

INTRODUCTION TO ASIAN CIVILIZATIONS

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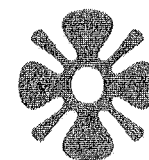
Sources of Japanese Tradition
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Sources of Korean Tradition

VOLUME I



*From Early Times Through
the Sixteenth Century*

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CHAPTER THREE

The Introduction of Buddhism

Buddhism was transmitted to each of the Three Kingdoms during their transition from tribal federations to ancient states: to Koguryō in 372, to Paekche in 384, and to Silla in 527. During its dissemination Buddhism absorbed the myths, legends, and shamanist beliefs of the tribes and forged a more systematized religion and philosophy. By offering a way for the people to comprehend the conflicts and contradictions in society, it provided the social and spiritual basis for each of the Three Kingdoms to develop into a state.

The introduction of Buddhism meant the importation not only of the religion but also of an advanced Chinese culture because by nature Buddhism was neither closed nor exclusive. The inclusion of monks in the *hwarang* order in Silla indicates that Buddhism provided the social and spiritual basis for the development of Silla into a state.

From its inception Buddhism was allied with the royal authority. But this alliance was most conspicuous in Silla, which had the lowest standard of culture and was the last to develop as a state. In Silla, Buddhism became a force accelerating the growth of the state structure and of royal power. In order to strengthen kingly powers, the ruler was viewed as the wheel-turning emperor of the Kṣatriya caste. The twenty-third to twenty-eighth rulers adopted Buddhist names—for example, King Chinp'yōng adopted the name

of Śuddhodana, his queen became Māyā, and Queen Chindōk became Śrīmālā.

Although Buddhism in Koguryō and Paekche also had a nationalist color, these states were more advanced in their cultural standards, were familiar with Taoist literature, and distinguished the Buddhadharma from royal authority. Koguryō, which had contacts with the Chinese mainland and Central Asia, adopted the Buddhism that used the method of *ke-yi* (employing Taoist terms to elucidate Buddhist ideas). Likewise, Paekche had contacts with the Han commanderies and the southern dynasties, and the aristocracy was more powerful than the royal house. Thus the nobles were able to uphold the independence of the Buddhist church. Instead of holding Buddhist ceremonies to pray for the protection of the country, monks in Paekche and Koguryō specialized in the study of Buddhist doctrines or disciplinary texts (Vinaya)—in Paekche the *Nirvana Scripture* and the *Perfection of Wisdom Scripture* and in Koguryō the Three Treatise school. Active Koguryō monks include P'ayak, a disciple of Chih-i, who transmitted the teachings of the T'ien-t'ai school in 596; Sūngnang, who played a major role in China as a master of the Three Treatise school; and Hyegwan, who founded the same school in Japan.

In Paekche the study of the disciplinary texts flourished; it was founded by Kyōmik, who had returned from India in 526; three Japanese nuns traveled to Paekche to study it. Studies in the *Nirvana Scripture* continued, judging from the request to the Liang during the reign of King Sōng (523–554) for commentaries on the text; the Koguryō monk Podōk, who sought refuge in Paekche, further stimulated the study of the same text. Other eminent monks include Hyehyōn, who did not go to China but whose biography was included in the *Hsü kao-seng chuan* (*Further Lives of Eminent Monks*); Kwallūk and Hyeche'ōng, who went to Japan as experts on the Three Treatise school; and Tojang, who founded the Tattvasiddhi (Jōjitsu) school in Japan.

Early Buddhism in Silla developed under the influence of Koguryō. Hyeryang, an exile from Koguryō, was made the national overseer of monks (*kukt'ong*), and Chajang, upon returning from the T'ang, succeeded to the position as great national overseer (*taegukt'ong*). Both contributed to the institutional development of the church and the consolidation of Buddhist thought. Chajang also systematized the belief that Silla was the land of the Buddha—that in Silla, a land supposedly chosen and blessed by former buddhas, Buddhism was not a new religion.

Taewang Hŭngnyun because it was the king's abode. This was the first monastery erected in Silla.

The queen, too, served Buddha by becoming a nun and residing at Yŏnghŭng Monastery. Since the king had patronized a great cause, he was given the posthumous epithet of Pŏphŭng (Promoter of Dharma), which is by no means idle flattery. Thereafter, at every anniversary of Yŏmch'ok's death, an assembly was held at Hŭngnyun Monastery to commemorate his martyrdom. PL

Wŏngwang Goes to China for Study

[From *Haedong kosŭng chŏn* 1B:1020c-1021b]

The monk Wŏngwang's secular name was Sŏl or Pak. He was a resident of the capital of Silla. At the age of thirteen he had his head shaved and became a monk. His Sacred Vessel was free and magnificent, and his understanding beyond the ordinary. He was versed in the works of the Mysterious Learning [*Hsuān-hsuēh*] and Confucianism, and he loved literature. Being lofty in thought, he had great disdain for worldly passions and retired at thirty to a cave on Samgi Mountain. His shadow never appeared outside the cave.

One day a mendicant monk came to a place near the cave and there built a hermitage for religious practice.

One night, while the master was sitting and reciting scriptures, a spirit called to him: "Now, that monk is cultivating black art. I beseech you to persuade him to move away. If he does not follow my advice, there will be a disaster."

The master went to the monk and told him, "You had better move away to avoid disaster. If you stay, it will not be to your advantage."

But the monk replied, "When I undertake to do something opposed by Māra [the Evil One] himself, why should I worry about what a demon has to say?"

The same evening the spirit returned and asked for the monk's answer. The master, fearful of the spirit's anger, said that he had not yet been to the monk but knew the monk would not dare disobey. The spirit, however, remarked, "I have already ascertained the truth. Be quiet and you shall see."

That same night there was a sound as loud as thunder. At dawn the master went out and saw that the hermitage had been crushed under a landslide.

Later the spirit returned and said, "I have lived for several thousand years and possess unequaled power to change things. This is, therefore, nothing to be marveled at."

He advised the master: "Now the master has benefited himself, but he lacks the merit of benefiting others. Why not go to China to obtain the Buddhaharma, which will be of great benefit to future generations?"

"It has been my cherished desire to learn the Path in China," replied the master, "but owing to obstacles on land and sea I am afraid I cannot get there." Thereupon the spirit told him in detail of matters relating to a journey to the west.

In the third month, spring, of the twelfth year of King Chinp'yŏng [590], the master went to Ch'en. He traveled to various lecture halls, was received, and noted subtle instructions. After mastering the essence of the *Treatise on the Completion of Truth* [*Tattvasiddhi*], the *Nirvana Scripture*, and several treatises from the *Tripitaka*, he went to Hu-ch'iu in Wu, now harboring an ambition that reached to the sky. Upon the request of a believer, the master expounded the *Treatise on the Completion of Truth*, and thenceforth requests from his admirers came one after another like the close ranks of scales on a fish.

Now that he had further cultivated meritorious works, it was incumbent on him to continue the spread of dharma eastward. Our country therefore appealed to Sui, and a decree allowed him to return to his country in the twenty-second year, *kyŏngsin*, of King Chinp'yŏng [600].

In his thirtieth year [608], King Chinp'yŏng, troubled by frequent border raids from Koguryŏ, decided to request help from Sui to retaliate and asked the master to draft the petition for a foreign campaign. The master replied, "To destroy others in order to preserve oneself is not the way of a monk. But since I, a poor monk, live in Your Majesty's territory and waste Your Majesty's clothes and food, I dare not disobey." He then relayed the king's request to Sui.

The master was detached and retiring by nature, but affectionate and loving to all. He always smiled when he spoke and never showed signs of anger. His reports, memorials, memoranda, and correspondence were all composed by himself and were greatly admired throughout the whole country. Power was bestowed on him so that he might govern the provinces, and he used the opportunity to promote Buddhism, setting an example for future generations.

In the thirty-fifth year [613] an Assembly of One Hundred Seats was held in Hwangnyong Monastery to expound the scriptures and harvest the fruits of blessing. The master headed the entire assembly. He used to spend days at Kach'wi Monastery discoursing on the true path.

Kwisan and Ch'uhang from Saryang district came to the master's door and, lifting up their robes, respectfully said, "We are ignorant and without knowledge. Please give us a maxim which will serve to instruct us for the rest of our lives."

The master replied, "There are ten commandments in the bodhisattva ordination. But since you are subjects and sons, I fear you cannot practice all of them. Now, here are five commandments for laymen: serve your sovereign with loyalty; attend your parents with filial piety; treat your friends with sincerity; do not

retreat from a battlefield; be discriminating about the taking of life. Exercise care in the performance of them."

Kwisan said, "We accept your wishes with regard to the first four. But what is the meaning of being discriminating about the taking of life?"

The master answered, "Not to kill during the months of spring and summer nor during the six meatless feast days is to choose the time. Not to kill domestic animals such as cows, horses, chickens, dogs, and tiny creatures whose meat is less than a mouthful, is to choose the creatures. Though you may have the need, you should not kill often. These are good rules for laymen." Kwisan and his friend adhered to them without ever breaking them.

Later, when the king was ill and no physician could cure him, the master was invited to the palace to expound the dharma and was given separate quarters there. While expounding the texts and lecturing on the truth, he succeeded in gaining the king's faith. At first watch, the king and his courtiers saw that the master's head was as golden as the disk of the sun. The king's illness was cured immediately.

When the master's monastic years were well advanced, he went to the inner court of the palace by carriage. The king personally took care of the master's clothing and medicine, hoping thus to reserve the merits for himself. Except for his monastic robe and begging bowl, the master gave away all the offerings bestowed upon him to the monasteries in order to glorify the true dharma and to lead both the initiated and the uninitiated. When he was near the end, the king tended him in person. The king received his commission to transmit the dharma after the master's death and thus to save the people. Thereupon the master explained the omens to him in detail.

In the fifty-eighth year of Könbok,⁴ seven days after the onset of his illness, the master died, sitting upright, in his residence, giving his last commandments in a lucid, compassionate voice. In the sky northeast of Hwangnyong Monastery music filled the air, and an unusual fragrance pervaded the hall. The whole nation experienced grief mingled with joy. The burial materials and attending rites were the same as those for a king. He was ninety-nine years old. PL

Chajang Establishes the Monk's Discipline

[From *Samguk yusa* 4:191-194]

The venerable Chajang [fl. 636-645], surnamed Kim, was the son of Murim, Rank 3 of the True Bone class and a native of Chinhan. Early on, he lost both his parents and came to abhor the dust and clamor of the world. Renouncing wife and

children, he donated fields and gardens to be made into Wōnnyōng Monastery and dwelled alone amidst the remote escarpments. He did not run from wolves and tigers and cultivated the meditation on dried bones. Becoming somewhat exhausted and vexed, he then built a small hut and covered the walls with thorns and brambles. He sat inside naked and, if he nodded abruptly, he was pricked and pierced. He tied his head to a beam in the roof in order to ward off stupor.

Chajang lamented to himself that he had been born in a border region, and wished to travel to the west to learn the transforming teaching. Therewith, in the third year, *pyōngsin*, of Inp'yōng [636], he received royal permission and together with more than ten of his disciples, such as the monk Sil, traveled west to T'ang, arriving at Ch'ing-liang Mountain.

T'ai-tsung [626-649] sent a messenger to cater to his needs and ensconce him in Sheng-kuang Cloister. Though favors and gifts were richly given, Chajang despised this opulence. Upon his request, he went to Yün-chi Monastery on Chungnan Mountain and used an overhanging cliff on its eastern slope for his dwelling. There he lived for three years. Men and spirits received the precepts, and miracles took place every day. To relate all these would make the narrative complicated, and so they are omitted.

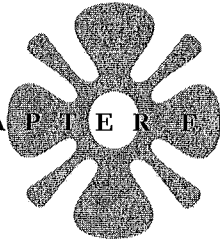
Subsequently, he returned to the capital and again received imperial favors. He was granted two hundred rolls of damask to use as capital for the cost of clothing.

During the seventeenth year, *kyemyo*, of Chen-kuan [643], Queen Sōndōk [632-646] sent a letter to T'ai-tsung requesting Chajang's repatriation. Giving his consent, the emperor invited Chajang to enter the palace and granted him one bolt of damask and five hundred of assorted textiles. The heir apparent also granted him two hundred lengths of textiles and other gifts. As there were still many missing scriptures and images in his native kingdom, Chajang begged to be given a set of the *Tripitaka* to take back, as well as all types of banners and streamers and flowered canopies, and anything else that could serve as an object of merit.

Once he arrived in Silla, he received the welcome of the entire country and was ordered to dwell in Punhwang Monastery, where he was provided with generous supplies and protection. One summer he was invited to the palace to discourse on the treatises of the Mahāyāna. Furthermore, at Hwangnyong Monastery, he lectured on the *Text of the Bodhisattva Precepts* for seven days and seven nights. The heavens rained sweet showers, and cloudy mists, murky and nebulous, enveloped the lecture hall. All the fourfold congregation⁵ marveled at the wonder.

The court deliberated, "Although the eastern flow of Buddhism has continued for hundreds and thousands of years, there has been a lack of rules and regula-

CHAPTER FIVE



The Rise of Buddhism

About the time of the unification of the Three Kingdoms, the learned Silla monks Wŏnhyo, Wŏnch'ŭk, and Ŭisang began to study Buddhist philosophy and popularize the faith. The epochal development of Silla Buddhism at this time, almost a century after its introduction, was made possible by political and ideological factors that facilitated the study and understanding of Buddhist thought. Although Silla received Buddhism from Koguryŏ and Paekche, it may have come into direct contact with Chinese Buddhism when the Liang monk Yŭan-piao arrived as an envoy. Beginning with the time of King Chinhŭng (540–576), Silla monks studying abroad began to return home, bringing with them Buddhist images and scriptures. Thus toward the end of the seventh century, most scriptures translated into Chinese were known in Silla, as evinced by Wŏnhyo, who never went to China but was able to establish his own unique system of Buddhist philosophy based on translated scriptures.

Earlier Silla Buddhism may have leaned toward the *ke-yi* ("matching the meaning") technique used by translators of the Prajñā scriptures, but the influx of Mahāyāna texts enabled Silla to better understand the Great Vehicle—that is, the vehicle of the bodhisattva leading to Buddhahood. Although the doctrines of the Three Treatise school (as propagated in Koguryŏ) and the T'ien-t'ai school (as propagated in Paekche) were little known, the efforts of Wŏngwang (d. 640) and Chajang (fl. 636–645) enabled Silla monks to

understand the tenets of the *Compendium of Mahāyāna* of the Consciousness-Only school and, later, those of Flower Garland metaphysics.

The impetus for the development of Buddhist philosophy in Silla was the unification of the Three Kingdoms, which also entailed the absorption of Koguryŏ and Paekche Buddhism. Opposing the state's adoption of Taoism, the Koguryŏ monk Podŏk lectured on the *Nirvana Scripture* and finally moved to Wansan prefecture (now Chŏnju) in Paekche (650). His eleven disciples built monasteries and lectured on the *Nirvana Scripture*, and Wŏnhyo and Ŭisang are said to have attended Podŏk's lecture. Wŏnhyo wrote a commentary on the text, and other commentaries followed—an indication of Koguryŏ influence on the formation of the Nirvana school in Silla. Likewise, the transmission of the Three Treatise school may have helped make Silla monks aware of the doctrinal differences between Mādhyamika and Vijñānavāda (or Yogācāra).

In China, Chih-i (538–597) established the T'ien-t'ai school; Hsüan-tsang (c. 596–664) translated the texts of the Consciousness-Only school that he had brought from India; and K'uei-chi (632–682) founded the idealistic Fa-hsiang ("dharma-characteristics") school. Thus the polemics between the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools were intensified—one upholding the truth of emptiness [*śūnyatā*] and the other expounding that everything exists in consciousness only. A new doctrinal system that could overcome these two opposing philosophies was Hua-yen (Flower Garland) metaphysics. As Silla pursued active diplomatic relations with the Sui and T'ang, trends in doctrinal studies in China were introduced and became the subject of inquiry for Silla monks. Mutual stimulation and development in T'ang and Silla testify to a close interaction between the two countries. Wŏnhyo, for example, wished to study and transmit the Consciousness-Only philosophy from Hsüan-tsang but remained in Silla all his life to develop his own system of Buddhist philosophy. Indeed, by abandoning his studies abroad he became the most original and prolific Buddhist philosopher in Korea and East Asia at that time. Wŏnhyo's accomplishments were transmitted to T'ang, where they stimulated the development of Hua-yen metaphysics—for example, Wŏnhyo's commentary on the *Awakening of Faith* inspired a similar work by Fa-tsang. Conversely, T'ang developments in Consciousness-Only and Flower Garland philosophy influenced the formation of these schools in Silla, and Silla's contributions to the two schools were transmitted to T'ang (see Fa-tsang's letter to Ŭisang).

With the development of royal authority in Silla came an awareness of the limits and contradictions of a Buddhism established and legitimized as a bulwark of the state. In its effort to consolidate power within and without,

Silla used Buddhism to enhance the privilege and status of the ruling house and to foster enthusiasm for unification. Until unification occurred, Buddhism was regarded primarily not as a religion but as a political-religious ideology that furthered the secular objectives of the state, and the faith was thereby deprived of its religious autonomy. With unification an accomplished fact, however, Silla Buddhism aspired to a new dimension: the abolition of conflict between the state's earthly objectives and the religion's otherworldly outlook, as well as the separation of church and state.

Meanwhile, in response to the consolidation of the administrative machinery after unification, Confucianism began to replace Buddhism as a political ideology. As Buddhism separated itself from politics, its political influence began to decline. The king was no longer considered a Buddha (as King Chinhŭng had been) but instead was accorded a Chinese-style posthumous epithet. Similarly, the state sought Buddhism's aid not through eminent monks but through the Buddhist community.

Such Confucian scholars as Kangsu and Söl Ch'ong emerged to play a major role in importing Chinese civilization, drafting diplomatic papers, and functioning as political advisers, roles hitherto reserved for eminent monks. They also began to criticize a Buddhism that had forgotten its primary religious function, as the remarks attributed to Kangsu show. King Munmu, who wished to adopt Confucian political thought, banned contributions of land and money to monasteries in 664. Aware of the contradiction inherent in upholding Buddhism with its magic and incantations as the state religion, he intended to curtail a drain on the kingdom's economic resources. In his attempts to point out a new direction for Buddhism, King Munmu ordered Ŭisang, who had just returned from China, to construct Pusŏk Monastery as the major place of worship for the Flower Garland school. In his will, he recommended Kyŏnghŭng, the master of the Consciousness-Only school, as national preceptor.

The outstanding questions around the time of unification, then, were the reconciliation of the tenets of the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra schools and a blending of the state's secular aims with the otherworldly goals of Buddhism. The solutions to these problems took the form of research into Buddhist doctrine and popularization of the faith. PL

WŎNHYO'S BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

Toward the end of the seventh century, Silla Buddhism made great strides in establishing a unique version of Buddhist philosophy through the efforts of Great Master Wŏnhyo (617–686). Posthumously honored as the "National

Preceptor Who Harmonizes Disputes," he systematized different schools of Buddhism and established a basis on which the people of Silla might understand them. Wŏnhyo had no special teacher, nor did he travel to China. He read widely and interpreted every text he could find, regardless of its doctrinal affiliation. His works indicate the scope of his broad reading and acute comprehension of Mahāyāna texts.

Focusing on the *Flower Garland Scripture* and the *Awakening of Faith*, Wŏnhyo was able to establish his unique universalistic and syncretic Buddhist philosophy, a harmonization of nature and characteristics. He traced various texts to their origins and periods of formation. His *Treatise on Ten Approaches to the Reconciliation of Doctrinal Controversy* (*Simmun hwajaeng non*) offers a logical basis for overcoming doctrinal inconsistencies and differences. Thus while Chih-i classified and rated the Buddha's teachings by periods, methods, and modes of doctrine, Wŏnhyo harmonized them and established their essential equality and unity.

Wŏnhyo's works were transmitted to China and Japan, where they exerted considerable influence. Known as the *Korean Commentary* (*Haedong so*), his commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*, which offers a theoretical system resolving the controversy between Mādhyamika and Yogācāra, is one of the three great commentaries on that text. His commentary on the *Adamantine Absorption Scripture*, which presents the practical theory of his Buddhism, was elevated to the status of *non* (treatise), indicating that the author was a bodhisattva, not just a mortal man; his *Treatise on Ten Approaches*, together with the *Meaning of Two Obstructions* (*Ijangŭi*), influenced Fa-tsang's *Wuchiao chang* and was said to have been carried to India to be translated into Sanskrit. Chinese masters who were influenced by Wŏnhyo include Fa-tsang (643–712), Li T'ung-hsüan (635–730 or 646–740), and Ch'eng-kuan (738–839). The Japanese monks Gyōnen (1240–1321) of the Flower Garland school and Zenshu (723–797) and Jōtō (740–815) of the Fa-hsiang school were also influenced by him. Furthermore, Wŏnhyo visited Ŭisang at the Avalokiteśvara Cave on Mount Nak and discussed with him his *Diagram of the Dharmadhātu* (*Ŭisŭng pŏpkye to*; 668), an indication that he maintained close ties with Ŭisang after the latter's return from China. Unlike Ŭisang, however, Wŏnhyo had no intention of founding a school or nurturing disciples. Hence he failed to form a school of his own, was accorded less esteem in Silla than in China, and had fewer disciples than Ŭisang. Only Ŭich'ŏn (1055–1101) was able to appreciate Wŏnhyo's contribution. Wŏnhyo's works were quoted by Silla monks but received no serious study—in sharp contrast to a host of later studies on Ŭisang's diagram.

Wŏnhyo, perhaps the most seminal Buddhist thinker in Korea, contrib-

opportunities to split Korea into rebel strongholds. Wang Kŏn emerged as a powerful general under Kim Kungye in T'aebong in central Korea. In 918, he founded Koryŏ, overthrowing Kungye. Seventeen years later, the last Silla king formally acknowledged Wang Kŏn's hegemony by recognizing the new dynasty and peacefully transferring power to it. In 936, after militarily destroying the internally torn Later Paekche, Wang Kŏn became the unchallenged authority in the Korean peninsula.

Yet Koryŏ owed much to Silla. In Silla, birth determined one's social and political functions. Koryŏ was never able to escape totally from this rigid order, as the architects of Koryŏ were themselves mostly men from Silla aristocratic clans and some of the great clans would continue to dictate Koryŏ politics until the kingdom's collapse in the fourteenth century. Silla's religious beliefs also influenced Koryŏ thought. Buddhism, which had matured during the Silla period, continued to dominate Koryŏ society. The Buddhist hierarchy grew rich through its links with the court and great clans and influenced the life and thought of the kingdom. Indigenous shamanism merged with Buddhist beliefs as well as Taoism and folk cults, leaving indelible marks, particularly in the popular culture.

Chinese culture also contributed to Koryŏ's development. As Koryŏ's early kings searched for an effective system of government, they naturally turned to China's rich and varied experience and borrowed liberally from Chinese political thought and institutions, eventually affording Koryŏ a sophisticated system of administration. Koreans also adopted the Chinese system of official recruitment, which relied in good part on a state examination on skill in literary Chinese and the Confucian classics. The state examination became an important means to select civil officials of varied backgrounds, who in the latter half of the dynasty became an active check on the entrenched power of the aristocratic establishment.

Early Koryŏ, compared to Silla, was a much more mobile society and had a greater resemblance to China both intellectually and politically. Koryŏ kings were generally well versed in Confucian thought while also devoted to Buddhism. Through its international contacts and internal maturity, Koryŏ achieved a level of sophistication that put it on a par with China, setting high standards in literature and art that became the envy of its world. Literary and artistic works of eleventh-century Koryŏ won the admiration of Chinese intellectuals for their refined style and erudition, for example, and the celadon produced in Koryŏ kilns has never been equaled to this day. Early Koryŏ was a prosperous society that offered a degree of stability for both the rulers and the ruled.

Koryŏ was not, however, immune to foreign attack. Khitan and Jürchen tribes living to the north harassed Koryŏ from the start. The Khitan invaded Koryŏ on three separate occasions between 993 and 1018, forcing one Koryŏ king to flee his capital. When later challenged by the Jürchen, Koryŏ responded by building a long wall across its northern territory. But even with such fortifications, relations with the northern tribes remained tense and perilous. Through preemptive attacks and diplomatic appeasement, Koryŏ was able to keep frequently belligerent neighbors in the north in check until the massive onslaught of the Mongols in the thirteenth century.

The mid-twelfth century, which brought Koryŏ to the peak of its prosperity, also saw the dynasty in crisis. First, members of one of the kingdom's great clans, the Yi of Kyŏngwŏn, tried unsuccessfully to take control of the government. Less than a decade later, in 1135, a monk named Myoch'ŏng dared to challenge the power of the aristocratic establishment and even tried to establish a new dynasty with its capital at the site of modern P'yŏngyang. On both occasions the aristocratic elite establishment, calling on military officers, defeated these attempts, but the rebellions indicated growing political and societal unrest and tensions. In 1170 a group of disgruntled military officers who had been ostracized by members of the civilian elite revolted, enthroned a new king, and purged a large number of civilian aristocrats. The revolt commenced a century of military rule, as generals became the key figures in determining state policy.

In the middle of the military period a new danger threatened the dynasty: the Mongol invasions. By 1258, after nearly thirty years of resistance, the military ruler fell and a new civilian leadership ready to sue for peace emerged. The Mongols answered by imposing a number of mechanisms of control upon Koryŏ. But with the eventual defeat of Yüan in China by the new Ming dynasty in 1368, Mongol domination over Koryŏ weakened. The end of the Mongols and the end of Koryŏ came nearly at the same time, as Neo-Confucian reformers, under the leadership of General Yi Sŏnggye, took control, instituting reforms and finally establishing the Chosŏn kingdom in 1392.

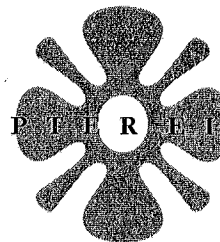
Despite the changes in its leadership, first with military rule and then with Mongol domination, Koryŏ remained a fairly stable, well-organized society. Although the literati officials had a more limited role in determining state policy in the latter half of the dynasty, the esteem for scholarship was undiminished. Much of Koryŏ's extant literature comes from the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. The state examination, which had always been important, was maintained and even invigorated in the early

fourteenth century. There is also evidence to suggest increased social mobility in late Koryŏ times. Nevertheless, great clans continued to dominate late Koryŏ life much as they had earlier.

Although Buddhism remained the spiritual anchor of the kingdom, its thrust changed significantly. The Meditation school, which had spread in the closing days of the Silla kingdom, predominated in late Koryŏ society. With lavish donations and patronage from Koryŏ's leading families, meditation monasteries dotted the countryside. But this school was not the property of the elite alone. Because of its simple message, calling for meditation and relying on sudden enlightenment, the poor peasant and struggling merchant also found it a source of inspiration.

Koryŏ, lodged between Silla and Chosŏn, is often overlooked in Korea's historical development. This is unfortunate because Koryŏ's legacy to contemporary Korea is impressive. Through the introduction of the civil service examination, it established merit as a criterion for government service. With its elaborate state apparatus, Koryŏ institutionalized government and made decisions in a rational manner. In Koryŏ, Buddhism expanded to become not only a religion of the aristocrats but a spiritual foundation for the entire society. In Koryŏ, as Koreans defended their land against invading troops, first from the north and then from Japanese pirates in the south, a sense and spirit of a people with a common heritage grew, heightening national consciousness. Koryŏ also produced priceless artistic and literary masterpieces. It was during the Koryŏ kingdom that the Western world first learned of Korea and began using the name Koryŏ for the country.

CHAPTER EIGHT



Early Koryŏ Political Structure

This chapter focuses on Koryŏ's political development through the early twelfth century, especially on the political foundations of the dynasty. King T'aejo (918-943) relied on both indigenous institutions and borrowed systems from China as he cautiously formed his new government. This structure was further strengthened by reforms launched by his successors, Kwangjong (949-975) and Sŏngjong (981-997) in particular. It was in the latter reign that Koryŏ's state organization clearly emerged through the efforts of Confucianized officials such as Ch'oe Sŭngno (927-989). Reform-minded officials like Ch'oe urged the implementation of Confucian practices that stressed proper moral conduct while trying to curtail Buddhist practices considered corrupting influences. Throughout the eleventh century, the political institutions were further refined as Koryŏ modified the dynastic structure through the successful transplantation of major Sung organizational forms.

While working on internal political stability, the dynasty also endeavored to normalize ties with the continental powers in the north. In response to shifting power, as first the Sung and then the Liao and Chin states emerged in succession, Koryŏ pursued a realistic foreign policy that sought a peaceful settlement of disputes through diplomacy while not shirking from military confrontation when necessary. The northern orientation thus set remained the basic direction of foreign relations for the rest of the Koryŏ period.

misplaced belief in geomantic prophecies, however, he decided to move the capital. As he was by nature resolute and unbending, he recklessly mobilized people for corvée, initiating public works and overworking laborers. Although it was the king's wish, popular sentiment did not accede, and resentment rose among the populace. Calamity quickly followed. He passed away before he could move the capital to P'yŏngyang. This is truly regrettable.

King Kwangjong, even in his childhood, had a remarkable appearance and an outstanding disposition. He received special care and love from his father King T'aejo. At King Chŏngjong's command on his deathbed, he inherited the throne, which was thus affectionately passed from older brother to younger brother. He treated those under him with much propriety, and he never lost his eye for judging people. He did not hold his royal relatives and high nobles too close, always restraining the mighty and powerful. He never neglected the humble, and accorded favors to widows and orphans. For eight years after he ascended the throne, the government was clean and equitable, meting out no excessive rewards or punishments. From the time he employed Shuang Chi, he leaned heavily toward the literati, dispensing excessive favors and courtesy to them. Thereupon, even the untalented came forward, upsetting the order of seniority, and advanced quickly, becoming high ministers in less than two years. Thereupon, mediocre people from north and south all competed to join in. Regardless of whether a person had knowledge or talent, the king treated all with special kindness and favor, so that even junior persons competed to advance, and the initial virtue of the king gradually disappeared.

Moreover, the king became excessive in his devotion to Buddhism and unduly valued Buddhists. Although regular observances of Buddhist fasting services were already numerous, many additional incense-burning prayers for special wishes were held. Prayers were merely offered to obtain blessings and longevity. Even though our financial means were limited, he tried to produce unlimited acts of merit. Taking his position as sovereign lightly, he sought to elevate the petty. His outings and banquets were all done with extreme extravagance. Not taking immediate hardship around him to be indicative of the future—which he assumed would be peaceful, thanks to the Buddha's power—he did not seek to correct wrongs in performing his deeds.

In his later years, many innocent people were put to death. Had Kwangjong had always been as respectful and frugal in his expenditures and as diligent in governing as he was early in his reign, could he not have lived longer rather than having passed away at the age of fifty years? I, perhaps foolishly, believe so.

Earlier, when kings Hyejong, Chŏngjong, and Kwangjong succeeded each other, not everything in the new dynasty had been settled. As a result, half of the

military and civil officials of the two capitals [Kaesŏng and P'yŏngyang] were killed or injured in succession disputes.

I humbly believe that, owing to the virtue of the ancient sages, Your Majesty has a new opportunity for restoration, as the glorious royal mandate has been passed on to Your Majesty because of the previous king's unselfish considerations. If Your Majesty truly follows King T'aejo's precedents, how would you be different from Hsüan-tsung's cherishing T'ai-tsung's old ways? Your Majesty, be selective, if you can, from the events of the last four reigns. It can be said that Hyejong upheld the principle of brotherly love, as his merit rests in having protected his close relatives. It can also be said that Chŏngjong exemplified the brilliance of strategy, as his early detection of a germinating rebellion allowed him to suppress disturbances in the palace, safeguard the dynasty, and preserve the crown to this day. Kwangjong's initial eight-year rule can be compared to the Three Ages of Hsia, Shang, and Chou; particularly noteworthy was his systemization of court ceremonies, but it might be said that the balance sheet of his achievement was evenly divided between the good and the bad. Kyŏngjong's freeing of thousands of unjustified prisoners of the preceding reign and his burning of the slanderous documents of many years may be considered the apex of generous leniency.

In general, this is the record of the four reigns. Your Majesty should selectively put into practice the good points and caution yourself on the bad by eliminating nonessential tasks and halting unbeneficial endeavors. Only by so doing will the ruler presiding above be at ease and the people below be joyful. If you do so, how could Your Majesty's life not last for a long time and the dynasty cease only after one hundred generations?

HK AND ES

Ch'oe Sŭngno: On Current Affairs

[From *Koryŏ sa* 93:12a-b, 19b-22a]

Although I am not bright, I unworthily hold an important position in the government. I therefore desire to memorialize the throne with no thought of avoiding my duty, humbly record my thoughts on current affairs in not more than twenty-eight points, and present them under separate cover in accordance with prescribed form.

It has been forty-seven years since our country united the Later Three Kingdoms. Our soldiers have yet to see peace, however, and military provisions are still in excessive demand. This is all because to the northwest there are many places to defend, as we border on barbarians. I hope Your Majesty will keep this fact in mind. Generally it was King T'aejo's intention to make Mahŏl Rapids a

border, whereas it was the Chinese decision to make the stone wall on the banks of the Yalu River a border. I beg that between these two places Your Majesty in the future choose a more strategic location and establish a border for our territory. Then choose from among the local people those who are good at archery and riding and assign them to defend the area. Select from among them two or three as adjutant officers and put them in command so that the central army will be free from the task of defending the area in rotation and the cost of transporting military provisions will decline.

Because soldiers in our dynasty's royal regiments during T'aejo's reign were charged with protecting the palace, their number was not large. King Kwangjong, believing slander, executed generals and ministers, creating suspicions himself, and then increased the number of soldiers. Selecting men of talent from the rural districts, he put them in the royal regiments and had them all quartered in the palace. Contemporaries considered this burdensome and useless. Although the number decreased slightly in Kyŏngjong's reign, there are still too many to this day. If Your Majesty will follow the precedents of T'aejo and retain only the strong and brave and dismiss the rest, the people will have nothing to lament and the country will have much to save.

Our T'aejo was sincere in his devotion to China, but he sent officials to affirm ties only once in several years. Nowadays envoys are sent frequently, not only for tributary visits but also because of trade. I fear that the Chinese may look upon this with disdain. Moreover, ships traveling back and forth frequently are shipwrecked, and many lives are lost. I ask that from now on we combine tribute missions with trade and strictly forbid all other contacts.

The king, in governing the people, cannot visit them at home daily, and so he sends out magistrates to look into their welfare. After our T'aejo unified the country, he wished to set up provincial governments, but as it was still the formative age, many conditions were too unsettled for this. As I observe it now, the powerful local strongmen, under the pretext of public works, extort the people to the point that they can no longer endure it. I request that you establish provincial governments. And even if you cannot fill every office at once, first establish one provincial government for about ten *chu* and *hyŏn* and place two or three officials in each government to nourish and attend to the people.

In Silla the clothing, shoes, and stockings of nobles, officials, and commoners each had its designated color. Nobles and officials in court wore formal clothing and shoes and held tablets, and when they were out of court, they wore what they wished. To differentiate the noble and humble and distinguish the high and low, commoners could not wear patterned clothing. In this way, even though official robes were not locally produced, the supply was adequate for the use of

officials. Since King T'aejo's time, we have worn clothes as we please regardless of social status. Even if one's rank is high, if his house is poor, he cannot afford an official robe. And if one is unemployed but has money, he can use silk gauze and elegant brocade. As for products in our country, there are few good items but many coarse goods. Even though none of the materials with designed patterns is locally produced, everybody wears them. I fear that the formal wear of the officials will not follow set regulations and will cause us embarrassment when we welcome officials from other countries. I ask that you command all officials to wear formal robes and shoes and to hold tablets at court meetings in accordance with Chinese and Silla conventions. In court presentations, have them wear socks and silk or leather shoes. Commoners should not be allowed to wear patterned silk but only plain silk fabrics.

Although Chinese systems are good to follow, as the customs of each area have their own characteristics, it would be difficult to change every custom. As for the teachings of the classics on rites, music, poetry, and documents, as well as the ways of the ruler and subject and the father and son, we must fittingly follow China and reform our vulgar ways. In the rest of the systems, however, such as transport and clothing, we should follow our native traditions so that the ostentatious and frugal will be balanced. We need not be like China in everything.

The people who live on the various islands grew up in the middle of the sea because of crimes committed by their forefathers. But as their land produces little food, their livelihood is very difficult. And yet as the government agent presses demands for levies from time to time, he daily impoverishes them. I request that we adhere to the levies set for the mainland districts and equalize their tax burdens and corvée levies.

According to the *Book of Changes*, "The sage influences the heart of the people, and consequently the world enjoys peace and harmony."¹² It is also stated in the *Analekts*, "May not Shun be instanced as having governed efficiently without exertion? What did he do? He did nothing but gravely and reverently occupy his royal seat."¹³ The sage can move Heaven and man because he has the purest virtue and an unselfish mind. If Your Majesty maintains a humble spirit and is always respectful and courteous to your subjects, then who while in government would not exhaust mind and strength in exposing evil plots and who while in retirement would not think only of serving you? This is referred to as the ruler treating the subject with respect and the subject serving the ruler with loyalty. I hope that Your Majesty will always be singularly prudent and never arrogant and will be gentle in dealing with your subjects. Even though there are criminals, if you deliberate on their crimes in accordance with the law, you can expect great peace imminently.

Except for the court slaves doing labor in the palace, King T'aejo sent the rest to live outside to till land and pay taxes. In Kwangjong's reign, because his many Buddhist activities daily increased public construction works, he enlisted the slaves living outside to carry out the public works. As the funds appropriated for the palace were not sufficient to pay for all the expenses, the rice stored in the government warehouses was also diverted. Your Majesty has not yet been able to correct this abuse. Moreover, since the number of horses raised in the palace stable is considerable, the expense is extravagant, causing people to suffer. Should disturbances occur on the frontier, provisions will not be adequate. I ask Your Majesty, strictly following the systems established by T'aejo, to limit the number of horses and slaves in the palace and resettle the remainder outside the palace.

According to the *Record of Rites*, "The hall of the Son of Heaven was ascended by nine steps; that of a prince by seven."¹⁴ This has been the established practice. Recently, however, there has been no social distinction between the high and the low, and if a person has financial means, the first thing he does is build a house. Accordingly the powerful in all local administrative districts compete to build large houses exceeding the earlier standards. They not only exhaust the resources of their families but also cause harm to the people, and the result is excessive abuse. I humbly urge you to order officials of the Board of Rites to regulate house construction according to social status and to command all in the country to comply with this. Those who have already built in excess of these standards should be ordered to demolish the houses as a warning for the future.

In earlier times, as China's virtue declined, its eight great families, Lüan, Hsi, Hsü, Yüan, Hu, Hsu, Ch'ing, and Pai, ended up as slaves. Although the descendants of the meritorious subjects¹⁵ of our dynastic founding should have received emoluments as stipulated each time royal commands have been issued, there are still some who have never received any rank and remain mixed among the slaves. As newly rising groups frequently insult them at will, discontent festers.

Ever since numerous court officials were purged in Kwangjong's last years, many descendants of the great families have been unable to continue their family lineages. I urge you to adhere to the often-issued royal commands and employ descendants of the meritorious subjects according to their rank. If you weigh the recipients of meritorious land grants in the year *kyŏngja* [940] and the officials who entered government service after the unification of the Later Three Kingdoms and confer upon them appropriate ranks and positions, this will mitigate past errors in regrettable charges and slights and avoid misfortune that could arise in the future.

In winter and summer, the dynasty's prayer meetings and memorial services for

former kings and queens have been practiced for a long time and are not something to be set aside. I urge you, however, to reduce other services that can be done away with. If they cannot be reduced, then observe them in accordance with the *yüeh-ling* of the *Record of Rites*.¹⁶ This states that since the spirit of the fifth month connotes the struggle between yin and yang, resulting in distinction between life and death, the gentleman must purify his body and soul, confining himself to his living quarters, certainly moving about without haste, abstaining from music and women, and eating moderately. By so controlling desires, he puts his mind in order. All officials also cleanse their bodies and submit to the king no litigation to be heard, thus assisting the completion of yin.

Since the spirit of the eleventh month connotes the struggle between yin and yang, resulting in the destruction of all living things, the gentleman should purify his body and soul, confining himself to his living quarters, moving about without haste, dismissing music and women, forbidding addiction to lust, and putting the mind and body at peace. By so conducting everything in quiet, he waits for the stabilization of yin and yang. This then is a time to desist. Why? When it is very cold, people on corvée labor will suffer and food may be unclean. When it is extremely hot, one perspires profusely. Or one may kill many insects by mistake, and so make sacrificial offerings impure. What kind of virtuous merit can this bring? Moreover, even if today produces good things, tomorrow will not necessarily bring good rewards. This being the case, nothing is as good as improving government policies.

I request that you divide the twelve months of the year into two halves and, from the second to the fourth month and from the eighth to the tenth, devote half the time to government affairs and half to acts of religious piety. From the fifth to the seventh month, and from the eleventh to the first, exclude pious acts and concentrate only on government affairs. Every day listen to government matters, and day and night assiduously deliberate on government policies. Every afternoon, in compliance with the four daily rituals of the gentleman,¹⁷ refine government orders and look after health. In this way the seasonal conduct of the government will be orderly and Your Majesty will dwell in peace. This will also reduce the people's toils. How could all this not bring great religious merit?

The *Analects* states: "For a man to sacrifice to a spirit that does not belong to him is flattery."¹⁸ The *Tso Commentary* states: "If a spirit is not your clan's, it will not receive sacrifices."¹⁹ This is to say that offering sacrifices where one has no right to offer them brings no blessings. The services at our dynasty's ancestral temples and national altars still have many deviations that do not adhere to established rules. The services to the mountain peaks and the sacrifices to the constellations are vexing and excessive. It is said that sacrifices should not be

done too frequently. If they are too frequent, they become burdensome. If they are burdensome, they become unrespectable. Although Your Majesty cleanses your heart in a most respectful way and certainly has no trace of laziness, if the sacrificial officials regard this as a routine affair, it becomes wearisome and is done without respect. How then will the spirits happily receive the service?

In ancient times, Emperor Wen of Han China had officials conduct the sacrificial service with respect, but he did not lead them in prayer. This detached view of the service can be called a great moral sense. If the spirits are unaware of the supplicant's needs, how can they extend blessings to him? If they are aware that these services are for self-gain and favors, as even a gentleman would have difficulty in responding to this, would the spirits not have even more difficulty? Furthermore, the expense of these services all comes from the toil and blood of the people. It is my belief that if you ease the people's labor, you will win their hearts, and the blessings from this will certainly exceed those blessings gained from prayers. I hope Your Majesty will eliminate extraneous prayers and services and always preserve an attitude of humility and self-reproach toward Heaven. In this way, calamity will of itself vanish and blessings appear.

The laws governing the free and the lowborn in our country have existed for a long time. When King T'aejo first founded the country, except for those officials who had originally had slaves, all other officials who became slave owners had acquired them while in the army, either by obtaining prisoners of war or through purchase. T'aejo once wanted to free the slaves to be commoners, but being concerned about agitating the feelings of the meritorious subjects, he followed a course of expediency. Since then, for the last sixty years, no one has ever made an appeal. In Kwangjong's reign, the king began to direct an investigation of slaves to determine their true status. All the meritorious subjects resented the investigation, but none dared to remonstrate. Even when Queen Taemok urgently remonstrated, the king did not heed. The lowborn and slaves gained their wishes and slighted the nobles, and those who competed to lie and scheme against their masters were numerous. Kwangjong himself created the causes for calamity and was unable to stop it. By the end of his reign, many innocent people had been killed, and the result was his great loss of virtue.

In early China when Hou Ching²⁰ encircled the palace in Liang, the house slave of the high official Chu I²¹ crossed over the palace wall and surrendered to Hou Ching, who conferred on him the high title of *i-t'ung san-ssu*.²² The slave, riding a horse and wearing a silk robe, faced the palace and shouted, "After serving for fifty years, Chu I just got the command of the central army, but I merely began to serve King Hou and immediately received the highest title of *i-t'ung*." It is said that the household slaves in the palace thereupon competed to escape and

surrender to Hou Ching and that the palace accordingly fell. I hope that Your Majesty will carefully reflect on this earlier incident and not allow the lowborn to put the noble to shame, but will follow the Golden Mean by separating slaves and masters. Generally people who hold high office are reasonable and few commit illegalities. How can people of low status, when they have insufficient wisdom and gloss over their wrongdoings, be made commoners? Although some royalty and nobles may have committed illegal acts because of their influence, at present the government is as clean as a mirror, with no pursuit of personal interest. [How can anyone transgress?] The misconduct of King Yu and King Li of Chou could not conceal the virtue of King Hsüan and King P'ing, and although Queen Lü of Han was unvirtuous, it did not tarnish the worthiness of Emperors Wen and Ching. Try to make important judgments with clarity so as to have no future regret. There is no need to rekindle disputes by reopening investigations of decisions that were made in earlier times.

HK AND ES

Ch'oe Sŭngno: On Buddhism

[From *Koryŏ sa* 93:15b-19b]

I have heard that Your Majesty, in order to hold Buddhist rites to accumulate merit, at times personally grinds tea and barley. Your Majesty's diligent labor troubles me deeply. Such practices started from Kwangjong's reign. Believing slanderous defamations, he had many innocent people killed. Misled by the Buddhist theory of just retribution and wishing to remove the consequences of past sins, he exacted provisions from the peasants to hold Buddhist services. He established Vairocana confessional rituals, held Buddhist maigre feasts on the polo fields, and set up Buddhist Festivals of Equal Bestowal of Wealth and Law on Land and Sea in Kwibŏp Monastery.

The offerings at the Buddhist services were invariably provisions exacted from the people. At that time, children turned against their parents and slaves against their masters, and all sorts of criminals disguised as monks, many actually mingling with real monks, wandered about begging and came together to hold Buddhist services. What good would this do? Although Your Majesty's actions since ascending the throne are not like this, the matters you have troubled yourself with are without any benefit. I hope Your Majesty will rectify the regal policy and do nothing that is not of benefit.

I have heard that monks, when traveling to the countryside, stay at government hostels and postal stations, chastising the local clerks and people for carelessness in their reception and provision of food. The clerks and people,

Moreover, Master Hüii's family had for successive generations intermarried with the royal family, becoming one of the first families of Korea. Yet Master Hüii alone, indifferent to worldly concerns, remained unaffected by worldly ambition. And yet with his virtue and personality so respected, how could men of wisdom help admiring him and at the same time not regret his withdrawal from government?

HK AND ES

THE FAMILY

Lineage was at the very core of Koryŏ's political order. Not only did the clan lineage enable great families to rise in society, but as the following passages demonstrate, it determined one's status, whether aristocrat or slave. Accordingly, relations within the family were extremely important for the smooth functioning of this society, an attitude that was reinforced by Confucian ideology.

Of all the values Confucianism emphasizes, filial piety receives special attention. King Sŏngjong (981-997), Koryŏ's sixth monarch, in his rescript on filial piety, asked that filial subjects be recognized and rewarded. As the king indicated, to be filial at home meant to be loyal to the state. In short, filial behavior would help to secure the state and bring harmony to society.

Sound family relations are evident too in Ch'oe Nubaek's twelfth-century tomb inscription for his wife, Yŏm Kyŏngae. In this beautiful tribute, Ch'oe describes his deceased wife's humility and untiring devotion to him and his family. The woman's role in Koryŏ society is revealed to a limited degree through this eulogy. The description also provides a rewarding glimpse of social history, convincingly demonstrating that not all court officials lived lives of splendor.

King Sŏngjong: Rescript on Filial Piety

[From *Koryŏ sa* 3:17a-18b]

Generally in governing the country, one must first attend to what is fundamental. In doing so, nothing surpasses filial piety. This was exemplified by the Three August Sovereigns and the Five Emperors.⁵ Filial piety is the order of myriad affairs and the core of all virtues. Accordingly, a Chinese emperor congratulated Yang Yin⁶ for honoring his parents and built a gate to commemorate this in his home town. The emperor of Chin China commended the extreme filial piety of Wang Hsiang [185-269]⁷ by ordering his name recorded in histories.

As a child, I lost my father, and I may have grown up foolish and ignorant. Entrusted with the succession, I inherited the responsibility to protect the dynasty. Recalling my deceased grandfather, I grieve over the brevity of human life. Whenever I think of past times with my brothers, I feel even more fraternal affection. Accordingly, if we take the precepts from the six Confucian classics and rely for a ritual norm on the three ritual texts,⁸ this will make the customs of a country return to the five filial virtues expected of rulers, feudal lords, officials, scholars, and peasants.

Recently I have dispatched officials to the six provinces to spread instructions to help the old and the weak who are starving and wandering, to rescue destitute widowers and orphans, and to look for and visit filial sons, obedient grandchildren, righteous husbands, and chaste women.

There was in Kurye-hyŏn, Chŏnju, a person named Son Sunhŭng. When his mother died of an illness, he painted a portrait of her and placed it on an altar. Once every three days he attended her grave, serving her as if she were living.

In Chibul station, Unje-hyŏn, a person named Ch'adal had three brothers, and together they supported their old mother. Ch'adal told his wife to attend his mother, but she was not diligent, and so he immediately divorced her. His two younger brothers also single-heartedly served their mother without even a thought of marrying.

The mother of Pak Kwangyŏm of Moran-ri in the Western Capital [P'yŏngyang] had been dead for seven days. Suddenly he saw some dried wood that seemed to be shaped like his mother. He carried it to his home and revered it with all propriety.

The ruler is the sovereign of all the people, and the people are the subjects of the ruler. If there are good deeds, it is my blessing. If there are evil deeds, it is my worry. Illuminate action that respects parents so as to display the spirit of good customs. If humble, rural peasants diligently think about filial piety, how can government officials neglect serving their parents? Truly if one is filial at home, he will certainly be a loyal official for the state. All scholars and commoners, please take my words to heart.

HK AND ES

Ch'oe Nubaek: Tomb Inscription of Yŏm Kyŏngae

[From *Chŏsen kinseki sŏran* 1:357-359]

On the twenty-eighth day, *musul*, of the first month of the sixth year of Huang-t'ung [12 March 1146], the wife of Hannam Ch'oe Nubaek, Lady Yŏm, Duchess of

Pongsŏng-hyŏn, died in her country house. Ch'oe Nubaek composed the following tomb inscription.

As a person, my wife was pure and modest. She was very literate and well understood moral obligations. In speech, appearance, skill, and conduct, she was superior to others. Before marriage she ably served her parents; after marriage she was extremely diligent in wifely ways. She was the first to perceive and carry out the wishes of elders, and with filial piety she nourished my now deceased mother. In good and bad fortune, in congratulations and condolences, she could share the feelings of immediate family members and in-laws. There was no one who did not praise her.

Earlier, I was sent out as a magistrate to P'aeju [in Chŏlla] and Chung-wŏn [in Ch'ungch'ŏng]. Without hesitation, crossing mountains and streams, she accompanied me all the way. And when I was involved in military matters, she endured hardship in our poor home and often made and sent military uniforms. And when I was a palace attendant, she used every means possible to supply delicacies to present to the king. How she followed me through all of these difficulties for twenty-three years I cannot entirely record.

One day she said to me, "You are a man of letters. Mundane matters should not be important to you. I consider providing clothes and food for the family to be my task. Even though I repeatedly put forth effort to do this, it does not always come up to my expectations. Later on, even if I unfortunately die first and you attain more income, enabling you to do everything you wish, please remember me for trying to ward off poverty, not for my lack of talent." As she finished speaking, she released a vast sigh.

In the spring of [1145], *ŭlch'uk*, I advanced from supervising attendant in the Office of Heir Apparent to junior monitor, drafter of royal edicts and proclamations. My wife, showing her happiness in her face, said, "It seems we have almost seen the end of our poverty." I responded to her, "Being a policy critic is not a position to earn a rich stipend." My wife said, "If suddenly one day you are standing in the palace court with the king arguing over an issue, even if I am forced to wear a thorny wooden barrette and poor cotton skirts and carry heavy burdens in making our life, I will accept it willingly." These were not the words of an ordinary woman.

I continued to be promoted many times and successively received higher stipends. In looking at my family's present situation, however, it is not as good as in the days when my wife struggled to make ends meet. How could anyone say my wife did not have talent? When my wife was about to die, in leaving her last instructions to me and our children, all her words were reasonable and many were worth listening to.

When she died, her age was forty-seven. Her epitaph reads: "I, your husband, pledge not to forget you. That I am not yet buried together with you gives me great pain. The children will live in harmony and expect to be prosperous forever."

HK AND ES

SOCIAL STATUS

Only a small minority in Koryŏ enjoyed lives of luxury and wealth. Although most people lived lean, austere lives, Koryŏ society permitted a limited degree of mobility. For the intellectually able, there were always opportunities to advance, for example, through the state examination. Marriage presented a potential means of moving up the social ladder.

An Hyang (1243–1306), who lived in the later period of the dynasty, came from the middle level of Koryŏ society. The short description offered here reveals the personal interaction between a hereditary local clerk and a centrally appointed official. Both had their own bases of power that could conflict but assured orderly dynastic rule when used effectively. Chŏng Kasin (d. 1298), the subject of the next selection, was another official who lacked an esteemed lineage. This anecdote clearly reveals the importance of one's lineage in establishing marriage ties even for those who were not members of the elite.

An excellent source for understanding twelfth-century Koryŏ is the *Illustrated Account of Koryŏ* (*Kao-li t'u-ching*) by Hsü Ching (1091–1153) of Sung. Hsü visited Koryŏ on a mission from China in 1123 and compiled this work describing Korea and the Koreans. In this particular passage, he briefly identifies the major social classes of Koryŏ for his Chinese readers and then gives a frank account of what he interprets to be Korean behavioral norms. Although Hsü's ethnocentrism is readily apparent in this and other passages, his work sheds precious and otherwise unavailable light on aspects of Koryŏ life.

The Career of An Hyang

[From, *Koryŏ sa* 105:28a–b]

An Hyang's original name was Yu, and he was from Hŭngju. His father, Pu, was a local clerk with a degree in medicine who advanced to the post of deputy commissioner of the Security Council by the time he retired. As a boy, An Hyang enjoyed studying, and early in King Wŏnjong's reign he passed the state