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PURITAS SUBMERSA RESURGIT

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This study began with a comparison of two texts of *Sim Ch'öng chön* (The Tale of Sim Ch'öng) in the British Library. The comparison showed the existence of a «Seoul version» of the tale. Compared with the «popular version» of the tale, the Seoul version reveals a truer model of the perfect, because imperfect, Korean woman.

I The Texts

The British Library, which used to be, and is still widely known as the British Museum Library, has two Seoul block prints (*kyöngp'an-bon*) of *Sim Ch'öng chön*. Both were bought in Berlin in 1889, but their previous history is unknown.

One is of 24 leaves. The first 23 leaves have 14 lines per half leaf and generally 21 syllables per line. Leaf 24 has 15 lines on each side, about 25 syllables per line, and is in a markedly different hand. The very thin re-cycled paper on which this text is printed contains some small unasimulated patches with printing in English on them, and this copy cannot therefore have been printed very much earlier than 1889. I shall refer to the first 23 leaves of this text as 'A'.

I do not know of any other copy of A, but there is a later print from the same blocks in the National Library in Seoul. This has the last part sentence of leaf 24 deleted, leaving only 5 syllables in the last line.

The other text is of 26 leaves, 15 lines per half leaf, about 27 syllables per line. This is in the same hand throughout, a squarer hand than A. I shall refer to this text as 'B'.

There are, to my knowledge, two other copies of B:

a) The Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (which used to be called Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes) in Paris has a copy in the collection made by Collin de Plancy. The printing, paper and bindings of the Seoul block prints in this collection are far superior

to those found elsewhere, and it may be assumed that Collin de Plancy had them made to order while he was in Seoul in the late 1880s.

b) The Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad has seven volumes in western bindings entitled *Collection of Korean Books in Seven Volumes*, signed «W.G. Aston» and dated «October 1881». The B text of *Sim Ch'ŏng chŏn* is the fourth of five Seoul block prints in the first volume.¹

I have read these texts as carefully as I can and found them by and large comprehensible. However, I do not know of any Korean study of them, and there remain some phrases which I cannot understand at all, and many more on which I wish to seek confirmation of my understanding by Korean experts in future. Neither text gives any author, publisher or date, and both are entirely in Korean letters, without punctuation of any sort and in a pre-modern spelling. Since they are reproductions of manuscript, they have to be treated as manuscripts for much of the argument presented here.

II The A and B Texts Compared

The text as in A (the first 23 leaves) corresponds closely with the text as in B to 17b.9 (that is, leaf 17, reverse side, line 9). Of approximately 13,500 syllables to this point, over 1,100 are actually different in the two texts. However, this is a relatively small degree of difference between two pre-modern texts of any work of literature in Korean, and it may be assumed either that one was copied from the other or that the two derive at no very great remove from a single original.

Over two thirds of the variations are differences of spelling such as one is used to ignoring within a single pre-modern text. I shall show below that there is probably some significance in the variations in spelling between the A and B texts, but will first establish the relationship between them on the basis of the variations of substance between them.

¹ The texts are described from my own examination of them. M. Courant, *Bibliographie Coréenne* (Paris, 1894–1901), No. 809, was wrong in describing the B text as of 16 leaves and has misled others. The two British Library texts are reproduced in Kim Tonguk, *Ko-sosŏl p'an'gak-pon chŏnjip* (Seoul, 1973–75), IV, 493–519. The Korean National Library copy is reproduced in Kim Tonguk, *Ko-sosŏl*, II, 105–117, and also in Han'guk munhwa yŏn'gu-wŏn, ed., *Han'guk kodaesŏl ch'ongsŏ* (Seoul, 1958), I, 229–276.

About half of these variations of substance, 150 cases, 170 syllables, are variations in phrases, words or suffixes which can only be regarded as equally acceptable. For example:

- A 21a.6: *syegan i chaning hăgo pulsang hăn gös ũn*² «what is hard for humanity to bear and sad»
- B 15b.4: *syesyang ũi pulsyang hăgo chaning hăn gös ũn* «what is sad and hard to bear in the world»
- A 9a.3: *ŭiji*, B 6b.6–7: *ŭit'ak*, two words meaning «reliance on».
- *hăni*, *hăsin* and *hăoni* (compare A 22a.3 and B 16a.9 and A 12a.14 and B 9a.2–3), verbs in forms of plain, polite or humble reference substituting for each other.
- A 5b.12: *purhyoe*, B 4a.13: *purhyo* «lack of filial piety», nouns with the subject particle shown in the final vowel in one text but not in the other.

There is also a small number of variations which are probably failures in printing or slips in engraving, and a similar number of variations in which the A text has a difficult reading which cannot be explained as a corruption of the reading as in B, but is so difficult that I cannot with confidence apply the rule that the more difficult reading is to be preferred. An example of this is:

- B 2b.7–8: *nunmur i pi odŭt hăni* «his tears fell like rain», a very conventional phrase; A 3a.13–14: *nunmur i iŭm ch'ăni*, clearly something like «his eyes were full of tears».

The total effect of all such variations, before the relationship of the two texts is established, is that either text might be between one and two percent corrupt. However, I cannot see more than a dozen cases in which the B text shows without doubt that the A text is corrupt. The only really clear examples of these are:

- A 13a.14 has just *mokkŭm* at the end of a line for *mokkŭm ũi in: mokkŭm ũi pyŏngsin abi tyurinŭn il* (B 9b.10) «the privation my sick father is suffering now».
- A 15b.12–13: *ŭngmyŏng hăni* «obeyed»; B 11b.4–5: *ŭngmyŏng hăgo naa oni* «obeyed and came out».
- A 16b.8: *ttŏnaji animiroda*; B 12a.9–10: *ttŏnăji ani hămiroda* for «does not depart».

2 I have not given in the glossary Korean spellings for quotations from the texts for which references are given, since it is preferable to refer to the texts themselves to appreciate the point being made. The McCune-Reischauer transcription is slightly adapted to the out of date spelling used in the texts. *ă* represents the *arae a* letter.

It is not possible to demonstrate in this way that A is corrupt in more than one syllable in a thousand, and my conclusion is therefore that, while A and B are certainly copied from a third text, A is a very reliable copy. On the other hand there are variations affecting about 100 syllables where the text as in A shows that the text as in B is corrupt. Almost two complete lines of A, from after *yǝngnong hǎni* to and including *po hǎni*³ are missing in B⁴. This is a typical example of the omission in such texts of a detail of the story which does not affect the story as a whole, and it is irrelevant whether the omission was accidental or deliberate. A translation of the passage affected, with the section which is missing in B marked / to /, and the latter part somewhat abbreviated, will serve to illustrate the point:

Then there was performed a full range of music: the pipes, flutes, drums and horns rang in their ears. Brocade mats glittered in the sun. / The day's magnificent event can scarcely ever have been seen before. Presently the court ladies bowed their heads, [three words unintelligible] from the verandah. / The members of the royal family, in response to the musical signal all went out in order . . . the princesses and titled ladies bowed . . . the servants of the six palaces and the three thousand serving women completed their loyal addresses. . .

The two next biggest variations each affect five syllables:

– A 13b.8: *chyǝnsye chagüi aphǎe syǝ* «standing before her in a former life»; B 10a.1: *chyǝn üi syǝ*, which could mean, but is not easy to take as «standing before» or just «before». This suggests to me a corruption from the text as in A to the text as in B through an intermediate stage, with B an attempt to make some sense of an obviously corrupt passage. The other is a clearer example of an apparent direct miscopying by B:

– A 15b.5: *tols i tadarannünjira* «the anniversary arrived»; B 11a.13: *tols ira* «it was the anniversary».

The remaining variations in this group affect only one or two syllables each. Typical examples of these are:

– A 3b.13–14: *ne hyosyǝng üi hanǎr i kamdong hǎsǎ* «heaven being moved by your devotion to your father». B 3a.3 omits *hanǎr i* «heaven», leaving poor sense.

– B 4b.11–12: *üisig i öböp hǎm*, no sense; A 6b.2: *küisig i ömöm hǎm* «his breath almost stopping». The syllable before this is *üi*, and if the writer of B had intended this to begin *üi*-, he would have used a «repeat» sign and not, as in the text, another syllable *üi*.

– B 5a.1: *chǎro*, not easy, perhaps «herself»; A 6b.9: perhaps *chǎro*, but better *chǎjyo* «often».

3 20a.9–11.

4 14b.15.

- B 16b.5: *pangwŏn*, no sense; A 22b.2: *wŏnbang* «distant parts».

All the variations described so far therefore suggest that the text as in B is about two per cent corrupted from the original from which A and B were copied, B probably being a copy of a copy. However, if we survey all the possible corruptions in both texts, there is not a single demonstrable corruption which affects more than the detail – and most often only a detail of language – at that particular point. By and large both A, as far as the end of leaf 23, and B, as far as 17b.9, are good versions of the same text, and A is, as far as we can see, an excellent version.

Leaf 24 of A is entirely a different matter. The change of both handwriting and format from leaf 23 to leaf 24 is obvious at a glance. There are also some indications that the spelling is different, a point which I cover briefly below. This last leaf of the A text condenses into about 750 syllables the text as in B from 17b.9 to 20b.2, which is about 2,250 syllables. It achieves this by selecting phrases as in B and supplying new connections between them. From about 24a.7 there is more complete rewriting, and the two texts become difficult to compare directly. However, about two thirds of the words in the last six lines of 24b can be found in B, and it would therefore seem clear that it was still the intention of the writer to condense an original rather than to write a new ending.

The differences between leaf 24 of A and the B text are so great that I cannot see any convincing evidence as to whether A was copied from B or from a third text. A translation of the last few lines which A and B have in common⁵ and then the continuation of the story in the two texts will indicate the scale of the differences:

«Father, do you not know me? I am Ch'ŏng, who was sold to the merchant and thrown into the Phosphorescent Whirlpool to die. The grace of heaven being immeasurable, my body is ennobled and we meet each other, father and daughter. What cause for complaint could we have were we to die now?» she said, [B:] in wild lamentation. Sim Hyŏn, hearing these words, and completely baffled, gave a loud cry: «Is this [heaven?] or earth? Is this a dream or reality? Are you truly my daughter Ch'ŏng? I mean, how could my little girl, who died over three years ago, become so ennobled? Has there ever been anything like this? I have no eyes to see you: could there be such a sin?» As he said this, he screwed up his face. Suddenly he found to his joy that he could see out of the corners of his eyes. [A:] in lamentation. Sim Hyŏn cried loudly: «Are you truly my daughter Ch'ŏng? I mean, how could my little girl, who died, become so ennobled? I have no eyes to see you, which I regret.» As he said this, he screwed up his face and found that he could see out of the corners of his eyes.

⁵ A 235.11, B 175.6.

This is more or less the point in the story at which, as we shall see below, the popular versions of the story end. A continues the story to the point where Sim's remarriage is arranged, and then stops abruptly in mid sentence, just as Ch'ŏng and her step-mother start to make arrangements for the wedding. (It is the last part sentence which is deleted in the later printing mentioned above.) B at this point still has about a quarter of its course to run, and we shall see below that this ending of B could well not have been popular by the 1880s.

III The External Characteristics of the A Text

My conclusion from the evidence described above is that A reproduces with almost complete faithfulness an original from which B was less faithfully copied. This conclusion is quite contrary to my expectations when I began comparing the two texts. The date we have for the existence of a print of B, 1881, is earlier than any likely date for the only print we have of A. B is, on the whole, clearly printed, excellently printed in the copy in Paris, and all of a piece, with an obviously planned ending. A is a rather scruffy print and has a last leaf which clearly does not belong with the rest, and it ends in mid sentence.

Now, we know that the B text existed in 1881, and, since the earliest positive date we have for a Seoul block print of a popular novel (*sosŏl*) is 1848,⁶ we may assume that the B text is from an engraving made between about 1850 and 1880. There is no evidence, at least, to suggest otherwise, and the B has all the characteristics of a text of that period. However, if we look again at the A text, now that it can be demonstrated that it was very much closer to the original of A and B, we find that it has some interesting characteristics.

In the first place, the handwriting is quite a passable «palace style»⁷, which is not unknown in Seoul block prints, but is not common, and it

6 Courant, *Bibliographie*, No. 825.

7 Palace style (*kungmunch'e*) manuscripts are so called because the best examples of them are to be found in the former royal palace library, the Naksŏnjae Library, in Seoul. Many others can be identified as coming from particular households in Seoul connected with the royal family. These palace style texts represent a stage in the development of literature in Korean which I have not seen investigated. My understanding of them is based on my own observations of the Naksŏnjae Library and private collections in 1961-62 and 1967-68, and I owe much to the personal guidance given me by Professor Chŏng Pyŏnguk. One can find clear evidence that popular novels were written in Korean for reading by the ladies of the palace and upper class households from the late 18th century to the early 20th century.

also has most unusually the blank spaces for fingering at the bottom outside corners of each leaf, as is done in good manuscripts.⁸ It is possible then that the copy from which the blocks for A were made was itself an actual manuscript made for reading in an upper class household in Seoul. If not, it is almost certain to be a very accurate copy of such a manuscript.

Even more striking, however, is the spelling used in A. It was only very late in my study of these texts that I came to have enough confidence in A as a text of *Sim ch'ŏng chŏn* to examine its spelling objectively. Again I was surprised by this text. Contrary to the expectations which my prejudices about such texts had given me, I found it not only very consistent within itself, but also congruent with the spellings which began to fall into disuse late in the 18th century. While it would be a monumental task to check every spelling of every single word in this text, and the uncertainties of interpretation would prevent any absolutely firm conclusions, I have been most impressed by the regularity of all the spellings which I have checked. Let me give examples of just a couple of frequently occurring words:

The word for 'heart, mind' is spelt only *mǎām* (eight times) in A. This appears to be the only spelling of this word used from about 1600 until *mǎūm* is found in 1772.⁹ B uses only the modern spelling *maūm*. In the A text, Sino-Korean words with the character for «heaven» (modern spelling *ch'ŏn*) have that syllable spelt only in the older tradition *t'yŏn* 42 times, whereas B spells it *t'yŏn* 12 times and *ch'yŏn* 30 times up to 17b.9. On the other hand, «a thousand» (modern spelling also *ch'ŏn*) is always spelt *ch'yŏn* in both texts.¹⁰

The A text, in short, gives every appearance in its first 23 leaves of being a very faithful copy of a manuscript of *Sim Ch'ŏng chŏn* made for reading in an upper class household in Seoul perhaps as early as the late 18th century.

8 The only other good example of this in a Seoul block print is an 1856 printing of *Sŏyu ki* (A Journey to the West), see Kim Tonguk, *Ko-sosŏl*, IV, 343–372. The print is in Paris.

9 I have checked such points only in Yu Ch'angdon, *Yijo-ŏ sajŏn* (Seoul, 1964).

10 Leaf 24 of A is too short to give any clear evidence from its spelling, but it does have *hǎn* at 24a.3 for «one», for which the earlier copyist used only *han*, and it has *chyu* several times in words where the earlier leaves have *tyu*.

IV The Seoul Version and the Popular Version

Sim Ch'öng chön is one of the best known traditional Korean stories. There can hardly be a single Korean who does not know the outline of the story: a blind man, surnamed Sim, promises to a Buddhist temple a gift which he cannot possibly afford; to raise the money, his daughter, Ch'öng sells herself to a merchant as a sacrifice to ensure the safe passage of his cargo; Ch'öng's devotion to her father is rewarded by her being returned to land to become queen; when father and daughter meet again, Sim's sight is restored and he enjoys wealth and honour for his remaining years.

The versions of this story which all Koreans know derive from oral traditions which certainly go back to the 1820s, but were only published as books after 1910, and no text of the oral tradition is earlier than the 1870s. I shall call all these «the popular version». The popular version, so defined, is episodic and subject to considerable variation, but all forms of it have long passages in common, word for word. The older forms of it are largely in rhythmic style, which still leaves its mark on even the most recent re-tellings of the story.¹¹

The Seoul version, on the other hand, has almost nothing in common with the popular version, except for the barest resemblances of plot, as outlined above. Those who have looked at the Seoul version in the past have had only the later printing of the A text, which seems to date from later than the first books containing the popular version, and appear to have concluded that the Seoul version is a reduction of the popular version and completely ignored it. I should like now to consider the Seoul version, in the light of the evidence given above, as a completely different work of literature from the popular version, in its own right as a book

11 For the evidence on the oral telling of the story, see Kim Tonguk, «P'ansori palsaeng ko,» *Söul taehakkyo nonmunjip: Inmun-sahoe kwahak*, 2: 167–205 (1955), 3: 239–301 (1966). For the popular version in a manuscript of the 1870s, see Kang Han-yöng, *Sin Chaehyo p'ansori sasöl chip* (Seoul, 1971), pp. 155–249. A block print made in Chönju in 1916 follows this largely and is reproduced in Kim Tonguk, *Ko-sosöl*, II, 179–214. Most subsequent publications of the story in Korea, including some later Seoul and Ansöng block prints and apparently all annotated editions, follow a re-writing by Yi Haejo in 1912 under the title of *Kangsangnyön* (The Lotus on the River). There is a very good text of an oral version in Pak Hönbong, *Ch'angak Taegang* (Seoul, 1966). I have generally followed the Chönju block print, with deep indebtedness to Marshall R. Pihl, «The Tale of Sim Ch'öng: A Korean Oral Narrative,» Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1974. This gives an excellent account of the oral tradition and includes a full annotated translation of the Chönju block print.

which was read by ladies of the upper classes at a time when the popular version was only being told orally.

The popular version more or less ends with Sim's regaining his sight. There remains after that barely one twentieth of any text of the popular version, almost all of which is taken up with descriptions of his old age blessed with every comfort. His death is mentioned only very briefly. The A text peters out at much the same point as the popular version. Its last leaf attempts to condense the remainder of the story as in the B text, but, on the evidence we have, the attempt seems to have been abandoned in mid sentence. The A text as it stands appears to be an attempt to tailor the Seoul version to the popular version. It did not succeed, but was nevertheless published. One hopes that the few pennies so earned were well spent, because it was certainly an act of literary vandalism.

We have seen that the first two thirds of the B text is shown by the A text to have minor corruptions but that the two texts are substantially the same. We have no supporting evidence on the last third of the story as told in B, but, on the other hand, no reason *a priori* to doubt that it was an equally reliable copy of an earlier Seoul version. I shall now therefore consider the B text as the full Seoul version.

As far as the Seoul and popular versions are parallel in plot, the Seoul version is about two fifths of the length of the popular version, and there are enormous differences between them. The Seoul version is supremely prosaic in style, and even when the same scenes are being described, there is hardly a word of the Seoul version to be found in the popular version or *vice versa*.

Although the popular version is actually set in a mythical country called The Emerald Kingdom (Yuriguk), it is in fact indistinguishable from late Sung China. The Emerald Kingdom of the Seoul version, on the other hand, is remarkably similar to Korea, the date is Ming Ch'eng-hua (1465-88), and there are some rather inaccurate echoes of the reign, 1469-94, of King Sŏngjong of the Yi Dynasty.

The daughter is Ch'ŏng, «Purity», in all versions, and her surname, Sim, has connotations of sinking into the sea. Otherwise none of the names of any characters are the same in the two versions, not even the personal name of Ch'ŏng's father. In the popular version it is usually Hakkyu, which has connotations of scholarship and literary talent which contrast humourously at one point in the story with his almost buffoon-like lewd behaviour. In the Seoul version his personal name is Hyŏn, and he never once fails to live up to the connotations of Confucian virtue which the name has.

Ch'öng's mother is a Kwak, and introduced as a fully rounded character in the popular version. In the Seoul version she is a Chöng, and given only a line or two of conventional praise. The Seoul version has only one indirect reference to an offer of adoption for Ch'öng, while the popular version features as a main character in the story a local rich lady who offers to adopt her.

By the time Sim has made his promise, the popular version has already told quite a number of interesting little stories episodically, and is about a quarter of the way through its total length, while the Seoul version has done no more than set the scene in about 50 of its 750 lines of text. By the time Ch'öng throws herself into the Indanso, or Phosphorescent Whirlpool, we are halfway through the popular version, but only one quarter of the way through the Seoul version, which is up to this point about one third of the length of the popular version.

However, the remainder of the Seoul version is not very much shorter than the longest popular version, and from this point on the Seoul version develops a positive character of its own. In both versions Ch'öng is conducted to the palace under the sea of the Dragon King. In the popular version she is kept in luxury and meets the spirit of her mother.

In the Seoul version she is addressed by the Dragon King as Kyusöng, the star Kyu (Chin. K'uei) and told that in a previous existence, in a world in which historical kings of China and spiritual powers of Buddhist and Taoist origin seem to have co-existed, she had diverted for the private use of a man to whom she was partial, called Nogunsöng, the star Nogun (Chin. Lao-chün), associated with the spirit of Lao-tzu, wine which should have been served at a royal banquet. «The Jade Emperor was wrathful and said, 'This is not a crime of a heavenly being, but a crime of a serving wench in charge of wine.'» For this crime, Nogun and she were sent to earth as father and daughter. «For the crime of having stolen wine, he was given no feeding angel. He was made to beg for his food for thirteen years and also his eyes were dimmed,» and so on. However, Śākyamuni, impressed by Ch'öng's sacrifice of herself for her father, has sent his disciples to the Jade Emperor to plead for forgiveness, and the Jade Emperor has given his permission for her to return to earth to become queen of the Emerald Kingdom.

While there is some detail in this passage¹² which it is difficult to understand precisely, in part because of the historical and theological con-

12 A 11b.5-12b.13, B 8a.15-9a.13.

fusion in the beliefs involved, clearly an attempt is made in this whole passage¹³, which also describes briefly Sim's continuing to live in poverty, to reconcile a code of beliefs with the fact of human suffering. The popular version has none of this, presumably because the beliefs involved were not those of the audience for the popular version.

The next stage of the story, Ch'öng's delivery to the palace and her becoming queen, is longer in the Seoul version¹⁴ than in the popular version. In the popular version there is more detail of the reaction of the sailors who find her in the sea, and the emperor, apparently still unmarried, is charmingly seduced by Ch'öng. In the Seoul version, the king keeps the flower in which Ch'öng is concealed in a cabinet. His queen dies, and the court recommends that the king take another queen. Ch'öng reveals herself to him, and meanwhile the courtiers, who have seen that the star Kyu is particularly bright, recommend to the king that there is a lady who is suitable to be queen. The king reveals who she is, and the marriage takes place. The uxurious king neglects his royal duties until he is reprimanded for this by his queen, and together «they discussed court and national policies». Ch'öng is by no means the only heroine of a woman's novel who strengthens the sense of duty of a husband in his moment of weakness.

In all versions of the story Ch'öng next thinks of her father. In the popular version he has been stripped by a scheming concubine of the wealth left to keep him. On his way to the palace he has the bawdy adventures already referred to, and forms a highly irregular relationship with a good blind woman whom he just happens to meet. None of this appears in the Seoul version. In that,¹⁵ the party for the blind is simply correctly arranged by the bureaucracy, Ch'öng recognizes her father and has him attended to, but she is unable to serve him as a daughter should because «she could not but have regard for the dignity of her position as queen.»

The last third of the Seoul version, in the B text only, completes a work of a very different character from the popular version. A second marriage is formally arranged for Sim, and his household is very properly and comfortably organized.¹⁶ Both he and Ch'öng richly endow the temple for which the original gift had been promised «to repay the goodness of Śākya-muni»¹⁷. Hyön visits his old home, rewards his old friends, rebuilds his

13 A 10a.7–16a. 11, B 7a.15–12a.1.

14 A 16a.11–20b.4, B 12a.1–15a.5.

15 A 20b.4–14a.5, B 15a.5–18a.6.

16 18a.6–20b.4.

17 20b.4–10.

derelict house to be fitting as the birthplace of a queen, and makes satisfactory arrangements for his ancestors to be served in perpetuity.¹⁸ The queen has three sons and two daughters; Sim has a daughter and two sons. Ch'öng and her step-mother become very attached to each other, but, since Ch'öng is queen, she cannot be with her father.¹⁹ Hyön dies at the age of 75 after 27 years at court.²⁰ Hyön's wife dies immediately of grief and the two of them are buried with his first wife. Ch'öng dies after having completed the full ritual of mourning, and the king dies in grief at her death, but the greater part of the last three leaves is taken up by Ch'öng's laments for her father and her reproaching herself for her lack of filial piety. The «castle at Elsinore» atmosphere is relieved slightly by a few lines²¹ describing the subsequent prosperity of the Sim line, and the story ends.

This was because they had been assisted by the filial piety bestowed by heaven and the great virtue given by the Buddha to Queen Sim. Who in the world would not admire her? Virtue such as that of Queen Sim can rarely be discerned and therefore we must make it our model.²²

The model of filial piety for a woman presented in the Seoul version is therefore not merely the sacrificing of one's life to ensure the comfort of one's father and the continuation of his line, but an admission that, even when a woman has done everything humanly possible for her father, she can still never repay him for his absolute gift of life to her. This is so because she is a woman. A woman can never be perfect, in Ch'öng's case because she has conflicting obligations, but in general, because, as the king tells her, «it is the custom for women not to rush home five hundred leagues on the death of a father or brother far away.»

«Why», [he asks her,] «do you neglect the state and think only of your private feelings?» «Your majesty's rebuke», [she replies,] «is to the point,» but «my father in his last years enjoyed the greatest possible blessing and wealth, except that I, his daughter, could not attend him morning and evening, or perform my duties of wishing him a safe sleep and greeting him when he woke. Nor was I at his side at his death, and so I cannot justify myself as worthy of his boundless love.»²³

18 20b.11–22a.3.

19 22a.3–23a.9.

20 23a.9–12.

21 26a.9–13.

22 26a.13–15, ends.

23 23b.5–6, 24a.11–13.

V Conclusion

What started unpromisingly as a tedious task of textual criticism ended with the recovery of a lost version of *Sim Ch'ŏng chŏn*. This version was single-mindedly high-minded,²⁴ typifying the highest moral aspirations. As in England, from John Bunyan to Jane Austen, it is the noblest role of fiction to present the highest ideals for the edification of the reader, especially for that reader who is most in need of edification, the female reader. The Seoul version also has at least the merit of being genuine literature, actually written, actually to be read, and not that spurious product of an age which has lost all standards, «oral literature».

Sim Ch'ŏng perhaps first lived in the 1780s. In the 1880s the A text took her, before she could attain the perfection of imperfection, womanhood, and drowned her in the Phosphorescent Whirlpool of vulgar taste. Now, in the 1980s, her star shines once more and Purity, drowned, rises again.

GLOSSARY

Ansŏng	晏城
arae a	아래아
ch'ŏn, heaven	天 天
ch'ŏn, thousand	千 千
Chŏng	鄭
Chŏng Pyŏnguk	鄭炳昱
Chŏnju	全州
ch'yŏn	千
chyu	丘
-ga	가
Hakkyu	학규 (學奎)
han	汗
hăn	汗
Han'guk munhwa yŏn'gu-wŏn	韓國文化研究院
<i>Han'guk kodae sosŏl ch'ongsŏ</i>	韓國古代小說叢書

24 I cannot resist adding as a final footnote that not only is there not a single villainous character in the Seoul version of this story, but also there is not a single use in either text of the subject particle -ga. Who would not admire the purity of such a text?

Hyŏn	訖 (賢)
Indanso	인 단 소 (燐 蛋 溯)
Kang Hanyŏng,	姜 漢 永,
<i>Sin Chaehyo p'ansori sasŏl chip</i>	申 在 孝 趾 仝 司 事 詮 集
<i>Kangsangnyŏn</i>	江 上 蓮
kasa	歌 辭
Kim Tonguk,	金 東 旭,
<i>Ko-sosŏl p'an'gak-pon chŏnjip</i>	古 小 說 板 刻 本 全 集
Kim Tonguk, «P'ansori palsaeng ko,»	金 東 旭, 趾 仝 司 發 生 致,
<i>Sŏul taehakkyo nonmunjip:</i>	서울 大 學 校 論 文 集,
<i>Inmun-sahoe kwahak</i>	人 文 · 社 會 科 學
kungmunch'e	宮 文 體
Kwak	郭
kyŏngp'an-bon	京 板 本
Kyusŏng	芥 叟 (奎 星)
Lao-tzu	老 子
măăm	口 呂
maŭm	呌 呂
măŭm	只 呂
Ming Ch'eng-hua	明 成 化
Naksŏnjae	樂 善 齋
Nogunsŏng	老 君 星
Pak Hŏnbong, <i>Ch'angak Taegang</i>	朴 憲 鳳, 唱 樂 大 綱
<i>Sim Ch'ŏng chŏn</i>	沈 清 傳
Sŏngjong	成 宗
sosŏl	小 說
<i>Sŏyu ki</i>	西 遊 記
t'yŏn	訖
tyu	彳
Yi, Dynasty	李
Yi Haejo	李 海 朝
Yu Ch'angdon,	劉 昌 惺, 李 朝 語 辭 典
<i>Yijo-ŏ sajŏn</i>	유 리 국 (瑠 璃 國)
Yuriguk	