

# Views of the country, visions of self : Chosn dynasty travel records on Chiri-san and Paektu-san

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# VIEWS OF THE COUNTRY, VISIONS OF SELF

## Chosŏn Dynasty Travel Records on Chiri-san and Paektu-san

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### Introduction

During the Chosŏn dynasty educated Koreans seem to have lived in a divided space. A cleavage opens between the space they inhabited culturally and the space they inhabited physically. This does not merely point at the pervasiveness of Chinese influence, but, more specifically, at a seeming lack of significance of Korean places in literary contexts. I shall use here two examples. One is from my readings of Chosŏn dynasty writings on dreams. The whole philosophical tradition of these writers was Chinese, including the basic notions on what a dream should mean or what the activity of dreaming means. It is surprising, however, that even the physical background of the dreams told often is situated in China. Given the literary and sometimes allegorical nature of these dream stories, this does not mean, of course, that the nightly dreams of Korean literati commonly led them to China. But obviously a Chinese background is one of the elements that can add significance to a dream story. The second example is the novel *Kuunmong* 九雲夢. When I first read it as a student, it struck me as very strange that this novel hailed as the Korean masterpiece of all ages is set in China.<sup>1</sup> But it seemed to me even stranger that the China the novel depicts was so different from the China I had experienced: the distances between places seemed to be much shorter. It was obviously a koreanized China. In reports on travels inside Korea, Korean literati respond to Korean physical space with exactly the same literary tools and the same mind-frame that refer them back to China in

- 1 This is of course true for other fictional texts as well. Wei Xusheng in his study of “Chinese literature in Korea” points out that it will be hard to find another “national literature” with a similarly great percentage of works using a foreign background (*Zhongguo wenxue zai Chaoxian*, Guangzhou 1990, p.287). Needless to say, the terms “national literature” and “foreign” may not be fully appropriate in this case.

their fantasies. These texts can thus be expected to wield insights into how Koreans dealt with the above-mentioned cultural cleavage. But this is not their only merit. More generally, they prove to be a subtle but rich commentary on intellectual and even political trends of their time. This is in part due to the general nature of travel writing.

Travel writing has been called by some scholars the matrix from which narrative writing springs.<sup>2</sup> It is also deeply linked with historical writing. In occidental literature, both Homer's *Odyssey* and the work of Herodotus, which resulted from his journeys, are among the earliest works in their genre. In the Chinese tradition, the piece hailed as earliest fictional writing, the *Mu Tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 of the 3rd century B.C., is also organized around a journey, and China's Grand Historian Sima Qian was famous for his wide and far travels. A third, if later, connection is between travel writing and autobiographical writing. Though both presumably present facts, they are clearly centered around the experiencing self, and the purposes underlying the narration are elusive.<sup>3</sup> Travel texts cannot be read as either history or fiction, and only with great caution as autobiography, but they share certain functions with each of these genres. They are valuable sources of historical information, especially on social history, which may be hard to find anywhere else. At the same time, they afford us certain insights that we expect to gain from fictional works, but are seldom offered in premodern literature, namely the workings of the individual mind in concrete situations. I shall concern myself here with this more literary side, treating the travel texts as statements of the authors on their position in the world as they perceived it and as personalized commentaries on the intellectual trends of their times.

2 This assumption is elaborated in studies like Percy Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983.

3 For the impact of travel literature on the development of autobiography in China, see Wu Pei-yi, *The Confucian's Progress. Autobiographical Writings in Traditional China*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1990, pp. 94 ff.

## Korean travel literature

A great treasure trove of travel literature was produced in Korea, especially during the last five hundred years. Four genres are most frequently used for relating journeys: Chinese prose (*hanmun* 漢文), Chinese poetry, usually of the regular style (*hansi* 漢詩), Korean language prose and Korean language epic poetry (*kasa* 歌辭). There is a wide variety of recorded journeys. Some are involuntary, like being taken prisoner of war to a foreign country,<sup>4</sup> being driven off course by a storm to distant shores,<sup>5</sup> or going into banishment. Other records describe official tours of inspection or embassies. Still others record journeys undertaken of own accord, such as visits to friends and teachers or outright pleasure trips. Among these possible variations, my topic here are *hanmun* records of pleasure trips to mountains. Such essays have been very little studied. In the vast field of Korean travel literature only records of foreign travel have received considerable attention, mostly for the historical information they contain.<sup>6</sup> As to travel inside Korea, some studies are to be found on *kasa*<sup>7</sup>

- 4 E.g., the *Kanyangnok* 看羊錄 by Kang Hang 姜沆, relating his experiences as prisoner of war in Japan after the Hideyoshi invasions.
- 5 See Ch'oe Pu's 崔溥 *P'yohaerok* 漂海錄, translated as *Ch'oe Pu's Diary: A Record of Drifting Across the Sea* by John Meskill, Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1965.
- 6 In addition to the above, other examples of studies in Western languages are: Gari Ledyard, "Korean Travellers in China over 400 Years, 1488-1887", *Occasional Papers on Korea*, March 1974: 1-42 and: "Hong Taeyŏng and his Peking Memoir", *Korean Studies* 6/1982: 63-103; Tchi-ho Paek: *Bericht des Nosongdang über seine Reise nach Japan aus dem Jahre 1420*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1973; Richard Rutt: "James Gale's Translation of the Yŏnhaengnok: An Account of the Korean Embassy to Peking 1712-1713, reworked by Richard Rutt", *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch* 49: 55-144. For Korean studies focussing on foreign travels, see Kim T'aejun and So Chaeyŏng, ed.: *Yŏhaenggwa chehŏm ŭi munhak*, *Chunggukpyŏn*, *Ilbonpyŏn*, Seoul: Minjok munhwa mungo kanhaenghoe, 1985.
- 7 Most noteworthy is Ch'oe Kanghyŏn, *Han'guk kihaeng munhak yŏn'gu*, Seoul: Ilchisa, 1982, which also contains much valuable information on *hanmun* travel-



and *hansi*, but no extensive study seems to have been done on *hanmun* essays.<sup>8</sup>

Mountain trips are among the Korean pleasure trips most frequently commemorated. They are also most conducive to the kind of reflection I am interested in, as they are less bound to specific historical anecdotes than descriptions of cities or buildings. The mountain most frequently visited and written about from earliest times is Kūmgang-san. I have chosen, however, two other mountains as my focus, namely Chiri-san and Paektu-san, precisely because materials on them are less widespread, which makes it easier to observe correspondences between individual texts. To connect these two mountains is justified by the intimate link between the two made by the Korean literati themselves through a combination of folk-etymology and geomantic thought. The chthonic energy that runs through and shapes the mountains according to *p'ungsu* 風水 thought is supposed to originate from Paektu-san and to flow down to Chiri-san, where it experiences its last great upsurge on the peninsula. Therefore, it is said, Chiri-san was given the second name Turyu, “to flow (*ryu* 流) from [Paek]tu 頭”.

The eight texts that form the basis of this study are not the only texts written on the two mountains, but the only available<sup>9</sup> pleasure trip records

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ogues, most notably an extensive list of primary texts; still, the actual topic of the book are travel *kasa*.

8 The essays in Kim T'aejun and So Chaeyŏng, eds.: *Yŏhaeng kwa ch'ehŏm ūi munhak: Kukt'o kihaeng p'yŏn*, Seoul: Minjok munhwa mungo kanhaenghoe, 1987, are only partially concerned with *hanmun* records; even those which are do not give a literary analysis of the texts. One of the rare examples of a study of a *hanmun* travelogue in any depth is Yi Sangju: “Tamhŏn Yi Hagon ūi ‘Namyurok’ e taehan koch'al – kŭ Honam p'ungsok chijŏk sŏnggyŏk ūl chungsim ūro”, *Han'guk hanmunhak yŏn'gu* 15, 1992: 311-349. Typically, Yi Sangju is mainly concerned with the factual information to be gained from the record; his grossly mistaken claim that the simultaneous production of a prose record and poetry during the journey is exceptional (p. 311) shows how little common knowledge about this kind of literature exists.

9 At least three more travelogues exist, of which I could not get hold: “Turyusan kihaeng” by Yang Taebak 梁大樸 (1544-1592), “Yu Turyusannok” by Cho Wi-

that contain a description of the view from the summit. They are all written on a day-to-day basis, though not in strict diary form, and vary in length from about six to fifteen Chinese folios.

The first and most obvious question we may want to ask is: why were these travels undertaken, and why were they written about? Let me start with some general observations. First, all of the travelers in my sample were situated near the mountain before they set out on their journey; none of them undertook a longer trip specifically to climb the mountain (as is repeatedly the case with Kūmgang-san travels). The journies to Chiri-san or Paektu-san thus carry more the character of an outing than that of a pilgrimage. This is confirmed by the reasons the travel narrators give for their trips. Usually the texts are introduced with explanations of the circumstances and rationale for the trip. Wide differences in literary craft and in argument notwithstanding, a pattern of reasoning emerges, consisting of three to four elements: 1) expression of an old wish to go; 2) an explanation of that wish, but unfortunately mostly in very general terms; 3) especially in earlier texts, obstacles to the trip; and 4) the opportunity to go, which in most cases is connected with finding a companion. This emphasis on good company seems a rather secular concern with entertainment, given the fact that traveling literati were accompanied by hosts of servants anyhow.<sup>10</sup>

But if we see the mountain excursions as sheer recreation and tourism, the question remains why records were written. The wish for commemoration, today satisfied through photography, was in my opinion fulfilled for East Asian literati by the poetry they used to compose on such occasions for centuries before prose essays were written. In China, the travel essay has developed from prefaces to travel poetry, which explains the circumstances of the latter's composition. The first independent travel essays, however, written by Liu Zongyuan 劉宗元 in the early ninth

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han 趙緯韓 (1558-1649), and "Yu Paektu-san ki" by Sō Kisu 徐淇修 (*chinsa* 1801); they may or may not satisfy my criteria.

10 Significantly, Nam Hyoon, who travels without a companion of his own class, reports so many discussions with Buddhists in his travelogue that it comes close to being a record of a spiritual journey.

century, were clearly allegorical pieces deploring his banishment. The first travel diary, written around the same time by Li Ao about a much traveled route (and therefore most probably *not* intended as guidebook for future travelers), is a very cryptic piece which is nowadays considered by some also to be of allegorical nature. The influence of Liu Zongyuan on the earliest writer of my sample, Kim Chongjik (1431-1483), is obvious.<sup>11</sup> This tradition should caution the reader as to the function of travel texts; it cannot, however, be taken to shape the nature of all travelogues written in Korea, or in China for that matter.

I shall present my readings of these texts in three steps. First, I will give my analysis of the basic statement or momentum of narration underlying each text. For this I shall mainly rely on three crucial parts of each – beginning, summit view, and end –, as these are the most reflective passages. Second, I shall turn to the description of rituals to mountain gods which are found in some texts and speak more specifically of one potential function of travelogues, a discourse of power. This will eventually lead to my third topic of how the Chinese cultural model affected the treatment of Korean places.

### Summit views and their messages

The first text in this sample, written by Kim Chongjik (1431-1483) who is famous for leading the *sarimp'a* 士林派 to power at Sŏngjong's court, is one of the oldest full-fledged prose excursion records in Korea, the only extant older ones being two Kūmgang-san reports written in Koryŏ.<sup>12</sup> Kim's text can thus justly be called the ancestor of Chosŏn dynasty excursion writings; in fact, until the early sixteenth century practically all extant excursion records seem to have been produced by members of his school. At the time of his trip to Chiri-san in 1472, Kim Chongjik had not yet gained any power at court. But he was already acknowledged as the head of a school of learning concentrated in Yŏngnam (the Kyŏngsangdo

11 See the discussion of his text below.

12 Im Ch'un's 林椿 [12 cent.] undated "Tonghaenggi" (*Tongmunsŏn* 東文選 65), and Yi Kok's 李穀 "Tongyugi" (*Tongmunsŏn* 71), written 1349.

region);<sup>13</sup> and he was the magistrate of Hamyang, the county to which the northern part of Chiri-san, including the peak (Ch'ŏnwangbong), belongs. His essay starts with the words:

I have grown up to the South of the Ridge, so Turyu is my 'native mountain'.  
 ("Yu Turyu nok", *Chŏmp'ilchae munjip* 2. 51b)

He goes on to tell how he held office at Hamyang, but was prevented from visiting Turyu by duties until at last his disciple, Cho Wi, compels him to go. He then formulates his expectations:

Now the time was just the middle of autumn and the fogs had cleared; on the night of the fifteenth one should watch the moon shine on Ch'ŏnwangbong; at cock's crow, the sunrise would be seen; and when morning broke, one would have a view in all directions. All this could be had at one time. So I decided on my travel plan. (Ibid. 52a)

Clearly, the core of the whole undertaking was to be the summit experience. Thus, it makes sense to turn to the summit episode as the main event of the trip. In fact, we find that the summit view is so central to the trip that Kim Chongjik has to climb Ch'ŏnwangbong twice, as the first time his view is blocked by clouds. The result of his second ascent is described in following words:

Now I climbed the northern elevation with Yu Hoin and [the monk] Haegong. Cho Wi had already reached the shrine [on the summit]. Even someone flying on wild geese would not get any higher than we were. As it had only just cleared up, there was not a speck of a cloud; only vast green and blue stretched around us without discernible end. I said: "If we have this far-reaching view and do not try to get the essentials, how would that differ from the outlooks of a woodcutter? So let us first look north, then east, then south, then west, proceed from the near to the far. How about that?" Haegong could very well demon-

13 See Yi Pyŏngghyu, *Chosŏn chŏn'gi kiho sarimp'a yŏn'gu*, Seoul: Ilchogak 1984, p. 7. Though Yi argues here that Kim Chongjik's group is not a political entity before 1482, this does not preclude political ambitions on the side of the already formed group during the previous decade.

strate it. Following this mountain on its way north down to Namwŏn, the first elevation is Panya peak. What stretches east for some 200 *i* 里 elevates itself steeply when coming to this peak, then winds northward and subsides. The sibling peaks and progeny ravines vie with each other in grace, too numerous to be all taken into account. The parapet I see there, that seems to be dragged and wound around – is it the city wall of Hamyang? Where green and yellow overlay each other, and a white rainbow crosses them – are these the waters of Chinju? The green conches in dotted line from east to west, rising up so high – are they the island group of Kōje in the Southern Sea? The counties of Sanŭm, Chugye, Unbong, Kurye and Hadong all hid amidst the folds of the skirt and could not be seen. The mountains to the north were: in the near distance Hwangsŏk (Anŭm) and Kuam (Hamyang), in the far distance Tōkyu (Hamyang), Kyeryong (Kongju), Chu'u (Kŭmsan), Sudo (Chirye), and Kaya (Sŏngju). To the Northeast ... [and so forth through all directions].

Some were like earthen mounds, some like dragons and tigers, some like fruits arranged for show and some like a pointed knife. But only P'alongsan to the east and Mudŭng to the west rose high among the mountains. North of Kyerimnyŏng [Ch'ungch'ŏng pukto] and south of Tsushima island, vapors filled the sky and the world visible to the eyes was at its end; no more distinctions could be made. I had Yu Hoin record the recordable as above. Then we looked at each other and said, congratulating ourselves: 'Since ancient times there have been people who climbed this mountain, but has ever anybody enjoyed it as much as we do today? (57b-58b)

At the outset of the text, Kim had claimed a kind of birthright to the mountain (as his 'native mountain') and ruling power over it (as under his jurisdiction). Now on the summit he shows his discursive powers with which he orders the world lying below. The essence of this power is the correct naming of things, which of course is the privilege and duty of the Confucian worthy. Tellingly, Kim takes pains to distinguish himself from a 'woodcutter', an image which, besides designating a socially lowly person, is also a traditional Daoist symbol for the free, intuitively wise man, who merges with nature and is uninterested in distinctions. By setting himself off from the woodcutters, Kim Chongjik strongly emphasizes his identity as a Confucian scholar. A descriptive grid is then laid over the landscape, a rule for its perception set (going from north to west, from far to near). The land is thus incorporated into the domain of the Confucian literatus,



whose power is the power of administration and literary custody. Accordingly, Kim's appreciation of the landscape is epitomized by his order to Yu Hoin to record what they see and name. The self-congratulation that follows and that, at first reading, seems so exaggerated falls in line with this appropriation of the place. No earlier traveler could have enjoyed the place as much, because nobody before had made it his own like this – encircling and recording it, making it part of a writable and readable universe. This finds a faint echo a few lines later during the descent from the summit:

On the way we encountered a dozen interesting peaks that all afforded good views, comparable to the upper summit, but they had no names. Yu Hoin said: 'Why don't you give them names, Master.' I answered: 'What if these names are not trusted because they lack literary evidence?' The woods were full of Maga-wood, which is good for walking sticks. I ordered my retainers to pick some that were fresh and straight, and soon we had filled a quiver. ... (59 a)

Kim would not dare to give names without a literary source. He does not impose *himself* upon the landscape, but a given order received through a written tradition. But the Maga-wood seems to come in here as a substitute, a *pars pro toto* that he can make his own after all. This self-ascertaining aspect becomes all the more evident in the conclusion of the piece:

As lofty and wonderful as Chiri-san is, if it stood on the Middle plains, it would be more revered than Mount Tai. The Emperor would ascend it and bestow on it golden ink and jade documents to record it and send them up to the Heavenly Emperor. Or otherwise, it should be compared to Wuyishan and Hengshan, where the cultured and refined like Han Yu 韓愈, Zhu Xi 朱熹<sup>14</sup>, and Cai Yuanding 蔡元定 (Song), and ascets like Sun Cho 孫綽<sup>15</sup>, Lü Dongbin 呂洞

14 Zhu Xi's Ziyang academy, where he taught from 1183-1192, was on Wuyishan; he also wrote some poems on the landscape of this mountain.

15 Famous as the author of a long 'descriptive poem' (*fu* 賦) on Tiantaishan, he lived in Wei times.



賓 or Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾<sup>16</sup> followed on each other's heels, wandering and resting in its midst. And now they are only the hide-out for simpletons, escaped slaves, and those who 'learn from Buddha' in order to avoid taxes. That I together with my friends could now climb and tour it once was the fulfilment of a lifetime's wish, and only the entanglements in official business held me from ... exploring all its hidden marvels. So this mountain has not remained without recognition. (62 a)

This is a direct echo of the aforementioned travel essays by Liu Zongyuan, the most famous of which ends with a lament about the place being unrecognized because of its distance from the capital. For Kim Chongjik, Turyu is redeemed from this fate through his own visit there, while this same visit makes himself stand in a row with great Chinese sages. Through his travel text, he has shown his vision of the power he wants to exercise: that of administering and serving a great order; and he has shown his vision of himself as receiver and transmitter of that order.

Kim Ilson's travel record is a response to Kim Chongjik's, as the title, "Sok Turyu nok (A follow-up on '[Yu] Turyu nok')", indicates. He records an ascent of Chiri-san undertaken together with another important figure of the Yŏngnam group, Chŏng Yŏch'ang 鄭汝昌, about fifteen years later (1489). Kim Ilson (1464-1498) is that close disciple of Kim Chongjik who ignited, and was killed in, the first literary purge in 1498. He is known to have belonged to the politically more radical wing of the *sarimp'a* who became disenchanted with Kim Chongjik's moderate attitudes after his group won power at Sŏngjong's court.<sup>17</sup> If Kim Chongjik in his essay presents the image of a physically rather weak, cautious man<sup>18</sup>

16 One of the Five Daoist Patriarchs of the Southern Song. His real name was Ge Changgeng. For a time he lived secluded on Wuyishan.

17 See Yi Pyŏnghyu, *Chosŏn chŏn'gi Kiho sarimp'a yŏn'gu*, p. 32 f.

18 This is very much the case with his descriptions of his physical condition: he complains about tired feet at several points, and the second ascent to Ch'ŏnwang-bong would have been cancelled due to his bad physical shape but for his will-power. See also Ch'oe Sŏngbŏm, "Chiri-san kihaeng", in: Kim T'aejun and So Chaeyŏng, *Yŏhaenggwa ch'ehŏmŭi munhak. Kukt'o kihaeng p'yŏn*, 195-213,

at the apex of his life, Kim Ilson presents himself as an impatient, strong young man with great visions. This is clear from the first sentence. Whereas Kim Chongjik in the opening of his text places himself at the foot of Mount Turyu, Kim Ilson flies in from afar, thus opening up a far larger perspective:

That men are born in one corner of the big calabash that is the world, is fate. If then it is impossible to tour all the world to get hold of whatever there is, at least the mountains and rivers within one's own realm should all be explored. However, in human affairs joys are sparse. That I have an intent but cannot match my wish happens in eight or nine of ten cases. I first came to Chinju to teach with an intent to nourish my mother. And Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343), when he took up office in Goulou, never intended to give up his Daoist pursuits. Turyu is within the domain of Chinju. So after I came to Chinju, I daily maintained my walking gear: Turyu's cloud and mist, monkeys and cranes were my alchemical cinnabar. ("Sok Turyu nok", *T'agyǒng sǒnsaeng munjip* 5, 8b-9a)

In this global perspective, Chiri-san is just one of many places worth visiting. Kim's wish to climb it is created by circumstance (not by natural bounds), and at the same time connected to a larger pursuit, couched in the quasi-religious terms of the Daoist pursuit of immortality. Clearly, Kim Ilson wants more than local hegemony. Accordingly, from the summit he looks out into the cosmos rather than onto the lands below:

When I wandered around, gazing into all directions, ten thousand *i* 里 all came to meet my eyes; the vast land with its numerous mountains all became ants' fiefs and earthworms' mounds. Would one venture to describe them, it would be in tune with Han Yu's "Poem of the Southern Mountain",<sup>19</sup> but the per-

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whose comparison of Kim Chongjik's and Kim Ilson's travelogues focusses on the opposition old versus young man (see esp. p.203 ff.).

- 19 Han Yu, *Changli xiansheng ji* 昌黎先生集, SBBY, 1.17b, "Nanshan shi". This elaborate long poem is one of Han Yu's most famous descriptive poems and has been an inspiration to Koreans writing on Chiri-san because of this mountain's designation as Korea's "Southern Mountain". See for example Yu Mongin's poem

ceptions of my heart were in accord with Confucius' ascent of the Eastern Mountain<sup>20</sup>. All the uprising feelings were wound up by the exalted melancholy of looking down into the regions of dust. To the Southeast of the mountain was the territory of old Silla; to its Northwest, the land of old Paekche. All this busy bustling like mosquitoes rising and being destroyed in a bottle or bowl – from early times on, how many heroic men's bones are buried here? That we folks today could climb here without accident, is this not also a grace from above? In the middle of this vastness and beauty, at a time of peace and satiety, I thought of the unequal distribution of suffering and joy throughout the ages. So I said to Paeguk [Chǒng Yŏch'ang]: "When shall you and I invite immortals to join us, to rise to flight through the universe, to travel in body beyond the Eight Expanses, to witness with our eyes the destiny of the one source, so that we may see the time when all vitality is at its end?" Paeguk laughed and said: "This cannot be attained." (Ibid., 17b-18a)

Kim Ilson is not concerned with geography anymore; the charting of the land has been done already. Instead of enumerating the placenames one by one, he is satisfied with summing them up as the kingdoms of yore. But his concern is not history either; it is his dissatisfaction with 'the unequal distribution of joy and suffering' that makes him long for a journey beyond human limits. To him, the summit of Chiri-san is not a place of achievement, but a point of departure. This is borne out again by the unique ending of Kim Ilson's travelogue. For in his last sentences he complains that Ch'ŏnghak-tong – the paradisiacal spot on the foot of Chiri-san described as untraceable by Yi Illo in his famous anecdote<sup>21</sup> – could not be found, and thereupon agrees with Chǒng Yŏch'ang on a continuation of their trip to the sea. The end of this travelogue is just the potential beginning of a new one; the deep sense of fulfilment that Kim

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"Sanmokhaeng", written during his excursion to Chiri-san treated below, which echoes the famous enumeration technique of Han Yu's poem (*Ŏu chǒnjip* 2.19a-20b).

20 When Confucius climbed the Eastern Mountain (Dongshan), he realized the insignificance of his natal state of Lu. See *Mengzi* 孟子 52; 7A:24.

21 *P'ahanjip*, Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1972, p. 6 ff.

Chongjik's travelogue bespeaks is replaced by a notion of strife and seeking.

Two years earlier than Kim Ilson, another member of the Yŏngnamp'a had climbed Chiri-san, Nam Hyoon (1454-1492). Although he, too, had belonged to the more radical group, after failing with a memorial in 1478 he had given up all interest in a court career and lived in seclusion. This personal choice again is reflected in his travel writing. First of all, his trip itself is of a different nature: he travels without companions from his status group and associates instead very closely with the Buddhist monks at whose places he stays, recording many of their conversations. Obviously, as someone without pretense to office, he can be far more open to the Buddhist alternative. His travelogue is in strict diary form without any introduction or final reflection, but he too cannot omit reflections on the summit experience; they are worked into a separate little piece, the "Yu Ch'ŏnwangbong ki". Here, he first names the places seen from above in a vein similar to Kim Chongjik, but then proceeds to relate the resources of the mountain, that is, the fruits, wildlife, woods, etc. that the mountain provides to the people living on it; this climaxes in the following:

For the high and lofty mountain, though it is never seen at work, still extends so much favor to the living beings. This is like the wise man [*sŏngin* 聖人], who lets his gown hang down and folds his hands; although one does not see him exert himself, he figures out the ways of serving [the state] to administer the people. Great indeed is the likeness of this mountain to the wise man. (*Ch'ugangjip* 4, 23 b)

Thus in his summit piece, Nam Hyoon imbues Chiri-san with an image of his own choice of sagehood: the wise man as a recluse, effective without action through the power of his virtue.

Read in context, the travel pieces of these three interrelated men thus seem to enter into a discourse about conviction, aspiration and choice. This interpretation finds support in a travelogue responding to them, written by a reader much closer to them in time, Yu Mongin (1559-1623).

Yu Mongin had studied under Sŏng Hon (1535-1598) and thus belonged to a lineage of learning that traced itself back to Kim Chongjik. But he was expelled from Sŏng Hon's school (which was one of the talent

pools of the Sŏin faction at the time) because of frivolous behaviour, so he turned to the Pugin group and became the leader of the shortlived Middle Northerners (Chung-pugin). He clearly uses his travel record (written in 1611) to set himself off from his predecessors. At one point on the road he comments:

When I came through Ŭit'an village, feelings overcame me. Once, Kim Chongjik had taken this road to Ch'ŏnwangbong. But he is he and I am I, and I do not have to follow him on this path. ("Yu Turyu-san nok", *Ŏu hujip* 6.5b)

Later in the text, Kim Ilson becomes his target:

When I came to Ssanggye temple, I saw the stone gate with the inscription by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn 崔致遠. ... His strokes are slender, but unyielding, very different from the soft style of ordinary people. This is really extraordinary calligraphy. Kim T'akyŏng [Ilson] called it the like of boys' exercises. T'akyŏng was a good writer, but he did not understand calligraphy. (Ibid. 11b)

Yu himself was a famed calligrapher. So these are strong disclaimers of dependence on the Kim Chongjik line in political choice and learning. But again, the central statement is made after arriving on the summit. He first comments on the shrine that had stood there since Kim Chongjik's times:

In Chŏlla and Kyŏngsang those who wish for luck ... set this up as a heretical temple and created the custom to honor ghosts similar to [the half barbarian Chinese states] Chu and Yue. From near and far the shamans and sorcerers rely on this to dress and feed themselves. They climb the uttermost peak and peer around. When they see officials and literati arrive, they run away and hide in the bushes like rabbits, and wait until the travelers have descended; then they gather again. (Ibid., 7 b)

Next he describes the view:

I only knew that the brilliant green were mountains and the flossy white were streams, but could not make out which was which place, which mountain or which waterway. So I tried to attach names according to what the mountain monks pointed out. Gazing east, there was Taegu's P'algongsan ... [and so on,



citing the names of the most important places and some historical events they remind of, letting the places appear ever more remote and small]. Finally, on the ocean that closed in on us from three sides, dots of islands surfaced between the waves – like the various isles of Tsushima – like so many tiny bits. Alas! The inconstant world can be pitied. The sentient beings, no more than meat to be minced, rise and decline in earthen jars, and if you pick them up, they do not even make an armful. And all these people who stick to their own opinions and their exclusive rights, who insist on ‘correct’ and ‘mistaken’, on power and cliques, can they not be greatly deplored? As I see it today, heaven and earth also are only of one mind. This peak, again, is only a small thing under heaven. Those who climb it and then think of themselves as elevated are doubly to be lamented. He who expects immortals to come to his company, to make phoenix wings and crane’s backs his bed and sitting mat, who feels that he has reached a far point from which to peer down – how little does he know that this mound is as insignificant as a feather in autumn! (Ibid., 7b-8b)

All the high ambitions of his predecessors are thus pulled down back to earth. This very summit on which Kim Chongjik took pains to impose a Confucian order is in fact inhabited by shamans who take over as soon as the literati have left. While Kim made an effort to give the right names (in the vein of the Confucian ‘rectifying the names’), Yu points to the fact that the traveling scholar completely depends upon the knowledge of local monks to recognize the places. And to Kim Ilson’s elevated Daoist sentiments he responds by pointing out the natural limitations of human beings and the world they inhabit.<sup>22</sup>

But Yu is not only concerned with ridiculing his predecessors. His belittling of their ideas and strife, as well as of the world at large, seems intimately linked with the sense of resignation which pervades his text and is formulated at the beginning and end as a strong wish for retreat. The beginning reads:

I have tired myself out in public service for the last 23 years. I consider myself as base and lowly. [But] in splendour I have gone in and out of the ‘5-foot heaven’ [the royal palace] often indeed. Too often I severed relations with those

22 This might in fact as well point to the poem Yu Ho’in 俞好仁, Chongjik’s companion on this trip, wrote about Ch’önwangbong, *Wayurok* p.642.



that were not my likeness. Now I am old and indolent and beset with sicknesses; I should retreat, and I remind myself that in all my life I have loved to travel mountains and ocean, and that my thoughts used to be with the countryside of oranges and pumelos, plum and bamboo. (Ibid. 1a)

And he ends:

According to what I have measured with my own feet, Turyu is doubtlessly the foremost mountain in the East. If one wanted to give up the glories and riches of the world and say good-bye to it for good, only this mountain would offer secluded settlement.<sup>23</sup> But I know very well that tax and military duty are not what a white-haired scholar could manage. Morning and night I loosen the long silk girdle around my waist to get back into my original clothes. If I could borrow a 'square *chang*'<sup>24</sup> in the regions of clear waters and lonely hills, I could not only report on my own home region of Kohŭng, but on our (whole) land. (Ibid. 15 a-b)

How this outspoken wish for retreat conflicts with his actual confinements (be they political obligations or financial considerations) is shown in an earlier, subtle but forceful passage that describes the last moments before his leavetaking from the inner mountain region:

Suddenly there was a mountain goat the size of a mule reclining idly on the top of Hyangno Peak. When it heard the sounds of the pipa and the long flute, it inclined its ears and turned around, but though seeing us humans did not hide itself. Ah, for how many years must it have been tended by immortal maidens, idly sleeping between the white clouds, until it now dares to appear here all of a sudden and tempt me to learn to ride a goat? I took up my whip and shouted at it; it cried out in response and rose. At this point, my pleasure trip was at its end and the escort to bring me back to office already spread their noise through the valley. I left this gorge riding my horse very slowly, as if parting from a

23 Allusion to a place in Lu, south of Taishan, where Lu Yingong 魯隱公 (Duke Yin of Lu) hid himself, *Zuozhuan* 左傳 Yin 11.

24 *Pangjang*, or *fangzhang* in Chinese – a pun on the Chinese mythical paradise with which Chiri-san is identified, see below.

loved one, turning my head back to the places my feet had trod. (Ibid., 12b-13a)

As the traveler is about to leave the mountain, the mountain goat – readable as a personification of the mountain itself – appears and enters communication with him (note the gradual intensification: listening to human music, swaying its ears, looking but not hiding). The traveler responds wholeheartedly, fully acknowledging the temptation (of almost erotic quality) inherent in the communicative act, which he heightens, but at the same time wilfully destroys by shouting at the animal and cracking his whip. Yu presents himself here as being offered the chance to give up his Confucian identity, and to retreat as he confesses to wish, as the spirits of the mountain seem to approach him and show him the way into the life of a mountain recluse; and he leads the reader to feel the enormous temptation inherent in this chance. All the more startling, then, is his renunciation. No explanations are given for the causes of the decision, but it becomes abundantly clear that it is made against innermost desires – and this is obviously what Yu Mongin wants to communicate to his readers.

His travelogue, then, is a disclaimer of political power interests. If the 15th century travelers discussed their respective political choices, Yu writes to convey that his involvement in politics is not his choice at all. But ironically, like Chŏng Yŏch'ang and Kim Ilson whose fate he deplors in spite of all criticism, he did not manage to retreat from political life in time and was executed in the aftermath of the coup d'état of 1623 that brought the downfall of the Northerners.

The next person to write on Chiri-san, Pak Changwŏn (1612-1671), was at the time of his trip (1643) an inconspicuous magistrate of the small district of Anŭm, part of Hamyang county. He would rise to higher posts later, but not to any notoriety in Korean intellectual history. In him we encounter a typical example of the leisure class. Whereas Yu Mongin refutes the intellectual and political presumptions that have been part of their predecessors' trips, Pak does not care about them any more at all. Both Yu's and Pak's trips share a new stress on aesthetic pursuit; they take musicians with them and have them perform at crucial points in space or

time, and both compare landscapes to artistic creation.<sup>25</sup> But only Pak's account can be called predominantly touristic. This holds already true for the outer circumstances of his trip: the shaman shrines we encountered as religious organizations in Yu's account have now been transformed into travel tour organizers who provide accomodation, food, and transportation (that is, sedan carriers and guides), instead of prayers. But his own touristic purpose is apparent as well. Thus, in his introduction he praises Chiri-san with the following words:

Its clear air, miraculous traces of the past, mighty physical presence and riches in touristic attractions cannot be enumerated even by the very artful. ("Yu Turyu-san ki", *Kudangjip* 15.1a)

His experience on the summit is best summarized by one of his poems on the occasion (it is telling too that he cites his poems in the text, while writers up to Yu Mongin record them separately):

On Ch'ŏnwangbong, we see the sun set,/ see the moon rise, and see the sun come out./ The monks say, strange, this has not happened before./ Indeed, heaven has not little favored our trip! (Ibid. 5b)

To 'combine three sights' on Ch'ŏnwangbong had been Kim Chongjik's expressed aim; Pak Changwŏn revels in having attained them (he quite certainly had read Kim's account), but does not attach any meaning to the sights besides having enjoyed them. Significantly, his reflection on the trip at the end centers on the harmony between the fellow travelers – this is the focus of attention for modern group tourists, too.

His travelogue therefore is foremost an exercise in literary craft. Its charm lies in its intricately woven net of citations of and illusions to the Chinese and Korean literary heritage.<sup>26</sup> The function of such texts may by now be to prove status and literary ability. (During the 17th century,

25 See *Ŏu hujip* 5. 3a-b, *Kudangjip* 15.4a-b.

26 Interestingly, Chinese sources of inspiration are cited, while Korean are usually only alluded to.

production of travelogues reached its quantitative peak in Korea.<sup>27</sup>) But obviously, it has become difficult at this point to say anything original about a trip to Chiri-san. This may explain the silence that falls over the mountain for the next 200 years, until Song Pyöngsön (1836-1905), a descendant of Song Siyöl and known for his patriotic suicide, writes about it again in 1879. Befittingly for a latecomer of a glorious lineage, Song writes from a mainly antiquarian point of view, taking inventory of what traces of the past are left. The land he travels seems one of the past and not one of the present.<sup>28</sup>

In the meantime, Paektu-san, which had been little more than an object of reverence and hearsay before the eighteenth century, was opened up for travel. In 1712, the Qing emperor sent a mission to demarcate the border between his country and Korea. It was met by Korean envoys, who, however, were discouraged from accompanying it to the site of the actual placement of the borderstone. This event gave rise to many later border disputes between China and Korea, but in the 18th century sparked off increased economic activities on the Korean side of the region and ultimately seems to have given rise to a wave of tourism which the two travelogues treated here by Pak Chong (1764) and Sö Myönggü (1766) testify.<sup>29</sup> This still largely untouched mountain now underwent a similar

27 It is also of interest in this context that Pak Changwön wrote a number of travelogues, unlike all of the previously treated authors, among whom only Nam Hyoon has two other travelogues besides the Chiri-san records. This, too, makes it less likely that Pak wrote his travelogues for the sake of distinct political statements.

28 "Turyu-san ki", *Yönjae sönsaeng munjip* 21.27a-34a.

29 It becomes clear from their texts that a number of similar trips had been conducted prior to theirs. Pak Chong mentions Cho Yöngsun 趙榮順 and Yi Myöngghwan 李明煥 as precursors; in the Collected Works of both, some literary traces of their travels are found. Two other full first-hand accounts survive, but are not readily available and are therefore not treated here. The earliest account seems to be an anonymous "Paektu-san ilgi" of 1740 reported to exist in some private possession by Son Kyöngsök, see id., "Paektu-san kirok sogo", *Hoegwi* 1 (Hoegwi tonginhoe p'yön), Seoul: Pömyangsa, 1985, p. 87. Another text by Sö Kisu (*chinsa* 1801), a relative of Sö Myönggü, about a trip done in 1809 can be found in his *Sojaejip* 蓀齋集 (preserved in the Kyujanggak library). An important second-hand travel

process of literary appropriation as Chiri-san 300 years earlier, but the different geographical and cultural context produced different results.

Pak Chong (1735-1793) was a native of the region, a young educated man who had been invited by the magistrate of Kyŏngsŏng to join him on a trip to Paektu-san. The general tendency of his travel report reminds us very much of Pak Changwŏn's. His essay likewise is a show-off of literary education with little obvious focus of attention or intent.<sup>30</sup> That it became a valuable anthology piece<sup>31</sup> is due to the youthful curiosity with which Pak observes his surroundings, the autobiographical immediacy of the text and, last but not least, the site itself. The remoteness of the destination and the difficulties involved in getting there turn the tour into a heroic deed. Pak Chong's emphasis is thus not on having seen, as Pak Changwŏn's, but on having done. This becomes very apparent from the way he depicts himself as the one who leads the tour to success and the scorn at those who wanted to discourage the magistrate; but we hear it already from his introductory remarks:

Paektu is the Kunlun of the Eastern Country. I have been born in this northern nook and have no chance ever to get the satisfaction of climbing China's Kunlun; so I always wanted to climb our country's Kunlun once, to relieve a bit my condition of restraint. But the dangers of the road and the dwellings of jackals and tigers were not such that a poor scholar in straw sandals could easily travel there. I resented this for a long time. ("Paektu-san yurok", *Tangjujip* 14. 1a)

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account is Hong Set'ae's 洪世泰 (1653-1725) "Paektu-san ki" in kw. 9 of his *Yuhajip*, relating the events of 1712, which are also the subject of Pak Kwŏn's 朴權 (1658-1715) "Pukchŏng ilgi" and Kim Chinam's 金指南 (1654-?) "Pukchŏng nok", both reprinted in *Paeksan hakpo* 16, 1974.

30 Pak Chong shares with Pak Changwŏn a predilection for writing travelogues; his *munjip* contains seven more pure travelogues and a number of related pieces.

31 Both the North Korean *Kihaeng munjip*, trl. Kim Ch'ansun (P'yŏngyang, Chksŏng kojŏn munhak sŏnjip, 1964), and the South Korean *Tongguk sansugi*, ed. by Ch'oe Ch'ŏl (Seoul: Tongmun ch'ulp'ansa, 1977), feature this text. However, the latter may have been influenced by the former.



His accomplishment of having undertaken the journey after all is of course to be measured by these dangers. Again, after coming down from the mountain, he reflects on having

routed four demons [discouragement by locals on four stations], escaped three dangers [of thunderstorms, flooding of roads, and wild beasts], and attained two rare things [a good view of the mountain from below and of the surroundings from the summit]. (Ibid. 10b-11a)

So here is the first adventurer in our sample of Korean travelers. But in a most interesting passage he reveals that he adventures against the odds of his upbringing in Cheng-Zhu style Confucianism. For at his departure, he gets into an argument with his elder cousin:

He said: 'The journey you undertake is certainly superb. But if you try to reach there in quiet meditation, then you can have all the four seas within the boundaries of one bedstead. Why should you have to go through hardships and danger and search the extremes for the new and strange in order to nourish your vital energies? It seems that your mind has encroached on the side of letting loose and vacating. On the side of quietude and earnest pursuit you seem to be somewhat lacking. How do you think about this yourself?' I answered him: 'Your honored admonishments are definitely very true; still I dare to disobey. My heart not only finds pleasure in classics and histories, but is also comforted by mountains and water; this is in reality the way of inner and outer education. Whether this heart is quiet or not is just a question of how it is "educated" by its owner. Even if I sit quietly in front of my books at a clean desk under a bright window, if I cannot keep evil wishes and wrong concepts from arising profusely, this is not real quietude. Even if I run and ride around, experiencing manifold things, if I have control over my heart that it doesn't go astray and stumble, this does no harm to my quietude. In my pursuit of quietude I definitely have not reached the state I just talked about; but my state of serenity has nothing to do with my traveling to Paektu-san or not.' (Ibid. 1a-b)

On the individual level, this passage offers a rare glimpse into the value conflicts engendered by a brand of Confucianism so narrow as to interfere with daily activities. On the historical level, it emblemizes the contemporary struggle of the new emphasis on substantial scholarship and



firsthand experience with the old school of introspection and self-cultivation.

The next traveler to Paektu-san, Sŏ Myŏngŭng (1716-1787), clearly belongs to the new school. His travelogue accordingly contains an unusual amount of factual observations. As he says to his fellow-traveler Cho Ŏm 趙暉 (1719-1777)<sup>32</sup> at one point:

‘The ancients used to combine various activities. If we only set out for a pleasure trip into nature, this would be shallow. We could inspect the conditions of the border defense, and we could measure the angle of the polar star.’ Consequently, we found some raw materials and gave them to an artisan to construct a quadrant. Here now we measured the polar star ... (‘Yu Paektu-san ki’, 12th day, p. 257)<sup>33</sup>

The summit experience Sŏ relates reminds us very much of Kim Chongjik. The surrounding lands are identified in detail; the sight is recorded, this time not in words but in pictures; and the direction of the various peaks is established with the compass. Again, a proponent of a new set of ideas uses his position on a mountain top to inscribe these ideas onto the world below. But whereas Kim Chongjik administered the land, Sŏ measures and objectifies it.

Thus again, a new type of traveler emerges: the traveler as all-round expert. If Pak’s trip was an adventure, his is an expedition. But it is more than that. For he and Cho Ŏm are in a special situation, namely in banishment. Both have refused to appear at court in their function as first counselors, and were for that arrogance banished to Kapsan and Samsu at

32 Cho Ŏm is renowned for having transmitted the potatoe from Japan and is also considered as a *sirhak* 實學 scholar. He might be coauthor of the “Yu Paektu-san ki”, as it is narrated in the third person and contains the statement: “They returned to their homesteads and composed a record [one copy?] each”. However, as this passage is ambiguous and as the text is only found in Sŏ Myŏngŭng’s *munjip*, without any reference to another author, I take it to be his work.

33 I cite Sŏ Myŏngŭng according to the reprint in *Paeksan hakpo* 19/1975, pp.254-262, as it may be more easily available than his *munjip*.

the foot of Paektu-san, respectively.<sup>34</sup> On the way to their place of banishment, Sŏ proposes a trip to Paektu-san in following words:

I have already married off my children and thus have more or less done what a man has to do. There are only three things in my life that remain to be done: finishing my study of the *Yijing* (*Yŏksŏl*), and visits to Paektu and Kūmgang. That I am now banished to the foot of Paektu – doesn't that mean that heaven wants to help me in cancelling my debts to Paektu-san? (Ibid. p. 254)

He reiterates that same idea a few lines later, when he reflects on the outcome of the travel:

The wonders of mountain and marches, the heart-refreshing distant views ... [were] a joy for a lifetime. And when we came down from the mountain, a royal announcement of grace already awaited us. Alas! That the two of us brought such disgrace on ourselves – was it really the working of heaven, so that we could settle our debts to Paektu-san? (Ibid.)

But the text as a whole can be read as arguing the other way round: the trip to Paektu-san resulted in the redemption of the two offenders; it empowered them and showed their sincere intentions. How could it do that? Here we hit upon another dimension of the mountain trips and my second topic, the interrelated phenomena of weather on the summit, purity of the heart, and rituals to mountain deities. I want to make clear from the outset, however, that I speak about these things only as they are textualized in the travelogues and do not intend any statement on the function of these rituals as actually practiced.

34 Sŏ explains this situation in the beginning of his travelogue, but does not give the reason for his and his colleague's behaviour. From the record in the *Yŏngjo sillok* 英祖實錄 (107. 12a) can be inferred that his reason was a memorial not accepted by the king.

## Ritual and power discourse

As we have seen, the summit view is a central concern of all travelers. As a summit view depends on a clear sky, fair weather is an important issue for all the narrators in my sample. Also, all of them share the notion that a clear view from the summit is not sheer coincidence but the working of some spirit and depends on certain qualities of the traveler. In the more touristic oriented tales of our sample, this notion is quite watered down. Pak Changwŏn, for example, does tell with satisfaction how he is congratulated as someone who masters the art of immortality because of the marvelous sights he obtained; but the fact that these congratulations are uttered by Buddhist monks reveals that they are not very sincere, and as he never harks back on this idea, it rests there as just another literary embellishment of his trip.<sup>35</sup> Most outspoken on this idea on the other hand are those narrators who have strong ideological statements to make. And it is in these texts that ritual is brought in, with prayer texts fully cited. These are the texts by Kim Chongjik, Kim Ilson and Sŏ Myŏngŭng.

Kim Ilson speaks twice about rituals. First, upon entering the uninhabited regions of Chiri-san, his local guides ask him to dismount his horse and do obeisance to a spirit they call Ch'ŏnwang, like the summit itself is called. Kim responds contemptuously: "I have never heard of him" and sets spurs to his horse instead, thus demonstrating his disregard of unorthodox customs.<sup>36</sup> On the summit, however, he prepares a prayer text to go with a sacrifice to the mountain spirit, but Chŏng Yŏch'ang dissuades him because of the heresy charges he might bring on himself due to the dubious nature of the spirit who is revered on Chiri-san. Kim Ilson gives in, but maintains that his ritual would be in full accordance with Confucian precepts.<sup>37</sup> His claim to orthodoxy is reinforced by the prayer text. In this

35 *Kudangjip* 15.5b.

36 *T'agyŏng munjip* 5.9b.

37 Ibid. 18b-19a. The female figure kept in the shrine and called *sŏngmo* 聖母, Holy Mother, is said by the locals to represent Buddha's mother Maya. Kim defines in his prayer text the divinity he addresses as Queen Wisuk, mother of the founding king of Koryŏ, hereby following Kim Chongjik's precedence, but later in his argument with Chŏng Yŏch'ang professes actually to have neither of both in mind, but "the spirit of Turyu". The Confucian state rituals encompass sacrifices to the

text, he first argues that rituals to high divinities originally were the privilege of the most powerful authorities, but that now all literati can pray wherever they find a shrine. Next he claims that the spirit of Chiri-san must possess great power, and that by granting him good weather it has already shown recognition of his sincerity; so he feels encouraged to pray here for his heartfelt wish, which is long life for his mother. With this line of argument, he weaves a tight net of connections between power, sincerity and prayer. His initial argument seems to claim for himself as for all of the educated class the ceremonial authority that once belonged only to a tiny set of rulers. In a second step, he makes use of this authority to avail himself of the power of the mountain god through his prayer, which in turn is only promising because of the sincerity he has already proven by obtaining good weather. Ritual or sacrifice thus signify a form of power which is available to those with the right education and the necessary moral rectitude – the Confucian sages.

This interpretation is borne out by the fact that the remaining prayer texts are found in the narratives of Kim Chongjik and Sŏ Myŏngŭng, the two travelers who most strongly emphasize the order and significance they can give to the world below. In both texts, the power aspect of ritual is even more directly addressed, as they both use rituals to obtain good weather.

Kim Chongjik first speaks about ritual at a place below the summit where he recalls he had offered prayers for rain before, which were invariably successful.<sup>38</sup> This seems to be a twofold statement. He demonstrates his *ceremonial* power through the success of his prayers. But at the same time, he reminds his readers of his position of *political* power in the region, because the rain prayers are his obligations as magistrate.

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spirits of the great mountains and rivers. Chosŏn Korea, in imitation of China, set up a set of Holy Mountains to be revered by annual rituals held at nearby shrines. The Korean set consisted of only four mountains (as opposed to five in China), lacking an Eastern Mountain. This was presumably a recognition of Korea's subordinate status. Chiri-san was revered as Southern Mountain, the shrine to its spirit being in Namwŏn. See *Kukcho oryeŭi* 國朝五禮儀, Killye, Sŏrye; and *Kyŏngguk taejŏn* 經國大典 (Han'guk chŏngsinmunhwa yŏn'guwŏn, 1986) vol. II, p.412.

38 "Yu Turyurok", loc.cit. 55a.

We see the latter form of power somehow shine through the former. And indeed, when he holds a ritual at the summit to pray for good weather, he does not forget to mention that he changes into his official garb.<sup>39</sup> On his second ascent he then offers a prayer of gratitude for the good weather, stating overtly that he sees the clear sky as being granted on his request, and somewhat obliquely that this is due to his sincerity.<sup>40</sup> So again, the power of his prayer is proven and with it the purity of his heart. Reading the line of argument backward, purity of the heart is equated with ritual power; ritual power is equated with political power. This throws a peculiar light on the end of the text, where Kim Chongjik claims to have purified himself during the trip to such an extent that even his family says he looks different.<sup>41</sup> In the light of our equations, by purifying himself, he must have availed himself of new power, or at least enhanced his righteous claim to such power.

This, of course, fits so seamlessly into the contemporary climate at the capital, where ritual matters are of primary political concern and many power struggles center around questions of ritual that the point made here may seem to need no argument at all. But what is of importance here is how strong a power pledge Kim makes for himself in his text in spite of his overtly modest diction. In fact, Kim Chongjik comes dangerously close to posing as a ruler, if we take Chinese parallels into account.

One is the *feng shan* 封禪 sacrifice to Mount Tai, a state sacrifice of such impact that only few Chinese emperors have dared to perform it. One of the reasons that could keep emperors from proceeding with a planned *feng shan* sacrifice was prolonged droughts.<sup>42</sup> Now Kim Chongjik in the beginning of his text mentions that droughts in his county had earlier kept

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid. 57b: "I entered the shrine of the Holy Mother and brought her another libation with following words of gratitude: 'Today, heaven and earth are clear and open, mountains and rivers give way to the view. This is truly the blessing of the spirit, and I deeply appreciate it.'"

41 Ibid. 61b-62a: "I felt that my breast and my vision had been broadened and rectified. Even my wife, children and servants found that I was not like usual."

42 See Werner Eichhorn, *Die alte chinesische Religion und das Staatskultwesen*, Leiden/Köln: Brill, 1976, p. 173 ff. *Feng shan* rituals were understood as the emperor's reporting to heaven the achievement of 'great peace'.



him from climbing Chiri-san; and in the end he claims that Chiri-san would be a better object of *feng shan* sacrifices than Tai shan.

The other one concerns the spirit sacrificed to. The locals claim that the Chiri-san spirit is Maya, Buddha's mother; but Kim tries to invest instead Queen Wisuk 威肅, mother of Koryŏ T'aejo.<sup>43</sup> This is not only an exchange of a foreign with an indigenous spirit, but also reminiscent of the *feng shan* sacrifice empress Wu Zetian 武則天 held on Song shan in 696. At this occasion, she conferred mountain divinity titles on the mother of the founder of the Xia dynasty.<sup>44</sup> If this is not a coincidence and Kim Chongjik indeed wants to insinuate an equation of his own performance with an imperial state ritual, this still does not have to mean arrogant self-elevation; seen in the light of Kim Ilson's above-mentioned explications of ritual rights, he claims ruling/ ordering powers for his class and not for himself.

An understanding of this rhetorical connection between purity and power again facilitates a reading of Sŏ Myŏngŭng's text. The rituals he describes, held on the evening and morning before the final ascent of the Paektu-san peaks, aim to induce good weather and to forestall accidents. Though these rituals are instigated by the local guides and administered by the magistrates of Kapsan and Samsu, who are part of the travel group, Sŏ Myŏngŭng presents himself as a driving force behind them.<sup>45</sup> He is also the author of the prayer texts which are again cited in full. Of course, the magic works. In the night after the first ritual, the sky clears, and the travelers obtain a full view on the summit. That the clear sky is specifically granted to Sŏ and perhaps his companion, Cho Ŏm, becomes apparent when they leave the summit first. Those who stay behind suddenly see

43 See "Yu Turyu nok", loc.cit. 56a.

44 See Eichhorn op.cit. (n. 42) p.176.

45 "Yu Paektu-san ki", p.258. Immediately preceding the ritual episode, Sŏ relates how he and Cho Ŏm disregarded advice of the local guides to their own detriment; coming to their pledge to hold a sacrifice, he says, "so we followed their advise". Besides making clear that those who now "followed their advise" were he and Cho, this episode might also serve the function of reminding the king – if he was among the intended audience, which cannot be known – how useful it is to heed the advise of people far below oneself, if they happen to be knowledgeable about something.



dark clouds emanating from the lake underneath and flee in fright. And the local people again congratulate the travelers for the extremely good fortune they have had despite not observing certain rules, for example the one that servants should be left behind on the final ascent.<sup>46</sup> Sŏ obviously implies that his sincerity is powerful enough to make up for such superficial ceremonial laxity. And again, like Kim Chongjik, he speaks of the purifying effect the trip has on himself: the night before leaving the mountain, he says, "my dream soul was exceptionally pure".<sup>47</sup>

By coming to Paektu-san and obtaining good weather through the power of his purity, he has proven the sincerity of his heart; by purifying himself through the mountain trip, he again enhances his aptness to serve near the throne. That he is recalled immediately after his return is thus the logical result of his tour to Paektu-san. At least in this sense, not only has the mountain felt his power, but he has availed himself of the power of the mountain.<sup>48</sup>

#### The use of Chinese role models

One element in the rhetoric of the ritual texts which I have not mentioned so far is the use of Chinese role models for strengthening the argument. This leads up to my third topic, how the Chinese cultural model comes to bear on Koreans while they travel their own space.

At first glance, China does not seem to play a great role in Korean travelogues. Allusions to Chinese figures and places appear in all of the texts, but they seem negligible if compared in quantity with references to Korean history and personages. The Korean travelers do relate their own history, and relate themselves to their own history and space while they

46 Ibid. p.261.

47 Ibid. p.262.

48 In fact, this has a very practical side to it, as he poses as something like an "Old Paektu-san-Hand" at court after his return, and it seems to be on his instigations that a hall for state rituals to Paektu-san is erected in Kapsan in 1767.

traverse it.<sup>49</sup> But references to China, even if sparse, appear at conspicuous points, usually in the reflective passages, whereas Korean references are confined to specific places, not apt to give meaning to the trip as a whole; and they are qualitatively different in the degree of their recurrence. For Paektu-san no tradition of indigenous historical allusion could develop. But even for Chiri-san it did not happen. Not even Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn, who presumably left many traces there, is mentioned in each of the travel records. But there are three Chinese references that reappear regularly and thus leave a deep imprint on the literary map of Chiri-san. These are 1) to Taohuayuan, the village living in a golden past; 2) to Fangzhang, the paradise island, and 3) to Hengshan, the southernmost of China's Five Holy Peaks. Each of these references seems to bespeak a certain mode of handling the Chinese cultural model while at the same time upholding Korean identity. These modes readily coexist in the same text; but they are unequally stressed at different periods. Their heydays follow each other chronologically in the same sequence in which I shall explain them now.

The "Taohuayuan mode" is exemplified in Kim Chongjik's reaction to an idyllic hamlet in some Chiri-san valley: "Even to Taoyuan at Wuling this is hardly inferior."<sup>50</sup> The Korean place is in this mode described as similar to a well-known Chinese one though not identified with it. It is different, but equally good. Especially Kim Chongjik, who makes more statements in this vein, expands this mode to a demand for recognition of the place Korea should rightfully occupy in the sinic world. For example, in a poem written on the occasion of his second ascent, he complains that Chiri-san is not known in China, and at the same time describes its rightful place in the cosmic order:

The Five Peaks reign supreme over the Middle Plain,/ the eastern Mount Tai is  
revered by all./ Little do they know that across Bohai/ there is the majestic  
Turyu./ Kunlun hails from most ancient antiquity;/ the axis of the earth

49 As may be expected, references to China are especially sparse in Sŏ Myŏngŭng's Paektu-san record, and quite abundant only in Pak Changwŏn's text, where they serve their well-known function as literary embellishment.

50 "Yu Turyu nok", loc.cit. 53b.

connects West and East./ The cardinal directions hold their order,/ imagine for yourself creation's accomplishments!<sup>51</sup>

Proud as this is, the Fangzhang mode goes even beyond it in maintaining that Chiri-san is a paradise – a better place than could be found anywhere in China. The equation goes back to a Du Fu 杜甫 poem which starts with the line “Fangzhang beyond the Three Han” which is wilfully misread to allow identification with Chiri-san.<sup>52</sup> This seems to have been done first by Kim Chongjik,<sup>53</sup> but the one who dwells most on it is Yu Mongin. He explains the quote in detail and goes on to say:

Qin Shi huangdi and Han Wu di recklessly spent their efforts on wind-spiced ships [to reach this place], but we are in possession of it while sitting here! (“Yu Turyu-san nok”, loc.cit. 1b)

This show of pride, repeated later in the text, contrasts sharply with poems Yu Mongin wrote during a sojourn in Peking, in which he deeply deplores that he was born a Korean.<sup>54</sup> But this may just show how their land and landscape, the very earth they lived on, could function as a source of identity for Koreans while their cultural identity seemed more questionable. In Kūmgang-san, this same state of mind leads travelers to reiterate

51 “Chaedŭng Ch’ŏnwangbong”, *Chŏmp’ilchae sijip* 2.2a.

52 “Fengzeng taichang Zhang Qing ershi yun”, *Du gongbu ji* 杜工部集 j. 9, Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1994, S. 143.

53 ‘Long I sang Du Fu’s verse of “Fangzhang at the three Han”, and unwittingly my soul rose to flight.’ *Yu Turyu nok*, loc. cit. 62a. Nam Hyoon states that ‘Master Kim of Chŏmp’il studio used Du Fu’s word of “Fangzhang in the Three Han” and called this Fangzhang mountain’, “Yu Ch’ŏnwangbong ki”, loc.cit. 23b.

54 See “Togaksa sŏlsi yuksu”, *Ōu chŏnjip* 2.7b, which is a series of six poems all beginning with the line “Men of the Eastern Country would wish to be born here”; the last one ends with the line: “I just hope for the hundreds and thousands of *kalpas* to come/ to be forever Chinese and live under the great Ming.” These poems record his trip to China in 1609, two years before his Chiri-san ascent.

the ill-founded legend that Chinese wish to be reborn in Korea only to have a chance to tour this famous mountain.<sup>55</sup>

The Hengshan mode, finally, is the only one that takes China as a role model and thus might indicate any deference to China. In some instances, Hengshan becomes explicitly a model for Chiri-san, just like Han Yu who climbed Hengshan and Confucius who climbed Taishan are taken as role models for the narrators themselves.<sup>56</sup> In his prayer text, Kim Ilson, for example, informs the mountain god:

When Han Yu prayed in silence with the essence of his heart, the spirit of Hengshan did not deny him his favors. (“Sok Turyu nok”, loc. cit. 18b)

In an even more outspoken manner, Kunlun becomes the role model for Paektu-san in Sŏ Myŏngŭng’s second ritual text:

The famous mountains under heaven are 36 in number. Kunlun is their ancestral source; and the Chinese people all wish once to climb Kunlun for its enormous sight. Also, Kunlun never conceals its enormous sight from men. This is why the Sea of Stars [the source of the Yellow River] has been talked about to later generations. The Paektu-san of our country is like China’s Kunlun. If we who live in this side-track of land to the East of the Sea do not once climb Paektu to exhaust its extraordinary view, how much would we resent it! Now some transmit that often those who climb Paektu do not get the view they wish because of rainy or foggy weather. How is it possible that the spirit of Kunlun does not hide itself from the Chinese, but the soul of Paektu-san alone gives the people of the East miserly treatment? To let us know that this is not necessarily so, may the spirit extend its help, let the sun and stars be clear, and the million phenomena reveal themselves, so that we can get the complete view of the mountain! (“Yu Paektu-san ki”, p. 258)

55 One of many possible citations comes again from Yu Mongin: *Ōu yadam* 1.41 (ch’anggi 娼妓). Kim Chongjik, in fact, shows similar partiality to Korean mountains in his “Sŏk Kyejing yu Chiri-san sŏ”, where he claims that even “Hengshan, Taishan, Hengshan and Huashan” in China would appear small when compared with Chiri-san (*Chŏmp’ilchae munjip* 1.43a-b).

56 For Han Yu and Confucius as model, see for example Kim Ilson’s summit descriptions cited above.

Significantly, this idea of role model is employed in all the ritual texts for an exhortation of the mountain spirits. The acceptance of Chinese superiority this seems to imply is however countered by the element of identification. If Chiri-san is expected to emulate Hengshan, or Paektu-san Kunlun, then their powers must be on an equal footing. In other texts, the comparison is consequently turned into directly stated identity: "Chiri-san is our country's Southern Peak",<sup>57</sup> "Paektu is the Kunlun of the Eastern Country".<sup>58</sup> Through such identification, all the significance attached to the Chinese place can be brought to bear upon its Korean counterpart without obliterating the latter's Korean identity. China is not only a model for Korea, Korea is an – albeit smaller – model of China. This is of course a commonplace idea, especially after the fall of the Ming. In travel literature, we can witness how it is translated into perceptions of concrete places. One telling example are the reflections of Pak Chong:

Kunlun is the ancestor, and the Yellow river rises from its peak; only after having flown through sands for thousand *i* 里, it surfaces at last, and it carries much jade. Now this mountain [i.e., Paektu-san] is made up of froth-stone, has a pond on its summit, and only after flowing for hundred *i* under sand the waters of the river come to light. Thus it closely resembles its ancestor; only there is the difference between stream and river, hundred *i* and thousand *i*, stone and jade, the difference in size and value. This is at once concrete and mysterious. What comes after Kunlun, even of the Chinese mountains, never reaches it. The Five Peaks are venerable, but I haven't heard that any of them has a pond 80 *i* in circumference on its summit. Only Hua shan has a jade well: curious it is, but clearly not comparable to the Great Pond. Thus it can be known that this mountain is the legitimate heir of Kunlun and the Five Peaks are only side-offspring that happen to be nearer in space. For our Eastern Culture is very developed, so that we are called Smaller China. That in the present world it is we 'barbarians in left-buttoned garments' who can stick to the [Ming style]

57 Song Pyŏngsŏn, "Turyu-san ki", loc.cit. 27a. He is of course right in a very literal sense, as Chiri-san *is* the officially revered Southern Mountain of Korea.

58 Pak Chong, "Paektu-san yurok", *Tangjujip* 14.1a.



clothes and hats shows that there are great natural powers attached to this mountain.<sup>59</sup>

### Concluding remarks

I have analyzed the eight major extant travel records on Chiri-san and Paektu-san, first showing how each of these makes a noteworthy statement on the position of the author in life and thought. Taken together, these statements also form an outline history of Chosŏn period trends in domestic traveling, which can be seen to develop in four stages: first, a philosophical mood of discursive appropriation; second, an aestheticist mood of touristic enjoyment; third, a scientific mood of discovery and realistic description; and fourth, a nostalgic mood of remembrance and taking inventory. They can also be read as personalized commentaries on the intellectual developments of the periods in question.

Second, I have looked in some detail at rituals as one element of travelogue rhetoric, a discourse of power which is aimed at backing their authors' idea systems. Here, the travelogues are not only commentaries, but arguments in ideological strife. And last, I showed how the travelogues reinforce Korean identity even while upholding the Chinese model. In this process, at least one riddle I seem to have solved: the physical background of *Kuunmong*. The mountain on which the novel begins is Hengshan. Yet, Chiri-san is so much identified with Hengshan that Hengshan became something like another name for Chiri-san. The novel then is set not in China but in Korea, or better in that cultural space of literary meaningfulness where Chinese placenames could rightfully substitute Korean. Certainly, the travel records written during the bygone centuries had helped propel Korean landscape into that larger cultural space. Domestic Korean travel writing no doubt has contributed significantly to the formation of Korean national identity; and it is not least for this reason that these writings should be read and studied today.

59 Ibid. 8b-9a

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