
BOOK REVIEWS

Chyök Syöngui chyön. Kwönji tan (Povest' o Chëk Sënye. V odnoï tetradi). Iz koreïskikh ksilografov Sankt-Peterburgskogo filiala Instituta vostokovedeniia RAN. Faksimile ksilografa. Perevod s koreïskogo, predislavie, kommentariï, prilozheniia i ukazatel' A. F. Trotzevich. Sankt-Peterburg: Tsentr "Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie", 1996, 230 str.

Chyök Syöngui chyön. Kwönji tan (The Story of Chyök Syöngui in One Part). A Korean block-print from the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences. Facsimile. Translation from Korean, introduction, commentary, addenda, and index by A. F. Trotzevich. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg Centre for Oriental Studies, 1996, 230 pp.

The text of "The Story of Chyök Syöngui" represents one of the vernacular novels which was edited as a block-print in the nineteenth century. The credit for collecting these novels belongs to a well-known English orientalist W. G. Aston. Now this collection is preserved in the Manuscript Fund of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences.

The collection consists of seven volumes which have European bindings. Every volume comprises three to five literary works, most of them representing the vernacular novels. The texts of the novels were very popular, and at present they exist in numerous manuscripts and block-prints. In my view, every edition is of great interest to specialists, as it provides new information on the history of the text. Publication of "The Story of Chyök Syöngui", in its turn, can give some new findings in the area of Korean studies.

The work by Prof. Trotzevich contains the facsimile of the Korean text, its translation into Russian, the author's introduction, commentary, addenda and index. The author points out the misprints of the original edition and decipheres a number of Chinese passages written down in Korean phonetic alphabet.

The introduction by Prof. Trotzevich is devoted to a comparison of "The Story of Chyök Syöngui" to a Buddhist *jātaka* "The Friend of Evil" from the 4th *kwön* of chapter 6 of "Buddha Ta-feng pien's Requit for Favours Sūtra". The comparison of these two writings enables Prof. Trotzevich to trace the way an alien plot was transformed in the Korean novel. The hero, whose name is present in the title of the novel, goes through a whole series of sorrows, shows his unusual abilities and ultimately receives his re-

ward. It is worthy noting that in the Korean novel the place of action is changed. Instead of the Indian city of Varanasi the Chinese Anp'yong appears. The Korean version differs also from the textual point of view: the reason for searching the pearl is quite different in the above-mentioned *jātaka*, where it is everyone's happiness, while in the novel it is the rescuing of the hero's mother. Syöngui's sacrificing his life for the health of his mother represents the Confucian model of behaviour of a devoted son. As Prof. Trotzevich points out, all the changes of the original Buddhist plot have been caused by following the laws of the Korean vernacular novels. The *jātaka* never fails to emphasize the ultimate goal of searching the pearl, the inner sense of the deed: the pearl is expected to bring prosperity to the people.

Prof. Trotzevich states that the novel demonstrates mostly the interest in the hero's personal fate. His deeds are shown to be necessary for attaining the well-being of the people and for establishing order among them. That is why the novel stresses the deed itself, as well as the ultimate reward. The pearl becomes useless after it finds its way to the hero's mother and rescues her. The novel is aimed to show that the State and its people begin to flourish only due to Syöngui's strict following the model of Confucian behaviour, and not because the pearl has been found.

The Korean novel, as Prof. Trotzevich believes, reveals ideas which differ from those of the *jātaka*. The Buddhist idea of goodness towards all living creatures, and of necessity to forgive even bitter enemies, has been replaced in the novel by the idea of devotion to parents and of punishment to those who destroy harmony and order.

The author of the publication studies also the background of the novel and shows its relation to the Korean myth of death and birth of the god of fertility. Prof. Trotzevich draws special attention to the problem of the origin of two personages' (brothers') names. She supposes that the names could be a result of the transformation of Korean reading of Chinese characters for these names. Thus the Friend of Goodness, *i. e.* Syönu, has become Syöngui, while the Friend of Evil, *i. e.* Agu — Hyangui. Just as the surname Chök has originated from Syök, in original — Buddha.

The publication by Prof. Trotzevich is a valuable contribution both to the study of Korean literature and to the history of culture of the Far Eastern peoples. Needless it to say that the facsimile edition of the text makes it much more available to a scholarly audience.

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