kisaeng with fluttering jewelled hairpins pour the wine

For guests in gilded belts and coral hatstrings, wearing splendid swords.

A haze of red dust hangs over the far road to Peking,

Where the envoy’s carriage comes bearing imperial grace.

I had a pet bird called paengnydng-jo, Hundred-Gifted Bird, which came from China. It was about the size of a quail and sat on a perch in its bamboo cage. Its call was like the cound a Chinese carter makes when he stops his mules; but it also learned to imitate the sounds of birds and animals. Before the summer solstice it sang a great deal, but after that it fell into silence. I had a parrot, too, about the size of a magpie, that lived in an iron cage and performed acrobatic feats on an upright iron rod. Its plumage was brilliantly coloured, and like the other bird, it came from the far south.

In winter delicious apples were brought to us from the city of Fenghuang. The Chinese keep even grapes fresh and sweet through the winter in most remarkable way. Their pears are better than our finest Pongsan variety. In the third and fourth moons they brought cabbages three of four times as large as out Korean ones, and green radishes, tender as pears. [page 88]

We paid a visit to T’onggun-jong, the General’s Pavilion, to see the torches for the international fair. Forty companies of armed soldiers patrol the no-man’s-land beyond the Yalu, and when the fair is opened in spring and autumn the governor orders torches to be lit at the pavilion. The forty companies of soldiers watch for the torches, and respond with great flares from their side; a trumpet is sounded and they engage in a mock battle.

I made my way to the pavilion in the evening, escorted by red silk lanterns musicians. The pavilion stands north of the city, on a great rock that gives a view of the triple stream of the Yalu and the mountain ranges beyond —the most famous view on the western frontier. The pavilion had been hung with curtains and with red and blue lanterns. On a rope stretched from the beams hung horn lanterns and glass lanterns with blue and red silk ones set on the ground at each end, so that the whole place was as light as day. There were mats of Mongolian felt, with silk screens set around. The whole forty kan of the pavilion was carpeted,with no spaces between the mats. You would never see such mats anywhere else,not even in the yamen of the gov-ernor of a province.

The polychromed beams and pillars, the ornamented balustrades and railings shone beyond the clouds and were prettily reflected in the waters of the yalu. The light on the clouds reached from Chiu-lien-ch’eng across as far as the peaks of Fenghuang; there before me was the landscape of Yen, China itself, with all its mists and shadows: Chi-men yen-shu, the smoky trees of China’s gateway.

This phrase, Chi-men yen-shu, properly belongs to one of the Eight Views of Peking. The 800-li land of Liao-tung, however, has unbounded trees and hills, like clouds and waves, so that villages and hamlets shimmer in a mirage, and horses and oxen seem to be walking upside down, small trees seem tall,and little houses big. It is a mystifying sight, because when one looks closer it all disappears. The explanation is that the plain is so wide that the sky reflects images like a silver sea,or a bright river whose banks seem to ripple and trees to shake. So not only Chi-chou but all Liao-tung came to be included in Chi-men yen-shu.

I had doubted whether the Eight Views of Peking could possibly stretch as far as this distant border. On reading a history of Peking I found that they could not do so. It said that seven or eight li to the west of Peking, outside the Te-sheng-men, is a hill called Chi-ch’iu, standing high and alone in the wide plain. A thousand or more densely-foliated trees grow on it like green smoke. Formerly there was a city gate there called Chi-men. In the time of the Khitan Tatars it became on of the Eight Views of Peking, called ‘Chi Gate in Driz-[page 89] zling Rain,’ but in Ming times the two characters for drizzling rain were changed to yen-shu, smoky trees. The Ch’ien-lung emperor wrote the four characters Chi men yen shu and had them inscribed on a stone. Koreans,not knowing where the real Chi gate was, when they passed the border of Chi province and saw a sight that suggested smoky trees, neither blue nor green, neither smoke nor mist, but a haze that reflected like water, called it yen-shu, smoky trees. This was in the region of Chi-chou, a provincial name given by Wen-ti of Sui to an area that had formerly been called Yu-yang. Our people confused Chi-chou with Chi-men. For five centuries the Korean envoys travelled this road in both directions, accompanied by interpreters on numberless dusty journeys, yet they never realized that there was another yen-shu. What an astonishing thing!

Pipes and harps made music, like a fairy orchestra. The girls sang so sweetly that the clouds stopped in their course and the dust on the beams danced for jov. Each pair of dancing girls was ringed with a halo,so light their lithe willow waists and swallow-wing sleeves—the singing and dancing of this area is rightly famous. Soon a gun was fired,the torches were lit, and the companies on the further shore responded with flashing signals. It was as though bright stars had come out in the blue on every side like rosy peach- blossoms floating on the river. The sound of drums and horns rang through the air like phoenixes calling. Fishes and dragons of the deep listened spellbound. I was moved to write a poem;

This is the finest pavilion on the frontier river,

Where emerald Ma-i guards drake’s-neck-green waters.

Six roads spread starwise to the furthest outposts;

Ten thousand mountains, thick as paduk pebbles, huddle in the west.

White sands, old trees, surround the crumbling walls,

Dim mists, cold clouds shroud barren autumn fields.

Leaning on the balustrade, I see flashing signal lights

That fill the river with shining fire, signs that all is is well.

Soon the moon rose in the east to signal that night was far advanced, and I returned to the yamen.

There was a display of horse riding by dancing-girls at the Paegil-won, and I went to watch it. This hall also stands on the east bank of the Yalu with a wide race-course in the great plain before it. The riders were all decked out in military uniform, neat and trim. They were formed up in companies on tall horses, with splendid gilded saddles. At the blast of a bugle and three beats of a drum, the horses lined up at attention. Each rider had her reins in her hand [page 90] and held her charger steady; then away they bounded and disappeared into the distance. Not one of them fell short of what was expected. One of them, Kyonghye, Jewelled Grace, carried a sword in each hand. Her horse sped swift as a swallow. She was a marvellous rider. The history of this group of amazons, in the most important defence point on our western frontiers, is said to date back to the days of Wei Man.86 beyond the time of Ko Chumong87 and the Wangs of Korya88

Drawn up by the pavilion in cohorts of carmine—

Three strokes on the drum and off they go,

Like flowers filling the fragrant air.

The Governor of Uiju was eventually replaced by a successor. We packed our baggage and returned to Seoul When we reached the capital all his clansmen and relatives welcomed him with great joy, and we gave many gifts of Chinese things to all our friends.

He decided to give up public office and retired to his summer home on the Han River. I accompanied him to this Samho-jong, Pavilion of the Three Rivers, at Yongsan. The ground was carpeted with grass and all the flowers were in bloom. The pavilion stood high above the river in a group of trees. There was a pool filled with louses, and a beautiful spring of water, the great river in front and green hills behind. Fishermen joined the dozing gulls in passing the time by the river shore, and boys gathering wood sang and played pipes as they rode,facing backwards on their oxen. I wrote a regulated verse:

This tower is set on the river west of Seoul: I come up here at will and linger at leisure. Both shores are clad in silk woven of spring grasses, Evening sunshine blends the great river’s gold and green. Clouds hang low on the hamlets, a lonely sail goes homewards, Fallen flowers lie on the jetty, a far-off flute mourns; The breeze brings formless mists that suddenly clear away,

Lo,an embroidered sachet brought to life,a living mural!

I have also written two quatrains:

Fragrance drops from flowers, willow catkins wave, Spring has the air of a picture,with gentle sunshine beauty. I loiter here, drifting on undulant dreams; Wildgeese pass high above, a sail idles by.

Pale moonlight shimmers on the springtime willows, Lingering mists envelop the morning flowers. [page 91]

Gulls sit on the sands and do not stir.

A flute is heard from far across the scented fields.

Yongsan is three miles west of the capital, on the lower reaches of the Han, which is said to be one of Korea’s most beautiful sights. Dragon country, it must surely be the finest spot on the river. Our summer-house stands where it just catches the view, and the water passes it in a wide sweep towards Noryang-jin and Yanghwa-do, then beyond to the sea. To the south the peaks of Kwanak-san encircle us and bow. It seems as though one could beckon them to come in. The white sands of the shore gleam like polished marble, the high pavilions are built close together. Boats carrying tribute-goods and merchandise crowd together so that their masts look like warp threads on a weaver’s loom. Laden oxen and horses go by continually,ducks and gulls are forever bobbing on the water. Lift your eyes and there the scene is before your desk. This is indeed a place to remember, and our pavilion is the best one here. Many high officials and ministers of state have built pavilions nearby at points of vantage, but it is impossible to enjoy the river and to hold office at the same time, so most of these buildings are loaned out to people with leisure. A line of T’ang verse says:

In retirement who ever sees a soul?89

To abandon public office and retire here to live is a very rare thing but His Excellency has given up everything, cut himself a fishing-rod from the bamboo grove and come here in plain dress. He has cast away his rank and emoluments like and old pair of shoes, regarding the world’s honour and glory as a passing cloud Shall I ever fathom his enlightened soul and highborn spirit? Shall I ever fitly praise his gentle manner? I too love the river, I love the hills and natural beauty. We make our servants dress like countryfolk: they carry the water and wood, and keep the garden weeded, and grow vegetables. We have heard no word of unkind comment from our neighbours. We are happy and peaceful, with the joy of a cicada that sheds its larval form and flits into the trees to sing and sip the dew.

The sound of oars below the pavilion adds to my peace. I have written a quatrain about this:

The boatmen sing as they paddle their boats,

Sunshine slants through the clouds floating far above;

The sheet of bright water extends thirty li,

The willows by the river obscure the famous houses.

Here we read and sing,and four companions join me in my pleasures.

Unch’o, Cloud of Ch’o, a Songch’ on girl, and wife of Minister Kim [page 92] Yonch’on90 is one of them. She is a gifted person, renowned for her poetic ability, who comes frequently and sometimes stays for several days. Then there is Kyongsan, Jewel Hill, of Munhwa, wife of the minister Yi Hwasa.91 She is well-read,learned,and a polished writer. She lives nearby,so we often meet. The third is Chukso, ‘Bamboo West,’ a country girl of my own home town, wife of So Songho, the governor.92 She is very wise and quick to learn, a disciple of Han Yu93 and Su tung-p’o, who imitates old poems. The last is my own sister, Kyongch’un, Jewel Spring, wife of the governor Hong Chuch’on.94 She is bright and gifted with good judgement, sweet in all her ways. She is widely-read in classics and history, and second to none in composing poems. We meet and enjoy each other’s company with a roll of ornamental writing-paper on the table and the inkstone at our side. When we declaim together, the sound is like tinkling gems or golden coins. The seasons have no days without inspiration; the river birds and flowers banish every care. I have written four quatrains about all this:

We meet in spring mood, with sadness for beauty,

Young willow-leaf eyebrows, smooth apricot cheeks,

And write verses nourished by the sight of happy flowers.

Would that some fairy could join us to hinder time’s passing.

The spring has gone and yet no guest arrives;

Spring’s many longings fill thes e leisure hours.

With cup and song we join in friendly competition,

Remembering this floating life is but a gate of dreams.

Gulls wheel in the sky above the heaving mist-clad waves;

I lean on the balustrade, because I cannot sleep;

Sounds of voices are wafted from the other bank,

Boats return home southward in the moonlight.

I open the curtains to see the world of water

With springtime breezes outside the twelve painted walls:

Peach, plum and river willow on the other bank

Blend together in a tinted showery haze.

So the five of us enjoyed this charming place in a continual succession of delights among flowers, birds, clouds, mists, winds, rain, snow and shining moon. Every day was lovely every month a happy one. We played the lute to express our pleasure, and told one another pleasant tales. All these things found expression in the verses we wrote, some dignified,some light, some old-fashioned, some pathetic. I have no idea which of us wrote the best, but [page 93] each expressed her own personality. Kyongch’un,as well as being gifted,had her sister’s love. She was as free as the daylight from all earth’s impurities, clever and loving. Her mind was as clear as water and moonlight, her complexion was polished jade and driven snow. Never was such an accomplished person seen before or since. Nevertheless, she was an imprisoned woman who had no chance to see the world. At times we two used to forsake writing and share our innermost ideas and longings: when we discussed books our thoughts would race like a great river rushing to the sea; when we read aloud together we sounded like orioles in the treetops or a phoenix on the hill, so sweet was the sound to our ears. Others know nothing of the joys we shared.

Now as I think of all the delights that I have experienced,of how I left my footprints on hill and dale, and saw so much of my country’s beautiful and happy places, I realize that few, even men, have seen as much as I. My heart is satisfied and all my wishes have come to pass; but the world is wide and this little country is only a tiny part of it. Time has passed through long, long years, and one little life is a brief joy. Still,to have seen a corner of the universe is to have seen all; and to see a hundred years is to see what all time is like, so there is no need to raise the questions of numberless hills and uncountable years. Our experience and knowledge are but a dream. If I had not written this down, who would have known that a girl called Kumwon ever lived?

I lay my head on my pillow, close my eyes, and let my soul and spirit bear each other company, off and away: that is to dream. The world and everything in it is a dream that returns to nothingness. All that we have seen and learned is a vision of the night. If we reckon time by the day, it is dream; if we reckon it by the year,it is dream; a hundred years, a thousand years—all are dreams. I live in a dream and have written down the dream I have dreamt, a dream within a dream. We laugh it off and take the brush to jot down one of the hundred things we have experienced, of which these verses of mine are little scattered reminders.

Now I have told my story: of my start to the four prefectures of the central region, to the Diamond Mountains, the Eight Views of Kwandong, Sorak-san, Seoul, Uiju, and back to Seoul again. I have called the book *Hodong sorak ki*.

21 April 198595

Kumwon

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NOTES

1. Queen Chindok of Silla sent a flattering poem,T’aep yong song, to the T’ang emperor in 650. It was written in Chinese and preserved in the Samguk sagi and

other chronicles.

2. Ho Nansorhon (1563-1589): the most famous woman poet of the Yi dynasty,though doubts have been expressed about the authenticity of the poems attributed to her. At the end of her collected works is a poem telling of a dream she had in 1585 about a visit to Kuang-sang-shan,one of the ten islands of the Taoist immortals.

3. Pu Ch’u, one of the poems in the Ch’u Tz’u, tells how Chan-yin, a diviner of Ch’ u, was asked to advise Ch’ u Yuan. Kumwon’s quotation is inaccurate,but its sense is correct.

4. Ch’u Yuan,counsellor of Prince Huai of Ch’u in the fourth century BC. He was one of China’s earliest poets, and the south Chinese ‘dragon-boat festival’ of the fifth day of the fifth moon commemorates his suicide by drowning.

5. Analects Xi 25 vii.

6. The Four Central Prefectures: Korean Hojung sa kun. Hojung is a name sometimes applied to Ch’ungch’ong province. The prefectures referred to are Chech’on, Tanyang,Yongch’un and Ch ‘ong-p’ung.

7. Kyongin year 3rd moon.

8. Uirim, ‘Righteous Forest’ is said to be named after Pak Uirim, legendary creator of the ornamental lake two miles north of Chech’on.

9. A commonplace of Yi poetry,opening phrase of the Paekku sa.

10.Omija, ‘Five-Taste-Seed,’,is Schizandra chinensis. The perch of the Sung-kiang are mentioned in Su Tung-P’o’s Ch ‘ih-pi fu.

11. A scholar of the Tsin dynasty (4th century AD) who was a connoisseur of herbs and freshwater fish from his home state of Wei.

12. Chuang-tzu, reputed author of the book of the same name,was a formative Taoist writer. Legend says that he became an immortal while dining with the Queen Mother of the West at the Lake of Gems (see below note 35).

13. Hsi-shih was a Chinese paragon of feminine loveliness, trained and sent by the prince of Yueh to seduce and ruin his rival, the prince of Wu, in the fifth century BC.

15. Shang-shan szu hao,four scholars who despaired at the cultural chaos created towards the end of the reign of Ch’ in Shih-huang, and about 212 BC retired to live as recluses in the Shang hills, They emerged, hoary-headed, to serve the Han dynasty about twenty years later. The pomelo story is a Chinese legend.

16. T’ao Ch’ ien’s famous description Tao-yuan chi,is one of Korea’s commonest poetic allusions.

17. The caves were down-river from the old magistracy of Yongch’un. The immortal’s, names mean ‘golden flower’ and ‘southern flower’

18. Cf. Su Tung-p’o’s Shih-chung-shan chi, in Tung-p’o chi XXXIII. The Li Po referred to (otherwise Li Chlin-chih,9th century) is not the famous 8th-century T’ang poet. Su Tung-p’o (Su Shih) 1037-1101,was the greatest of the Sung poets. [page 95]

19. Nu-wa,one of the mythical sovereigns of China,is said to have been sister and successor of Fu-hsi in the third millenium BC. Her story as told in the introduction to the Shih chi relates how after the rebellion of Kung Kung she was forced to support the damaged vault of heaven by using mountains as scaffolding.

20. Yu was the legendary founder of the Hsia dynasty, who is supposed to have altered the landscape of China in order to control its floods.

21. Tanbal-lyong is the pass where legend has it that King Sejo cut off his hair,in monk fashion,on his visit to the Diamond Mountains; the entrance from Seoul to the mountains where the monasteries are found,and hence the point of entry to monk- hood for many.

22. Yen-ching pa ching. Every important place in the Far East has a series of ‘eight views,’ in imitation of the Eight Views of the Hsiao-hsiang Rivers,first painted and entitled by the Sung painter,Sung Ti.

23. Chunghyang, ‘All Fragrance,is another name for Sukhavati, the Pure Land of Amitabha. The peaks look like a fortress.

24. Ksitigarbha (Korean: Chijang), a bodhisattva regarded as a saviour from hell.

25. See below note 45.

26. The Eight Lakes (P,aJ tam) are Hungnyong (Black Dragon),Ch’ongnyong (Blue Dragon),Pyokp’a (Green Waves), Punun (Spraying Cloud),Chinju (Pearl), Ku-dam (Turtle Pool), Son-dam (Boat Pool) and Hwaryong (Fire Dragon). They form one of the traditional series of views in the Diamond Mountains.

27. Yang Saon,1517-1584,a distinguished calligrapher. Pongnae,his literary style,is the Korean form of P’eng-lai, name of a Taoist paradise in the east,frequently applied to the Diamond Mountains.

28. The ‘diamond’ (Kumgang) means vajra,the thunderbolt or diamond that symbolizes indestructible truth.

29.Immortals were said to ride on blue cranes.

30. Sumeru (Sumi) is the central mountain of creation, and therefore used as a name for the Buddha’s throne.

31. Avalokitesvara: the merciful bodhisattva known in China as Kuan-yin, in Korea as

Kwanum or Kwanseum.

32. Vairocana: the true and essential Buddha body, almost equatable with the idea of godhead.

33. Kasyapa: the leader of Sakyamuni’s disciples after the Buddha’s death.

34. The Islands of the Immortals, which included P’eng-lai, were believed to be in the far eastern sea,i.e., the Pacific.

35. The Lake of Gems was at the abode of the legendary Queen Mother of the West, beyond the mountains of western China and Tibet.

36. Li, a measure of distance. Ten li was an hour’s walk, i.e., three or four miles. In the-ory a li was 360 paces.

37. The Inner Diamond Mountains (Nae Kumgang) are the southern section of the region.

38. Manjusri (Korean: Munsu or Myogilsang): the bodhisattva of wisdom. This famous relief image is traditionally ascribed to the Buddhist monk Naong (1320-1376).

39. Lu-shan: a waterfall in China,subject of a famous poem by Li Po.

40. Kamno-su: ‘Sweet Dew Water,’ in Sanskrit Amrta, the nectar of immortality, with [page 96] various Buddhist associations.

41. Probably a satirical proverb.

42. The Outer Diamond Mountains (Oe Kumgang) are the central and north-western sector of the region.

43. King Namhae of Silla reigned AD 4-24. The chronology of this legend is highly suspect.

44. Min Chi, 1248-1326,a distinguished diplomat and scholar during the Mongol domination of Korea.

45. Queen Inmok (1584-1632), wife of Sonjo,is one of the saddest figures in Yi dynasty history. Her son, Yongch’ang, was prevented from acceding to the throne and murdered while still a boy by his half-brother,Prince Kwanghae. The West Palace is the Toksu Palace. Princess Chongmyong was her daughter.

46. Lan-t’en, otherwise Yu-shan, was a place in Shensi proverbial for its fine jade.

47. T’sang-hai means the ocean, and the proverbial reference is to a pearl left behind by divers. It usually means a man of worth who goes unrecognized.

48. T’an-wu-chieh (Korean Tammugae) represents the Sanskrit Dharmodgata, the name of several famous monks.

49. Kwandong, ‘the Eastern Border,’ is a sobriquet for Kangwon Province, and here means the east coast.

50. King Ling of Ch’u built a magnificent palace Chang-hua-t’ai, whose inauguration feast in 534 BC is mentioned in Tso Chuan X,vii 2.

51. The megalomaniac emperor who unified China, and built the A-fang palace. He reigned 221-209 BC.

52. A Han emperor who, among greater deeds, built the Po-liang (Cedar Beams) Palace. He reigned 140-86 BC.

53. Hwarang: an elite youth corps of the Silla dynasty.

54. Kan: a unit of measurement of floor-space, theoretically eight feet square.

55. Ch’oe Ip,1539-1612,a distinguished statesman and scholar.

56. See above note 27.

57. Mydngsu can also mean ‘shining sand,’ and applies to other points on the east coast. ‘Singing sands’ is proper to this beach.

58. See above note 31.

59. Otherwise Li Tzu-ch’ang,an astronomer of Han, about the time of Christ.

60. Yao and Shun were the ideal rulers to whose days Confucius looked back with admiration.

61. Yang Hou, ‘the Marquis of Yang,’,was a lord of Ling-yang who died by drowning and became a sea-god of the Chinese.

62. This sentence is based on analects VI 21.

63. raesung, ‘great vehicle,’ is Korean for Mahayana.

64. These were apparently famous waterfalls in China.

65. Samyon was the literary style of Kim Ch’anghup, 1653-1722,one of the four brothers of Kim ch’angjip,a distinguished family of scholar-statesmen.

66. Ch onghan-ja was Kim Sisfip,the wanderer and writer,who visited this area in 1459-60. Ose was his literary name.

67. Ttuksom, Yongsan and Map’a

68. AD. 621. [page 97]

69. The T’ang armies were three times repulsed by Koguryo.

70. The royal residences were all built at the foot of the mountains to the north of the city.

71. Segom-jong: the origin of the name is unknown, but the pavilion was built in 1749.

72. Sangso, ‘minister,’is a title. The man referred to may be Kumwon’s husband.

73. Hsuan-tao-kuan-shih is a poem by the T’ang poet Liu Yu-hsi, and contains the phrase t’aoch’ien-shu, ‘a thousand peach-trees,’•

74. Kuan Yu or Kuan ti,the Chinese god of war. An historical personage, hero of the San-kuo-chih-yen-i, Korea’s most popular story-book. Died 219.

75. Chou Ts’ang was a loyal companion of Kuan Yu who committed suicide on Kuan’s death San-kuo-chih yen-i77.

76. Chang Fei outwitted and defeated Chang Ho at nan-p’ing-shan (San-kuo chih yen-i 69-70); he routed Ts’ao at Ch’ang-pan-ch’iao (42); Hua-yung-tao was the scene of Ts’ao’s flight after the battle of the Red Cliff (50).

77. Yongjong, now known as Yongjo, reigned 1725-76.

78. P’u-ching was a Buddhist sage to whom Kuan Yu appeared immediately after his death. San-kuo-chih yen-i 77.

79. Tzu-chen, a legendary Taoist, otherwise Mei Fu,has probably been confused with Tzu-tsin (Wang Ch’iao),6th-century BC prince of Tsin,a flautist who rode on a white orane.

80. Szuma Hsiang-ju,the great second-century BC exponent of fu poetry,who by his skill on the lute persuaded a wealthy man’s daughter to elope.

81. Mangwol-tae,a Koryo palace derelict since the fourteenth century. The Sonjuk bridge was where Cnong Mongju was assassinated in 1392 because he remained loyal to the Koryo dynasty.

82. A Chinese scholar-statesman who came to Korea as imperial envoy in 1606.

83. A couplet about this place by Kim Hwangwon (1045-1117) recorded in Sinjung Tongguk yoji sungnam and T’aengni chi.

84. Tan’gun, legendary founder of the Korean nation in 2333 BC, and the viscount of Ch’i, who was supposed to have fled to Korea in 1192 BC when the Chou state was established in China are both supposed to have had their capitals at P’yongyang.

85. Hong Kyongnae’s rebellion of 1812 was the most important of early nineteenth century peasant uprisings.

86. A refugee from Han China who became ruler of north Korea about 194 BC.

87. Legendary founder-king of Koguryo.

88. Wang was the dynastic surname of the Koryo monarchs, AD 918-1392.

89. The famous reply of the monk Ling-che to Wei Tan, and origin of the phrase lin- hsia, ‘under the trees,’as a synonym for retirement.

90. Yonch’on was the literary style of Kim Iyang (1755-1845) of the Andong Kim clan. He was dead by the time Kumwon wrote.

91. Hwasa, ‘Flowery Chronicler,’was apparently his literary style.

92. Songho, ‘Pine Lake,’ was So Kibo, brother of So Ikpo.

93. Han Yu, 768-824,advocated an archaically simple prose style.

94. Yi Nunghwa gives Hong’s name (presumably a literary style) as Sech on. Chu (wine) and se (sprinkle) are easily confused.

95. Kyongsul year 3rd moon 10th day.