

The Record of the Black Dragon Year

Now it is said that, ¹ in the sixteenth year of *mujŏ* (1588) of Great King Sŏnjo in the state of Chosŏn, the seasons were fair and the harvest abundant, the country was peaceful and its people content—a time of perfect peace and prosperity. In Sakchu, P'yŏngan province, there was a man whose family name was Ch'oe and his given name Wŏgong. He was approaching forty but regretted that he had no child. One day, however, his wife saw a large star with radiant light fall to the north and realized that she was having a dream of conception.

In her unconscious state she saw a man in court attire and cap, thirteen feet in height, attended by an azure-clad boy holding a fan of white feathers. The man approached the lady and said: "Long ago, in the empire of Han, I was Marquis Shouting, Kuan Yünch'ang. But I committed a crime against heaven and had to float like cloud and flow like water. Then I found out that my younger brother had become king of Chosŏn, on whom I wish to depend. So I went to the Jade Palace of the Transcendent in Heaven, and the Emperor on High instructed me: 'I kept this child under my care and loved him every day, but because he lost a volume of *The Document of Human Fortune and Misfortune*, I am sending him into exile as a human being and you must raise him secretly.' Thus I wish you to raise him as a person of noble birth."

When the man vanished, the wife awoke stunned, and realized that it was but a spring dream. And indeed she became pregnant from that month on, and after the tenth month gave birth to a precious boy. His appearance was extraordinary, and his stature handsome; so Ch'oe Wŏgong named him Ilgyŏng and loved him unceasingly. By the time Ilgyŏng was three or four years old, his

manners were ten times better than those of an ordinary person. At seven he could comprehend the Four Books and the Three Classics² and was versed in the works of various schools of philosophy. He knew astrology, geography, and the rise and fall of dynasties from time past—there was nothing he did not know. At thirteen he passed the civil service examination; at sixteen, he became minister of personnel; at nineteen, third state councilor. Thus his fame spread at court.

One day, the king had a dream: From the east a girl with unkempt hair, carrying a broomcorn millet sack on her head, entered the palace in tears and placed the sack on the stone step. Soon in the eight provinces flames pierced the sky and the people were in turmoil. When the king woke up in shock, he realized that it was an evil portent, cruel and distressing. The next day he was still troubled by the omen of the dream. And when the hundred officials at court convened to discuss the dream, all were silent. Thereupon, Third State Counselor Ch'oe Ilgyöng spoke: "The girl had a broomcorn millet sack on her head; likewise the graph that contains the human radical with those for rice and girl is the graph for *wae*,³ Japan. So I fear there will be a Japanese invasion like fire in the eight provinces. As Japan is strong and prosperous, disaster will soon be upon us."

The king asked: "When this will happen?"

Ch'oe stated: "After three years, in the Black Dragon year, summer, after the fifteenth of the fourth month, they will land."

The hundred officials were silent. But the king became angry and declared: "During such a peaceful reign you disturb the court with your foolish talk! Divest him of his official rank and exile him to Tongnae!"⁴ Thereupon Ch'oe went at once to the place of exile.

The story resumes: it was the twenty-eighth of the fourth lunar month, summer, of the year of the Black Dragon (7 June 1592). It so happened that an astrologer was gazing eastward: the sun's rays

dimmed, the air filled with death, waves touched the sky, black clouds covered the water as they approached. Countless thousands of Japanese ships covered the ocean, their three-tiered masts wrapped with blue awnings, the beat of drums and battle cries shaking the waves as they came.

In an instant, they landed and killed the magistrate of Tongnae. Like thunder a man roared: "With this sword I'll cut off the heads of the people of Chosön." All looked upon him and saw that he was the commander-in-chief. After three days' rest, Supreme Commander Chosöp planted the general's standard, allotted soldiers for each of the eight provinces, summoned Ch'önch'ang and Manch'ang,⁵ and said: "Assemble the unit commanders in columns, complete the number in each unit, and take a roll call."

The two generals obeyed the order and reported: "Renowned generals number over two hundred. There are two million armored soldiers, three million cavalry, one million advance soldiers, and twenty-eight thousand infantry scouts for each province."

Supreme Commander Chosöp and Deputy Commander Kiyomasa mounted the general's platform and summoned Madüng and Mahüng. They gave them eight hundred commanders and fifty thousand soldiers and said: "Attack the twelve districts of Chölla, annihilate the whole province, and hold and defend the walled town of Chönju."

They summoned Mugyöng and Puyöng and said: "Take eight hundred renowned commanders and fifty thousand soldiers. Destroy North Chölla province, cross Autumn Wind Ridge,⁶ and destroy the fifty districts of Ch'ungch'öng province."

They also summoned Kyöngch'ang, gave him two hundred commanders and thirty thousand soldiers and said: "Destroy West Kyöngsang province and the districts east of the Great Pass Ridge⁷ and hold the walled town of Wönju."

They also summoned Hosöp, gave him two hundred commanders and fifty thousand soldiers and said: "Destroy the twenty districts in Kangwön province, cross Bamboo Ridge,⁸ and crush the twenty-one districts of Hamgyöng province."

They also summoned Söch'ölgöl and Söch'ölbae and said: "Cross Kangwön province and destroy Kyönggi province. If you seize the capital city, send news of victory."

"Chosöp will cross Bird Ridge⁹ and destroy the twelve districts of Kyönggi province. You must rush your cavalry to assault P'yöngan province, cut off its forty-two districts, enter the walled city of P'yöngyang, and await Kiyomasa. Deputy Commander Kiyomasa will command six hundred generals and fifty thousand soldiers. He will destroy East Kyöngsang province, enter Kyöngju, hold and defend Taegu, destroy Sangju, wipe out the seven towns of Yöngye, cross Bird Ridge, annihilate Kyönggi province, ambush Seoul, cut off the heads of Chosön's generals, and offer them to those under our generals' command. If among the generals there is one who is negligent, execute him on the spot and report it later."

All the generals and soldiers formed into units and began to march. The standards, spears, and swords mocked the sun and moon. The beating of drums, blare of bugles, and shouts of men shook heaven and earth. The sight was imposing and stern. Alas, the corpses of the people of Chosön were piled as high as mountains; blood flowed and formed rivers. It was impossible to guess the number of deaths. At dusk, flames everywhere pierced the sky. By day, plundering thieves killed countless innocent people, and weeping shook the nine springs.¹⁰ The sight was unbearable.

Continuing with our story, at this time in Sakchu of P'yöngan province, there was a person whose family name was Yi and his given name Sunsin. His other name was Lord Ch'ungmu (Loyal Warrior). He had lost his parents at an early age and was now twenty

years old. He was a person of magnificent spirit; he could lift three thousand pounds; and he daily practiced horsemanship and archery.

At this time, he said with great joy: "This is an opportune time. With my talent I will deliver millions of people." He left home and endeavored to build a boat by the sea, waiting to be summoned by the court. In general, the boat was ten thousand feet in length and ten fathoms in height, and its four sides were rounded so that no water could enter. Seen from afar, it looked like a large turtle floating on the water. He built several thousand and called them *köbüksön* (turtle ships).

He then went to various bureaus, directing and pressing for military provisions and horse fodder. He went down to Chönju and saw the provincial intendant Paek Naesu, and said: "Now the Japanese bandits are everywhere, so please send a message to the king quickly. If the king summons me, I will repel the enemy with my own sword."

The intendant replied with great joy: "I have already sent several dispatches, but there's been no news. It must be because the roads are blocked. Please take action against the marauders at once, general. There are twenty thousand soldiers assembled from seven villages. Achieve merit and protect the Altars of Soil and Grain."¹¹ Yi Sunsin readily agreed to put Paek Süngsu in charge of transporting military supplies and launched an attack against the Japanese invaders. Mahüng invaded the seven villages south of Chölla province. Entering a large river, he sent a dispatch ahead. Yi Sunsin, with a helmet that displayed the sun and moon, wearing star-studded armor,¹² carrying a seven-foot-long sword in his hand, and riding a Mongol horse, came out surrounded by soldiers and provoked a fight.

The Japanese general Madüng, who led a naval force of ten thousand soldiers waiting at sea, cried: "Yi Sunsin! Little boy! Come

out at once! Let's test our skills in a sea battle!" So Yi Sunsin, overjoyed, gathered his boats into formation in the shape of the graph *myo* (rabbid) in the water, killed fifty thousand Japanese bandits beneath the waves, and then surfaced.¹³

Mahŭng, who had been in the base camp, came running and said: "Sunsin, do not harm my soldiers." As columns of flames arose from somewhere, Yi Sunsin looked away in surprise. Mahŭng, taking out an arrow, shot Yi Sunsin in the chest. Madŭng, in turn, raised a sword, cut off Yi Sunsin's head, and held it up. With a sigh he said: "Because of this single child, tens of thousands of generals and soldiers are now lonely underwater spirits."

After killing the provincial intendant Paek Naesu, they went into the city of Ch'önju beating the drum of victory and gathering the remaining soldiers. In high spirits, they trained every day and destroyed the people. At this time, Kiyomasa led ten thousand soldiers, destroyed East Kyöngsang province, crossed Bird Ridge, launched a surprise attack on the walled city of Taegu, went to Sangju, and was exultant as he destroyed the seven districts of Yöngye. The district magistrate of Mungyöng, Sin Kirwön, came to the visitors' quarters with a seal box in his mouth and bellowed:¹⁴ "The ignorant barbarians have ignored heaven's majesty and dared to invade Chosön. How could we not be sad? With the sun and moon so bright, how could we lose to the Japanese criminals? I would rather place the seal box where the wooden tablet is."¹⁵ With that he untied the seal string, hung it on the wooden tablet, and threw himself on the ground and wailed. The Japanese commander Moch'ung drew his sword and cut off his head, saying: "You are truly a loyal subject." Crossing Bird Ridge, Moch'ung slew Ch'ungju magistrate Sin Ch'igyöng and cut a destructive path toward Ansong in Kyönggi.

At this time, there was a person in the Cheju fortress whose surname was Kang, and his given name Hongnip. Having lost both parents at an early age, he was given to wine and women, and dissolution. At sixteen, his strength was enough to lift three thousand pounds and his height was nine feet. He made his living roaming in the mountains catching tigers and deer and selling the deer antlers and various parts of the tigers. One day, hearing that the Japanese bandits had invaded Chosön, that the Altars of Soil and Grain were in danger, and that the fate of Chosön could be decided in one morning and evening, he went to the Cheju headquarters and said to the soldiers: "At this time the Japanese bandits have invaded our country of Chosön and are said to have captured nearly all of the eight provinces. Are you not alarmed? I am an insignificant general without skill. But if you give me a contingent of soldiers, with a single sword I will annihilate the Japanese invaders and save the people."

The magistrate scoffed: "What sort of lunatic are you? Still in your diapers and yet full of audacity and creating a commotion here?" He ordered: "Flog him thirty times with light bamboo and throw him in prison!"

At this Kang Hongnip threw back his head and burst out laughing: "You're the puppy who does not recognize the tiger." From the sack on his back he took out a helmet decorated with a flying phoenix and put it on. He then put on a thousand-pound suit of armor. Brandishing a Blue Wave sword,¹⁶ he then rebuked the magistrate, saying: "As a salaried official, you fail to think of your country but act instead in this manner. You too are a traitor. I will cut off your head and hang it high within the fortress."

With a loud cry Kang Hongnip then charged the magistrate. But the magistrate simply said smiling: "Now that we have met such a distinguished general, how can we fear the Japanese bandits? I too

have received a royal command and have guarded this fortress. In such times, how could I sleep and eat at ease? First I wanted to assess your dignity. Now that I have estimated your courage, you may give an official order to the soldiers within the fortress and defend it against the Japanese raiders."

Only then did Kang Hongnip's indignation begin to fade. At once he picked out eight thousand elite troops. While he was recruiting and inspecting, Kang made the magistrate general of the middle army. After marching three days, they came to the walled city of Ch'öngju and launched a surprise attack on the Japanese bandit generals Mahüng and Madüng, who had attacked twenty-eight districts of Ch'ölla province and were fortifying the city of Ch'ungju. Kang Hongnip, spurred by his martial spirit, broke down the fortress gate and rushed in. The generals Mahüng and Mahüng could not gather their wits, and fifty thousand soldiers were all killed.

The Japanese generals quickly responded: "As an unknown general, you slay without following procedure. How can your action be correct according to military law?"

Kang Hongnip replied in anger: "Why should I announce my name to ignorant Japanese thieves? If you must know, I am Kang Hongnip from Cheju Island!"

Brandishing his sword, he beheaded Mahüng, annihilated one file of soldiers, and had the magistrate guard the fortress. Leading a thousand soldiers, he headed toward Taegu fortress. The Japanese generals Chuch'ök and Chudal were defending the fortress, and Kang Hongnip charged in with war cries. Chuch'ök came forward and fought him hand to hand. Kang Hongnip struck him with his Blue Wave sword, and Chuch'ök fell headlong with his horse.

Kang Hongnip said: "Come out at once, Japanese thieves! If you hesitate and I strike your general's platform with my sword, not even your bones will remain!"

Chudal replied: "Kang Hongnip, little one, receive my sword! and charged forward. Kang Hongnip met him and the three hundred thousand Japanese soldiers, and killed them with one sword in the blink of an eye. Leaving Han Paek to guard the fortress, he then led a thousand soldiers toward the capital."

The story resumes. At this time, the magistrate of Ch'ungju sent a report: "The Japanese marauders came through Tongnae, swarmed over the eight provinces, seized the three southern provinces by surprise, and now are headed for Kyönggi province." The sovereign was greatly startled, and the entire court convened to discuss how to repulse the enemy. While the hundred officials, distraught and vacillating, were silent, Publicist Chöng Ch'ungnam spoke: "Your subject has no particular talent, but if you would grant me a hundred thousand soldiers, in a moment I would annihilate the Japanese bandits and resolve my country's great problem."

While the king was pleased to send out the army, the three southern provinces and Kangwön province had already been seized by the bandits. Only the Kyönggi forces of eighty thousand men, Hamgyöng province's seventeen passes, and Hwanghae province's six passes were left. The king struck his desk and lamented: "The sovereignty of two hundred years may come to an end in one morning?"

Then, with all his heart and strength, the king gathered one hundred thirty thousand soldiers. Wearing a pure gold helmet and the Nine Dragon armor, riding a black-maned horse, Chöng Ch'ungnam marched out to battle. On the third day, Japanese general Kiyomasa, advancing on Kyönggi province at the head of fifty thousand soldiers, met Chöng Ch'ungnam and attacked him.

Ch'ông Ch'ungnam said: "Dog! Oblivious of heaven's power, you invaded our Chos'ôn and killed its people. How can the way of heaven ignore this? Our Majesty has ordered me to exterminate your seed. So let us lead our soldiers to battle and decide matters once and for all!"

When Ch'ông Ch'ungnam displayed a battle formation based on the Three Entities and Five Agents,¹⁷ the Japanese general Kiyomasa thundered: "Among our forces, heroes are gathered like clouds. Moreover, we received the royal order to crush Chos'ôn and behead its king and present his head to our ruler. My name will be handed down for a myriad years." He then danced his sword dance.

Ch'ông Ch'ungnam, his anger rising to the sky, danced his own sword dance and bellowed: "Y'ou're as weak as a day-old puppy!" After a few passes at close combat, Ch'ông Ch'ungnam raised the severed head of Ch'ôngd'ung to say: "How many Japanese generals are there? Let them come all at once!" And he encountered the enemy left and right.

Seeing his brother's death, Kiyomasa was greatly enraged. Wearing the twin phoenix helmet and a three-thousand-pound suit of armor, he stretched his mouth two feet wide, ground his teeth, sprang upon Ch'ông Ch'ungnam, and beheaded him. Moreover, it is said that he destroyed three hundred thousand soldiers with a single sword, killed all the people of Chos'ôn who stood in his way, and advanced to Ky'ônggi.

At that time, His Majesty, after sending Ch'ông Ch'ungnam to war, was eagerly awaiting news of victory. Then the intelligence officer reported: "Marshal Ch'ông beheaded Ch'ôngd'ung, but unfortunately he himself was killed by Kiyomasa and now the enemy force has the upper hand. You must devise a defense strategy at once." The king could not say a word. And when all his subjects

were in panic, a soldier named P'ôpch'ôn climbed South Mountain to shout: "The enemy is already crossing the Han River."

The king, overcome with grief, cried aloud. With Yu S'ôngnyong and S'ô W'ônjik from Andong, in Ky'ôngsang, he escaped. He instructed the army to guard the four capital gates and ordered the hundred officials to protect the Altars of Soil and Grain. Led by Minister of War Yu S'ôngnyong and followed by S'ô W'ônjik, the king left through the Small West Gate. When the party was over Muhak Pass,¹⁸ Yu S'ôngnyong and S'ô W'ônjik took turns carrying the king on their backs and thus advanced slowly. But the Japanese bandits were everywhere, and the royal party hesitated, not knowing where to go. Yu S'ôngnyong said: "I have heard that the invaders are in P'y'ongan province. Let us take a narrow path to Ŭiju."

The king thought this strategy sensible, so they continued for several days until they reached Py'ôkche Station, where they took to horseback. When they reached Mach'ôn Ridge,¹⁹ a certain Chos'ôn soldier in armor came forth. Then, after a moment of hesitation, a boy with a Heaven Traveling sword jumped from a rock above the road, hunted down the hundred remaining Japanese soldiers, and prostrated himself before His Majesty: "Your humble subject is Kim Togy'ông from P'y'ongan province. The Japanese bandits are powerful in the eight provinces, and I tried to rally a defense but had no soldiers or standards, nor any summons from Your Majesty. I was on my way to the capital and I am lucky indeed to encounter Your Majesty on the road. How can I not be deeply grateful? It is owing to your vast virtue that I am here."

The king was greatly pleased and held Kim Togy'ông's hand and asked: "How old are you?"

The boy answered: "I am seventeen."

The king inquired: "Where should I go to avoid the bandits?"

"Let's proceed quickly to Ŭiju," Kim Togy'ông urged.

So they had the child hold the rein. When the party reached Uiju, the king occupied a fortress and had Kim Toгыöng deliver a letter to the mayor of Uiju.

At this time, Kiyomasa cut off Chöng Ch'ungnam's head, surrounded the capital city, and captured and held P'yöngyang. "King of Chosön, come out at once and surrender," he shouted. "We have already gained control of the eight provinces and can live off the land for three years. Even if you were built of iron, how could you last?"

Kiyomasa's army surrounded Seoul with an iron-tight grip, and he sent generals to the eight provinces to encourage farming. At this time, Madöng and Mahöng destroyed over sixty towns in Chölla and held the walled city of Chönju. Kyöngch'ang destroyed the east and west of Great Pass Ridge in Kangwön and held the walled city of Wönju. In addition, Chosöp destroyed the twenty-one passes of Hamgyöng and held the walled town of Hamhüng. He also destroyed Kyönggi, Hwanghae, and P'yöngan provinces, held the walled city of P'yöngyang, and took for concubine a female entertainer named Wölsön—a matchless beauty, a celebrated singer, a woman of letters, and a superior player of Chinese chess. Every day he engaged in the pursuit of elegant pleasure while sending his soldiers to province after province as officials in charge of stimulating agriculture. They shouted "Hurrah, hurrah!" and in Yöngwang Arbor the strains of music reverberated.

At this time, Ch'oe Ilyöng had passed three years in far-off exile hoping every day to be released and return home. As expected, the Japanese invaders, starting from Tongnae, launched their attack on the eight provinces. Ch'oe Ilyöng considered for a moment the affairs of state and because of the extreme danger thought: "I have not been commanded by the king. But if I become an official and

subject of my native land and die in the interest of the country, how can there be any regret?"

He equipped himself with travel gear and set out for the capital, but the roads were blocked in all four directions and he could not get through. He turned toward the coast and walked two hundred tricents a day.²⁰ Looking upon the capital, he saw that the Japanese bandits had surrounded the walled city and the king had fled. Unable to suppress his sadness he wept loudly, not knowing where the king had gone. Thinking the king might have gone to Uiju, he went to that city and indeed the king was there at the commander-general's office. Ch'oe Ilyöng entered, prostrated himself, and said: "The disloyal Ch'oe Ilyöng has committed a serious crime by coming here without royal command. This subject's crime is deserving of ten thousand deaths."

The sovereign was both happy and sad. Holding Ilyöng's hand and shedding royal tears, he said: "I, the lonely one,²¹ sent you one thousand tricents away and have now suffered this great disaster. Who can I blame? From that time on, I could not forget you, but could not summon you. Seeing you today is like a dream. But do not be resentful: confer with us concerning a defense against the invaders."

"What shall we do now that there are no generals and soldiers?" Ch'oe Ilyöng responded: "However much we consider this, our hands are tied. Today at the hour of the snake (9-11 A.M.), however, it seems there will be glad news. But why should you believe this? There is a general named Kim Üngsö in Yonggang, P'yöngan. I humbly beseech you to summon him quickly."

The king immediately sent a messenger to Yonggang and waited for the hour of the snake. Suddenly more than a thousand soldiers were seen coming from the south. Looking carefully, the king saw that their speed was as the wind and rain, and they arrived in an

instant. Their general wore an eighteen-hundred-pound helmet and dragon-scale armor. He rode a Mongol horse and wielded a seven-foot sword, and his height was nine feet. He cast his body below the stone steps and addressed the king:

"I am a humble general, by the name of Kang Hongnip, who lives on Cheju Island in Ch'olla. Though I have no talent, how could I not plan for the country's interests in these troubled times? I routed all the Japanese bandits who had seized the walled city of Ch'önju, and then I went down to the walled city of Taegu and annihilated the enemy. I have come here to see Your Majesty. But because I have crushed the Japanese marauders without a royal command, my crime merits death."

The king rejoiced all the more and said, "I, the lonely one, did not realize my stupidity. Now the Japanese bandits have grown strong, and I have abandoned the Altars of Soil and Grain and reached this present condition. You and the others must work out a defense against the invaders at once and ease the distress of the country."

At this time Kim Ŭngsŏ, who had lost his father at an early age, was taking care of his loving mother, devoting himself to her wholeheartedly, and earning a living by wandering in the mountains cutting wood. One day he was going to sell wood when he received a royal command. Rejoicing, he pounded on his A-frame pack filled with firewood and said:²²

"The precious sword that fell into the Yi River has found its owner.²³ The bamboo buried in the midst of snow has met the colors of spring. Rejoice, rejoice. I have come upon an auspicious day!"

Kim entrusted the care of his mother to his younger brother and from somewhere equipped himself with helmet and armor. Riding a Flying Dragon horse, he followed the messenger and came to see

His Majesty. Rejoicing even more, the king summoned Kang Hongnip and introduced him to Kim Ŭngsŏ. After acquiring two generals he could not contain his happiness.

At this time, Kim Ŭngsŏ was twenty years of age. He stood nine feet tall, his face was like jade embedded in a crown, his eyes were like torches. He wore a three-thousand-pound helmet of red-gold, was dressed in a hundred-pound suit of armor, and wielded a seven-foot Shooting Star sword. He was the hero of the age.

His Majesty was exceedingly happy. But when he inspected the soldiers there were eighty thousand in Kyŏnggi guarding the capital—and because only six passes in Hamgyŏng and seven passes in Pyŏngan were remaining, he was extremely anxious. He summoned Ch'oe Ilgyŏng and said: "How can we defend against the bandits with less than a thousand soldiers?"

"How can we capture the uncompromising Chosŏp, who is like a white tiger as big as a mountain, with these few soldiers?" Ch'oe Ilgyŏng responded: "I think we should send a messenger to Nanking and obtain reinforcements to capture the bandits."

The king was happy and said: "Who should we send as an envoy to obtain reinforcements?"

They conferred, and Yu Sŏngnyong addressed the king: "Although this subject is without talent, I will enter Nanking, obtain reinforcements, and return."

The king was exceedingly pleased, spoke with reverence, and sent off the envoy with ample presents.

The story resumes. At this time, the Japanese general Kiyomasa surrounded the capital and the people inside suffered great hunger and thirst. Among them many died, and the people were panic-stricken. One day a cold wind arose from outside the South Gate; sand and stones flew about, thunder filled the air, the ground seemed to sink, and the Han River boiled. In the enemy camp the

generals and soldiers were greatly startled and broke formation, racing helter-skelter like breaking waves.

Kiyomasa looked in the air and saw a general wearing a red gold helmet and a thousand-pound suit of armor. Brandishing a Blue Dragon sword and wearing a three-point beard, the general glared with the eyes of a phoenix and said:

"I am Marquis of Shouing, Kuan Yinch'ang, of the Three Kingdoms of the past. I am now entrusting myself to the state of Chosön to avoid wind and rain. Barbaric Japanese bandits, how dare you invade Chosön? When I beheaded the commanders of five passes,²⁴ hundreds of thousands of heroes all died at my hands. I am from another world. And if I do battle, you'll be erased in an instant. If you do not wish to meet sudden death, evacuate your position and retreat at once. If you are arrogant, I will pulverize the Japanese people."

Kiyomasa looked dazed. For it was indeed a famous general of the Three Kingdoms. Then, speechless and dumbfounded, Kiyomasa saw that Lord Kuan's horse had vanished; he faced the sky with measureless gratitude and evacuated his position in terror and retreated to Kangwön province.

At this time, in Koksan in Hamgyöng, there was a person whose surname was Kim and his given name Töngnyöng. He could lift three thousand pounds and was nine feet tall. His swordsmanship and military tactics²⁵ matched the Taoist magic of Huang-shih Kung of old.²⁶ But at this time he was in mourning for his father and devoted to his mother and would not leave her for even a day. One day, hearing that Japanese invaders were within a hundred tricents, he said to his old mother: "The fate of the country has turned bad, and Japanese bandits are filling the mountains and fields. Although I am in mourning, how can I as a subject be in peace

when the country is in peril? I will go to repel the bandits and return at once."

His mother replied with great reproach: "You are shocking your mother with ignorant words. A prince is mourned for nine years, a gentleman for six years, and a parent for three years.²⁷ What ignorance leads you to speak these impractical words? If you disobey me, you are no longer my son."

Kim Töngnyöng could not reply and against his will had to stay. Days later, he heard that the marauders would arrive in a short while. Regrettably he left his mother's side and entered Kiyomasa's camp without a trace and said: "I am the Chosön general Kim Töngnyöng. Although I mean to exterminate all trace of the Japanese bandits, I have let you live because I am in mourning. But you ignorant Japanese thieves, not knowing the power of heaven, have impertinently invaded Chosön. If you value your lives, leave at once. Your destiny lies in my hands, so leave quickly. In case you don't believe my words, I will return tomorrow at the hour of the horse (11 A.M.-1 P.M.). If you wish to see my talent in action, cut out some pieces of white paper and put them on each soldier's head and wait." So saying, he vanished.

Greatly angered, Kiyomasa beheaded the gatekeeper, saying: "How was this frivolous rascal able to enter at will?" And he issued an official order to the soldiers: "Cut out a piece of white paper and put it on your head. Tomorrow at the hour of the horse the rogue will surely return. Watch his movements and shoot your guns and arrows all together at once."

The next day, until the hour of the horse there was no sign of Kim. Then from the north came a speck of black cloud and a violent gale, and sand and stone flew about, and tall trees fell and heaven and earth seemed to overturn. Wearing hemp mourning clothes and holding a fan,²⁸ with his right hand the young man

gathered the white paper, which had become a field of white flowers amidst the countless soldiers. Then, like thunder, he rebuked the enemy:

"See my abilities! If I were not in mourning, I could gather the heads of your soldiers in an instant just as I did this paper. If you value your lives, retreat quickly. If you ignore my words, I will destroy you with my fan." And he vanished.

Kiyomasa's blood ran cold and he said with a sigh: "Although I came to Chosŏn after learning Taoist magic for eight years, never before have I seen such abilities. He is like a god." And he disbanded the camp and proposed to join Chosŏp.

At this time, a letter came to Kiyomasa from his younger sister, which read: "Elder brother, you have been campaigning for three years a myriad tricents away, leading hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Are you well? Here I observe the ether in heaven every day. At first, elder brother's life star and General Chosŏp's main star were brightly lit, but recently they have been covered by a black cloud. I am worried and want to hear your news. If you meet someone with the graph *song* (pine tree) or come to a place with this graph, please be careful. There are many inauspicious portents, so humbly I beg you, elder brother, to withdraw and return." Kiyomasa saw the letter and was furious. He laughed in scorn and said: "Burn it."

The story resumes. At this time the king called Ch'oe Ilgyŏng and discussed defense plans. Ch'oe called Kim Ŭngsŏ and said: "General, listen to what I say. The Japanese commander Chosŏp has captured Korea, is holding the walled city of P'yŏngyang, and calls himself king. He sent his officials and soldiers to various areas as prefects to encourage agriculture. He has taken the female entertainer Wŏlsŏn from P'yŏngyang as a concubine. While they feast and pass the time with music and regale themselves, how could we

not be bitter? I am now planning a great undertaking through a secret plot, so you should take this to heart. By the first watch of the night (6-8 P.M.), you should have covered two hundred tricents; then quickly station yourself outside Chosŏp's bedroom. Sooner or later, if you watch the movements of the enemy, Wŏlsŏn will come out to relieve herself. Grab her and entreat her thus: 'As Chosŏn's commander-in-chief, I've received a royal order to come here to this important place and rely upon you. Although you are only a woman, by force of circumstances you have obeyed the invader's commands. But our hearts are the same. For the most part, my life or death and the rise and fall of the state are completely in your hands. What is your intention?'"

"Elicit her sympathy. When Wŏlsŏn becomes willing, tell her to engage Chosŏp briefly in conversation and tell him that his humble maid's older brother is at such and such a place and wishes to meet the general. Three thousand small bells are hung on the beam of Yŏngwang Arbor. These can be taken care of as you see fit. Chosŏp's Heaven Resounding sword holds the essence of the Milky Way. If anyone else confronts it, it makes a clanging noise and advances of its own accord. By all means be careful and make every effort to accomplish your task. Chosŏp is one born with the strength of Tsushima Island's Kullyŏkch'up'a River. When you behold him, throw yourself on the ground and you will escape harm. If you don't, you'll never see His Majesty again."

Kim Ŭngsŏ listened carefully and at once put fifty cups of poisoned wine and one pound of Chinese cotton into a silk pouch. Bidding farewell to the king, he departed in the first watch of the night.

Reaching Yŏngwang Arbor at the beginning of the second watch, he tied his horse outside the fortress and rushed inside the arbor. All the soldiers were asleep and the candle was burning bright.

As expected, W'ols'ön came out and Kim grabbed her hand. In great surprise she said: "Which division general are you who tries to violate the favorite concubine of the Japanese general? If he hears you inside the tent, you cannot avoid death."

Kim Üngsö held his sword and begged: "I am a general of Chosön, Kim Üngsö. I've received a royal command and have come here tonight to plan a great undertaking. Although you are a mere woman, you serve Chosöp and are unable to end your own life. Our hearts share the same indignation. Relying only on you, I entered the midst of a myriad soldiers brandishing long spears and mighty swords. What is your intention?"

Satisfied and happy, W'ols'ön answered: "I will follow your command."

Pleased, Kim Üngsö said: "There is no other plan but for you to go inside and say to Chosöp that your brother used to live in the land of Yonggang. Confronting these times and hearing that the general is occupying the fortress, he braved the distance of a thousand tricents and is requesting an audience."

After hearing what Kim Üngsö was saying, she took a wine bottle in her hand and parting her red lips against her white teeth, displayed feminine charms that moved Chosöp greatly. Parting her red lips against her white teeth, in a faint voice as beautiful as that of shattering jade, W'ols'ön said gently, "I have an older brother who has considerable martial talent. With a little wine and meat he requests to meet you."

Once Chosöp granted permission, W'ols'ön called her "older brother" and said: "Older brother, on what occasion have you come such a long way? Please come in." W'ols'ön urged wine on Chosöp and as they shared it Chosöp said to Kim Üngsö: "I see Older Brother's spirit: your brow is broad and you are truly a hero who harbors great ambition. The heavens have called my brother

and me to sweep away the dust rising from the battlefield, and to behead the Chosön king and render meritorious services."

As they spoke, she continued to ply him with wine. After thirty cups, the poison in the wine began to work and Chosöp could not collect his spirits. As he tumbled down on his curtained bed and lost consciousness, Kim Üngsö took W'ols'ön outside and inquired about Chosöp's sleeping habits.

"When this devil falls asleep, he usually opens one eye with a fierce glare," W'ols'ön reported. "If he is sleeping deeply, he opens both eyes with a fierce glare. Furthermore, three thousand small bells hang in the middle of the room and the Heaven Resounding sword hangs atop the wall. If anyone comes in, the bells shake and make noise of their own accord. By all means, be careful!"

"Don't worry," Kim Üngsö replied.

Placing W'ols'ön outside the window, he invoked a divine general to whom he gave a pound of cotton and told him to have all the holes of the small bells stopped. The candles shone brightly in all directions. Kim Üngsö danced his sword dance. And then, reciting the spell, stamping his left foot on the floor, and spitting three times, he went inside and saw Chosöp sleeping with both eyes open. Kim Üngsö could feel the enemy's malevolent air. Brandishing his sword whose light mocked the candlelight, Kim advanced and as quick as lightning, he beheaded Chosöp and threw himself on the ground. The headless Chosöp, holding the Heaven Resounding sword, hit the beam of the arbor and broke it. As the head tried to attach itself to the body, W'ols'ön gathered hot ashes in her skirt and sprayed them over the body. Only then did the body fall on its back.

In great joy Kim Üngsö called W'ols'ön outside and said: "Your loyalty is unparalleled. Even though we've captured a fierce tiger on Mount Ch'o,²⁹ you have killed the hero of the day. If I let you live, it will be difficult for me to succeed. Since your loyalty will be made

known to posterity, even as a lonely spirit, do not resent me." As he finished speaking, he beheaded Wolsön and put the head on the wooden beam and rushed out as if he were flying. Hanging Chosöp's head on his horse, he took off. It was the hour of the ox when the first cock crows (1-3 A.M.). In the blink of an eye he arrived at T'ogok fortress. His Majesty was waiting impatiently, and as Kim prostrated himself below the steps, His Majesty, striking his desk, calling Ch'oe Ilgyöng and holding Kim Üngsö's hand, said with great joy, "Now that we have caught the tiger Chosöp, how can we capture Kiyomasa?"

"Even though Chosöp is dead, there are still Japanese generals like fierce tigers on Mount T'ai setting up camps everywhere," Ch'oe Ilgyöng replied. "We will try to repel the enemy after the reinforcements from Ming have come from Nanking. Otherwise, it will be difficult to protect the Altars of Soil and Grain."

As Kim Üngsö and Kang Hongnip wanted incessantly to engage the Japanese army, Ch'oe Ilgyöng repeatedly held them back: "Never underestimate the enemy. Even though a man's rage overflows, you should wait for the reinforcements and fight by joining forces." And so every day they waited.

The story resumes. When Kiyomasa heard of Chosöp's death, his rage rose to the sky. He expressed his anger in every word: "From the beginning, we built an army depending on him. How could we have anticipated this?" He called all his generals for discussion. When he heard that the king of Chosön and famous generals were gathered in Üju, P'yöngan, Kiyomasa said he would at once sweep through there and destroy them.

Meanwhile, Yu Songnyong had entered Nanking, presented a gift of cloth, and prostrated himself: "Your subject's country has had the misfortune to be overwhelmed by myriad Japanese and we cannot secure the Altars of Soil and Grain. Our king has fled from

the palace to Üju and sends me to solicit help. So I beg Your Majesty, through your vast grace, not to let the Eastern Country [Korea] fall. I trust Your Majesty's vast virtue like heaven and have come a long way and traversed myriad millicents. Please, grant us a thousand generals and a hundred thousand elite troops. Our king excelled in arms and letters and pledged to uphold the Altars of Soil and Grain, but alas the Japanese bandits have proved too powerful. If I think of what might have happened since my departure, I am stupefied and wish to return at once. With your virtue as vast as the ocean, I beg you to save my state from its distress."

The Son of Heaven was greatly surprised and assembled the entire court to discuss the Korean situation. But all the courtiers said: "The Eastern Country's situation is urgent, yet this is the busy farming season. Dispatching the plowmen will stir a disturbance."

The Son of Heaven, however, saw the Chosön envoy's loyalty and was uneasy. Endlessly he discussed the matter, but the ministers repeated: "The time being such, one cannot consent to a foreign state's request for reinforcement." The Son of Heaven, unable to prevail, told the envoy to return. Yu Songnyong was remorseful, but there was nothing he could do. Mindful of his country's distress, he returned lamenting to heaven.

After sending back the envoy, the Son of Heaven, unable to repress his pity, leaned against a desk and had a dream. A general wearing armor and helmet, with gold cap and court attire over them, entered and bowed four times, saying: "Elder brother, you guard all under heaven, yet you do not know the ties between brothers. How can I not be sad?"

"Who are you to call me your elder brother?" replied the Son of Heaven.

"Lord brother, please listen carefully." Again the ghost of General Kuan bowed four times. "Liu Hüantse of the Three

Kingdoms of old reincarnated as the Son of Heaven of Great Ming, and the youngest brother Chang Fei became the king of Chosŏn. Your subject could not be reborn, so he used to rely on the younger to avoid wind and rain. Then the younger suffered the Japanese invasion and fled to Ŭiju. Please, send the requested reinforcements as soon as possible and save your younger brother from distress." He then vanished.

The Ming emperor realized that it was a dream. Since that general's face was vivid before his eyes, his mind was confused. At once he assembled the hundred officials to discuss the dream. The Minister of the Left Yu Killi informed him: "Your Majesty's dream portends a divine response. How can you break the ties?" His Majesty's compassion grew even stronger.

On the second night, at the third watch, again the general wearing the Heaven Gold helmet, the Green Cloud armor, holding a Blue Dragon sword, riding his horse Red Rabbit, rustling his three-point beard, and glaring with the eyes of a phoenix, said respectfully: "Elder brother, if you disparage your younger brother's words, our oath of brotherhood in the Peach Garden³⁰ will be broken and a calamity will befall even you. I may be a hundred-year-old lonely spirit, but the live body which cut down myriad soldiers like tender grass during the Three Kingdoms period has not weakened a bit. Why should I worry about the Japanese bandits? Nonetheless, it is a child's right to receive the parents' kindness. I beg of you, elder brother, quickly raise and dispatch an army." He then vanished.

When the emperor came to himself, the questions and answers were still ringing in his ears. At once the emperor summoned Li Jusing and made him commander to lead the army. He also appointed Li Jupo the commander of the vanguard, Han T'aek the commander of the middle army, Nann T'aegyŏng the general of the

left wing; Yu T'ongjŏl the general of the right wing; and Chu Paltae the general of defense. An additional seven hundred commanders were summoned and dispatched. While they were leaving through Chengyang Gate,³¹ heading for Chosŏn, the Son of Heaven personally offered three cups of wine to Li Jusing, saying: "Sir, you are my hands and feet. Be careful on your ten-thousand-*trient* expedition. And by all means win the day effortlessly; return, and leave your beautiful name for a myriad years."

Li Jusing listened to the order and then marched. Wearing a Nine Dragon helmet and a pure gold armor adorned with images of the sun and moon, the man of nine foot stature rode on his Red Rabbit horse and held a Blue Dragon sword. His complexion was blue black, his eyes like torchlights, his voice like thunder. Wielding his sun and moon standard, he commanded. He was as fast as the wind and rain.

At that time Yu Sŏngnyong, who had barely survived entering a foreign country a myriad *trients* away and thought he had made the trip in vain, returned to Chosŏn crying endlessly to the vast heavens and explained to the king why the army he requested would not come. His Majesty grieved and cried aloud. Then Ch'oe Ilgyŏng remarked: "Your Majesty, do not torment yourself. It seems the requested army will appear after all. Minister Yu should cross the Yalu promptly and greet the reinforcement." Ch'oe Ilgyŏng's words had always proved true, so how could the king not trust them like gold and stone? His Majesty was pleased and had Yu Sŏngnyong rush across the Yalu to welcome the Ming army.

At that time, the imperial army of a myriad soldiers rushed in like the wind and rain while their flags, banners, spears, and swords mocked the sun and the moon and their war drums and bugles shook the earth. They stationed themselves by the river and sent the

imperial rescript to the king of Chosŏn. His Majesty bowed four times to the north and unsealed the rescript, which read:

"Alas! King of Chosŏn! Your country's lot was ill fated, and you suffered the Japanese invasion. Since the Altars of Soil and Grain were in peril, you sent an envoy to request reinforcement. But as it happens to be the busy farming time and I could not dispatch the army, I returned your envoy. That night, however, I had a dream. So quickly I have dispatched our forces. When I think about the dream, how can I, between brothers, even for a moment forget the shock I received?"

After a few days, Li Jusing commanded his soldiers to cross the river, but heaven obstructed him: from nowhere a great rain covered the earth for tricents around and the Yalu River swelled and overflowed. Li Jusing could not cross the river and gazed upward to the sky and lamented: "Heaven always has a purpose. What shall we do? If we oppose the will of heaven, though we may win in battle how long can our victory last?"

Just as he was ordering the soldiers to go back, Minister Yu Sŏngnyong bowed his head to the ground a hundred times and said: "If you will pitch camp for tonight only, I will make a bridge that will allow you to march across the river."

"If you intend to do this," Li Jusing said, "swear that you will accept punishment if you fail." Yu Sŏngnyong swore an oath and began his undertaking: connecting boat to boat, he urged on the people to build a bridge that night. Gazing upon the river as big as an ocean that had become land, Li Jusing exclaimed: "How can there be such talent in a small country like this?"

When Li Jusing expressed a wish to dine on dragon broth, Yu Sŏngnyong poured water into an earthenware jar, caught a dragon with a hook, and boiled the broth. When Yu presented it, Li Jusing said: "To eat dragon broth there must be ivory chopsticks." When

Yu Sŏngnyong pulled out ivory chopsticks from his sleeve and presented them, Li Jusing was struck with amazement. Immediately they crossed the river. And at this the king, who was at P'yŏngyang, rejoiced and brought a few attendants, generals, and soldiers to welcome Li. After greetings were exchanged, the king said with reverence: "This humble king has no virtue, and so we have met with disaster from the Japanese. When the Altars of Soil and Grain were in danger, however, heaven assisted. How can we measure the efforts of a general who has traveled so many tricents?"

They exchanged courtesies, and the next day Li Jusing gathered his generals and said: "We have seen the king of Chosŏn and the situation is indeed pitiful. But the king's face is pitiful, as well, so how can he possibly protect the Altars of Soil and Grain?"

Even if he could drive out the invaders there seemed to be no opportunities for meritorious service, so Li Jusing was again about to command the army to go back. The king, however, summoned Ch'oe Ilyŏng and said: "They say the Chinese reinforcements are turning back. What can we do to devise a good plan?"

Ch'oe Ilyŏng responded: "Li Jusing is the hero of the age. Because he already knows the impending victories and defeats, he plans to meet with Your Majesty to inform you about the withdrawal of the army. I entreat Your Majesty to construct the Altar of the Big Dipper in front of the Chinese encampment. Mount the altar, declare that you will abandon the Altars of Soil and Grain, think of the circumstances of your millions of subjects, and wail loudly. Li Jusing will recognize Your Majesty's hidden kingly energy and press for battle."

The king immediately constructed the Altar of the Big Dipper. And when he mounted it, he thought of the Altars of Soil and Grain and the desperate circumstances of his subjects and wailed loudly.

Li Jusing heard and asked: "Where is that sound of crying coming from?"

A soldier answered: "The king of Chosŏn has heard that you are taking the army back and weeps in such a manner."

Li Jusing was greatly surprised and exclaimed: "His crying is as the crying of the black dragon of the azure sea. It is clear that his reign will last sixty years."

Marshalling his generals, he prepared to march as the joyous shouts of all the Chosŏn soldiers and generals reverberated. When Li Jusing prepared the general's platform and issued commands to each of his generals, the heroes of Chosŏn were as numerous as the clouds over Mansu Mountain: Kim Ŭngsŏ of Yonggang in P'yŏngan; Kang Hongnip of Cheju in Chŏlla; Paek Sŏllam of Samch'ŏk in Kangwŏn; Yu Hŭngsŏ of Kwangju in Kyŏnggi; Kim Ch'gyŏng of Yŏnghŭng in Hwanghae. Each one, equipped with helmet and armor, presented himself to Li Jusing, who was greatly surprised and said: "If there are so many heroes in this small country, how can the times not be uproarious and confused? Who is the general that killed Chosŏp?"

Kim Ŭngsŏ seized his sword and said: "Indeed, I am the humble general who did it."

"How unfortunate to find such a hero is in such a small country," Li Jusing said. "There are many brave men to serve as the vanguard for this battle."

So saying, he planted the standards of fifty generals before the camp, hung a thousand *nyang*³² of gold on the standards, and said, "The one who removes the gold will command the army's vanguard."

One general raised his body and leapt up from behind the blue tent and cut off the gold, half of which dropped. Another general let his body fly and also took half: the Chinese camp was struck with

amazement. On that day, Li Jusing made Kim Ŭngsŏ the commander of the left vanguard, Kang Hongnip the commander of the right vanguard, Song Kun the commander of the left wing, Han T'aek the commander of the right wing, Paek Sŏllam the deputy commander-in-chief, Nam T'aegyŏng the general of the guard, and Li Jupo the general of the center, while Li Jusing remained supreme commander-in-chief. He mounted the general's platform and vividly wrote on the standard in gold letters: "Great Ming Captain General Serving as Commander-in-Chief and Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Expedition, Li Jusing."

Li Jusing brandished the Blue Dragon sword, his bell-like eyes glaring like lightning, his commands as stern as frost, his dignity beyond compare. His Majesty came outside the gate with Ch'oe Ilgyŏng and bade them farewell. Li Jusing wielded the flag of the sun and moon, beat on the drums, broke camp, and marched. His speed was as the wind and clouds.

The story resumes. After Chosŏp's death, Kiyomasa sighed and said: "From each province I will muster commanders and soldiers and perform a meritorious deed in a few months' time." Then the intelligence officer reported: "The king of Chosŏn has requested a dispatch of troops from Nanking, and thousands of famous generals and a million soldiers have joined forces with the heroes of Chosŏn. Now it is said they have covered the mountains and fields and are advancing. Please, general, assemble your troops at once." Even before he finished his words, a messenger arrived from the Chinese camp, and Kiyomasa said: "With my single sword I will annihilate the Chinese generals and behead Kim Ŭngsŏ and console Chosŏp. I will relieve my anger by capturing the king of Chosŏn and Ch'oe Ilgyŏng alive."

At this time, the king discussed the book of military arts with Ch'oe Ilgyŏng and worried that there were no supplies and provi-

sions. Ch'oe replied: "In a place called Sakchu there is a rich man, Kim Suöp. It is said that he has some 900,000 sacks (*sök*)³³ of grain. Now, through a royal summons, use that grain and repay him when times are peaceful."

At once the king summoned Kim Suöp, who came and prostrated himself. The king said: "I hear you have a lot of grain. The country's fate is dire: we are suffering a Japanese invasion and now Chinese troops have arrived and we have no provisions. Let us use your grain for the army, and when times are peaceful I will repay you."

Kim Suöp replied: "Although I do not have enough grain, I have 900,000 sacks. Why shouldn't we use them, the grain of our people, at a time like this?" The king was overjoyed and at once had the grain transported.

Li Jusing sent a manifesto and urged battle. Kiyomasa mustered some nine thousand commanders and two million troops from the provinces and organized them into a long snake formation. They beat drums and waved the White Tiger flag and then two generals ran out. When the Green Dragon flag was hoisted, two more generals came running out. When the Dark Warrior flag was hoisted, two more generals ran out. With the Vermilion Bird flag, two more dashed out.³⁴ Thus eight generals joined together and shouted: "Chinese troops, listen. We have received heaven's grace and an order from our ruler. We have taken nearly all of Chosön. Today, after destroying Chinese generals and taking the Chosön king alive, we will offer them before the general!"

Thus the Japanese generals incited anger, and Li Jusing became enraged, brandished his sword, and galloped out. Kim Ūngsö and Kang Hongnip told Li Jusing: "Calm your anger for a moment. Although petty generals like us have no talent, we have received the marshal's command and will annihilate the Japanese commanders.

Just watch our abilities." Then Kim Ūngsö leapt forward and, in the blink of an eye, his sword cut off the heads of eight Japanese generals, and he returned to the camp. Again Kim stamped the Japanese camp. Hitting left and right he roared: "Kiyomasa, come out at once! Let us see who is the victor!"

Then two generals from the Japanese camp came out.³⁵ Each of their faces was like a huge chest with a copper head and iron forehead. Their eyes were like the morning star, and each was holding a three-thousand-pound Shooting Star mallet. They were named Söch'ölgöl and Söch'ölbæ. Then out came another general, who was three feet in height and one-eyed, his mouth two feet (*chi*) eight inches (*p'un*), and his teeth three one half inches.³⁶ He was the so-called one-eyed general. Wearing a thousand-pound red gold helmet and holding an iron mallet, Kim Ūngsö came forward and rebuked him: "When all humans have two eyes, how can you, with only one eye, oppose a grown man? It's ridiculous!" Even before the three exchanged sword blows, Kim Ūngsö's blade was raised, and lifting the heads of Söch'ölgöl and Söch'ölbæ and the one-eyed general, he struck left and rushed right. Japanese generals, including P'alæg, rushed out shouting loudly: "Until now we have let the boys Kim Ūngsö and Kang Hongnip live. You think it is your world and exult? Now deal with our spears."

And so they attacked Kim Ūngsö and Kang Hongnip. Through seventy bouts, it was a close contest. The day ended, a gong sounded from both camps, and Japanese soldiers retreated. Unable to suppress their anger, they waited for daybreak. The next day, P'allak and P'alæg and others discussed their plans with Kiyomasa: "The enemy is slowly winning. Whatever it takes, we must slay Kim Ūngsö and Kang Hongnip. Then you can wreak your anger. Do not beat the gong tomorrow."

The next day at dawn, the two generals came out and showed off their skills. Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip vaulted upon their horses and fought the enemy in numerous bouts. Kim Ŭngsŏ decapitated P'allak, Kang Hongnip beheaded P'altrae, and both returned to the Chinese camp. Dancing the sword dance, they displayed their prowess. Li Jusing urged them to drink and praised them saying: "Indeed, you are the pillars of the state!"

Upon seeing the deaths of the two generals, the Japanese general Kiyomasa came forward holding his sword. But Mahŭng and Madŭng restrained him saying, "General, contain your anger."

Vaulting on their horses, Mahŭng and Madŭng advanced to the front. Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip were steadily victorious and went to the Japanese camp from which one Japanese general came out. At the same time, two generals, Li Jupo and Han T'aek, came forward from the Chinese camp to fight, and four Japanese generals came forward from amidst the Japanese camp. Then Kim Ilgywan and other generals came forward from the Ming camp, and they all confronted one another. The roar of the two opposing sides shook heaven and earth, and the cold wind scattered the dust in mid-air. Like lightning, the swords and spears flashed in the sunlight, and in the flurry of horses' hooves one could not tell head from tail.

The moment Madŭng brandished his sword, he beheaded Li Jupo; the moment Mahŭng brandished his sword, he beheaded Nam T'aegyŏng. The moment Kim Ŭngsŏ brandished his sword, he beheaded Madŭng. The moment Kang Hongnip brandished his sword, he beheaded Mahŭng. The moment Han T'aek brandished his sword, he beheaded Yŏhan. The bodies were piled like hillocks, and the blood flowed like rivulets.

Upon seeing the deaths of his soldiers and generals, the Japanese general Kiyomasa became furious. Stretching his lips two feet wide and gnashing his teeth, Kiyomasa put on a twin-phoenix helmet and

a three-thousand-pound suit of iron armor. He came forward shouting like a white tiger that grips a person in his mouth while perched on a steep cliff with a waterfall.

Kiyomasa charged forward destroying like the wind and the rain. Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip could not bear to look twice. To himself Kim thought: "Even though we have killed countless Japanese generals, we will be ruined by Kiyomasa." Kim was about to return to his own camp when he realized that if, leading a vanguard of a hundred thousand men, he left his post upon seeing the enemy commander, he would never escape the ridicule of posterity. Eyes glaring, teeth gnashing, he roared like thunder: "Hear me, Kiyomasa, commander of the Japanese! Your life is on my sword. Let us fight a decisive battle here and now to restore order to the times."

So saying, Kim Ŭngsŏ charged as if he were flying and fought ten bouts. But Kiyomasa brandished his own sword and beheaded Yu Hŭngsŏ and Paek Sŏllam. The battleground turned into no-man's-land. Kiyomasa charged, roaring like thunder, and slew nine Ming generals. Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip could not gather their wits and withdrew. In the Korean camp the situation was perilous.

Li Jusing was outraged: grimacing so that his face was like a blue-black jar, he drew his Blue Dragon sword and vaulted on his horse; his bearing was like that of a fierce tiger of Mount T'ai or a romping dragon that emerges roaring from the Jasper Sea. Kiyomasa came forward and fought about eighty bouts; his sword was steadily victorious and killed four Ming generals. Though Kiyomasa attacked left and right, Li Jusing became ever more enraged and destroyed the enemy's soldiers. Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip guarded the gate of the camp, but Kiyomasa pushed through the Ming camp. With his left hand, Kiyomasa carried a three-thousand-pound Shooting Star mallet and blocked Li Jusing; with his

with his right hand he carried a three-hundred-pound iron mallet and, like a heavenly god, confronted Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip.

Fifty-six Japanese generals faced seventy Ming generals. As the two parties fought one another, heaven and earth rolled in confusion. How could heaven be so uncaring? Just then a cold wind picked up and blew dust, the earth caved in, and it was as if heaven were exploding. With a sound like thunder from the air, a general appeared wearing a Heaven Gold helmet and Green Cloud armor, riding Red Rabbit, brandishing a Blue Dragon sword, and wearing a three-point beard. With eyes glaring like a phoenix's, he shouted: "Ignorant Japanese raiders, hear what I say! Despite your tiny domain you intend to swallow Chosŏn whole? How can you possibly expect to live? I am Marquis Kuan Yüch'ang of the Three Kingdoms period! My sword has no mercy! Receive it!"

Kiyomasa could not bear to behold Lord Kuan twice, such terror did he strike into his heart. At that moment, Li Jusing's sword flashed, Kiyomasa's head fell, and Kim Ŭngsŏ skewered it on his sword's end and danced a sword dance on horseback. Then he slaughtered the Japanese soldiers like leaves in an autumn wind, and returned to the headquarters beating the victory drum, where he feasted officers and soldiers, and the sound of rejoicing shook the earth. But when the toll call of the officers and men was taken, eighty Chinese commanders were found to have died, and Li Jusing lamented: "How could we have suffered such casualties?"

He discussed matters with his men: "I have heard that the Japanese raiders are in Chŏlla province, so I shall exterminate their seed," he said. He had a victory memorial and Kiyomasa's head sent by speedy officers and men to P'yŏngyang. While they were marching to Chŏlla, Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip told Li Jusing: "General, advance to the capital with officers and men and rest

peacefully. Your humble generals will make a clean sweep of the remaining Japanese invaders and return quickly."

"How many soldiers should I grant you?" Li Jusing asked.

"Grant us just three thousand."

Li consented and then urged: "Do not underrate the enemy. Be careful, win the day, and return quickly." So the two generals marched to Chŏlla province.

At that time, His Majesty, after having sent off the Chinese general, was waiting from day to day for news of victory when the intelligence officer presented him the victory memorial and Kiyomasa's head. His Majesty was very pleased and congratulated Li Jusing, but he worried about the Japanese generals Mugyŏng and Puyŏng in Chŏlla.

At that time, Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip sent a dispatch to Chŏnju fortress. Mugyŏng and Puyŏng, terrified, closed the fortress gate and would not come out. Kim Ŭngsŏ roared: "Chosŏp and Kiyomasa both died at our hands. Why delay your death? If you value your life, come out at once and surrender. If not, come out quickly and fight. This is our moment to exterminate you Japanese bandits."

Mugyŏng and Puyŏng said angrily: "There is nothing we can do now. But if we sever the heads of Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip and avenge Chosŏp and Kiyomasa, even if we die there will be no lingering regret."

Then they opened the fortress gate and came out to do battle. But before they had fought three close bouts, Kim Ŭngsŏ cut down the Japanese general Mugyŏng and held up his head, and Kang Hongnip cut down the Japanese general Puyŏng and held up his head, and they were exultant. They laughed aloud and said: "This is what we call getting what we wanted!" Then they advanced to the

capital and presented the Japanese generals' heads to Li Jusing. Li Jusing praised them highly: "General Kim is the hero of the day."

Li made Kim Ŭngsŏ commander of the vanguard and returned to P'yŏngyang. When the roll call of Chinese officers and soldiers was taken, there were eleven thousand men. Li Jusing lamented, "A myriad tridents of ocean away, my brother was killed and countless soldiers died. Will not the lonely spirits, without offspring to offer sacrifices to them, bear a grudge against me?" So His Majesty consoled him with humble words and rich presents. Li Jusing ordered Hian T'aek to return to Nanking with the soldiers. With the Son of Heaven's credentials, Li said he would traverse the eight provinces and sever the veins of mountains and rivers so there would be nothing to worry about in the future. With eight secondary generals, Li went to seek out the vital spirits of Chosŏn's mountains and rivers.

At that time His Majesty returned to the palace, consoled the capital's population, received the hundred court officials, offered sacrificial rites at the royal ancestral temple, and granted awards to generals according to their merit. He made Kim Ŭngsŏ the minister of war and captain general, Kang Hongnip the military commissioner of the north, Ch'ŏe Ilgyŏng the chief state counselor, Yu Sŏngnyŏng the second state counselor, Sŏ Wŏnjik the minister of personnel, and Kim Suŏp the vice minister of war and minister of taxation. He appointed the rest of the officials to provincial posts, and for five years he reduced the surtax collected under the uniform land tax, military cloth tax,³⁷ and other taxes to show his sympathy for the people.

Chief State Counselor Ch'ŏe Ilgyŏng unexpectedly became ill and died on the fifteenth of the eighth month of the Red Snake year (*chŏngsa*). The king grieved beyond expression, bestowed unsurpassed honor by providing the inner and outer coffins, had him

buried according to the rites with due honor, and had his loyalty recorded for posterity.

Kim Sundal, who was captain of the night watch at the royal defense command, approached the king and said: "Kim Tŏngnyŏng of Kŏksan, whose Taoist magic is like that of a heavenly god, sits comfortably and does not assist in the affairs of state. Not only has he gone in and out of Kiyomasa's camp for three days, but because there seem to have been many communications between them there is certain to be a future calamity."

The king immediately sent a messenger, ordering him to capture Kim Tŏngnyŏng and bring him back bound. The messenger went down and captured Kim. And when he presented him, His Majesty rebuked Kim greedily: "You went in and out of Kiyomasa's camp for three days and did not assist in the affairs of state, so you must harbor a treacherous design. How can you hope to live?"

Kim Tŏngnyŏng prostrated himself and said: "This humble subject was mourning the death of his father and could not repulse the Japanese raiders. There is no crime other than going in and out of the camp for three days and repulsing the invaders."³⁸

The king rebuked him severely: "You are attempting to save your life by saying one thing and then the opposite." He then ordered the soldiers to inflict innumerable blows on him. But Kim Tŏngnyŏng was not afraid at all and said: "This subject has committed no crime."

Seeing that Kim did not die, the king became even more outraged and ordered a particularly heavy beating. At that Kim wailed: "If you are intent upon killing this humble subject, I entreat you to inscribe the words 'Loyal Subject and Filial Son Kim Tŏngnyŏng' and for future generations erase the crime of disloyalty."

The king thought this praiseworthy. And when the words "Loyal Subject and Filial Son Kim Tŏngnyŏng" were carved on a hanging

board, Kim looked toward heaven and lamented loudly: "I learned Taoist magic for ten years to achieve meritorious service, but the Fashioner of Creatures was jealous,³⁹ and instead I die with my name disgraced. Who can I blame? In ten years another great calamity will befall the country, and all this is the fortune of heaven and earth. How can it be avoided?" So saying, he removed the dragon scale from his leg, endured one more stroke, and instantly died.

The king saw this and lamented: "Truly, he was a loyal subject." And with these words he was stricken with grief.

The story resumes. Li Jusing went all over the eight provinces and severed the veins of mountains and rivers. When he arrived at one place, an old man riding a black ox passed in front of him, and Li said to him angrily: "Frivolous one, you treat me with contempt!" With his sword, he spurred on his horse, but though he struck it twice, the old man on the ox unaffectedly rode on and slowly went into the steep mountains. Li Jusing, still more enraged, whipped his horse on, but he could not keep up.

The old man crossed a large mountain and a steep ridge and gradually went deeper to where the peaks and ravines touched the sky. Atop a cliff where trees formed a dense forest was perched a small thatched cottage of a few *kam*.⁴⁰ The old man went into the house and Li followed him. Looking left and right, he beheld magnificent scenery so that it was truly like a mansion in heaven. Because the distance to be covered was boundless, he sought the owner in front of the gate. When an azure-clad boy came out to lead him into the guest room, Li tied his horse outside the gate and entered.

The old man was delighted to see Li. After they exchanged greetings, he said respectfully: "General, where is your home? I

disgrace you by making you come to my lowly place. I cannot overcome my awe."

"One who travels all over comes and goes everywhere," Li Jusing replied. "The time is late and I have far to go, so I would like to put up for the night."

The old man sighed and lamented: "I am unfortunate. Although I have eight sons, seven have gathered medicinal herbs and gone from south of the river to sell them in Shu.⁴¹ My youngest is here, but he is unfilial and getting worse. He does not understand human relations and has severed the father-son relationship, so how can he be considered a person? Since I have met you opportunely, I must ask you to kill my unfilial son."

As Li Jusing listened, his anger exploded and he said: "How can I allow a son who does not know his parents to live?"

The old man was greatly pleased. He opened the gauze window and said: "He went across to the highest peak to gather medicinal herbs. He will return soon."

Li Jusing asked: "What is the name of this mountain?"

The old man answered: "To the west is called T'aeback Mountain and to the east is called Sobaek Mountain."⁴² The old man brought out wine and refreshments.

Shortly after Li Jusing had eaten, the azure-clad boy came in, wearing an octagonal belt and holding five-colored flowers in his hand. When Li Jusing returned his greeting, the old man said to his son: "Entertain our guest well." So saying, he went inside.

"I hear that you are very unfilial and don't respect human relations. Rascals like you should be killed as a lesson to posterity," Li said.

"Who are you to mock an adult? I will do away with you," the boy answered.

Li Jusing was further enraged and drawing his sword struck the boy. The sword, however, broke. Unaffected, the boy sat down and said in reproof: "I've known you for a long time. Although I intend to pulverize you, for the moment you are a guest in my house. To render meritorious service and leave a beautiful name behind is what every grown man wishes. But you, with perverse intentions of usurpation, smash the faults in our mountain ranges. How can I not be furious?" And he grabbed Li Jusing in one hand, threw him out the door, and roared: "Dirty general! Leave this mountain at once!"

Li Jusing looked up at the sky in resignation and lamented: "I cannot stay here for long." As he was leaving the compound, from somewhere he heard the clear sound of a bamboo flute. He looked in all four directions, and on the pine-crested cliff there stood a thatched cottage that was bright and clean. There was the old man, wearing a coarse yellowish turban and hemp clothes and a black belt, sitting on the railing. The azure-clad boy rode a crane and danced with jasper flowers on his head. In his hand was a jade flute which he played as he sat neatly upright.

Li Jusing found his way in little by little, relying on the shadow of the bamboo arbor. To the melody of the bamboo flute the boy sang:

Stout man, stout man, stout Chinese man,
Cross the Yalu River quickly.

Hurry, hurry, hurry, crossing the river.

Hsiang Yü cannot forget the beautiful Lady Yu at the O River
by the still full moon,⁴³

And the spring wind cannot forget Precious Consort Yang at
Mawei.⁴⁴

Liu Pang of Pei Marsh entered the pass first.⁴⁵

How can the wicked tiger of Mount Ch'o not know the rise
and fall of states?

Hsiang Yü's piebald horse is nowhere to be seen,

And at age sixteen he crossed the O River.

Stout Chinese man, cross the river quickly.

Li Jusing heard the song and said with a sigh: "This mountain spirit wishes me to return to my home country. This earth spirit will weaken my resolve. Every good objective has obstacles." He whipped his horse and on his return home stopped by the capital. His Majesty came out to greet Li, who took leave and said: "Chosön is my homeland, and we have our family burial sites here. So how could I ever betray you? I humbly beseech Your Majesty to keep well for myriad years." And when he was leaving for Üju, His Majesty received him with humble words and rich presents, came out forty tridents, and saw him off.

The story resumes. During this time, the ruler of Japan sent a million officers and soldiers to Chosön and waited daily for news of victory. The intelligence officer reported that Chosöp and Kiyomasa had died after destroying millions of soldiers and officers. Upon hearing the full story, the ruler of Japan was enraged and held council daily with all the court officials. An official message was sent throughout the state that if the wrongs done in the Black Dragon year were avenged and Chosön's surrender was received, a thousand pieces of gold and a fief of a myriad households would be rewarded. Stirrings of controversy, however, accompanied the announcement.

The story resumes. At that time Kim Üngsö and Kang Hongnip observed that Japan was not only flourishing, but in order to avenge the defeat of the Black Dragon year, was raising an army. At this time, the magistrate of Tongnae, Kim Tarun, sent a dispatch saying:

Some twenty nameless vessels have surreptitiously come and gone, spying on the situation in Chosŏn. They are sure to cause trouble.

As His Majesty felt anxious and distressed, Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip prostrated themselves and said: "We implore Your Majesty to give us two hundred famous generals so that we can go to the state of Japan, capture the ruler alive, and receive the instrument of surrender. Then there will be no more trouble."

At once His Majesty dispatched thirty thousand picked soldiers and a hundred generals. He made Kim Ŭngsŏ the vanguard commander and Kang Hongnip the rearguard commander. Kang drew his sword, however, and struck the ground, saying: "I am just an insignificant general, but from the outset I raised an army to seize the invaders for the sake of the state. For once let me lead the vanguard, invade the enemy state, behead the ruler of Japan, and present his head to Your Majesty."

Kim Ŭngsŏ spoke: "Kang Hongnip is worthy to command the vanguard. Please grant him permission."

The king said: "Do as you think best."

Thus Kang Hongnip commanded the vanguard. Kim and Kang, followed by thirty thousand troops, reached Tongnae, where, drums playing, they ordered the soldiers to board the boats and cross the sea. But just then, in the middle of the sea, a naked figure appeared and shouted: "I am the god of the Eastern Sea! If you two generals wait three days before proceeding, you will achieve merit." And the naked figure disappeared. Kim Ŭngsŏ, upon hearing this, wanted to wait three days. But Kang Hongnip replied, smiling: "We are leading countless troops and have a long journey ahead. So how can we possibly delay? Order all ranks forward!" So saying, he climbed into the boat and ordered the generals to set sail.

Again the god of the sea sang:

Pitiable, pitiable.

You do not trust my words.

It will be too late for you to regret.

Kim Ŭngsŏ replied: "Even though this is a spirit, he knows what lies ahead and wants to benefit us." So saying, he sounded a gong and halted the soldiers.

Striking the side of the boat with his sword, Kang Hongnip retorted: "Heresy cannot conquer truth! How dare you disobey the general's command? If you disobey me again, I will deal with you according to military law."

Kim Ŭngsŏ sneered. But unable to do otherwise, he reluctantly followed behind. The Taoist spirit, with nothing left to do, rode a small boat in the myriad acres of green waves, jasper flowers stuck on his head. Plucking a black zither on his lap, he sang:

How pitiful, how pitiful! Thirty thousand soldiers are pitiful.

Deluded Kang Hongnip is covered by cloud and mist,

But the pine- and bamboo-like general Kim is as bright as the sun and moon.

In the Eastern Sea, the hanging clouds are desolate.

Thousands of soldiers and myriad horses are nowhere to be seen and are scared out of their wits.

The dragon lying in the bottom of the Jasper Sea lost his pearl,

The tiger leaping from Mount Ch'ŏ has fallen into the trap.

How can you lead soldiers if you simply rely only on brute force?

How hard, how hard, is Tongjun Pass.

Don't resent, don't resent. Don't resent General Kim.

If you repent and awake, you will have a good journey to
North Mang Hills.⁴⁶

Alas, Our Majesty's vain strength is pitiable.

Upon hearing this song, Kim Ŭngsŏ's heart was naturally disturbed and he lamented: "All things follow heaven's design. What can be done?"

They crossed the sea in seventy days and then marched overland to the steep Tongjun Pass.

The story resumes. At this time the ruler of Japan daily discussed how to average the Black Dragon year. Chief of State Honggul'ong said: "This subject recently heard that enemy soldiers of the state of Chosŏn are about to invade soon. If they do, a great calamity seems unavoidable." The ruler of Japan was greatly surprised. "Then why not relieve my worry by devising an ingenious plan?" Honggul'ong informed him: "Enemy soldiers of Chosŏn will land on a certain day and encamp below Tongjun Pass. If you dispatch an army of thirty thousand, you can ambush them at the entrance of the pass. Have the army prepare much dried grass. We can shoot at once and set it on fire. And since the valley is deep and the hills are high, the Chosŏn soldiers, exhausted from their voyage of a myriad tridents, cannot escape." The ruler of Japan thought it right and sent the soldiers to lay an ambush.

The story resumes. When Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip arrived at Tongjun Pass, the road was perilous—the deep valleys and craggy peaks seemed to touch the sky, thick with clouds and mist. When they observed the four corners, to the west was Mount Murae, to the east Mount Ch'ŏnhwa, to the south Mount Mubak, and to the north Mount Sŏnha. Since the mountains were high and the valleys deep, progress on foot was hard. While they were passing over Tongjun Pass, at the foot of the mountain a sudden

fire started. And at the sound of the shot, the ambush rose up like bees as arrows and rocks poured down like rain and countless armored cavalry charged out. How could soldiers exhausted for a month fight back? Alas, their wailing made the mountains and valleys quake, and thirty thousand soldiers perished in the fire.

Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip led their horses over the pass, climbed Yŏngp'yŏng Terrace, and wept loud and bitterly. What a boundless atrocity! Kim Ŭngsŏ took out his sword, beat it on the ground, and full of rage said: "The way of a vanguard general must surpass a thousand people in wisdom and strategy. He should foresee the outcome of a battle in order to harmonize troops, officers, and generals. And then he must lead in front. You, general, simply heard the word 'vanguard,' and at once went out of your way to create this disaster. How can the fallen soldiers not bear a grudge against us? Alas, where will we go and with what reputation?"

Kang Hongnip struck his head and apologized: "Foolishly I volunteered to lead the vanguard, and now I have failed. Let me die here to follow the lonely souls of the fallen soldiers and escape your ridicule." He then drew his sword and raised it.

Kim Ŭngsŏ laughed and said: "In military life, human error is inescapable. If we do not vent our anger and die here now, how can we avoid the crime of disloyalty to posterity? Let us enter the capital of Japan and observe the situation, display our talents, and wait and see. If we cannot stop the Japanese ruler from raising an army, at least we can escape the ridicule of others."

Kang Hongnip said, "The general's words are right," and they entered the capital of Japan.

The story resumes. When the ruler of Japan heard that Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip were coming, he gathered his soldiers and, with dignified bearing, came out with eight generals. After they had danced a sword dance and showed off their skill, Kim and Kang

went inside. The ruler of Japan, accompanied by attendants, pitched a blue tent outside T'ae-hwa Gate and prepared a camp of a hundred thousand soldiers. Then while the eight generals played black zithers, Kang, equipped with helmet and armor, went in dancing a sword dance.⁴⁷ The eight generals leapt up at once and danced a sword dance with Kang. Outside the window, Kim Ŭngsŏ grasped his sword and, eyes only half open, watched the movements of the eight generals. Kang Hongnip and the Japanese generals could not distinguish among themselves. Again and again the swords of the Japanese generals struck Kang. And because it was exceedingly dangerous, Kim thought that if Kang were unlucky he would be alone with no one to rely on. He brandished his sword and danced. High spirits welled up inside him, and he worked his way in, mocking the Japanese generals. The glint of the sword was dazzling. Before half a day was spent, the Japanese generals were conferring: "What can we do to capture these two generals?"

When this was said, one general darted out and shouted: "Listen Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip! I have no skill but today I will fight you to determine victory or defeat."

Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip vaulted on their horses and engaged in hand-to-hand combat. The Japanese generals brandished the flag of the sun and moon and rushed forward like lightning. They fought each other and after fewer than ten passes Kim's sword would flash and the head of another Japanese would fall, and when Kang's sword would flash the head of another Japanese general would fall. Kim Ŭngsŏ was urged forward all the more by victory. He cut off the heads of the remaining Japanese generals and, carrying them, shouted like thunder: "Listen, Japanese generals! You disobeyed the majesty of heaven and met with defeat in the Black Dragon year. Again you have raised an army to redress your wrongs. We too have raised an army, but on our way here we

unfortunately transformed our soldiers into resentful spirits on Tongjun Pass. Though only we two are left, when we cut off the head of the ruler of Japan, lay waste the country, and alleviate the distress of our king, though on that day we die, there will be no lingering regrets. If there are any more Japanese generals left, let them come out!"

Hongult'ong addressed the ruler of Japan: "Behold Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip! They are no ordinary heroes. We will never capture them, so you should try to placate them by means of an ingenious scheme. Make them sons-in-law and place them at court."

The ruler of Japan felt this was right and the next day prepared a huge banquet and sent word to Kim and Kang: "I have prepared a banquet with the intention of fostering friendly relations and humbly invite the two generals to attend."

When Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip, carrying their swords, went to attend the banquet, the ruler of Japan met them and escorted them with all his attendants. He assigned their seats one after the other: their solemn manner and carriage were beyond reach. The ruler of Japan said: "Today our celebration is for the two generals. I propose that we offer annuity to each other, taking advantage of drunken gaiety, and make merry."

Kim Ŭngsŏ seized his sword and laughed, saying: "Ruler of Japan, this sounds like a wicked scheme to make us forget the Black Dragon year. Are you proposing that we become friends by means of music and merriment? If a grown man cannot attend this kind of banquet, how can he be deserved to be called a man?"

The ruler of Japan said: "In the old days, each country was out for its own interests. Hence the suspicion. Why think of affairs of the past?" Saying this, he offered wine. Superb wine in a golden goblet, the delicious meats on jade trays, the lovely music, the most

beautiful women ever seen—all stunned their wits. Then the ruler of Japan summoned a surpassingly beautiful woman and requested song and dance. From behind the blue tent came a woman carrying a black zither. And with delicate, jade-like hands she plucked the red strings and sang the following song:

O soldiers, don't play the black zither.

Even the agile sword of General Hsiang Yü was useless at the feast of Hungmen⁴⁸

O soldiers, how can you curb the persuasions of Su Ch'in and Chang I⁴⁹

How can you use the six marvelous plans of Chang Liang⁵⁰ and Ch'en Ping⁵¹

And the eight formation chart of Chuko Liang?⁵²

The sun and moon of Chosön are bright,

How can anyone bend the loyalty which touches the sky?

The ruler of Japan kept his countenance unchanged and requested another girl. This girl was sixteen and her name was Chujil. Her face was like that of a moon goddess and her bearing like a fragrant flower. She clasped a black zither and, half opening her red lips and white teeth, sang:

O Howöl, O Howöl, do not sing such a song:

If you identify the wild goose which carried Su Wu's letter⁵³ in Shanglin Park⁵⁴

How will you know the victory or defeat of the valley of the chirping crows and magpies?

From among them one hero will assist our king.

After listening to that song, Kim Üngsö was displeased. But Kang Hongnip coveted the girl with all his heart, and his complexion was unnatural.

Before long the sound of a moving sedan could be heard, and two jade sedan chairs came out. Two princesses, escorted by three thousand ladies-in-waiting, had come to watch the Korean heroes and listen to music. They were enclosed by a dragon and phoenix awning and golden beaded curtains. The ladies-in-waiting guarded them left and right. The two princesses, named Haenghüi (Princess Apricot) and Kye hüi (Princess Laurel), they were eighteen and seventeen years old. Their faces were as lovely as jade, and the hair on their temples was as attractive as clouds. Their skin was snow white and their faces as splendid as flowers. Their beauty was as if a spring breeze and peach blossoms were dewy with fine rain, or as if they had teased the moonlight for a thousand tridents. It stirred men's spirits.

At sunset, the ruler of Japan, taking advantage of the drunken merriment, placated Kim Üngsö and Kang Hongnip: "The attendance of the two princesses is for you two generals. I'm inviting you to become my royal sons-in-law, accept a fief of a myriad households, and live in glory in the floating world. Why should we not establish brotherly relations with Chosön and share mutual joy for myriad generations?"

Kim answered: "In that case, if you give me your head, I will take it, present it to our king, and return to support that proposal."

The ruler of Japan was struck dumb with embarrassment. When the sun set, Kim Üngsö and Kang Hongnip returned to their quarters. The ruler of Japan had sent court ladies to attend to the two generals. But Kim grabbed a sword and stood glaring so that the two ladies dared not enter his room. The next day Kim waited all day for Kang, but there was no trace of him. Kim Üngsö sighed

and said to himself: "He must have been seduced by the Japanese rogue. Now that I am alone, I will not escape death."

Kang Hongnip had indeed gone into Kyehei's palace that night. Kim Ŭngsŏ had no other recourse left but to write down his reason for suicide: "Your humble servant, General of the Middle Army Kim Ŭngsŏ of Chosŏn, bows his head four times to the ground and submits this letter to Your Majesty. Please read it in private." He then tied the letter to his horse's ear and told it in warning: "Although you're only an animal, you have lived off Chosŏn's water and soil, and having been born with Chosŏn spirit, you have followed me myriad tridents across the sea. Now, without accomplishing merit, you must leave your master. Is this not sad? Kang Hongnip, without firm conviction, has sided with the Japanese enemy and so I must die. As best you can, take my head and this letter to Our Majesty. I am trusting you to defend my innocence, so traverse a myriad tridents across the sea safely." Kim then wept loudly and bitterly.

In ten days, however, Kang Hongnip emerged and said to Kim Ŭngsŏ appealingly: "General, enjoy riches by expedient means." Unable to restrain his anger, Kim Ŭngsŏ beheaded Kang and then cut off his own head. How sad! Kim's horse took his master's head in his mouth, and whinnying, gathered his four hooves and, making his way through the clouds, crossed the sea, and in three days arrived promptly in Seoul.

Meanwhile His Majesty was waiting for news from Japan. One day, in a half dream, General Kuan Yunch'ang appeared to him and said: "Kim Ŭngsŏ and Kang Hongnip lost all their soldiers at Tongjun Pass. Kang has rebelled, and Kim has killed himself. The horse bringing Kim's head and letter is awaiting an order outside the Sungnye Gate.⁵⁵ Younger brother, find out Kim's news at once." Then he vanished without a trace, and the king was dazed.

He ordered the royal guard: "If there is a horse outside the Sungnye Gate, bring it in quickly." When the guard went out and looked, there was indeed a horse. He led the horse in, and His Majesty personally came out and saw that the horse was holding a human head in its mouth and beating its hooves as if rejoicing. Certain that this was Kim Ŭngsŏ's head, the king untied the letter from the horse's ear and read it. Weeping loudly and bitterly, he gathered the entire court and sealed Kim's head in a stone box and held a funeral. Because the horse died, as well, it was buried in the ground below Kim's grave. The king made Kim Ŭngsŏ's loyalty known to posterity.

The story resumes. It was the third month of spring, thirteen years after the Black Dragon year. There was a Buddhist monk named Great Master Sŏsan at Naksan Monastery in P'yŏngan province. At eighty, he read the Buddhist scriptures daily. One day, after burning incense and lighting candles, as he was invoking the name of the Buddha, a buddha with a gold embroidered cassock instructed: "In the year of the Black Dragon, the Japanese raiders burned every Buddhist hall. Once more, the Japanese bandits face their troops eastward to avenge their enemy. They seek to annihilate Buddhism. Having received the instruction from Śākyamuni, the Thus Come One, I transmit it to you, the master of meditation, to dispatch your disciple Yujŏng to cause Japan to surrender."

When he awakened, the words of instruction were still ringing in his ears. As the Great Master came out and observed the heavenly ether, Japan's main star and Chosŏn's main star were locked in deadly combat and death was in the air. He called his disciple Yujŏng and informed him of his vision. The following day he made preparations for a journey. Arriving at the capital, Great Master Sŏsan presented himself before the king, prostrated himself, and said: "This humble monk is a monk of Naksan Monastery at

Yŏngbyŏn in P'yŏngan. Śākyamuni, the Thus Come One, saying that Japan is again raising an army and our state is in danger, asked this humble monk to go to Japan and come back with Japan's surrender. This is the reason I am here."

The king replied in great surprise: "Even though you are a monk, you are also my subject. Go to Japan and prevent them from raising an army. Receive their written surrender and ease my distress."

"I am eighty and lack the physical strength," the Great Master replied. "But I have a great disciple, Samyŏng, who is capable of going to Japan. If you send him in my place, he will ease Your Majesty's distress."

The king summoned the disciple at once, and Samyŏngdang followed the messenger into the capital and came before the king.

His Majesty asked: "How old are you?"

Samyŏng replied: "I am nineteen. My name is Yujŏng."

Everyone saw that his face was like a white gen and his mind was as clear as water flowing in autumn. He was indeed a living buddha.

"I have heard the words of your teacher," His Majesty said.

"After undergoing defeat in the Black Dragon year, Japan is again raising an army. This is our state's great concern. Go to Japan, receive their surrender document, and ease my distress."

Samyŏng prostrated himself saying: "Would I not go through fire and water for Your Majesty's command and my mentor's directive?"

The king was pleased and immediately designated Samyŏng as an envoy. In a dignified manner he gave him a long baton and a hachet representing his authority. As Samyŏng bid farewell, the king personally urged on him three cups of wine and sent him off with provisions for the journey. The procedure was solemn.

When Samyŏng arrived in Tongnae, magistrate Sŏ Wandŏk showed contempt for him because he was a monk. Using the excuse of illness, he would not come to meet him.

Samyŏng said in great anger: "I have received a royal command and am on my way to a long sea voyage. Since you make light of my words, you must not care for your country." So saying, Samyŏng had him beheaded and exposed his head. Reporting this to the court, and boarding his boat, he then headed for Japan.

The story resumes. The ruler of Japan heard that Chosŏn's Living Buddha was coming and assembled the entire court to discuss the matter: "It is said Chosŏn's Living Buddha is coming. We must find an ingenious scheme. What should we do?" Grand Councillor Honggult'ong suggested: "The living Buddha is a manipulator of nature. So I have a scheme. On the Chosŏn envoy's way, write and post 18,990 graphs of poetry and prose on a 18,900-panel screen, and have him recite it from memory. If he does not forget a word, it must be magic. Then we will know if he is a genius or a charlatan."

The ruler of Japan thought it right and ordered the court to welcome Chosŏn's Living Buddha. The Japanese ruler came out with attendants and received Samyŏngdang. After finishing the ceremony, the ruler of Japan said: "It is said there is nothing that the Living Buddha does not know. There is a screen in the entranceway. Do you remember the number of panels?"

Samyŏngdang said: "King, you are fit to be mocked by a knee-high boy! What is the point of asking? The folding screen has 18,990 panels."⁵⁶

"Can you recite from memory the poetry and prose written on them?" asked the ruler.

Samyŏng, who was holding a rosary in his left hand and wearing a cassock and gold crown on his head, recited the 18,989 panels of

poetry and prose until the hour of the horse (11 A.M.-1 P.M.) the next day. The Japanese ruler and all his subjects were astonished and said: "He does not know one panel. How can that be?"

Samyōngdang replied: "How can I know the writing I did not see?"

The Japanese ruler sent someone to check if there was a mistake and, indeed, a panel had been covered by the wind.

All the more surprised, they discussed another ingenious scheme. Then a subject proposed: "Outside the South Gate there is a lake more than a myriad fathoms deep. Arrange a great banquet and fashion a thousand-pound cushion of copper. Give it to the Living Buddha that he may ride the cushion and enjoy a boatride on that water. If he does not carry it out, how can he expect to live?"

The ruler of Japan thought it right, arranged a banquet, and raised tents. While he was enjoying the feast with Samyōng, he took out the thousand-pound cushion and said: "Living Buddha, ride on that cushion and float on the water. Then we will know the power of the Living Buddha."

Samyōng laughed in his heart. Summoning the Dragon King of the four seas, he invoked a divine general and rode on the cushion, floating on the water, and enjoyed a boatride. If the east wind blew, he went west; if the south wind blew, he went north. Then Samyōng commanded: "Ruler of Japan, listen. I am a disciple of Śākyamuni, the Thus Come One. As I am boating on water like this, provide some music and come out yourself and dance. If you do not, you will suffer great calamity."

The ruler of Japan, greatly astonished, rose and danced. After enjoying himself all day long, Samyōng then returned to the detached palace and said: "Ruler of Japan, come out at once and surrender. I intended to enter your country in the Black Dragon year to exterminate your seed, but Śākyamuni the Thus Come One

held me back until the next opportunity. But now I am here. Ignorant of the power of heaven, you arrogantly invaded Chosōn. Our Majesty was troubled, and eight thousand living buddhas exerted themselves to serve their country with utmost loyalty. How can you possibly resist? If you treasure your life, present a surrender letter. Otherwise I will lay Japan waste."

The ruler of Japan was awestruck and could not dine and sleep comfortably. Again a subject informed him: "I have an ingenious scheme. Make a copper cell to imprison him. Make Samyōng sit in the room, seal the door, light a charcoal fire, and work a pair of bellows. However much he says he is the Living Buddha, his bones will melt."

The ruler of Japan thought this correct, so they built a copper house, assigned it as the residence of Samyōng, sealed the door, and stacked up charcoal. When they blew on huge bellows, Samyōng wrote the graph "ice" on his copper cushion and the graph "snow" on the walls. Sitting upright he recited the Buddhist scriptures from memory, and the cushion became cool. For two days and nights, the Japanese worked the huge bellows, the copper posts melted, and the ruler of Japan said: "However much of a Living Buddha he says he is, all of his spirit will melt."

Then he had a soldier open the door and looked inside. Samyōng, dressed in a cassock and sitting calmly, shouted: "They say it is hot in the south. Why is it so cold here?" Looking carefully, they saw that the place where he sat was covered with ice, and snow was falling on the walls in all four directions. The ruler of Japan was greatly astonished and again placed Samyōng in the detached palace. The ruler was greatly distressed, and another subject said: "All stratagems have proved useless. So I entreat you to attempt another plan to escape calamity. Make a metal horse from copper, heat it with charcoal, and force him to go about riding the horse."

The ruler of Japan said: "Why would a Living Buddha who spreads ice in a red-hot room be afraid of fire? But try it anyway."

Then they heated the copper horse with bellows and transformed it into a fire horse and said: "Ride, Living Buddha of Chosŏn." Samyŏngdang laughed wryly, faced west toward Chosŏn, bowed four times, spit three times—and from the west came floating a speck of black cloud. In an instant, heaven and earth were overturned. Thunder sounded from all four directions, startling their wits, torrential rain poured down, the ocean overflowed, and the Japanese capital was nearly submerged in the midst of the sea. The ruler of Japan was terrified. He unfastened his royal seal and hung it on his neck, took off his royal robe, fastened it to his neck, bowed his head to the ground, and apologized: "Divine Living Buddha, please spare my life."

Thus he did beg. And only then did Samyŏng stop the rain and say: "Will you ever again harbor treacherous aims and oppose Chosŏn?"

"Henceforth I will have no such presumptuous intentions," said the ruler of Japan, as he prostrated himself and begged for mercy. He bowed a hundred times and apologized: "If you spare my life, I will forever repay your kindness."

Samyŏngdang allowed this and said: "Every year you must submit as tribute three hundred human skins, three thousand pounds of bronze, three thousand pounds of peony bark, and three thousand pounds of other Japanese goods."

When the ruler of Japan had written an acknowledgment of surrender on these terms, Samyŏngdang said: "There are a thousand Living Buddhas in each of our provinces. If you ever again harbor treacherous designs, eight thousand Living Buddhas will rise as one and lay Japan waste. Be careful." The ruler of Japan bowed his head to the ground a hundred times.

When Samyŏngdang went back to Chosŏn, the ruler of Japan bid him farewell with great ceremony and generous presents. Samyŏngdang returned to Chosŏn, presented the Japanese ruler's written surrender and the list of tribute goods to His Majesty, went down to P'yoch'ung Monastery in Miryang, Kyŏngsang province, and passed away on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, the day of the full moon. His Majesty grieved and built a private academy at P'yoch'ung Monastery, ordered memorial services in spring and autumn, and ordered the monks of eight provinces to perform a vegetarian feast for Samyŏngdang every year on the fifteenth of the seventh month and to transmit these rituals down through the ages. His Majesty became more esteeming and reverent of the Path of the Buddha.

A STUDY FROM THE CENTER FOR KOREAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

The Center for Korean Studies was established at the University of Hawaii in 1972 to enhance the university's faculty and performance in Korean studies. The Center develops comprehensive academic programs, stimulates research and publications, and coordinates the resources of the university with those of other institutions, organizations, and individuals engaged in the study of Korea. The Center seeks especially to promote interdisciplinary and intercultural studies.

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PREFACE

The Imjin nok, or Record of the Black Dragon Year, is the first popular tale inspired by the Japanese invasion of Korea between 1592 and 1598. As a collection of folk narratives clustered around major events and characters, it exists in some forty manuscript and printed versions, long and short, in the vernacular and in literary Chinese. Some believe that oral narratives about the invasion had already begun circulating during the war. Thereafter the story went through the process of conflation, selection, and combination, and enjoyed wide transmission through oral storytelling and subsequent circulation of manuscript and woodblock editions. Its popularity is attested by the number of versions extant, especially those with regional variations, indicating that the memories of the war were shared by almost every living Korean. It also attests to the unlimited possibilities of selection and combination of motifs at the disposal of storytellers and later redactors. Compared to other wars fought on the peninsula, the Japanese invasion was unparalleled in its brutality, devastation, and hardship for the people. As a record of collective suffering and reflection, it also provides occasion for meditations on history and hope for the future.

The first section of the Introduction, "Producers and Consumers," traces the rise of popular storytelling in late Chosŏn times to provide a social and cultural setting in which a story like the