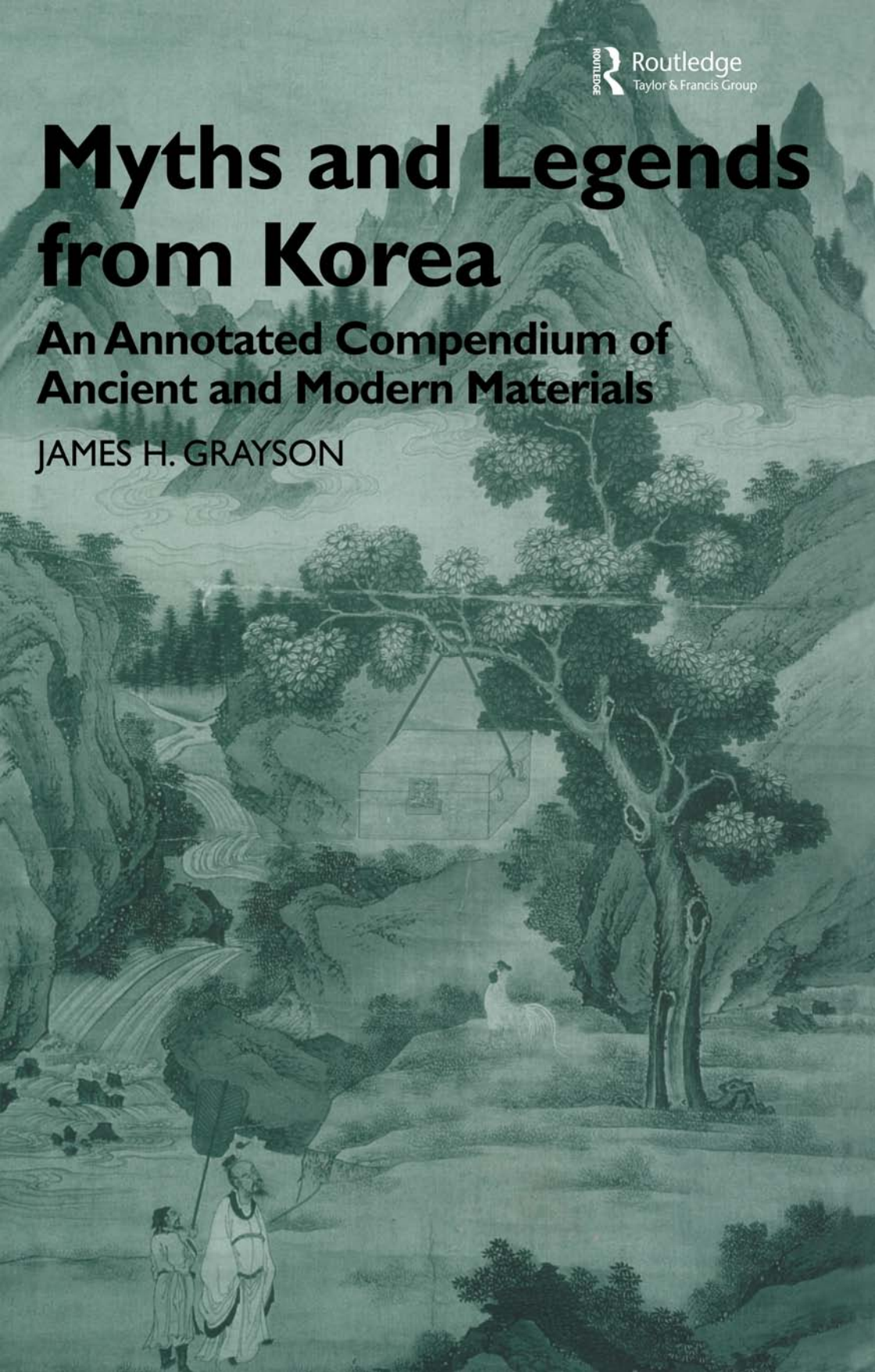


Myths and Legends from Korea

An Annotated Compendium of
Ancient and Modern Materials

JAMES H. GRAYSON



Myths And Legends From Korea

Myths And Legends From Korea

An Annotated Compendium of Ancient and Modern Materials

James Huntley Grayson

First Published in 2001
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

First issued in paperback 2011

© 2001 James Huntley Grayson

Typeset in Bembo by LaserScript Ltd, Mitcham, Surrey

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book has been requested

ISBN 978-0-700-71241-0 (hbk)

ISBN 978-0-415-51524-5 (pbk)

This book has been published through the generous support of The Daesan Foundation.

Cover illustration: 'The Golden Box'. Depiction of the discovery of the founder of the Kyongju Kim clan by Cho Sok (1595-1668). *Courtesy of the National Central Museum of Korea, Seoul.*

Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original may be apparent

To the Memory of My Father W. Norman Grayson 1906–1997
A Superb Musician

Contents

Preface	xv
Maps	
1 Korea: Boundaries Prior to 1945	xvii
2 Ancient Chosŏn	xviii
3 The Three Kingdoms	xix
4 Modern Tribal Peoples of Manchuria and Eastern Siberia	xx
I. Introduction	1
A Structure of the Book	1
B The Translation and Presentation of the Tales	2
C Approach to Folklore Research	3
D Definitions of Terms	6
E Oral Tales and Written Folkloric Material	10
F Periodisation of Korean Cognitive History	10
G Patterns in Ancient and Modern Korean Folk Narrative	12
H The History of Korean Folklore Research	13
II. Foundation Myths	24
A Introduction	24
B The Myths of the Ancient States of Korea	30
The Myth of Tan'gun	30
Tale 1 <i>Samguk yusa</i> version (13th Century)	31
Tale 2 <i>Chewang un'gi</i> version (13th Century)	42
Tale 3 <i>Ŭngje-si</i> version (15th Century)	46
Tale 4 <i>Sejong sillok</i> version (15th Century)	50
Commentary	52
Tale 5 Northern Puyŏ	59
Tale 6 Eastern Puyŏ	61
Koguryŏ Foundation Myth Types	63
Tale 7 <i>Lun-hêng</i> version (1st Century)	65
Tale 8 <i>San-kuo Chih</i> version (3rd Century)	67
Tale 9 <i>Sui Shu</i> version (Early 7th Century)	68
Tale 10 <i>T'ung-tien</i> version (Early 9th Century)	69
Tale 11 Kwanggaet'o Monument version (5th Century)	70
Tale 12 <i>Wei Shu</i> version (6th Century)	72

Contents

Chumong-type, <i>Samguk sagi</i> version (12th Century)	75
Tale 13 Story One: The Progenitor Tongmyǒng sǒngwang	75
Tale 14 Story Two	80
Chumong-type, <i>Samguk yusa</i> version (13th Century)	82
Tale 15 <i>Samguk yusa</i> version	82
Tale 16 <i>Tongmyǒng-wang p'yǒn</i> (13th Century)	85
Tale 17 Paekche	86
Tale 18 The Six Kaya States	88
Tale 19 Silla	92
Tale 20 Yǒno-rang and Seo-yǒ (Ancient Japan)	98
Koryǒ	100
Tale 21 Hogyǒng	101
C Korean Clan or Royal Clan Origin Myths	103
Tale 22 Sǒk Clan	103
Tale 23 Kim Clan	107
Tale 24 Hǒ Clan	110
Tale 25 The Six Clans of Sǒrabǒl	116
Tale 26 The Three Clans of Cheju Island	118
D Foundation Myths of the States of Northeast Asia	123
Tale 27 The Liao (Khitan) Dynasty (907–1125)	124
Tale 28 The Chin (Jurchen) Dynasty (1125–1234)	126
Tale 29 The Yüan (Mongol) Dynasty (1234–1367)	127
Tale 30 The Ch'ing (Manchu) Dynasty (1616–1911)	128
Ancient Japan	130
Tale 31 The Yamato State of Japan (prior to 7th Century)	130
E Foundation Myths and Legends of the Tribal Peoples of Northeast Asia	136
Even (Northern Tungus)	136
Tale 32 The Girl and the Bear	136
Tale 33 The Woman and the Bear	138
The Nanai (Goldi, Southern Tungus)	140
Tale 34 Tribal Foundation Myth	140
Tale 35 Clan Origin Myth – Bear	141
Tale 36 Clan Origin Myth – Tiger	142
Twentieth Century Manchu (Southern Tungus)	143
Tale 37 Foundation Myth	143
Udegey (Southern Tungus)	144
Tale 38 Edga and His Sister	144
Orochi (Southern Tungus)	146
Tale 39 The Bear's Wife	146
Ainu	149
Tale 40 Myth of the Origin of the Ainu	149
Tale 41 Myth of the Bear Clan	150
F Comparison of Northeast Asian Foundation Myths	151

III. Legends and Tales from the Ancient Period	156
A Aetiological Tales	156
1 Tales of the Origin of Buddhist Temples	156
Tale 42 Pre-existent Temple on Hwangnyong-sa Site	156
Tale 43 Pre-existent Temple in Liaotung Fortress	157
Tale 44 Pömil and the Vow to Build a Temple	159
Tale 45 Hyoga-wön: The Temple of the Filial Son	160
Tale 46 The Monks Who Became Temple Guardian Spirits	161
Tale 47 The Origin of Tonghwa-sa Temple	162
Tale 48 The Temple Dedicated to a Vengeful Spirit	164
2 Placename Etymologies	165
Tale 49 Lady Unje – Spirit of Mount Unje	165
Tale 50 Lady Chaemae and Chaemae-gol	166
Tale 51 Sabul-san Mountain	167
Tale 52 Kubul-sa Temple	168
Tale 53 Munsu-jöm and Ani-jöm Placenames	169
B Heroic Tales	171
1 Tales of Korean Heroes	171
Tale 54 Pihyöng-nang and Kildal	171
Tale 55 The Birth of Kyön Hwön	172
Tale 56 Kyön Hwön and the Tiger	173
2 Tales of Buddhist Monks	174
Tale 57 Ich'adon the Martyr	174
Tale 58 Poyo and the Sea Dragon	177
Tale 59 Wön'gwang and the Fox Spirit	178
Tale 60 The Esoteric Monk Hyesuk	181
Tale 61 The Esoteric Monk Chinp'yo	182
Tale 62 Nangji, Chit'ong, and the Mountain Spirit	185
Tale 63 Nangji, the Cloud-riding Monk	187
Tale 64 P'yohun Speaks with the Ruler of Heaven	188
C Edifying Tales	189
1 Tales of Buddhism	189
Tale 65 The Advent of Buddhism in Koguryö	189
Tale 66 Ado and the Advent of Buddhism in Silla	191
Tale 67 The Advent of Buddhism in Kaya	193
Tale 68 The Conflict of Buddhism and Taoism and the Fall of Koguryö	195
Tale 69 Origin of the Portrait of Samantabhadra	197
2 Tales of Cultural Validation	198
a Buddhist Virtues	198
Tale 70 How Monk Chosin Learnt to Reject the World	198
Tale 71 The Falcon Which Refused to Kill the Pheasant	201
Tale 72 The Love of a Tigress and a Man	202
Tale 73 Chinjöng – The Filial Monk	204

Contents

b Confucian Virtues	207
Tale 74 King Chinji and Toхва-rang	207
Tale 75 Monk Inhyesa Learns Humility	208
Tale 76 A Filial Son Feeds His Father with His Own Flesh	209
Tale 77 A Father Offers to Sacrifice His Only Son	210
D Tales of Magic	211
1 Prognostication and Magic	211
Tale 78 Omens Predicting the Fall of the Kingdom of Paekche	211
Tale 79 Portents Foreshadowing the Revolt of the Ninety-six Nobles	213
Tale 80 Lyric Song of Monk Wŏlmyŏng Drives Away Inauspicious Celestial Signs	215
Tale 81 Lyric Song of Yungch'ŏn Drives Away an Inauspicious Comet	217
Tale 82 Chinŭi Buys a Dream	217
2 Divine Protection and Healing	218
Tale 83 Myŏngnang Uses Magic to Protect the Kingdom of Silla	218
Tale 84 Ch'ŏyong and the Plague Spirit	221
Tale 85 The Monk Milbon Cures the Queen	222
Tale 86 Milbon Cures a Young Boy	223
Tale 87 Hyet'ong's Knowledge of Curative Magic	224
E Adventurous and Amusing Tales	225
Tale 88 The King with Donkey Ears	225
Tale 89 Kŏt'aji's Adventures in the Western Sea	226
Tale 90 The Sacred Zither and Flute of Silla	228
Tale 91 The Rescue of Buddha's Tooth	230
Tale 92 The Hwarang Misi-rang	233
Tale 93 The Embryo Buried in Wŏn'gwang's Tomb	235
Tale 94 The Journey of a Filial Son to the Netherworld	236
Tale 95 Kim Taesŏng, The Twice Filial Son	238
IV. Folktales from the Modern Period	241
A Aetiological and Etymological Tales	244
1 The World	244
Tale 96 The Creation of the Universe	244
Tale 97 The Origin of the Sun and the Moon	249
Tale 98 Three Brothers Killed by an Old Woman in the Mountain	252
Tale 99 In the Beginning, Spirit and Man Lived Together	253
Tale 100 The Origin of Eclipses	253
Tale 101 The Origin of the Mountains and the Rivers	255
2 Nature	256
Tale 102 Why the Green Frog Croaks	256

Tale 103 How the Tiger Got His Stripes	258
Tale 104 The Judgement of a Magpie	258
3 Customs	259
Tale 105 The Origin of ‘Kobok’	259
Tale 106 Why Koreans Wear Hats	260
Tale 107 A Fisherman Is Swallowed by a Whale: Version One	261
Tale 108 A Fisherman Is Swallowed by a Whale: Version Two	261
4 Cults	262
Tale 109 The <i>Sŏngha sindang</i> Shrine of Ullŭng-do	262
Tale 110 The Origin of the Tutelary Spirits of Sŏgwi-p’o	265
Tale 111 The Origin of the Cult of the House and Earth Spirits	268
Tale 112 The Spirit of the Rice Field	272
B Heroic Tales	274
Tale 113 A Fight Between a Centipede and a Toad	274
Tale 114 The Final Test	276
Tale 115 The Subterranean Land of the Ogre	278
Tale 116 The Nine-Headed Giant	281
Tale 117 Four Giants	284
Tale 118 The Revenge of the Huntsman’s Son	289
Tale 119 Valour and Loyalty	293
C Edifying and Moral Tales	296
1 Filial Piety	296
Tale 120 The Squirrels’ Gratitude	296
Tale 121 The Faithful Mother Who Became a Dog	297
Tale 122 Heaven’s Reward to a Filial Son	299
Tale 123 The Good Deeds of the Seven Brothers	301
Tale 124 A Tiger Rewards Filial Piety	302
Tale 125 The Filial Son and the Fairy Peach	304
2 Human Virtues	305
Tale 126 The Appeal of a Resentful Spirit	305
Tale 127 A Loyal Wife Saves Her Husband	308
Tale 128 A Mother-in-law Changes Her Attitude	309
Tale 129 The True Mother	310
Tale 130 A Pound of Flesh	311
Tale 131 The Marriage of a Brother and Sister	313
3 Punishments and Rewards	315
Tale 132 A Monk’s Misdeeds	315
Tale 133 A Priest’s Misdeeds and a Husband’s Revenge	317
Tale 134 A Young Man Returned to Life	320
Tale 135 The Arrogant King	321
Tale 136 Hŭngbu and Nŏlbu	322
Tale 137 The Boy Who Cried Tiger Too Often	325
Tale 138 The Son Who Abandoned His Father	326

Contents

D Tales of Magic, Geomancy, and Divination	328
Tale 139 The Nine-Tailed Fox and the Yŏ'ŭi-ju	328
Tale 140 The Magic Clothes	330
Tale 141 The Magic Pot	331
Tale 142 The Beggar's Friend	332
Tale 143 A Propitious Grave Site	333
Tale 144 A Fortuneteller's Cure	334
Tale 145 Rival Magicians	335
Tale 146 A Test of Identity	337
Tale 147 The Well of Youth	338
Tale 148 A Boat Crosses a River	339
E Adventurous and Amusing Tales	340
Tale 149 The Skeleton and the Traveller	340
Tale 150 A Game of Chess with the Mountain Spirit	341
Tale 151 The Door Lock Which Spoke	343
Tale 152 The Woodcutter and the Fairies	344
Tale 153 A Reincarnated Boy	345
Tale 154 The Man Who Changed His Name	347
Tale 155 K'ongjwi and P'atjwi	348
Tale 156 Princess Pari	352
Tale 157 A Father's Legacy	354
Tale 158 People Who First Saw a Mirror	356
Tale 159 The Bride Who Broke Wind	358
Tale 160 The Daughter-in-law Who Broke Wind Frequently	359
Tale 161 The Foolish Magistrate	361
Tale 162 The Forgetful Magistrate	362
Tale 163 Tomokkon'gi and Charunggobi	363
Tale 164 Digging Up Wild <i>Insam</i>	364
Tale 165 The Beggar and the Ancestral Spirit	366
Tale 166 Rabbit Visits the Palace of the Dragon King	367
Tale 167 The Heavenly Maiden and the Woodcutter	370
F Bear Stories	372
Tale 168 The Bear and the Spider	372
Tale 169 The Bear and the Wild Boar	373
Tale 170 The Hunter and the Female Bear	374
Tale 171 The Fisherman and the Female Bear	375
Tale 172 The Bear's Husband - A Comparative Tale from China	376
G Tiger Stories	377
Tale 173 The Hare Which Tricked the Tiger	377
Tale 174 The Tiger and the Puppy	379
Tale 175 A Fox Deceives a Tiger	380
Tale 176 The Hare's Judgement	380
Tale 177 The Tail of the Rabbit and the Tail of the Tiger	382
Tale 178 The Tiger and the Woodcutter	383

Tale 179 The Tiger and the Shrine Spirit	383
Tale 180 The Ninth Generation Only-Son and the Two Girls	384
Tale 181 The Tiger's Tail	387
H Fox Stories	389
Tale 182 The Fox and the Toad	389
Tale 183 The Fox-Sister and Her Three Brothers	390
Tale 184 The Traveller and the Fox	392
Tale 185 A Salt Pedlar and a Fox	394
Tale 186 A Farmer Deceived by a Fox	394
Tale 187 The Fox Wife	395
Tale 188 The Fox Empress of China	397
Tale 189 The Fox, the Dragon King, and the King of Heaven	398
Tale 190 The Fox Which Killed Priests	402
Tale 191 The Nine-tailed Fox Bridegroom	402
Bibliography	404
Appendices	418
1 The Bear Ceremony of the Udegey People	418
2 The Contents of the <i>Samguk yusa</i> Transliterated and Translated	420
3 Traditional Weights and Measures Given in the <i>Samguk yusa</i>	425
4 Abbreviations Used in Chapter IV, 'Folktales from the Modern Period'	426
5 Outline of the Thompson Motif Index and a List of Frequently Quoted Folklore Motifs	427
6 Outline of the Aarne-Thompson Type Index of Folktales and a List of Frequently Quoted Folktale Types	431
7 An Outline of the Types of Chinese Folktales and a List of Frequently Quoted Types	434
8 Type Index of Japanese Folktales (Seki)	437
9 Type Index for Japanese Folk-Literature (Ikeda) and a List of Frequently Quoted Folktale Types	438
10 Type Index of Korean Folktales (Ch'oe) and Index of Tales Translated in This Book	440
11 Index to 'Thompson Motif Index' Motifs Occurring in Tales	444
12 Index to Tales Occurring in the 'Type Index to Korean Folktales'	446
13 Index to Parallel Tales in Wolfram Eberhard's Type Index to Chinese Folktales	448
14 Index to Parallel Tales in Ikeda Hiroko's Type Index of Japanese Folktales	449
15 Index to Parallel Tales in Seki Keigo's Type Index of Japanese Folktales	450
16 Index of Subjects	451

Preface

Because I lived a significant portion of my working life (1971–1987) in the Republic of Korea during a period when the nation was undergoing both rapid industrialisation and significant cultural change, I developed a strong interest in the patterns of thought and belief of the Korean people as exemplified in their oral folklore. This book is a continuation of that long-standing interest. It is a collection of 177 tales from the oral literature of the ancient and modern periods, serving to illustrate the continuity and differences in Korean cultural tradition over a thousand years or more. The collection of oral folklore which is presented in this book is the largest and most thoroughly annotated source of Korean oral narrative published in over forty years, enabling the reader not only to compare folklore material from different periods of Korean history, but also to compare materials from China, Japan, and Europe.

This work differs from a certain form of folklore research in that it is not concerned with traditional typological comparisons, but with an analysis of the function of the tales, the purpose which these tales had for the listeners. This functional analysis follows a more traditional anthropological approach to the analysis of oral literature. This approach to the study of the content of the folktales is complemented by a form of folktale analysis which I call ‘dramatic structural analysis’, in which the narrative format of the tale is seen to be like the structure of a drama or play.

As this book is intended to be a contribution to the study of the folklore and cultural history of the Korean nation, it is my hope that it will find use as a textbook or supplementary book for anyone teaching, studying, or researching in the area of the thought and beliefs of the nations of East Asia.

The research for this book was made possible due to the significant support which I received from the University of Sheffield, the Korea Foundation, and the Daesan Foundation. The University provided assistance with travel expenses and research leave; the Korea Foundation granted me a generous Research Fellowship which enabled me to spend six months in Korea; and the Daesan Foundation generously provided me with support for research in Sheffield, assistance for the translation of certain materials in Japanese into English, and support for defraying part of the cost of the publication of this volume.

Preface

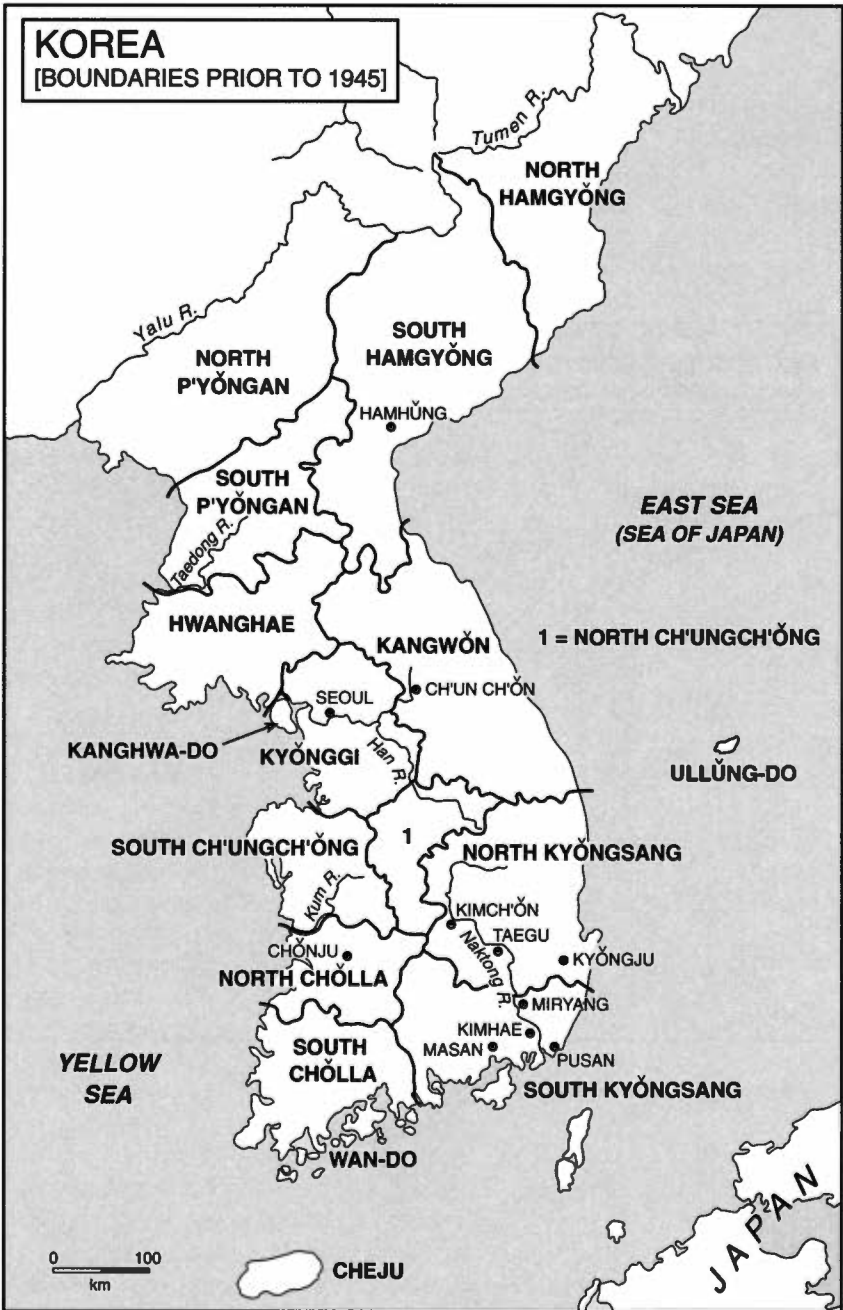
I wish to note here my personal thanks to everyone who gave generously of their time to help me with various enquiries including the staff of the East Asian Studies Library at the University of Sheffield, the staff of the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, the University of London, the staff of the Library of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University, the staff of Princeton Theological Seminary and the Princeton Theological Seminary Library, the staff of the Gest East Asian Library of Princeton University, the staff of the Institute for Korean Studies, Yonsei University, Seoul, and especially its director Dr. Pak Yongsin, the staff of the Office of Culture and Information of the County of Ullŭng-do island, Prof. Karlfried and Mrs. Ricarda Froehlich, the Revd. Im Sangjin of Todong First Presbyterian Church, Todong, Dr. Chin Sönggi, Director of the Cheju Folklore Museum, Cheju City, and the researchers of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, especially Leonid Ermilov, Aleksei Burykin, Tatyana Bulgakova, and Viktor Atknin. Mrs. Ludmilla Holt has provided excellent translations into English of materials in Russian. A final, but not insignificant word of thanks must go to my student assistants in the School of East Asian Studies at the University of Sheffield – Kim Sung-soo who assisted with the index and bibliography, and Maura Kelley and Robert Johnson who have translated into English certain modern folktales which had been recorded in Japanese. I give my heartfelt thanks to all of these people and many others who have given me much appreciated assistance. As any author knows only too well, without such assistance the research and writing of a book such as this would have been impossible.

Note: The Romanisation of East Asian Terms, Names and Placenames

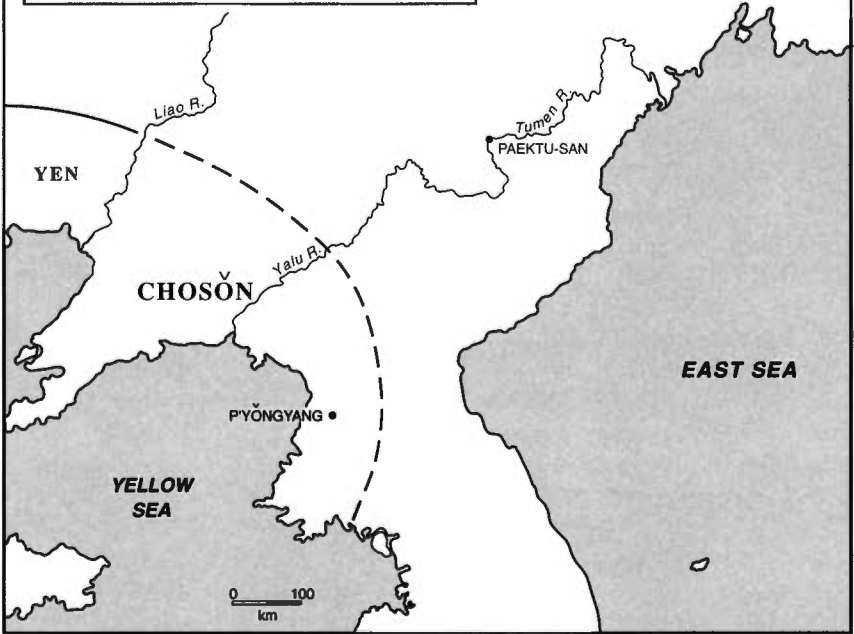
Standard Romanisation systems for East Asian languages have been used throughout. For Korean, the McCune-Reischauer System has been used, whilst for Chinese the Wade-Giles, and for Japanese the modified Hepburn systems have been used. For Russian, the Library of Congress System without diacritics has been utilised. The names of East Asian people, historic or fictional, are given in the East Asian order with the surname preceding the personal name.

KOREA

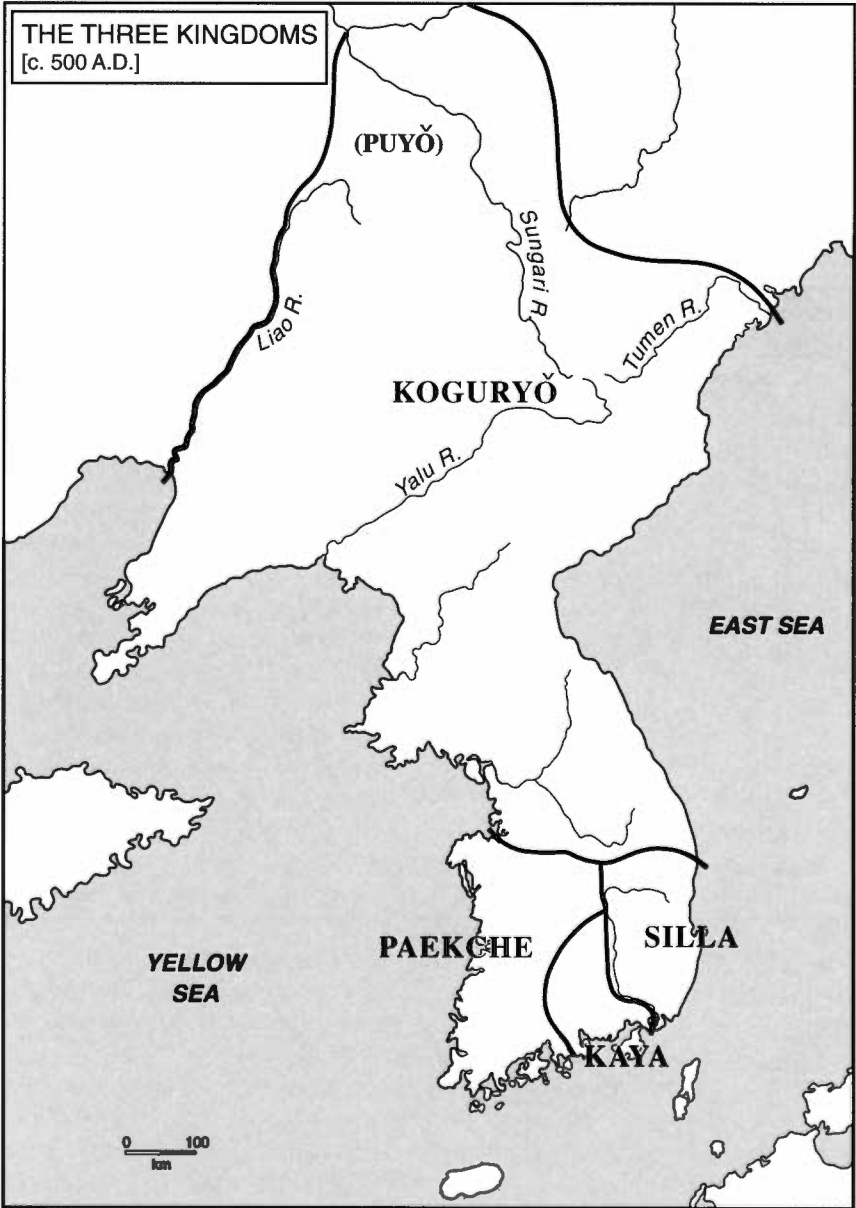
[BOUNDARIES PRIOR TO 1945]



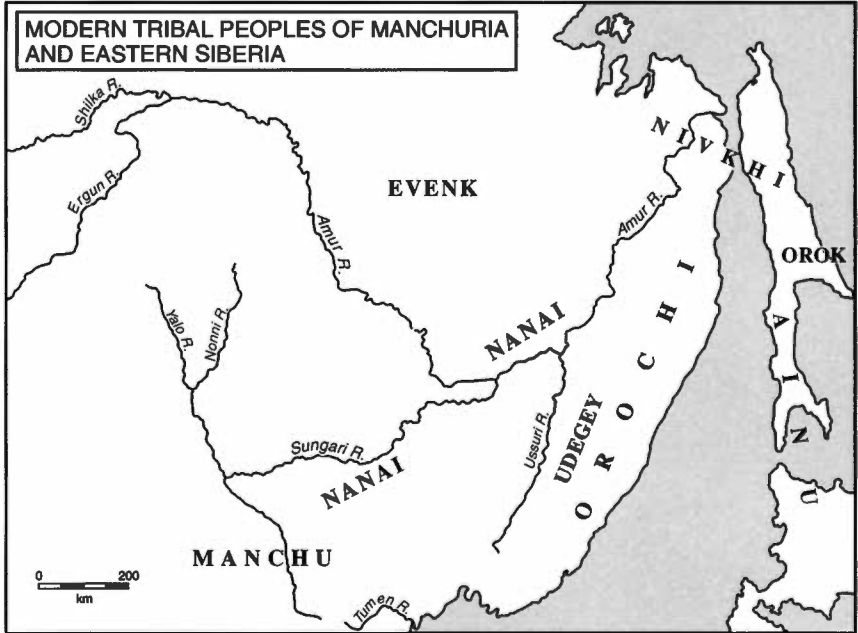
ANCIENT CHOSŎN (CHAOHSIEN)
[PURPORTED BOUNDARIES c. 333 B.C.]



THE THREE KINGDOMS
[c. 500 A.D.]



**MODERN TRIBAL PEOPLES OF MANCHURIA
AND EASTERN SIBERIA**



Introduction

A STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Oral folklore, especially longer sung or prose narratives, represent the deposition of the thoughts, beliefs, ideas and intellectual symbols of a people and a particular age. This book is intended to provide an introduction to the beliefs and thoughts of the Korean people in the ancient and modern periods through a presentation and analysis of the oral folklore of Korea. Three broad types of material are represented here – stories of the foundation of the nation, folktales from the ancient period, and folktales from the modern period. In order to create a balanced comparison between the two periods, the tales in the book are drawn from two major sources of folkloric material, the *Samguk yusa* from the thirteenth century and *A Type Index of Korean Folktales* from the twentieth century. The *Samguk yusa* contains 232 distinct units of Korean folklore, whereas the modern type index as originally formulated contains 635 distinct folktales. Each collection is the most comprehensive, organised source of material for its period.

Two extreme periods of Korean cultural history, the ancient period (defined as the period before the tenth century) and the modern era (defined as the period since the middle of the nineteenth century) have been selected to illustrate aspects of the intellectual, moral, and spiritual concerns of the people of the ancient and most recent past. The rationale for examining the extremes of Korean history is to illustrate the continuity and disjunctures in structure, theme and function of folktales from early to contemporary times. It has been my purpose to illustrate how certain tales and narrative motifs from the ancient period have persisted down to the present day in the oral literature of the Korean people, and to show how the cultural ethos of a period is reflected in its folklore.

The collection of Korean folklore presented here thus does not aim to be representative of all tale types of all periods. The folklore of the mediaeval and the pre-modern periods (defined as the eleventh to the mid-fifteenth, and the late fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries respectively) are not represented amongst the tales translated in this book. However, where relevant, in the commentary on individual tales comparisons are drawn with tales recorded in texts from these two

periods. The book also does not attempt to present all forms of Korean oral literature. For the most part, material known only in a sung form is excluded as are such aspects of oral folklore as riddles, proverbs and anecdotes.

The book is divided into three main sections, one section which is devoted to an analysis of the foundation myths of Korea, a second section which considers the legends and folktales of the ancient period, and a third section which examines the legends and folktales of contemporary times. Chapter II is focussed on the question of ethnogenesis, the way in which a people describe to themselves the formation of their nation, state, or ruling élite. To determine the peculiar and distinctive characteristics of Korean foundation myths, extensive material from the other peoples of Northeast Asia has been included for comparative purposes. Chapters III and IV present material from the ancient and modern eras arranged thematically by the categories of aetiological and etymological tales, hero tales, edifying tales, tales of magic, and tales of adventure. Because of the especial importance of the tiger, bear, and fox as actors in modern Korean folktales, separate sections have been provided to present additional examples of tales which have one or more of these animals as their principal actor. Each tale in the modern or ancient period will be analysed from the aspect of its narrative structure and its narrative motifs, and then compared with similar tales or narrative motifs from China, Japan and other nations. The book concludes with several appendices describing the different systems of folklore typology, and an index and glossary.

B THE TRANSLATION AND PRESENTATION OF THE TALES

For each of the tales presented in this book whether from the ancient or modern period footnotes have been provided where necessary and the source of the particular text which has been translated is given immediately following the text. Where possible parallels with the Aarne-Thompson Type Index and the Thompson Motif Index are drawn for both modern and ancient materials. All modern texts are provided with the Ch'oe Index type number. For comparative purposes, following the translation of the ancient texts a structural outline of the tale is provided. All texts, ancient and modern, are analysed according to a form of analysis which I call 'dramatic structural analysis' in which the tale is treated like a drama and examined for the flow of its themes. This form of analysis is explained in the next section. Tales with similar dramatic structures are referred to as constituting a 'type' of folktale. The analysis of the tale also takes seriously the uses or functions of a folktale. Discussion of the purpose of an individual tale is centred around the four functions of folktales as defined by William R. Bascom. This, again, is explained in detail in the section below.

The function of the tale has been determined only from the structure of the content of the tale because it was impossible to know for certain the actual aural context of the tale. This caveat is especially true of the ancient tales known only from ancient written sources, but it is equally valid with regard to the translations from modern sources where the aural context itself is not usually described even if other details about the time and place of the recording and the name of the raconteur are provided.

All of the Korean tales in this book are based on literary sources. None of them are the result of field research conducted by the editor. All of the ancient Korean and Chinese myths, legends, and tales have been translated by me from the original textual material. The particular ancient source is stated immediately after the translation of the text. Most of the comparative material from contemporary tribal peoples in Northeast Asia are based on Russian written sources which were translated by Mrs. Ludmilla Holt. In a very few cases, I have provided a recording of tribal tales which were told to me by the field researcher Mrs. Tatyana Bulgakova of St. Petersburg, Russia. In those cases the English translation was provided by Dr. Aleksei A. Burykin of the Russian Academy of Science, St. Petersburg. For some of the comparative material, I have quoted from existing translations, and in one case, the Myth of Jimmu, I have conflated and edited two existing translations to produce a text. In the section on modern Korean tales, I have translated most of the tales from published Korean language sources which are stated after the translation. In all cases, I have tried to provide a translation of the earliest known recording of a particular tale type. In some cases because a folktale was not available in a Korean language record but only in a Japanese language text, that tale was translated by Robert Johnson or Maura Kelly, post-graduate students of the University of Sheffield, into a literal rather than a literary form. The method for translating folktale texts was to provide a translation as close as possible to the literal form and vocabulary of the tale as recorded, rather than to create a smooth, literary work. In a few cases it was not possible to obtain the text for a particular tale type even after a thorough search in the National Central Library in Seoul, and in the libraries of various major universities in Korea. In such cases, I have provided a fleshed out rendition of the tale based upon the structural outline given in *A Type Index of Korean Folktales* by Ch'oe Inhak.

C APPROACH TO FOLKLORE RESEARCH

This book is essentially anthropological in outlook. Oral folklore, in my view, is an important resource for the study of the thought, and beliefs, and symbolic representations both of peoples who lived in the distant past, and of contemporary peoples. Through the stories which they told and which were repeated to them, the hearers of the tales obtained ideas, concepts and

beliefs which both reflected and created a particular spiritual and ethical ethos in the society of that time. Sixty years ago, Franz Boas made this point when he said that “a detailed study of mythologies shows clearly that . . . they reflect in detail the cultures of which they form a part.”¹ Mythology, by which Boas means the entire narrative folklore of a society, is a means of entrée into the mental culture of a people. Boas stresses this point by saying that folktales and legends present events which “occur in human society, with human passions, virtues, and vices.”² In this way, oral folklore is like a novel,³ or as I would put it, like a drama, a vivid representation of some aspect of the culture which serves a particular purpose, or function. Documented folklore narratives, whether ancient or modern, are like archaeological artefacts in that they give us some clue as to the way the people of the distant or recent past conceived of their social and physical universe. They give us some idea of the values, ultimate goals, and ways in which people construct or constructed what anthropologists refer to as their ‘weltanschauung’ or world view.

This book is concerned with three types of narrative folklore, myths, legends and folktales which for simplicity may be referred to collectively as folktales. It has been traditional for folklorists to begin research on narrative folklore by discussing the question of what ‘type’ a particular folktale is, and what pattern of ‘motifs’ constitute its formal structure. These two terms have become technical terms in the field with a specified range of meaning. Stith Thompson defines a folktale type as a narrative “capable of an independent existence in tradition. Any tale, no matter how complex or simple it is, told as an independent narrative is considered to be a type.”⁴ Thus, any oral narrative which has or has had some degree of currency in the society may be considered to be a type, a typical example, because it is a standard artefact of the thought and beliefs of that era. A tale must also be free from consistent association with another tale, that is it must have a life independent of any other tale. Both of these elements of Thompson’s explanation of a ‘type’ form a good and satisfying definition of the term. However, in practice I have not found the application of this term to have been consistent or useful.

This is so for two reasons. First, the indices of folktale types have been built up on a model derived from research on Scandinavian and European tale types. Using the renowned work *The Types of the Folktale* edited by Thompson, it is difficult to relate the patterns in that book with material from Korea, or East Asia in general. This is a fault readily recognised by everyone including the editor.⁵ In the case of Korean folklorists, there has been a lively debate about how to appropriate this international type index, if at all.⁶ However, additional material to expand the content of the international type index is not to my mind the principal problem with these indices.

The types as they are actually presented in the index do not seem to be closely related to the definition of a ‘type’. Although the ‘types’ are each

composed of scenes or narrative sections, too much attention has been paid to the types of characters and objects in the tale in the creation of a system of classification. In my view, the classification of folktales into types should be in accordance with the structural format of the tale (its individual constituent units of meaning and their sequence), and to take into consideration the function, purpose or role of the tale. Constituent units of meaning which occur in a fixed sequence form the more permanent elements of a tale, whereas many of the items chosen to characterise a tale in the indices are ephemeral and not related to the actual structure of the tale as such. Such presentational features will vary readily from one culture to another.

Let us compare a folktale with a drama. Let us further suppose that play 'X' has been changed into a play called 'Y'. If the new play 'Y' retains the same dialogue, the same dramatic flow, and the same structure of dramatic elements, then even though the names of the actors are changed, their clothing varied, and the physical background of the scenes altered, the two plays may be said to belong to the same 'type' of drama. In my view, this comparison applies equally well to the idea of the typology of narrative folklore. Changing the names of characters or changing the locations and time of action, does not create a new structural 'type'. Structural types should be based on the format of the content of the tale, the arrangements of its elements of meaning.⁷ Once one knows the structural type of a tale based on its narrative format, comparisons can then be made about the purported purpose, or function, of a tale.

The concept of the term 'motif' likewise presents similar problems to the concept of 'type'. Stith Thompson has defined a motif as "any one of the parts into which an item of folklore can be analyzed." He goes on to add that "to become a real part of the tradition, an element must have something about it that will make people remember and repeat it. It must be more than commonplace."⁸ Thus, in standard application, a 'motif' is a constituent unit of a folktale which has something about it which makes it memorable. It is, in short, a means or vehicle by which the theme or meaning of the individual folktale is conveyed to the hearer. This, again, is a good definition. None the less, the application of the term as it is represented by the massive *A Motif Index of Folk-Literature*⁹ is not satisfying. Too much attention has been paid to the type of actor in this sub-unit of the particular narrative, and not enough to the actual thematic structure of the motif. For example marriage of an animal to a human is given extensive coverage in the index by listing all the known examples of different animals married to humans. What is important, however, is not the identity of the particular actor, but the type of action – marriage of an animal to a human, its meaning, and its function. The names of the actors are ephemeral and may change in different natural and cultural circumstances. It would seem that the actual thematic structure of the narrative component by which the

Introduction

meaning of the tale is conveyed is less subject to alteration, and is of more importance in the interpretation of the tale and its classification as a type.

Interpretation of a tale will depend upon knowledge of the thematic construction of the tale, its central and subsidiary themes, and the means by which these themes are conveyed. I heartily concur with William R. Bascom who, in his classic article “The Four Functions of Folklore”,¹⁰ emphasised the importance of understanding the social context of oral literature. Oral folklore derives from and exists or existed primarily in the daily life of the people. Consequently, Bascom argued that any folktale had at least one of four functions for the hearer – which of course in turn had social consequences. He stated these functions as:

- 1 the amusement of the listener by providing a means to escape the oppressive conditions of a particular culture or period of time through fantasy,
- 2 the validation of the values of the listener’s culture, and its rituals and institutions,
- 3 the education of the hearer – a statement of knowledge on a particular subject, or an etymological or aetiological explanation of a certain aspect of the hearer’s culture or the surrounding physical universe, and
- 4 the instruction of the listener in maintaining conformity to the prescribed patterns of behaviour and ideals of the people¹¹

Elsewhere, Bascom states that folklore broadly may be said to have two social effects, one to ensure cultural identity and the other to maintain the political structures of the society and to manage socio-political change. This latter point will be of great interest to us in considering the question of foundation myths. He states that folktales help to maintain cultural continuity not only through education, but “by providing discontented individuals an opportunity to talk about forbidden forms of behavior.” The effect is thus to preserve “the established customs and institutions from direct attack.”¹² The ultimate collective effect of a folktale on the hearers is to ensure the cultural and political continuity and stability of society.

This book will be concerned with the social and anthropological interpretation of the role and function of Korean myths and legends. Based on the thematic structure of the tale, individual tales will be analysed according to the functions proposed by Bascom, and will be discussed in terms of the known socio-political context of the time of the recounting of the tale.

D DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

As certain terms will recur with considerable frequency, I provide here a definition of key terms in the way in which I understand them.

Folklore: In the broadest sense, folklore includes all the folkways of any nation including their cultural artefacts, and the material culture associated with those folkways which are created as a result of them. Anthropologists have tended to take a more restricted view of the term confining its use to the orally transmitted traditions of a society. I define the oral aspects of folk culture to include myths, legends, folktales proper, proverbs, riddles, folk songs and any other features of the folk culture which are transmitted orally and not initially through the written word. Bascom refers to these aspects of folklore as “the spoken artistic expressions” of a folk culture.¹³ Because the expressions of oral culture are comparable to written literature, they are often referred to as ‘oral literature’, or *kubi munhak* in Korean. Another term is folk literature. Because there is an obvious parallel between oral narrative and drama, my analysis of Korean myths and legends will use terms such as ‘drama’, ‘scene’, ‘theme’, and ‘actor’ which reflect my feeling that myths, legends, and folktales have a structure which is similar to that of a dramatic presentation. The use of a dramatic form of analysis of oral folklore does not reflect, however, an acceptance of the ideas put forward by Victor Turner¹⁴ and others that myth is a ritual re-enactment of certain key cultural events in the history of the society which enables the hearer to participate in them again. In many cases, there may be a relationship between myth and ritual. None the less, the relationship is not an inherent one.

Folk narrative: Folk narrative, which Bascom refers to as prose narrative,¹⁵ I define as being any long, orally transmitted, unsung narrative which has a certain degree of currency within the society. This definition excludes proverbs, aphorisms, rhymes, and riddles because of length, and folk songs because of the essential musical element in their composition. It also excludes any story which is ‘one off’. A narrative must have established itself within the traditions of a society. Folk narrative is comprised of three sub-classes of narrative – myth, legend, and the folktale proper. The term ‘folktale’ is often used to refer to all three of these sub-classes which has led to a degree of confusion in classification. Folk narrative, as is the case with most other aspects of oral folk culture, gives expression to two broad areas of meaning, referred to by anthropologists as existential postulates and normative postulates. These terms are defined below.

Myth: The principal defining feature of a myth is that the central characters or actors in the narrative are spirits, gods, divine and semi-divine beings. The spatial and temporal settings of the myth are often sacred, or are a mixture of the sacred and the mundane realms. The temporal setting of a myth frequently is placed in some hazy, primordial moment in the past. Often this is the case with foundation myths because ‘time’ can be said to have begun at the point described in the narrative. The physical surroundings are also somehow radically different from the setting of our

own time and place, or are a mixture of the sacred and mundane. Victor Turner refers to myths as relating “how one state of affairs became another” and that they “are liminal phenomena . . . frequently told at a time or in a site that is ‘betwixt and between’”.¹⁶ Thus, myths describe liminal events and periods in the history of a people, and illustrate the divine role in these events. When associated with ritual, myths permit the hearer to participate in that event. A myth is accepted as a true statement of historic events, but its truth-value or historicity derives from the religious beliefs of the hearers of the narrative.¹⁷

Legend: A legend is a folk narrative which is told as if it were the recounting of an actual historical event. The principal actors in the narrative are heroes or ordinary humans with no essentially divine characteristics. The temporal setting is often placed in a precise historic period with various historical details to give a verisimilitude of historical accuracy. Likewise, the physical setting is placed in nearby or well-known geographical features.

Folktale: The major difference between a folktale and a legend is that the folktale as such is recognised by the hearer as being fiction, an entertainment, albeit an entertainment with a purpose. Because of the acceptance of the essential fictional nature of the story, animals appear as key actors in these tales. They often possess the power of speech or of being understood. The temporal and physical setting may be given as putatively actual, none the less, they are not understood by the hearers to be a statement of a real time or place.

Weltanschauung: This term has been used by anthropologists to refer to the comprehensive world view characteristic of a particular people and is composed of two major components, existential and normative postulates.

Existential postulates: Existential postulates are concepts forming a part of the cognitive culture of a society which explain the origin of the world, the nation, the culture of the society, the clan and the family system, and all other customs and practices typical of the society. Existential postulates also comprise etymological explanations for the origins of names of individuals, groups, animals, and placenames. In short, they offer an explanation of how the physical and social universe came into existence.¹⁸ Foundation myths, the focus of Chapter II of this book, are primarily concerned with the expression of a culture’s existential postulates.

Normative postulates: Normative postulates are the aspect of the cognitive culture of a society which state and explain its ethical system. Normative postulates describe the preferred and prescribed behavioural patterns of a society and often indicate the consequences of non-compliance.¹⁹ Although proverbs, aphorisms, and riddles are a principal

means for the expression of normative postulates, this class of postulates often forms an important element in the thematic structure of folk narratives, especially folktales proper.

Theme: The theme of a folk narrative is the principal meaning or form of the content of the narrative as a whole as it unfolds through the various scenes of the tale. Any folk narrative may, of course, also include other subsidiary or joint themes. The effect of the theme on the hearer or hearers of the tale is its purpose or function as defined by the four-fold schema proposed by Bascom.

Narrative Motif: The narrative motif is the vehicle or means by which the theme or themes of a folk narrative is conveyed to the listeners. Because I apply the word 'motif' differently from the way in which it is normally used, I had originally coined the term 'theme vehicle'. I have found this to be a cumbersome term and now prefer to use the term 'narrative motif' to show my general agreement with the standard definition of the term 'motif', but use an adjective to show the distinction between the way it is normally applied and the way in which I apply it. Narrative motifs may be gods, spirits, heroes, ordinary people, animals, or even inanimate objects. In my view, the determining feature of the typological character of a folk narrative is its theme or themes and the way in which they are put together into a thematic structure, and not the means by which that theme is conveyed. As I stated above, narrative motifs are easily interchangeable with other motifs which are more appropriate due to changed historical, cultural, and geographical circumstances. In other words, they have no inherent meaning in themselves. Meaning comes from the themes of the narrative and the structure of the themes when combined into a narrative unit.

Narrative Section: A narrative section is a sub-division of the narrative of a folk narrative or story. It is the smallest dramatic unit of the story combining actors, action, and a set purpose. Also referred to as a 'scene'.

Culture hero: The culture hero is a key figure in creation myths and foundation myths. He or she is the heroic, semi-divine, or divine figure who brings culture and civilisation to a particular people, or at least those cultural features which define a particular people vis-à-vis their neighbours. The culture hero therefore is the key figure in the process of ethnogenesis.

Ethnogenesis: This is the process by which a people establish their identity as a distinct ethnic group vis-à-vis other groups. Myths of ethnogenesis are foundational in character being concerned with the origin of the nation, state, and diagnostic cultural characteristics.

Trickster: The trickster is the central figure in many myths, legends, and tales who attains his goals through devious methods. He is a kind of heroic

anti-hero. Melville J. Herskovits stresses this point, saying that the small animal or weaker person in besting his stronger adversaries “permits the satisfactions of an obvious identification to those who recount or listen to these tales”.²⁰ Not uncommonly, the trickster is also a culture hero.

E ORAL TALES AND WRITTEN FOLKLORIC MATERIAL

As one of the prerequisites for qualifying as a folk narrative is the oral transmission of the story, one may legitimately ask at the outset of a book which will have a significant number of ancient narratives, why stories are included which are known only because they were written down centuries after the period in which they were supposed to have been created. I have taken the view that even though these stories only now exist in a written form which is itself quite ancient, and in spite of the layers of redaction found in many of these tales, recorded narratives from the ancient period of Korean history came neither from the hand of a writer nor from the hand of a compiler of tales, but were the result of the anonymous oral transmission of the tale from the distant past. This is a view which obviously cannot be proven from documentary evidence, but I take it to be a self-evident point. Thus, although the ancient Korean stories which we now have are the result of literary redaction and compilation, they originated from amongst the stories which were told by the folk, the people of Korea.

F PERIODISATION OF KOREAN COGNITIVE HISTORY

As a major feature of this book will be the presentation of the values, beliefs and symbols used in Korea during both the ancient past and more contemporary times, it is important to have an overall schematic outline of the cognitive history of Korea. Broadly speaking, the periodisation of belief and thought follows dynastic history and consists of five periods: 1) the era before the advent of a major foreign cultural tradition (prior to the fifth century), 2) the early period of the absorption of foreign (Chinese) culture (fifth to tenth centuries), 3) the period of the mature synthesis of different traditions (eleventh to mid-fifteenth centuries), 4) the period of the dominance of the Confucian tradition (mid-fifteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries), and 5) the period of the absorption of a second foreign (Western) culture (mid-nineteenth century to the present). It is important to note that at two crucial periods of its history, Korea accepted as its own religious traditions from outside its culture. In period two, both Confucianism and Buddhism were transmitted to the ancient Korean kingdoms with Buddhism becoming the principal élite religious practice

until the mid-fifteenth century. Likewise, from the late nineteenth century, Christianity has been accepted into Korean culture along with Western technology and science. Approximately one-quarter of the late twentieth century Korean population is Christian.

Because of the difference in the spiritual and intellectual ethos of each of the five eras, folktales which arise in a particular era will reflect the cultural emphasis of that period. Thus, in the first period, one would expect to find mainly nativistic elements while in the second period there would be a mixture of Buddhist, Confucian and nativistic elements, without a strong emphasis on the presentation of one system over another. Also, as both Buddhism and Confucianism derive from outside Korea, one would expect tales originating in the second period to reflect attempts to reach an accommodation between the foreign and indigenous religions and philosophies. In the third period, tales originating in that era ought to reflect a more mature relationship between the two foreign traditions, and that there should also be fewer and more sophisticated tales from the indigenous tradition which reflect a high degree of the absorption of the concepts and motifs from the exterior traditions. In the fourth period, due to the extent to which a particular form of Neo-Confucianism had become entrenched as the official state orthodoxy, all other traditions – Buddhist and indigenous – were vigorously suppressed. In this period, we would expect to find a predominance of Confucian values reflected in the tales, and a derogatory view taken of competing spiritual and intellectual traditions such as Buddhism and native religious practices. The fifth period is similar to the second in that there is a substantial absorption of foreign values, beliefs, concepts, and symbols. Among the major features of Korean religion is the extent to which Christianity, Protestant and Roman Catholic, has become an important element in the spiritual culture of the nation. We should expect to find both Western ideas in general and Christianity in particular reflected in the folk stories which originate at this time. The two periods which I have chosen to present in this book have folkloric material which comes from a time when there was substantial cultural change. This means that the cultural ethos was more complex than in other eras and we should expect to find a greater variety of motifs, and values presented in the tales.

There are two principal sources for the tales included in this book. Materials for Chapters II and III which deal with ancient Korea were taken largely from the *Samguk yusa* [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms]. Items included in Chapter IV on modern Korea were initially selected on the basis of their inclusion in Ch'oe Inhak's type index of Korean folktales. Once selected from the index, original textual material for the tale was sought from various primary sources. In some cases, it was not possible to find extant primary material and the summary in the index was used to structure the tale.

G PATTERNS IN ANCIENT AND MODERN KOREAN FOLK NARRATIVE

As mentioned above, the tales recorded in this book have been drawn principally from the *Samguk yusa* and the Type Index of Korean Folktales which represent respectively collections of oral narrative from the ancient and modern periods. Obviously, the culture and political climate of these two disparate periods would have been very different and one would expect the folktales in them to reflect these differences. The principal difference between the two collections is that the *Samguk yusa* represents an attempt to salvage ancient legends and stories, whilst the type index represents more broadly the range of folktales current in modern Korean society. This difference in the two collections and the organisation of the materials within them could account for such differences in structure, content, and motifs which occur in the materials in each collection. A preliminary comparison of the frequency of the motifs, functions and themes of the two bodies of folklore materials tends to confirm the supposition that the era of the collection of the materials contained in the *Samguk yusa* was predominantly Buddhist in ethos, and that the modern era is still strongly influenced by Confucian thought.²¹

In the comparison of the two collections which I conducted, nearly half (49.5%) of the representations of themes in the *Samguk yusa* were related to Buddhist beliefs and practices, while nearly 20 per cent of the representations of themes referred to nativistic religious beliefs and practices.²² The third most important theme in the *Samguk yusa* collection, although much less important than the previous two themes, was an etymological or aetiological theme pattern. Confucianism is insignificantly represented amongst the total mentions of folklore themes in this collection. This result contrasts strikingly with the modern collection of tales in which cleverness in the resolution of life's problems is the most important theme (17.2 per cent), followed by nativistic religious concepts and practices (12.2 per cent), and a desire to see justice done, a good person rewarded and the bad punished (11.1 per cent). These themes clearly reflect a concern with the issues of the life of the ordinary person. Although in the type index collection of tales Confucianism is only the fifth most prominent theme, it is more than three times as evident in that collection as in the *Samguk yusa* collection. Moreover, Buddhism is even less represented in the Index collection than Confucianism is in the *Samguk yusa* collection. This would tend to indicate that Confucianism was more prominent in the society of Koryŏ times than Buddhism was during the late Chosŏn period. Interestingly, the *Samguk yusa* tales make little or no reference to personal problems and habits, marital problems and other issues which find a significant representation amongst the tales of the Index.

These differences in emphasis of the themes of the tales is paralleled by the frequency of the functions of the tales in the two collections. Of the

total mentions of functions in the *Samguk yusa*, nearly two-thirds (65.5 per cent) of them relate to the validation of cultural ideals, principally Buddhist beliefs. This contrasts with the collection of tales in the Index where nearly 60 per cent of the representations of function have to do with amusement and fantasy. The validation of culture function accounts for only one quarter of the total mentions of function in the tales of the Index. In the *Samguk yusa*, all other functions are nearly equally represented, although the education function is slightly more prominent. These differences in function between the two collections would imply that not only was there a greater Buddhist ethos to the era of the compilation of the *Samguk yusa*, but also that there was a greater need to find release from the social conditions of the late Chosŏn and early modern periods. These differences in function also suggest that the former collection of tales has a more intellectual bias, whereas the collection of tales in the Index reflects more closely the life of the ordinary person.

This latter point is confirmed by the frequency of the appearance of the ordinary person as a narrative motif in the two collections. The common person accounts for nearly a quarter of all references to narrative motifs in the tales of the Index, comparable to the number of times Buddhist monks appear as narrative motifs in the *Samguk yusa* collection. The reverse statement is also true. There is a very low usage of the common person as a narrative motif in the collection of the *Samguk yusa* (7.8 per cent) which parallels the even lower representation of Buddhist monks and nuns in the tales of the Index (3 per cent). Moreover, of the five predominant narrative motifs in the *Samguk yusa*, three have to do with the elite sector of society, collectively accounting for over half of all mentions of narrative motifs. The aristocracy alone is represented twice as frequently in the *Samguk yusa* collection as in the Index collection.

These broad comparisons not only point up the general cultural differences between the two periods in which the tales were compiled, but further suggest that these two sources reflect class as well as general social differences. Further research will undoubtedly refine these distinctions. None the less, this preliminary survey points out the very different nature of these two sets of materials.

H THE HISTORY OF KOREAN FOLKLORE RESEARCH

When did the study of Korean folklore begin? If folklore is defined as oral narrative, the collection of stories and interesting tales probably began quite early. Before the modern period, ancient scholars recorded stories, tales, and quasi-historical narratives in their collected writings. Perhaps the earliest scholar to record stories which he had heard was Kim Taemun (late 7th to early 8th centuries), a powerful minister of state during the mid-Silla period.

Amongst Kim's writings were two works, the *Kyerim chapchŏn* [Tales of Kyerim], and the *Hwarang segi* [The World of the Hwarang]. Neither of these works is now extant, but as we know that information in them was utilised in the writing of the historical work the *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Kingdoms] by Kim Pusik (1075–1151), we can guess that they contained considerable information about the development of Buddhism in Silla, the Hwarang troop of warriors, and in general about the customs of Silla times. These books were probably antiquarian works in the sense that they simply recorded stories and information without critical comment or analysis.

The antiquarian tradition of recording local stories, primarily an activity of the leisured Confucian literati, was a prominent activity during the Chosŏn period (1392–1910) and earlier. Three collected writings of this type of literature from the Chosŏn period have formed the basis of English presentations of folkloric material, the *Ch'ŏngba-jip* by Yi Yuk (1438–1498), the *P'aegwan chapki* by Ŏ Sukkwŏn (16th century), and the *Such'on-jip* by Im Pang (1640–1724).²³ These works are typical of many works of the same genre. Gazetteers compiled under government sponsorship, such as the *Sinjŭng Tongguk yŏji sŭngnam* [Augmented Survey of the Geography of Korea], the *sillok* or official annals of the reign of a king, and the *ŭpchi* or the official gazetteers compiled by local magistrates all contain information on local legends and stories. None of these works, however, contain scholarly analysis or comment on the materials which they have recorded.

If one were to search for a root for the scholarly study of Korean narrative tales, the honour must go to Iryŏn, a thirteenth century Buddhist monk from the Koryŏ period (918–1392) who compiled the *Samguk yusa*. This book is an extraordinarily rich source of information on the customs and beliefs of Silla, and to a certain extent of Koryŏ. It preserves numerous stories and tales from works which are no longer extant; it records for the first time local stories and beliefs current up to Iryŏn's lifetime and which had not been recorded previously; and it provides background information about lost books and other sources which had been used in compiling the *Samguk yusa*. The *Samguk yusa* is also valuable because Iryŏn makes numerous editorial insertions in his textual material which provide an extensive commentary on the quality of the particular text itself or which provide supplemental information from either the oral tradition or documentary material. Iryŏn felt compelled to compile this work because information of a folkloric nature had been excluded from Kim Pusik's *Samguk sagi* written in the previous century and would therefore have been lost to future generations. This fear of the loss of folkloric material was undoubtedly felt to be especially acute because Iryŏn, unlike Kim, was writing during the period of Mongol domination when the sense of Korean nationhood was being stifled. For reasons of his commitment to the collection, preservation, and analysis of narrative tales, Iryŏn must be styled the father of Korean folklore studies.

A root, however, does not make a tradition. Until contemporary times, there was not another notable figure who pursued to the same extent the collection, preservation, and analysis of oral narratives. The collection and study of folk narratives in the past hundred years may be divided into three general periods, the pre-colonial era (1880s–1910), the Japanese colonial era (1910–1945), and the post-colonial era (1945–). During the period immediately prior to the Japanese colonial era, European and North American missionaries and other foreign residents in Korea began to collect materials on Korean oral folk culture. The earliest collection of folktales was *Korean Tales: Being a Collection of Stories Translated from the Korean Folklore* (1889) by the American Presbyterian missionary Horace N. Allen (1858–1932). Written in a literary format, this book provides the earliest modern record of seven quintessential Korean folktales such as the Tale of Hŭngbu and Nŏlbu, the Tale of Sim Ch’ŏng, and the literary work in a folktale format, the Tale of Hong Kiltong. In 1893, H.G. Arnous published an unattributed German translation of Allen’s work entitled *Korea: Märchen und Legenden nebst einer Einleitung über Land und Leute, Sitten und Gebräuche Koreas*. The first extensive record of Korean folktales in a European language was *Koreiskiia skazki* [Korean Folktales] published in 1904 by Nikolai Georgievich Mikhailovskii (1852–1906). As an engineer, Mikhailovskii had been involved with the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway and Russian railways in Manchuria, and had visited Korea in 1898. During that latter visit, he had collected a large number of tales which he published in this work. The book contains sixty-four distinctive narrative tales and remained the largest single collection of Korean folktales in a European language until the mid-1950s. The work also exercised a great influence on the European understanding of Korean folk literature and was translated into several eastern and western European languages.

Work done during this period, however, tended to be the simple recording of commonly heard tales, provided no analysis, and most often made no reference to the name of the raconteur, or to the date and location of the recording. For purposes of comparative research, the lack of this kind of information was a major flaw. Perhaps the first Westerner to analyse scientifically Korean oral folklore was the American Methodist missionary Homer Bezaleel Hulbert (1863–1949). In a paper presented before the International Folklore Congress of the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893, he sketched the first outline of a typology for Korean folk narrative. Hulbert also wrote the first extensive discussion in English of the types of Korean folklore narratives and their character. This discussion forms a chapter in his *The Passing of Korea* (1906) which was written during the turbulent period when Japan was in process of snuffing out the independence of the Korean state.

In the first decade of the colonial era (prior to 1919), work on oral folklore was conducted primarily by Westerners (principally missionaries),

and Japanese researchers (often connected with the colonial government). The purpose of the research conducted by these two kinds of researchers was very different. The missionaries and other Westerners wrote to introduce Korea to constituencies in their home countries whereas the Japanese scholars conducted work the ultimate purpose of which was to serve the colonial administration of Korea. Important Japanese records of Korean folktales from this era would be Takahashi Toru, *Chōsen no monogatari-shu* [A Collection of Korean Tales] of 1910 with 28 tales, Aoyagi Kotaro, *Chōsen yawa-shu* [A Collection of Korean Stories] of 1912 with 19 tales, Imamura Tomoe, *Chōsen fuzoku-shu* [Korean Customs] of 1914, and Miwa Tamaki, *Tensetsu no Chōsen* [Legendary Korea] of 1919 with 139 tales. Works by Westerners include William E. Griffis (1843–1928), *Unmannerly Tiger and Other Tales* (1911) published in Britain as *Fairy Tales of Old Korea* (1911), and the Canadian Presbyterian missionary James Scarth Gale (1863–1937), *Korean Folk Tales: Imps, Ghosts and Fairies* of 1913 with 53 tales. Gale's work was the first European work to use historic documentary sources.

Following the suppression of the March the First Independence Movement of 1919, the Japanese colonial government took a more conciliatory attitude towards the Korean people and promoted a policy of supporting or permitting Korean cultural endeavours. During the 1920s and the very early 1930s, the study of Korean folklore began to be studied more intensively, and more materials were collected and published. The Government-General of Chōsen, as the colonial government was known, published in 1924 its own collection of twenty-five Korean folk narratives as *Chōsen dohwa-shu* [A Collection of Korean Fairy Tales] which, however, was less of a scholarly work than a literary-style presentation of Korean folk tales. During this decade several Japanese scholars also compiled materials and published them. Among these works were Yamazaki Nichijo's *Chōsen kidan to tensetsu* [Legends and Tales from Korea] of 1920 with sixty-three tales, Imamura Tomoe's *Rekishu minzoku: Chōsen mandan* [Historical Folklore: Korean Tales] of 1928 with fifteen tales, and Nakamura Ryōhei's *Chōsen shinwa tensetsu* [Legends and myths from Korea] of 1929 with 119 tales. To differing degrees, these works suffer from the fact that they were written in Japanese, thus being a translation of the actual narrative rather than a recording of it. It was government policy throughout the colonial era to encourage the use of the Japanese language to the exclusion of Korean, and at one point the use of the Korean language was forbidden altogether. Because the tales are recorded in a foreign language, it is difficult to discern precisely their original linguistic form. In addition to this problem of language, and as was the case with the Government-General's work, the presentation of the folktales tended to be in a literary format rather than being a transcription of the original oral format and thus losing the ethnographic ethos of the tale.

For Koreans, the relative relaxation of stringent Japanese colonial control did permit a greater degree of scholarship. Korean writers during the third and fourth decades of this century used the study of folklore in its broadest sense to develop a sense of nationalism which would ultimately undermine Japanese colonial authority. Scholars developed concepts which indirectly or implicitly refuted the claims of the colonial administration about the inferiority of Koreans and their genetic relationship to the Japanese.²⁴ The study of oral folklore by Koreans was conducted for the purposes of Korean self-identity and nationalism. Often Korean scholarship emphasised the antiquity of the nation, or used Korean language as the medium to present the tales. The earliest example of this kind of recording of folktales is An Tongsu's *Panmannyŏn-gan Chyosyŏn kidam* [Strange Stories from Five Thousand Year-Old Korea] of 1922 containing 104 tales. The very title of the book implies an antiquity for Korea similar to that of China, thus implicitly refuting Japanese colonial claims of Korea's lack of genuine history. It is also interesting to note that the title is written in an older form of the Korean language, an implicit appeal to Korean nationalism.

Another example of this type of writing is Sim Ūirin's *Chosŏn tonghwa taejip* [A Survey of Korean Fairy Tales] published in 1926 and containing sixty-six tales recorded in Korean. Zŏng In-sŏb (Chŏng Insŏp, 1905 – 1983) wrote *Ondoru yawa* [Tales from the Ondol Floor] in 1927 while he was in Japan. Containing forty-three tales, it was based largely on recollections of stories which he had heard during his childhood. The technique of using oneself as a source was quite commonly used by Korean folklorists at that time and is still utilised today.

Undoubtedly, the first great scholar of Korean oral literature is Son Chint'ae (1900–?) who wrote *Chŏsen mindan-shu* [A Collection of Korean Folktales] (1930) which contains 155 tales, and *Chŏsen shinka ihen* [A Collection of Korean Shaman Songs] (1930). Published in Japanese, these two works are milestones in the development of the study of Korean folk narrative. First, most of the tales which Son recorded were based on records which he had made on field trips to various parts of the country. These two works are the first compilations of Korean folktales to provide a comprehensive scholastic apparatus for the folktales recorded in them, providing the name, age, and place of residence of the raconteur of the tale, and giving the precise date of the recording of the tale. In addition, Son provides numerous footnotes to many of the tales giving historical and background commentary with regard to the meaning, purpose and history of the folktale. For this reason, one may say that the professional, academic study of Korean folk narrative begins with the *Chŏsen mindan-shu* and that Son Chint'ae may be called the father of modern Korean folklore studies. The only problem with the *Chŏsen mindan-shu* is that, due to the political climate of the time, it had to be published in Japanese. Consequently, the original words and phrases of the narrative were not preserved. The *Chŏsen*

shinka ihen likewise marks the beginning of the study of the *muga*, or ritual chants used by the Korean shamans, the *mudang*. Although like the *Chōsen mindan-shu* the text has been translated into Japanese, the original text is also provided thus preserving both dialectical words and ritual phrases in their original form.

Japanese scholarship on Korean folktales continued up to the end of the colonial period. An example from this period would be Morikawa Kiyoto's *Chōsen yadan tsuihitsu tensetsu* [Korean Tales and Recorded Legends] published in 1944 with twelve tales. Except for Andreas Eckardt's *Koreanische Märchen und Erzählungen Zwischen Halla- und Paktusan* published in 1928 with thirty-two tales, other Western presentations of Korean folkloric material, such as William E. Griffis's *Korean Fairy Tales* (New York, 1922 / London, 1923), and Homer B. Hulbert's *Omjee the Wizard: Korean Folk Stories* (1928) were essentially literary rather than scholarly works, addressed either to adults or children as a means of introducing Korean culture. Nikolai Mikhailovskii's book was translated into French in 1925 as *Contes coréens*, into Slovak in 1933 as *Kórejské rozprávky*, and into German in 1948 as *Koreanische Märchen*.

At the same time that more scholarly works were beginning to appear, researchers such as Son Chint'ae, Song Sōkha and others founded the Chosŏn Minsok Hakhoe [Korean Folklore Society] in 1932 for the promotion of the study of all aspects of Korean folk culture. The journal produced by the society, *Chosŏn minsok-hak* [Korean Folklore], became a prime means for diffusing knowledge about Korean folklore, culture, and trends and work in other countries.

Following liberation from colonial rule in 1945, Korean folklore studies were freed from the need to justify Korean identity vis-à-vis Japan. This political change did not alter the fact that the academic study of oral folk narrative and other aspects of folk culture continued to be motivated by the inner psychological need to establish a unique Korean identity. The politico-historical framework had changed, but the need for the endeavour itself had not changed. Although folklore studies continued to play a significant role in the creation of a Korean identity, the freeing from the constraints of Japanese rule also enabled scholars to explore theoretical and comparative issues. The publication in 1947 of a group of essays by Son Chint'ae under the title *Chosŏn minjok sŏrhwa-ŭi yŏn'gu* [Studies of the Folktales of the Korean People] with fifty-nine tales signified the beginning of the change in research to the discussion of issues other than strictly 'nationalistic' issues.

The difficult socio-political circumstances of the late 1940s following liberation from Japan and the aftermath of the Korean War impeded the growth of research and publication. For example, Ch'oe Sangsu's important, comprehensive collection of folktales, *Han'guk min'gan chŏnsŏl chip* [A Collection of the Legends of the Korean People] containing 317 tales, published in 1958, had been ready for publication in 1946. This book

contains valuable information about the sources and the collection of the material in the work, providing an index of tales by type, by region, and by raconteur. From this period onward, important regional studies began to appear, most notably Chin Sŏnggi's *Namgug-ŭi sŏrhwa* [Tales of the Southern Country] in 1959, the first of many scholarly publications on the folklore of Cheju Island. This book introduced a new, local term into folklore vocabulary, *namguk* [southern country], indicating the emergence of a strong sense of regionalism and separatism from mainland Korea.

Since the 1960s, the number of studies on Korean folk narrative has multiplied exponentially and it would be impossible to mention every important researcher and his or her work. There are, however, several trends which can be identified – 1) the increased study of local legends and tales, 2) the publication of multi-volume source books on local folktales, and 3) the increased sophistication in the analysis of narrative materials.

The important work of Im Sŏkche on the folktales of the Chŏlla provinces in the southwest of the peninsula is typical of the first trend. Along with his work which has been published in government-sponsored research publications, his book *Yennal iyagi sŏnjip* [A Collection of Old Tales] published in 1971 containing 239 recorded tales is one of the largest single collections of tales by one scholar since Son Chint'ae's work in 1930. As such, it is an important resource for the study of mid-twentieth century folktales. The choice of a vernacular Korean, rather than a Sino-Korean (Chinese character) title also indicates a strong element of nationalism. Another important scholarly work is Im Tonggwŏn's book published in 1972, *Han'gug-ŭi mindam* [Korean Folktales] which contains 152 tales. This work, Son Chint'ae's *Chŏsen mindan-shu* and Ch'oe Sangsu's *Chosŏn min'gan chŏnsŏl chip* are probably the best and most readily available single volume sources of general folktale material in a scholarly format.

The increased sophistication and development of the field during the 1970s and 1980s is indicated by the publication of massive collections of narrative folklore material. Among these encyclopaedic-type of works would be the Korean government's Bureau of Culture Properties multi-volume source, the *Han'guk minsok chonghap chosa pogo-sŏ* [A General Survey Report of Korean Folklore] (1970–), the Society for Korean Oral Literature's *Han'guk kubi munhak sŏnjip* [A Collection of Korean Oral Literature] (1977), the Academy of Korean Studies's *Han'guk kubi munhak taegye* [A Survey of Korean Oral Literature] (1980) published in nine volumes with many sub-volumes, and the Tongguk University's *Han'guk munhak yŏn'gu-so's Han'guk munhŏn sŏrhwa chŏnjip* [A Collection of Korean Written Folktales] (1981) in ten volumes. These books are major resources for anyone conducting research on the legends and folktales of contemporary Korea.

Along with these large, Korean language resources, there are also two extensive collections of material in English, *The Folk Treasury of Korea*

compiled in 1970 by Chang Töksun (Chang Duksoon) and others and the *Traditional Tales of Old Korea: A Mixture of Legend and History of Korea's Colorful Past* published in five volumes in 1974 under the editorship of Pak Yongjun. Unfortunately, both of these works have certain defects. The first book, although providing a general scholarly introduction, lacks any information about the collection and recording of the tales. This is especially surprising since the book was published by a folklore society. Although the second work provides the single largest compendium of Korean folktales in English with material arranged by province or region, like *The Folk Treasury of Korea* it also lacks information on the collection and recording of the tales thus limiting its usefulness for scholastic purposes.

The production of major single-volume, Korean language publications on Korean oral literature was not matched by similar presentations of folktale material in Western languages. The publication of Zǒng In-sǒb's *Folk Tales from Korea* in 1952 containing ninety-nine tales was a major development because it was the first English language work to state its sources and to provide some information on the collection of the tales. The book suffers, however, from the idiosyncratic Romanisation system of the Korean language which the author devised, and from a literary style of writing. The stories are not recordings of folktales, but are literary works, and more often than not are simple recollections of tales which he had heard as a child. None the less, the first time English reader seeking background information and comparisons with other East Asian and world tales may still read Zǒng's introduction with profit and interest. Zǒng's book was followed by other works in English such as Kim So'un's *The Story Bag: A Collection of Korean Folktales* with thirty tales in 1955, Pak Tae-yong's *A Korean Decameron: A Collection of Korean Tales* with forty-one tales in 1961, and Frances Carpenter's *Tales of a Korean Grandmother* with thirty tales in 1973. None of these books has any proper scholarly apparatus, and the latter book is written in a highly contrived literary style. Consequently, there has been a dearth of useful English language resources on Korean folktales.

There are better materials in German than in English. Andreas Eckardt wrote two new collections of Korean folktales in the early 1950s, *Unter dem Odongbaum: koreanische Sagen, Märchen und Fabeln während eines zwanzig-jährigen Aufenthalts in Korea gesammelt* (1951) and *Die Ginsengwurzel: koreanische Sagen, Völkserzählungen und Märchen während eines zwanzig-jährigen Aufenthalts in Korea gesammelt* (1955). The best Western language sourcebook for Korean folktales is Hans-Jürgen Zaborowski's *Märchen aus Korea* containing ninety tales which was published in 1975 and continues the tradition of Andreas Eckardt. Ingo Nentwig's *Märchen der Völker Nordost-Chinas* published in 1994 contains four Korean folktales current amongst the Korean community in Manchuria.

The increased sophistication of folktale analysis is indicated by the creation of a type index for Korean folk narrative. Ch'oe Inhak, a prolific

researcher and writer, published *A Type Index of Korean Folktales* in 1979 which was updated in 1994 in his *Han'guk mindam-ŭi yuhyŏng yŏn'gu* [Studies of the Form of Korean Folktales]. Based on his analysis of 2,500 different tales, the general categories of this index follow the Aarne-Thompson index format. None the less, the enumeration and categorisation follows from the characteristics of Korean folktales, and introduces certain elements which are not in the Aarne-Thompson index. The Ch'oe index, although inspired by the Aarne-Thompson index is the most distinctive folktale type index in East Asia. One of the items which distinguishes Korean folktale research from Western scholarship is that no distinction is made between the study of prose narrative and sung narrative. The Ch'oe index, for example, and many of the collections of Korean folktales include material which is strictly speaking vocal and not oral. Son Chint'ae was perhaps the first scholar who clearly saw that the sung narrative of shamanic songs was akin to the folktales which he studied. The tradition of studying the folk narrative of the shamanic chants has been continued by Boudewijn Walraven who published in 1994 the most important study in any Western language on the *muga* or shamanic chants, *The Songs of the Shaman: The Ritual Chants of the Korean Mudang*.

Korean folklore studies, including the study of folk narrative, is now a well established area of scholarly enquiry. There are many Korean scholars who hold posts devoted to the subject, while other scholars conduct research in the area from other disciplines. As in European countries, many Korean scholars came into folklore through the study of their nation's language and literature. There are several academic societies which are devoted to the research and publication of folkloric materials, and the Government of the Republic of Korea actively supports research in the field. The maturity of the discipline was clearly indicated when a folklore department was established at Andong National University more than fifteen years ago. In spite of its many advances, the academic study of Korean folk narrative now should concentrate broadly on two important areas – 1) a deepened interest in theoretical issues rather than on the simple collection and recording of materials, and 2) the comparative analysis of folktales, especially folktales from Northeast Asia.

Notes

- 1 Boas, Franz, *General Anthropology*, p. 616.
- 2 Ibid, p. 610.
- 3 Ibid, p. 611.
- 4 Thompson, Stith, "Type" in Maria Leach, Jerome Fried (1972), p. 1137.
- 5 Thompson, Stith, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, p. 8. A recent issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* discussed the problems of defining the meaning and use of the terms 'motif' and 'type'. See v. 34 (1997), no. 3.

Introduction

- 6 Kim, Sönp'ung, "Han'guk kubi munhag-üi pullyu-wa pangböp" [The Methodology and Classification of Korean Oral Literature].
- 7 This view of the structural analysis of folktales had been proposed by scholars such as Robert Plant Armstrong in the 1950s. See "Content Analysis in Folkloristics" in Pierre Maranda, *Mythology: Selected Readings*, pp. 173–193. Armstrong says that "Structural analysis consists of two activities; Discerning units of substance or of condition, and discerning and stating the relationship which obtains among such units." (p. 181). Armstrong also states that the dramatic analysis of myth derives from the work of Kenneth Burke's *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (p. 185).
- 8 Thompson, Stith, "Motif" in Maria Leach, Jerome Fried (1972), p. 753.
- 9 Thompson, Stith, *A Motif Index of Folk Literature: A Classification of Narrative Elements in Folktales, Ballads, Myths, Fables, Mediaeval Romances, Exempla, Fabliaux, Jest-Books, and Local Legends*.
- 10 Bascom, William R., "The Four Functions of Folklore".
- 11 Ibid, pp. 343–346. Linda Dégh makes a similar point by saying that a folktale is a social product dependent for its structure, content and life on the socio-cultural context in which it exists. She also states that there are four functions of folktales, that is, the recitation of interesting events, the description of historic events, exhortations to good behaviour, and entertainment. Bascom's list is, I believe, more comprehensive. See Linda Dégh, "Some Questions of the Social Function of Storytelling", pp. 91, 100.
- 12 Bascom, William R., "Folklore" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, v.5, p. 499.
- 13 Bascom, William R., "Folklore" in Maria Leach, Jerome Fried (1972), p. 398.
- 14 Turner, Victor, "Myth and Symbol" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, v. 10, pp. 576–581.
- 15 Bascom, "Folklore", in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, v. 5, p. 497.
- 16 Turner, op. cit., p. 576.
- 17 Anonymous, "Legend" in Maria Leach, Jerome Fried (1972), p. 612. See also in the same work, Erminie W. Voeglin, "Myth", p. 778.
- 18 Hoebel, E. Adamson, pp. 158–162.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Herskovits, Melville J., "Trickster" in Maria Leach, Jerome Fried (1972), p. 1123.
- 21 My method of research was to read through each of the collections and to encode each tale for narrative motif, function and theme. Every element of the *Samguk yusa*, which formed a distinctive story or pericope, was given a classification number. This number has no relation to the organisation of the book itself, but represents each isolated, independent narrative embedded within the book's sections. All duplicate stories and references to non-Korean stories not actually current in Korea at the time of collection were eliminated. All clearly historical narratives were likewise eliminated. For the tales of the Index, each tale type was counted as a narrative unit. All unnumbered variants were ignored. Once these two sets of narrative units were designated, a pre-determined list of codes for different narrative motifs, functions, and themes derived from a preliminary reading of the texts was used to represent the character of the individual narrative unit. Once this process was completed, the total number of coded references (which greatly exceeded the total number of tales in each collection) was compiled and a frequency check was made of each narrative motif, function, and theme. Frequency, as defined here, means the frequency of mentions of a particular feature. The definition presumes that such frequency comparisons give an impression of the dominance of certain ideas at a particular time. We can have no

- idea, most certainly for the period of the *Samguk yusa*, of the frequency with which a particular tale may have been told.
- 22 Linda Dégh suggests that folktales essentially express an escape from reality whilst legends deal more with history and are thus more educative in function. See 'Folk Narrative' in Richard M. Dorson (1972), pp. 59–60, 72–73. If one assumes that the *Samguk yusa* is more legendary in character, and that the Index possesses more folktales, Dégh's view would offer another explanation for the difference in the character of the two collections of tales. Thus, the *Samguk yusa* collection would naturally be more didactic in character and the Index collection naturally more orientated towards fantasy.
 - 23 Im and Yi's works formed the basis of *Korean Folk Tales: Imps, Ghosts and Fairies* (1913) by James Scarth Gale (1863–1937), an early Presbyterian missionary in Korea. The other work has been translated recently by Peter H. Lee as *A Korean Storyteller's Miscellany: The P'aegwan chapki of Ŏ Sukkwŏn* (1989).
 - 24 Janelli, Roger L., "The Origins of Korean Folklore Scholarship", pp. 27–31.

Foundation Myths

A INTRODUCTION

In this section, I propose to examine the foundation myths of ancient Korea. My own interest in this subject has been stimulated by the very lively popular and scholarly interest in the foundation myths of Korea, particularly the Myth of Tan'gun, which has developed there over the past decade and a half. Foundation myths are a particular type of creation myth dealing with the origin of the state, nation, people, ruling dynasty, or national culture. Creation myths cover a broad area from the origin of the universe to the origin of particular cultural traits or practices. Creation myths are aetiological in nature, that is they explain how certain things came to be, but also indicate that events came about because of a certain combination of events involving particular people, animals or forces of nature. Some of these myths may be purposive in character in that the actors perform creative actions with intention. Other creation myths show merely a causal relation between certain events and actors which led to the 'current state of affairs.' Within this broad area of mythology, foundation myths have a special place in the mythic history of a people because they describe the very origins of the people themselves, their customs, and their rulers. The principal function of foundation myths is ethnogenesis, the creation of a sense of being a peculiar people, distinct from neighbouring groups. Seen in one way, ethnogenesis is a definition of nationhood. To the core mythic narrative, an ethnic foundation myth in addition may describe how the state came to be, and how a particular clan or sub-clan came to possess sovereignty over other groups within the ethnic unit. In addition to ethnic foundation myths and state foundation myths, there are clan foundation myths which describe the origin of a large, consanguinal unit within the general ethnic unit. A fourth type of foundation myth is the myth of cultural origins which explains how particular cultural practices arose. Included in this type of foundation myth would be those myths which explain the origins of agriculture, the origins of certain cultic practices, the origins of the particular type of family structure, or the origin of customs such as mother-in-law avoidance. The figure who brought to the people those defining cultural practices which made them a 'civilised' people and gave them distinctive features vis-à-vis neighbouring groups is

called the Culture Bearer or Culture Hero. He or she is either a divine figure or a semi-divine hero.

There is no ancient documentary evidence for Korean creation myths which are concerned with the origin of the universe or mankind in general. The myths which have been recorded in the oldest surviving documents are foundation myths of the people, state, clan and culture. All surviving materials assume both the existence of the world and humanity. In most cases they also presume the existence of culture. Thus, surviving Korean foundation myths are primarily of the state formation type.

Many writers have alluded to similarities between Korean mythology and mythic systems in Manchuria and Siberia, as well as the neighbouring states of China and Japan. In this section, I propose to examine the narrative structure and narrative function of the foundation myths of Korea in comparison with similar foundation myths from neighbouring states and peoples. I will attempt to show in what way the foundation myths of ancient Korea are similar to and distinctive from the foundation myths told by these other groups. In addition to traditional Korean documentary sources, materials will be drawn from similar documents from the ancient states which surrounded the Korean peninsula or neighbouring peoples, as well as ethnographic material some of which has not been published previously. Except for purposes of short comparison, material from the ethnic Chinese dynasties has not been examined.

The Northeast Asian neighbours of Korea represent a diverse spectrum of ethnic groups, including Mongolian, Tungusic and Palaeo-Siberian types. Within the first two broad ethnic groups, there may be found peoples who have possessed the most sophisticated political systems of their time, and other groups which possess the most simple political and social systems. Comparisons will be made between the Korean myths and the myths of the Liao Empire (Khitan people), the Chin Empire (Jurchen people), the Yüan Empire (Mongol people), the Ch'ing Empire (Manchu people), and the early Yamato state (Japan). These comparisons will be at the level of state formation myths. The myths of tribal peoples who do not possess state-level societies, the indigenous peoples of Manchuria and the Amur River basin such as the Nanai (Goldi), the Udegey, the Nivkhi (Gilyak), the Ainu and others, will be compared with Korean myths as well.

Each myth presented in this section will be considered as if it were a drama composed of various scenes with actors in each of those scenes carrying out certain actions. This method of analysis, however, should not be taken to be an indication that the author accepts the thesis that myths are intrinsically related to ritual and religious ceremonial. This method of analysis is meant simply to show that the narrative structure of a myth may progress from one unit of the story to another in the same way that a drama unfolds through the course of its various scenes. In the commentary on a myth, its structure will be described in terms of the sequence of its

narrative scenes. Each scene in turn will be examined for its themes and narrative motifs. I use the latter term to indicate the means by which the theme is conveyed in preference to 'motif' which has developed a somewhat different technical meaning, as was discussed in Chapter I, D., 'Definition of Terms'. The thematic structure of the myth will then be examined in the light of the four functions of folklore as proposed by William Bascom in order to determine the types of functions which the myths may have had when heard by the original hearers of the tale. Finally the myths will be examined for redactions and additions made to the core text, insofar as these emendations can be determined. The fact that both the core and the redacted text may have had different functions is a point which must be kept in mind as we examine the different myths.

This section is divided into four units comprising the presentation of the myths of the ancient states of Korea, Korean clan and royal clan myths, foundation myths of the states of Northeast Asia, and the foundation myths and legends of the tribal peoples of Manchuria and the Amur River basin. A final section will then compare all mythic types in terms of structure, theme, and types of narrative motifs. A general classification of foundation myths in Northeast Asia will then be proposed.

Sources for Northeast Asian Foundation Myths

1 The *Samguk yusa*

The principal source for information about the legends and myths of the ancient period of Korean history is the *Samguk yusa* [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms]. This book was written in the thirteenth century by the learned monk Iryŏn (1206–1289). The *Samguk yusa* was composed in part as a counterbalance to the more Confucian historiographical work, the *Samguk sagi* [History of the Three Kingdoms] written by Kim Pusik (1075–1151) in the previous century. The latter work excluded much material of a folkloric or hearsay nature which the monk Iryŏn included in his work. Iryŏn's work greatly enriches our understanding of society and thought in Koryŏ times and earlier periods. The *Samguk yusa* is a rich repository of materials for the study of myths and legends, folklore, the society of the Koryŏ and earlier periods, information on family histories, vocabulary in use at the time of writing and earlier, etymologies of words and placenames, and other materials of interest to the student of religions, anthropology and folklore. Iryŏn was an assiduous collector of materials on local history, thought and belief. It would be no exaggeration to say that he was the first Korean folklorist. The work is divided into five volumes or *kwŏn* which encompass nine different topical sections. There are a total of 138 sections of titled material in these sections. However, as many of these titled sections contain more than one folkloric or historic narrative, the

total number of narrative units and referenced sources is vast. Each titled narrative section concludes with a poem. In the narrative units, Iryŏn has inserted supplementary material and his own comments and questions about the veracity and meaning of the sources.

Materials which have been selected from the *Samguk yusa* for presentation here are identified at the end of the narrative by a number and a transliteration into Roman letters of the Korean heading for the narrative unit from which the individual narrative has been selected. The identification numbers for the narrative units are assigned according to the sequence order within one of the nine topical sections. A complete list of the contents of the *Samguk yusa* appears in Appendix 2, indicating volume, topical section, and individual narrative units. A translation of the transliterated topical section headings and narrative unit headings is also provided. The only exception to this rule is where the term is the name of a state or a self-evident personal name or placename.

2 *Chewang un'gi*

The *Chewang un'gi*, a work contemporary with the *Samguk yusa*, was written by the thirteenth century scholar Yi Sŭnghyu (1224–1301). He was a typical literati bureaucrat of the period who had a strong interest in religion and the distant past. The *Chewang un'gi* is in a poetic format and is divided into two sections. The first section describes the work of the mythical sage kings and heroes of China's past, while the second section describes similar figures from Korea, beginning with Tan'gun. The Korean section consists of two parts, the first of which describes the kingdoms prior to the Koryŏ period, while the second part describes the Kingdom of Koryŏ up to the time of composition. Ancient Korean history is comprised of the following states, Former Chosŏn, Later Chosŏn, Wiman Chosŏn, the Four Commanderies, the Three Han states, Silla, Koguryŏ, Later Koguryŏ, Paekche, Later Paekche, and Parhae.

3 *Sejong sillok*

It was a common feature of the Confucianised bureaucratic system of East Asia to write a 'veritable record' (called *sillok* in Korean) about the reign of the previous ruler. These records contained detailed information on the workings of government which would be of assistance to the reigning ruler in making political decisions. The *sillok* for the reign of King Sejong (r.1418–1450) was completed in 1454 and consists of 163 *kwŏn* divided into 154 units of information called *ch'aek*. 127 *kwŏn* are devoted to matters of government. Amongst the remaining 27 *kwŏn*, 8 comprise a province by province gazetteer providing extensive information on historical monuments, places, and local stories and legends, among other matters.

4 *Ŭngje-si*

A collection of poems written by the scholar bureaucrat Kwŏn Kŭn (1352–1409) when he was part of the royal embassy to the Ming court in Peking in 1396. It was subsequently compiled and annotated by his nephew Kwŏn Nam in the early part of the fifteenth century.

5 *Tongmyŏng-wang p'yŏn*

A poem on the life of the founder of the Kingdom of Koguryŏ which was composed by the State Councillor Yi Kyubo (1168–1241) and forms the third chapter of his collected works, the *Tŏngguk Yi Sangguk-chip* [Collected Works of Minister Yi of Korea].

6 *Koryŏ-sa*

The *Koryŏ-sa* [History of the Kingdom of Koryŏ, 918–1392] is the official history of the dynasty composed in the early years of the succeeding Chosŏn period (1392–1910). It was written and edited initially by the prominent early Chosŏn scholar-bureaucrat Chŏng Tojŏn (1337–1398) and others using previous historical writings and documentary sources. The final version of it was not presented, however, until 1454. It consists of 139 *kwŏn* or volumes and contains some materials of interest to the folklorist.

7 *Liao Shih*

History of the Khitan Liao dynasty (907–1125). One of three dynastic histories written under the order of the Yüan emperor Shun-ti (r.1333–1368). Edited by the Mongol prince and prime minister T'ŏ T'ŏ Pu-hua (1313–1355) around 1345.

8 *Chin Shih*

History of the Jurchen Chin dynasty (1118–1234) on the order of Emperor Shun-ti of the Yüan dynasty. Arranged in 135 *chüan*, it was edited by T'ŏ T'ŏ Pu-hua between 1343 and 1345.

9 *Yüan-ch'ao Pi-shih*

'The Secret History of the Mongols'. A Chinese translation of the *Mongghol-un Niucha Tobchian* written around 1369. It describes the mythical, legendary and historical origins of the Mongol people.

10 *Ch'ing-shih Kao*

'Essays on the History of the Ch'ing Dynasty' from 1644–1911. Compiled by a committee of scholars between 1914 and 1917 as a precursor to an official history of the Ch'ing period.

11 *Kojiki*

'Relations about Ancient Matters'. A compilation of myths, legends and historical facts about the origin of the Japanese nation. A rich resource for folklore study, it was compiled by Ason Futo-no-yasumaru and Hiyeda no Are in 712.

Method of Translation

The textual materials which are presented here have been translated as literally as possible in order to retain a significant proportion of the original character of the myth or legend. I have retained the original structure of the sentence where possible, inserting in the text only those words which are necessary to make a smooth English translation. These insertions have been indicated by the use of [] brackets. Where the original text itself contains insertions, these have been indicated by the use of () parentheses. Iryōn, the author of the *Samguk yusa*, uses numerous textual insertions to provide his own comments and supplementary or additional information. I have left out many of these insertions where I felt that they were irrelevant to the translation as the presentation of a folkloric text. I have also retained where possible the original names for titles, rôles, dieties and devices reserving an explanation of their meaning for textual brackets []. I felt that the presentation of the transliteration of a term, rather than its translation, would be a better aid to cross-cultural comparison. I have also transcribed the reign eras of the Chinese emperors and the lunar calendar year names differently. The reign eras of the emperors have been transliterated according to Chinese pronunciation, but because the lunar calendar year names are used in Korea, I have always given these terms the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese characters.

Explanation of weights and measures in texts

In the translation, I have retained the original Chinese character names for the units of weights and measures which appear in the text. The value assigned to these different units has varied over the centuries, and there is uncertainty with regard to their precise value. The ancient and modern equivalents for these measures is given in Appendix 3 at the back of the book.

Presentation of the Translated Textual Material

In this unit, the textual material will be presented giving the following information: the translated text itself, notes, an indication of the original source for the text, a reference to parallel mythological or legendary tale types from other parts of the world, a reference to parallel motifs from other folklore traditions. This will be followed by a commentary describing 1) the narrative structure and sequence of narrative sub-structural units, 2) the narrative theme(s), 3) the narrative motifs (defined as the characters or motifs which convey the themes and sub-themes), and 4) the purpose and function of the myth or legend. Each individual narrative section will also contain footnotes which refer back to the text itself. The parallel types are drawn from the Aarne-Thompson Type Index, whilst the motif parallels are drawn from Stith Thompson's Motif Index and Wolfram Eberhard's Motif Index for Chinese folktales. Other sources are mentioned in the references.

B THE MYTHS OF THE ANCIENT STATES OF KOREA

The Myth of Tan'gun

The Myth of Tan'gun is the seminal myth of Korean cultural history relating the origin of the earliest Korean state – the Kingdom of Ancient Chosŏn, the origin of its ruling family, and the origin of the distinctive culture of the people. The source for this myth is drawn from an ancient book called the *Tan'gun kogi* which is no longer extant. The oldest surviving texts are four in number, two each from the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. The best known of these versions is the one contained in the *Samguk yusa* written by the monk Iryŏn. Contemporary with this book is a work by the Confucian scholar Yi Sŭnghyu (1224–1300) who wrote the *Chewang un'gi* [Rhymed Record of Emperors and Kings]. Each of these in turn became the source for two later works, the *Ŭngje-si* [Poems Written at Royal Command] by Kwŏn Kŭn and the record in the geographical section of the *Sejong sillok* [Veritable Records of the Reign of King Sejong]. All four versions of the myth will be examined and compared. At the end of this section, there will be a discussion of the historic reuses of this seminal foundation myth.