[page 29]

**CH’AO-HSIEN FU**

**translated and annotated by Richard Rutt**

**Translator’s Introduction**

Ch’ao-hsien fu is a descriptive poem about a visit to Korea written, with explanatory notes, by Tung Yueh, envoy of the Ming emperor, in 1488. It is worth presenting in translation, even though I make no pretence to definitive treatment. What I offer is deficient in historical comment, and I have no doubt that it contains mistakes; but it does at least show what this entertaining poem contains and it may one day be useful to someone capable of doing better work.

It was James Gale’s partial translation into English in ‘Han-Yang (Seoul)’ in the Transactions of this society, Volume II part ii, pages 35-43, that first gave me interest in Tung’s *fu*. Gale’s version is an attractive piece of writing, one of his earlier attempts at translation from Chinese. It is also curious. He was never interested in literary form, so he translated the fu and its footnotes into continuous prose. Difficult phrases he simply omitted, Chinese names he transliterated as Korean, he never bothered to check classical references, and some sentences he misunderstood badly. For instance, he attributed to Tung Yueh in 1488 a description of the haet’ae in front of the Kwanghwa-mun that were probably not erected there until the 1860s—thus incidentally leading the Clarks to repeat the error in their *Seoul: past and present* (Seoul 1969, page 79). (What I believe to be a more correct translation of the passage in question will be found in line 194 of my version.)

Gale seems to have used the text printed at the beginning of the 1530 edition of the *Sinjung Tongguk yoji sungnam*, the only extant [page 30] version of that famous royal gazetteer of Korea, where the Ch’ao-hsien fu occupies Volume I pages lb5-16al, and is complete except that the introductory prose paragraph is missing. One of the recurrent themes of discussion during the embassage was the inaccuracy of official Chinese accounts of Korea, and placing this accurate account at the head of Korea’s own royal gazetteer was one way of bringing its contents to the notice of the official geographers of the Ming court. It was doubtless partly with this in view that the Korean editors felt constrained to note a few errors in the fu, and to put the blame for them on the Korean interpreters. [See my notes on 24 and 151.]

Gale’s translation consists of two sections (*Yoji sungnam* I 5b6 to 9b2, and 10a8 to 12b3) corresponding to lines 168-296 and 333-448 in my version, including the annotations to these passages. His introductory note shows that he also knew of the account of Tung’s embassy contained in the biography of Ho Chong, the official Korean escort for the Ming envoys from Uiju to Seoul and back. This biography is contained in the sixth kwon of the eighteenth-century *Yollyo-sil kisul*.

The only other translation of *Ch’ao-hsien fu* that I know or is in Korean. It is also based on the *Yoji sungnam* text, and is on page s 25-43 of the first volume of the complete Korean translation of the *Yoji sungnam* published by Minjok Munhwa Ch’ujinHoe (Seoul 1969, reprinted 1970). It was done by Yi Talchin, who also added thirty-two useful annotations of his own. The translation has a number of mistakes, including characters misread, and some grammatical and sense slips. Like many Korean translations from Chinese it leaves some obscure phrases in Chinese characters. Yet it has been of inestimable value to me in unravelling the sense of much of the *fu*, and my annotations rely heavily on Yi Talchin’s.

There are four other editions of *Ch’ao-hsien fu*, besides the *Yoji sungnam*. The best is an undated publication in kapchin moveable metal type, possibly printed within a decade or so of the poem’s composition. Only slightly inferior is the woodblock edition engraved in 1531 by the scholar and poet Tae Tunam (1486—1536). Both these editions are superior in minor points to the version in the Yoji sungnam. Two poorer versions also exist: a Japanese woodblock copied from T’ae’s edition and a version in Yu-chang ts’ung-shu, a collection of 103 works compiled [page 31] by Hu Szu-ching (1870-1922).

In 1937 the Chosen-shi Henshu-kai published a facsimile of T’ae’s 1531 edition as the fifteenth, of the series *Chosen shiryo sokan*, using the exemplar formerly kept at Suso Sowon near Sunhung in North Kyongsang — the first owon established in Korea. The facsimile was accompanied by a sixty-page pamphlet, *Chosen fu kokan ki*, containing the text of the work in modern type with the variant readings of the four other editions I have mentioned, and a collection of other writings by Tung Yueh. Most of the variant readings are miscopied characters. and few of them are of interest. The moveable type edition and T’ae’s edition have no significant differences, and the *Yoji sungnam* text differs chiefly in it that avoids using the tabu manes of T’aejo and Sejo of the Yi dynasty and, as I have previously noted, lacks the initial prose paragraph of the fu.

The writings in the second part of the 1937 pamphlet are taken from *Hwanghwa chip*, a collection of writings by Ming envoys to Korea and the Korean officials who were deputed to meet them, first edited in 1450, last in 1773. The 1937 booklet contains 62 poems, 2 commemorative essays (ki), and two prefaces. About half the poems are printed in the Yoji sungnam, scattered throughout the gazetteer under the various places where they were composed, mostly on the return journey to Uiju. Both Tung and his vice-envoy composed these poems. They are of little interest in themselves, though they provide a few details of the journey and the dates of the stops on the way. The one written by Tung at the T’aep’yong-gwan in Kaesong is typical:

The walls are surrounded by dwellings,

Where limpid water runs over sparkling sands...

I have just dismounted from my hor:e beneath the pines,

And already hear the homing crows among the branches;

Slender willows wave green tassels,

Burgeoning bulrushes grow pale hoots;

The hills are ablaze with purple fire,

Where all around azaleas are in bloom.

References for these poems are given in my notes with the abbreviation [page 32] YJSN for *Yoji sungnam*.

Th two *ki* are the one on Ch’ongsu-san mentioned in the note to line 143 of my translation, and another about P’ungwol-lu, a pavilion at Pyongyang (YJSN LI 19a). One of the prefaces was written on the 1st of the 4th moon for *Sa-u-dang chip*, the collected poems of Ho Chong, the royal escort, of whom Tung has much to say; and the other is for the works of Sin Sukchu, the great minister of Sejong and Sejo, whose poems had been collected by his grandson Chongho, a teacher at the Songgyun-gwan in Seoul and himself a person of distinction. Tung wrote this preface in the guest-house at Uiju, the day before he left Korea.

Little else of Tung’s writings seems to have survived. Eighteen folios of *Ch’ao-hsien tsa-chih,* ‘miscellaneous notes on Korea’, in *Hsuan-lan-t’ang ts’ung-shu*, are a draft of the notes to the *fu* with a few scraps of the poem itself. Some of the variant readings are of minor interest. Wen-hsi chi and Kuei-feng wen-chi, Tung’s collected writings bearing respectively his canonized name and his literary style, are perhaps the same thing under different names. They are listed in various Chinese catalogues, but have not recently been seen, like his *Shih-tung jih-lu*, ‘diary of an embassy to the East’, which was probably another version of *Ch’ao- hsien fu*.

The T’ae Tunam and moveable type editions of *Ch’ao-hsien fu* contain a preface written by Ou-yang P’eng, dated the 8th day of the last month of the 3rd year of Hung-chi, which was 27 January 1491 by the Gregorian calendar. The postface by Wang Cheng is dated 9th of the chrysanthemum moon of the Hung-chi year of the White Dog, which was 3 October 1489. Wang Cheng, whose literary style was Kuei-lin, ‘cinnamon forest’, also has his name at the head of the fu as chiao-k’an or, as we might say, ‘copy-reader’. Tung had arrived back in Peking with his draft of the poem in June or July 1488, so the preparations for publication had been leisurely.

The *fu* was thought worthy of inclusion in the 36,000-volume collection of Chinese literature, *Szu-k’u ch’uan-shu*, made by order of the Ch’ien-lung emperor in the late eighteenth century. In Korea it was highly esteemed. Many quotations from it occur in the early nineteenth-century compendium called *Haedong yoksa*. (One of these, about Korean [page 33] mulberry-bark paper, was confused by Gale in his *History of the Korean people* [1972 edition, chapter xv note 8] with a quotation in the same book from the K’ang-hsi emperor.) Modern Korean writers sometimes quote *Ch’ao-hsien fu* for its natural history; but as I shall suggest, it is not entirely reliable for this purpose.

The word *fu* is translated in English by different scholars with different terms, varying from ‘rhyme-prose’ to ‘rhapsody’ and ‘idyll’. It is true that *fu* is difficult to define, but it is unquestionably a poetic form, characterized by description rather than lyricism, and usually moralizing, or narrative. There is often a brief prose introduction explaining the genesis or purpose of the work, the body of which is composed mainly of balanced couplets, especially couplets with six or four character syllables in each line. In *Ch’ao-hsien fu* many couplets have nine or more characters to the line. The couplets rhyme with each other and are occasionally interspersed with short passages of poetic prose. A change of rhyme usually indicates a change of subject, and the thirty-three paragraph-cum-stanzas thus formed usually end with a piece of poetic prose.

Fu are famous for alliteration, punning and other word-play, lush allusion, and exhilarating lists. Ch’ao-hsien fu has these things, but even where I have recognized them I have not always attempted to preserve them in the translation. I have been at pains to preserve the parallelism as far as I could, but have not tried to reproduce the length of the lines. Whenever the rhyme changes I have spaced the verses widely so as to indicate the paragraph-stanzas.

The introductory prose paragraph tells how the fu came to be written. The verses proper begin with a scanty geographical survey of the peninsula, followed by a passage describing Korean laws and society, praising their confucian correctness. Then the journey from Uiju to Seoul is described. There is not much more to the description than a list of places passed through, with short accounts of Pyongyang, city of Ch’i Tzu, and Kaesong, the old capital, stressing confucian ideals in both places. The arrival of the embassy at Seoul and the ceremonies by which it was received both outside the city gates and in the palace are recounted in detail With typical Chinese balance between passion for gastronomy and passion for etiquette, even greater detail is provided in the [page 34] description of the state banquets. These are the centre-pieces of the work. The return journey to Uiju is dealt with in a few lines.

The last two-fifths of the fu are general notes on Korea beginning with a repetitious account of confucian education, then describing Seoul. its surrounding countryside, buildings and streets. This naturally leads into a record of the dress and customs of the people, both men and women. The last tenth of the book describes the fauna, flora, and typical products of the country. All is concluded in a self-deprecatory envoi.

Tung Yueh added his own notes to the poem. Annotating poems had long been an accepted Chinese practice, but to annotate one’s own verses was less usual. Tung is supposed to have claimed the precedent of Hsieh Ling-yun, a fifth-century poet of the Southern Sung, who annotated his own Shan-chu fu. In the Chinese and Korean editions these notes are printed in smaller type between the lines of the fu—which is how Gale was led to translate fu and notes consecutively. I have transferred the notes to the end of the work so as to emphasize the literary character of the fu. Such further notes as I have added myself, or taken from Yi Talchin, are chiefly literary references and explanations. They are contained within square brackets. I have numbered the lines into which I have divided the fu and added asterisks to those lines which have annotations, either by the author or by me.

Tung Yueh, literary name Kuei-feng, ‘baton peak’, was sent as envoy to Korea in 1488 to announce the succession of Hsiao Tsung, who became emperor of China in the autumn of 1487. Tung was a Kiangsi man who had graduated with third place in 1469, and was reckoned an able poet. When he visited Seoul he was 58 by Korean counting. His vice-envoy was 36 years old (by the same method of counting), a man from Nanking named Wang Ch’eng or Wang Han-ying, considered an able scholar of the classics. He had come top in the examination for the chin-shih degree in 1481. The choice of such men for the embassy was deliberate, because it was known in Peking that the king of Korea, although he was still six months short of his twenty-ninth birthday when the envoys arrived, was an eager patron of scholarship. H was the man we now call Songjong, whose reign, then in its nineteenth year, marked the culmination of the great publishing enterprises of fifteenth- [page 35] century Korea.

When Hsiao Tsung acceded to the Ming throne Songjong had promptly sent a high-ranking embassy of congratulation, headed by 61-year-old No Sasin, the second deputy prime-minister, with the later notorious Yu Chagwang as vice-envoy. Tung Yueh already knew that he was to lead the embassy to Seoul bearing the imperial rescript notifying the Korean king of the new reign, so he contacted No Sasin and his companions during their winter visit to Peking and enquired about travelling conditions and the general state of affairs he would meet. He seems to have fussed more than a little, and not to have welcomed the prospect. He was anxious to delay his start until the worst of the winter weather was over.

Eventually he left Peking in the middle of the first moon leap (about the beginning of March 1488), crossing the Yalu into Korea on the 25th of the 2nd moon (15 April). Here he was met by Ho Chong, the wonjopsa or royal escort, a senior statesman nearly as old as himself— 54 by the calendar. Both Tung and Wang had been pernicketty about ceremonial details, for ever finding fault and asking Koreans, ‘Do you think we are just Korean eunuchs?’ There was some point in this because Korean eunuchs living in China had taken part in previous Ming embassies. When Ho Chong appeared, however, the Chinese changed their manner. He impressed them by his bearing, but above all by his ceremonial propriety and his astonishingly detailed book-knowledge of Chinese geography. ‘You must have 10,000 volumes locked up in your breast!’ they gasped in delight. Ho reported to the court that he was favourably impressed by the two envoys.

The journey to Seoul was uneventful, save for inconveniences caused by the spring rains. There was a contretemps at Sinan when the envoys objected to being entertained by kisaeng. That sort of music, they claimed, was improper within three years of the demise of an emperor. At P’yongyang, however, where Song Hyon, today best known as author of *Yongjae ch’onghwa*, was governor, there was a large-scale entertainment and the envoys behaved ceremoniously. They made a point of visiting the shrine of Ch’i Tzu, where they bowed in reverence, though they were discouraged from going further from the city to visit his tomb. They noticed the shrine of Tan’gun near Ch’i [page 36] Tzu’s shrine, and when they realized what it was they made their reverences there too. The tablet of Tongmyong, founder king of Koguryo, was also venerated, and they commented on the mention of Wei Man in the Han shu. At the confucian temple they were surprised to find images of the sages—something that smacked of buddhism, and a confucianism that was less than pure.

Before they reached Pyongyang, as they were crossing the Taejong River, they had asked Ho if it were true that in Korea a son and his father would bathe in the same stream at the same time. Finding they had been wrongly informed and this impropriety did not exist, Wang said that the Chinese official records must be revised. Sometime later, on the 11th of the 3rd moon, while crossing the Imjin, the Chinese asked Ho for an account of Korean customs to help them get an accurate description. This was probably the reason for the book of customs presented to Tung by Ho and mentioned in rung’s notes.

They arrived in Seoul on the 13th of the 3rd moon and left on the 17th. Thus they were in Seoul for only four nights, 4-7 May 1488. On the second day they were taken to see the students at the Songgyun-gwan, and were deeply impressed. Then they had a picnic lunch by the Han River in the present Hannam-dong, before boating down stream to Yanghwa-jin (the present Second Han River Bridge). The day finished with an evening at the Mangwon-jong, a pavilion on the Seoul bank at Yanghwa, rebuilt and renamed only four years earlier. (See notes to lines 325 and 331).

The return to Uiju after the embassy was over was by the same route as they had come. Again they stopped for picnics on the way (the one at Ch’ongsu-san is described in the note to line 143). This time they spent long enough in Pyongyang to visit Ch’i Tzu’s tomb—though it rained that day—and to have pleasure outings on the Taedong River and elswhere. They crossed the Yalu back into China on the 5th of the 4th moon (24 May), having spent five and a half weeks on Korean soil. Ho and the envoys wept as they parted on the bank of the river, and the two Chinese implored Ho to visit Peking and show the calibre of men that could be found outside the Flowery Kingdom. Within a week or so the fu was being composed in Liao-tung, as is explained in the prose introductory paragraph to the work. [page 37]

These background facts are gathered from references to the embassy in the Yijo sillok and the Yollyo-sil kisul. The latter work contains a few anecdotes that help fill out the picture.

The envoys were genuinely impressed by the Koreans they met. Ho Chong impressed his Korean contemporaries too. He was not only a firm confucian scholar who had resisted Sejo’s favouring of buddhism, but an expert horseman and archer who held military appointments. So Kojong was another who earned personal praise from Tung, as well he might, because he as much as anyone was responsible for the great literary achievements of Songjong’s reign. He did not live to see the end of the year. Tung also went out of his way at the farewell ceremony at the Mo-hwa-gwan to compliment the septuagenarian Yi Kukpae, former mayor of Kangnung. He wrote flattering poems for Chong Nanjong, president of the Home Affairs Board, and for Yi Ui and Son Chunggun, two of the interpreters. The promising 22-year-old scholar-official Pak Chung-yong (Pak Huiin), who died only six years later, also earned an encouraging and complimentary verse. Yet on the way back to Uiju Tung praised the king to Ho and said, ‘Korea has a king but no subjects (worth the name).’ Tung’s brief relationship with Korea produced mingled attraction and repulsion. Almost in spite of himself, he was pleased and impressed. Korea was quaint, odd, rustic, more than provincial; but correct in its behaviour and impeccable in its attitude to the emperor and his envoys. The scholarship of Korea genuinely astonished him and he honestly wanted to set the records straight in China. His fu was a travelogue, but also the result of an emotional experience.

What is it worth to us now? It gives vivid pictures of the Seoul court in the late fifteenth century, during the early vigour of the Yi dynasty; it suggests that Korean architecture differed from China’s; it describes details of Korean dress, especially women’s headdress, that did not survive until the nineteenth century; it underlines some details of social change between the Koryo dynasty and the neo-confucian Yi state. Expert historians may find further points of interest, but it must be admitted that the work is superficial. Tung came for a short time in the spring, saw only the road from Uiju to Seoul and spent only four days in the capital. He repeatedly insists on the truthfulness of his account, but his descriptions of flora and fauna are of doubtful [page 38] value because they were subject both to his literary need to make the lists look good, and to the vagaries of Chinese nomenclature of animals and plants. It is practically impossible to be certain of the identity of some of the species he mentions, and his one-horned deer is only one indication of his zoological unreliability.

Even his high praise of Korean ritual smacks of the superficial to us, though it was of prime importance for him. Those speeches at the formal meetings, with their trite quotations from the Spring and Autumn Annals and Book of Songs, may have been less than spontaneous. Nevertheless, mutatis mutandis, anyone who knows Korea today will recognize the country Tung describes. The great tower over the Chong-no crossing has gone; the T’aep’yong-gwan has disappeared; the Kwanghwa-mun has been restored, but the skyline of Seoul has been ruined. Yet the Koreans and their courtesy are still the same.

**A FU ON KOREA**

A fu is an accurate and detailed description of a matter, and Korea is a country where the landscape, the customs, the people’s attitudes, even the shapes of familiar things differ from our own. When I travelled there for a month as imperial envoy, by observation and enquiry during the daytime I obtained information that I jotted clown at night on slips of paper that were put in my luggage and then forgotten. When the business of the embassy was finished and we were on the way back through Liao-tung, we stopped for a week at a government guesthouse, to recover from the fatigue of the eight stages of the journey from Uiju to that point, and so that the entourage could launder their clothes. During that week I came upon the slips of notes and had them checked and collated with what Wang Han-ying had recorded We deleted everything that was not germane to our embassy, but even so were not able to make our record concise. Nevertheless, we have taken every care to make it accurate, sincerely believing that we have avoided prolixity in writing this fu.

[page 39]

1 Ah! that Eastern Land,

Guardian state of our borders!

Bounded to the west by the Yalu,

To the east by the Sunrise Sea,

5 The ocean its southern door,

The Malgal its northern gate.\*

Its eight provinces in order

Have Kyonggi at their head,

Flanked by Ch’ungch’ong and Kyongsang,

10 Hwanghae and Kangwon;

Yongan playing the role

Of a wall that stands firm;

P’yongan with poor soil,

Cholla richest in produce.\*

15 The breadth of the land is 2,000 li, its length as much again.\*

In former times there were three or four states,

now there is only one;\* For it has not trundled on

in the crumbling ruts of its ancestors: It has received the high favour of the Emperor.

He permitted its establishment,

20 A subsidiary state with laws of its own.\*

The Odes and the Documents are known there,\*

There are academies and schools:

Scholars, though poor,

banish bookworms and compose with elegance,\*

Statesmen, like p’eng.

soar aloft and transform into leopards;\*

25 Farmers labour at sowing and reaping,

with practised and wonderful skill;

Officials all follow the sages,

receiving their stipends in farm-land.

Castration is an unknown punishment,

thieves must wear the cangue.\*

Trade is based on grain and hempen cloth, [page 40]

Stores of which are reckoned as wealth;

30 The use of silver and gold is forbidden,

Save in trifling amounts.\*

Landtax is reckoned in units of kyol,

Four bags of grain for four days of ox-ploughing.\*

Scholars are trained in grades of fixed numbers,

35 That live in two dormitories and eat twice a day.\*

The two lower ranks of officials may not wear patterned brocade;\*

Each man has his own house, with cellars for hemp and rice.\*

Their finest practice is a national banquet,

Dispensing grace to all over eighty, both men and women.\*

40 Sons observe three years of mourning for parents,

Even servants get leave to perform this filial duty.\*

In the capital the Office of Supreme Excellence

Provides coffins to assist the poor;\*

In the villages cups are reverently raised at the drinking rites

45 With orderly vessels and moderation in wine.\*

Go-betweens arrange their marriages,

But a concubine’s son, be he never so learned,

Cannot enter the ranks of the gentry.\*

Families all aspire to the hatpins and headgear of rank.

50 And if one of gentle birth does something improper,

Society declares he lacks li.\*

No household is allowed to keep gambling gear,\*

But all have home shrines for ancestral rites:

Nobles make sacrifice for three generations,

55 Gentry and commoners only for two.

All these customs were handed down from Ch’i Tzu,

Imitations of what China is known to do.\*

They build fortified walls

That climb over the hills,

60 Sometimes stretching over the slopes

To curl back and enclose the towns.

Big ones rise high with soaring parapets, [page 41]

Even small ones have imposing gate-pavilions.

We journeyed from Uisun through Sunch’on,\*

65 Past the towering peaks of the Dragon-and-Tiger,

and Bear’s Bones,\*

And Kwak-san that touches the Milky Way;\*

Then leaving Sinan, we crossed the Taejong,\*

Past the noble crags of the Horse and Phoenix,\*

And Anju, that overhangs the flowing stream.\*

70 Neither Sukch’on county nor Sunan township

Is set in the flatlands;

The pavilions of Reverent Peace and Quiet Repose\*

Are both in pleasant places.

But the Western Capital sits in a broad plain,

75 So it was called P’yongyang, ‘the flat placed’.

When the kingdom was founded the boundary wall

Was built high by the riverside,

But sometime later it was moved to the north,

To a place of steep mountains nearby.\*

80 All the cities we saw before Had dry red earth,

Here and there some rich yellow,

But always mingled with sand and stones.

Near P’yongyang alone

85 Was the soil rich and loamy:

There were traces of fields with ditches and baulks;\*

Rice and hemp, pulse and barley could be grown.

There plants grow thick

And trees grow tall,\*

90 Cicadas sing among the leaves,

Wild-flowers bloom in the grass.

Kumsu Peak is linked to far Yongsan’s summit,\*

Pusok Pavilion peers down on the Pae River.

The ch’i-lin’s hoofprints are still in the rocky cave,\*

95 Stone camels and sheep crumble on the mountain ridges. [page 42]

Ancient palace sites remain,

Great pine-bridges span the streams:

Thoughts of former glories now long passed,

Strike a chill as when sunshine suddenly fades.

100 There are images in the confucian shrine,

Decked out in robes and headdresses;

The blue-robed scholar class

Crowded along the roadside

Wearing soft gauze caps,

105 Girdles that fluttered like willows in the wind,

And leather shoes,

Made low, with pointed toes.

If we stopped, they bowed;

When we passed on, they came after us.\*

110 To the east is the shrine of Ch’i Tzu,

With wooden tablet correctly installed,

And inscribed:

Second Founder of Ch ao-hsien:

For they revere Tan’gun as their national founder,

115 And treat Ch’i Tzu as continuing the succession.\*

His tomb is at T’o-san,

Southwest of the city wall.\*

It has two stone guardians,

Capped and clothed like officials of T’ang,

120 Blotched with a mottling of lichens and moss—

Patterned, as it were, with a coat of brocade.

On either side are stone sheep, kneeling to be suckled,

The epitaph stands on a tortoise with lifted head.

A round pavilion is prepared for worshippers’ prostrations,

125 Loose stones are piled up as a boundary wall.

All is intended to show gratitude,

Good enough in its way, but carried out crudely.

Once the Taedong is crossed, [page 43]

The mountains grow higher,

130 And near to Saengyang

The road twists round a corner

Where an old campsite spreads in the shade of the pines,\*

Like so many ancient rounded graves.

Then we caught sight of the waves of the sea,

135 And our hearts felt enlarged.\*

The great Songbul Pass has a huge cairn of stones,

And reaches northward to Chabi, south to Parhae.\*

The Yuan used to draw the frontier here ‘

And our Ming has not bothered to alter the map.\*

140 Yonjin, Komsu,\*

Pongsan, Yongch’on,\*

Hwanch’wi’s soaring beauty;\*

Ch’ongsu, where the clouds gather,\*

The benign air of Posan,

145 The waterfall of Kumam,\*

Songgo, Songak,

Ch’onma, Pagyon—\*

At last we came to Kaesong and stayed there

In the place that used to be the capital.

150 The site of Wibong Gate is rubble on the northern slopes,\*

Pannyong Hill rises from the eastern paddies.\*

Here the dragon crouched in the Spirit Pool,

There the waterfall drooped from the Long Stream.\*

Ten thousand dwellings still,

155 A hundred rice-chandlers,

Public offices with grades of dignity duly appointed,

The shrine-school with statues of sages solemnly displayed.\*

Fragrant oenanthe grows in half-moon pools,\*

Herbs drive the silverfish out ot old books,

160 Wineshop flags flutter on the spring breeze,

Pipes and strings sound beneath the night moon.

The population is great, much more than in other towns;

The atmosphere crowded, (though less than in Pyongyang): [page 44]

For the Wang were kings here for four hundred years,

165 Till King Yo went crazy, and the country was committed to Yi.

Koryo was the name of this third or fourth dynasty,

But when Yi Tan received the kingdom,

He begged to revive the old name of Choson.\*

Crossing the Imjin, we rested at Faju,\*

170 A high place with clear air, whence Seoul can be glimpsed.

Then we passed Pyokche and came to Hongje,\*

Where the royal demesne stands off to the east,

Ennobled by the splendid peaks of Samgak-san,

Lustrous green from the needles of myriad pines.\*

175 Thousands of feet high, the mountain walls to the north—

thousands of soldiers could not force their way in;

One road alone pierces the pass to the west—

one rider alone can go through at a time.\*

Mount ins stand round the city walls,

grand as soaring phoenixes in glory;\*

Sand piles about the pinetree roots,

white as driven snow in the sunshine.\*

The Mohwa-gwan stands on a southwestern slope,

180 The Sungnye Gate faces straight to the south:\*

The former a resting-place for imperial envoys,\*

The latter the radial point for royal justice.\*

When the imperial rescript arrived,

The King in robe and crown

came outside the city to meet it,

185 Ministers in robes and cap;

stood by like swans with necks outstretched;

The alleys were filled with milling crowds, young and old,

The buildings adorned with pendant cloths in many patterns.\*

Music sounded, now solemn, now gay;

Gong frames stood lavishly ornamented;

190 Incense smoke wreathed like clouds of morning mist,

Peach blossom trembled like silk on the eastern breeze;

There was constant uproar of jostling carts and horses, [page 45]

Like ceaseless sport of leaping fish and dragons.\*

Thousands of lanterns lit a fairy stage,

that dimmed the rising sun;\*

195 Monkeys carried babies on their backs

to sip the waters of Wu-shan,\*

Countless tumblers capered

like bears of Hsiang-kuo,\* Long-winded notes sounded

like Arab mares drawing salt-drays,\*

Tightrope tripping was like water-fairies walking on waves,\*

Pole-running like hill-goblins leaping the rafters,\*

200 Men dressed as lions, completely covered in pony-pelts,

Danced like phoenixes, sporting feathers from pheasant tails.

No dances we saw in Hwanghae or Pyongyang

Could compare with these for skill or for spectacle.\*

From the T’aepy’ong-gwan we could see the great bell tower\*

205 Dominating the city, top-heavy above the surrounding streets.

We feasted and rested,

Then strolled and relaxed.

My sleeping-place was set up with an eight-fold screen,\*

Its beaded blinds held half-rolled by tiny hooks,

210 At cockcrow servants waited on us with morning greetings,\*

And as we rode forth, outriders called to clear our way.

Minions were provided to run our errands,

Paper and ink for exchanging ve:ses,

Because the emperor is honoured in his envoy

215 And the rites are meticulously observed.

The pattern of the palaces

Is the fame as in China,But the paint is cinnabar\*

And the roof of round-tiles.\*

220 The three ceremonial gateways lack mother-of-pearl decoration,\*

But the throne-hall windows are filled with leek-green glass.\*

The stairs to the hall arc strictly kept to seven steps,\* [page 46]

Fine gauze fills the fretwork of its eight great doors.\*

Because of the high mountain spurs,

225 The palaces stand apart from each other;\*

And none of them built on flat sites,

For the sake of the terrain’s geomantic power.

When the rescript arrived at the palace,

The king himself kotowed,

230 With the crown prince and ministers

Attending on either side.

A marquee was set up on the throne-room steps,

With an awning stretched over the terrace.\*

Ceremonial weaponry was all on display,

235 The music conducted by the rapping-stick.\*

Three times all crouched like tigers

raising the Sung-shan cheer,\*

Both classes behaved like phoenixes,

performing the lion’s pavane.

We did not understand the language,

But we were moved by the courtesy.\*

240 The reception area was fully prepared

With the presents all displayed,

And places set to east and west,

Those for the guests and these for the hosts.\*

The ceremony ended with mutual reverences,

245 Then words were exchanged through interpreters.

The king said, ‘It is right that our tiny land

should be a frontier guard,

Presumptuous though that be

to the vastness of the imperial favour.

Our every drop of water and every grain of dust

can never repay it.

Though we perish utterly,

how can we ever make recompense?

250 But daily we sing the songs of Chou,

hymning the imperial grace [page 47]

And from our distance pray

for the splendid sunrise of the emperor;

Today we sing the happy sight of the lowland mulberries,\*

Now expound the protocol of the Spring and Autumn Classic,

Which says subject states must give

the place of honour to the imperial envoy—\*

255 How much more glory then, for you who are close to the

Son of Heaven?’

In courtyards and gateways

We walked always on matting.

Guests and hosts were separately placed

On thick piles of cushions,

260 The guests’ embroidered with coiled dragons,

scales all erect;

The king’s distinguished by flying phoenixes,

wings spread wide.\*

The bowls were gold, silver, brass, and ceramic;

The food the rarest produce of earth and sea.

The host offered the guests wine in Chinese fashion,

265 We returned the compliment with banqueting manners.\*

Honeycakes were arranged in five-layered piles,

Platters heaped up at least a foot high.

Dishes were edged with fences of silver or brass,

festooned with dangling green gems,

And covered with napkins in flower-petal shapes,

fluttering like brilliant phoenix wings.\*

270 Wooden and bamboo vessels, for appearance’s sake,

had big ones in front, small ones behind;

Everything displayed to be seen from the front,

tall things outside and short ones within.\*

There were titbits and meat stewed with rice,\*

Various pickles and meat cooked in soy.

The wine was made from ordinary rice:\*

275 Scarcely a quality to vie with the Ch’ing-chou secretary,

Though a full cup’s bouquet would waft [page 48]

beyond the P’ing-yuan post-station fence.\*

The tables were set in a row,

Covered with silk in the centre.\*

Right and left wings made three tables,

280 All laden with choicest meats.

Near the feast was a seat set apart,

where the king himself served the food\*

The trays were filled with meats

which the courtiers themselves carved up.\*

To show they were specially killed beasts,

the hearts were proffered,

And from the plump sweet pieces,

sausages were concocted.\*

285 Offering of wine continued, first by the princes,\*

Then by the presidents of the Six Boards of Government.\*

When drink was presented, it was five bowls each time;\*

And bowls were piled up, but not more than a foot high.\*

If a table was too small, food was removed to the mat,\*

290 When strong meat had been eaten,

they served water-plant shoots \*

Officials, like swans, waited inside and out,\*

Eunuchs and interpreters knelt close at hand.\*

Three banquets were held at the T’aep’yong-gwan,

Each with the same formalities undiminished.

295 And one was held at the Injong Hall,

A feast that was much more elaborate and splendia.\*

When our mission was done,

we were eager to leave Korea and go home.

The king went out first to the Mohwa-gwan,

and waited there with a banquet.

He gave repeated instructions, unstinting in courtesy,

300 More than ever correct and punctilious,

Speaking again and again of nobility,

Reiterating expressions of thanks, [page 49]

Quoting great thoughts from Mencius,\*

Mistakenly saying how good we were.

305 He mentioned Yen Izu’s advice to his lord,\*

Deploring his own inability to match it;

And he tried to bid us farewell with a poem:

It was a pity we could not understand it.\*

For a month we travelled Korea’s hills,

310 But had only five days with Seoul and its people.

We could not learn all there was to know,

But record here virtually all we saw.

The national Confucian College,

Has hills behind and is bordered by streams.

315 It consists of front and rear halls

With wings each side of the court.\*

The officers are two grades of szu-ch’eng,

The scholars lodge in upper and lower dormitories.\*

There is nothing to compare in Pyongyang,

320 Nothing to equal it in Kaesong:

No statues disfigure the rites,

The students become friends at their studies.

The scenery of the capital province

Is best at the River Han.

325 A high pavilion hinders the passing clouds,

The green water is a liquid mirror.

The ferry at Yanghwa

Is busy with traffic,

Funnelling provisions from the eight provinces,

330 As it were through the throat of the capital city.

Looking down the long stream from that tallest pavilion,

One sees the far borders of Paekche.

I left the boat here and rode out for a day,

Enjoying myself in the pleasures of a century.

\* \* \* [page 50]

335 Side streets and main streets alike

Are straight and unbending.

Rafters are cut sheer with the eaves’ edge

On the magnificent buildings.

Every house has high walls to protect against wind and fire,

340 Every room a north window to relieve the heat of summer.

Exteriors are controlled by government rules,

So rich houses do not differ from poor ones;

Interiors are arranged as each man desires,

And so reflect personal taste.\*

345 Government buildings also

All look alike,

With their principal halls

And their decorated angles,

Railed pavilions like wings

350 And dwarf statues on the roof-ridges.

Both public and private buildings are adorned

With indifferent ink-paintings;

The middle of double doors, where they meet,

Bears the sign of emerging creation.\*

355 Not all, perhaps, are like this;

I write only of what I saw.

Poor houses have walls woven of bamboo,

Completed by tying with rope,

Then roofed with a thatch of reeds

360 Before the holes in the walls are filled with lumps of mud.\*

Some have straggling thorns at the eaves,

And some are no bigger than grainbins.

A man may not fly 8,000 feet up like the phoenix,

Yet he can make a home on a twig like the tailorbird.\*

365 As for the wealthy houses:

They are all roofed with round-tiles,

And have wings to east and west,

Whose roof-ridges run north and south. [page 51]

All are plastered with earth

370 And the roofs before and behind the main hall

Are lower than those in the centre.\*

The doors open into the eastern wing,

Reached from the ground by steps,

Leading through to the main building.\*

375 The sites are low and damp,

So boards are spread for protection,

With rushes strewn on them for sitting.\*

I was surprised to observe

No pigs are kept in the houses,

380 No fences built round the vegetable patches,

And loads carried only by oxen and horses.\*

Animals are kept, but no sheep.

Goral and fish for eating are caught

By snares in the hills and bamboo traps in the rivers,\*

385 While plants are gathered in streams and creeks.\*

Some rural folk grow old without once tasting pork,

Then chance on it at feasts,

like dreams of trampling kale-yards.\*

When a man dies, he is buried in the mountains,

But the gentry have graves in fields near their homes.\*

390 These are all odd customs of this particular region,

Needing neither deep investigation nor detailed discussion.

Men show by their hatstrings

Their high or low rank.\*

Children keep all their hair,

395 Older and younger alike;

Little babies have it loose on their shoulders,

Six-year-olds wear two plaits like horns,

Out of respect for their bodily heritage preserving every hair,

As is easily seen before they are old enough to wear hats.

400 Common folk wear straw hats

With beaded chin-strings, [page 52]

Some round, some square,

But all stained black.

Coolies wear blue coats with split seams

and feathers in their hats;

405 Ordinary people wear several layers of hemp

and long flowing sleeves.

They dislike noise and are quiet in the streets—

To prevent disturbances pikemen stand at courtyard gates.\*

Shoes are of leather—walking in mud is no worry;

Stockings are bound to trousers—crossing water gives no trouble.

410 Clothes are all plain white, mostly coarse hemp,

And their trousers are usually crumpled and creased.

They carry loads on their backs, bent over,

humping along like basking tortoises;\*

To take orders from superiors, they squat on their heels,

shuffling like waddling ducks.\*

Twenty-four bearers are required for one chair,

415 A hundred changes for making a thirty li stage,

And since great weights are too much for the shoulders alone,

Such burdens must be carried with the help of the hands.\*

Women wear their hair over their ears,

But none of them was seen with earrings.

420 They wear a round white kerchief on the head

That covers the forehead and eyes.\*

The wealthy and noble veil their faces with black silk,\*

The poor and lowly show their calves below their white skirts.

The powerful are permitted to ride in a chair,

425 Others, however rich, may only ride on a horse.\*

Socks and shoes are hemp and leather,

the feet natural, not bound;\*

Skirts and dresses are hemp and silk,

the sleeves wide, but not long.

The coat reaches down to the knees,

The skirt hangs down to the ground, [page 53]

430 Etiquette makes an inferior

sit on her heels before her superior;

Custom makes the common women

carry burdens on their heads:

Some carry pots of water thus without a supporting hand,

Some balance measures of grain and move at a steady run.

I write simply what I saw,

435 And not what I did not see.

I had indeed heard

That women bathe in streams with the men,

And that widows work as post-station slaves.

When first I heard these things I was surprised,

440 Now I know that such practices have changed:

They are truly imbued with imperial grace,

And would not cross the broad Han on a raft.\*

Many the birds: pheasant, doves, finches and quails;\*

Many the beasts: red deer and spotted, roebuck and water-deer.\*

445 For seafood: tangle, laver, oysters and clams;\*

For fish: mandarins, grey mullet, cornet and octopus.\*

Carp and crucian abound in the fresh streams and pools,\*

Egret and heron often nest in the courtyards and gardens.

Cockle-like ormer is the sweetest food from the sea,\*

450 Coiled purple fern the finest herb of the hills.\*

Curious plants fill brooks and fields

with scent of orchidaceous slopes:

Solomon’s seal, ground cherry, purple cress, white artemisia,\*

Water-pepper shoots and angelica buds,

Pine bark for bread and wild ginseng for cakes—\*

455 All are fit for the dinner-table,

All good as titbits with wine.

Fruits are pears, chestnuts, jujubes, persimmons and hazels,

pine-nuts, apricots and peaches,

Oranges, tangerines, yellow plums, red plums,

pomegranates and grapes.\* [page 54]

Skins of tiger, leopard, roe, fox, and deer,

raccoon-dog, wild-cat and sable\*

460 Make beautiful rugs, coverlets, quivers and bow-cases.

Flowers are red rose and rhododendron,

peony and tree-peony,

White rose, lilac, bush-cherry and pittosporum.\*

By the middle of spring, cherry blossom is finished;

Before spring is over, wild pear blossom has shattered.\*

465 Plants riot in luxuriant abundance,

Trees grow twisted and bent.\*

Some old pines are as strong as fir,

When they are used for torches, no resin will flow.\*

The flowers of pines are gathered each spring,

470 The nuts eaten only in alternate years.\*

Small pines are used to bridge streams,

Large ones make pillars for shrines,\*

For the species are different

And each has appropriate uses.

475 The five metals, sources I never learnt,

but brass is commonest;\*

The five colours have each their own use,

but crimson is forbidden;\*

Of the five flavours, vinegar and soy are most esteemed;

Of the five tones neither rhyme nor pitch is observed.\*

480 For writing they use wolf-tail brushes,\*

For fighting prefer cherry-wood bows.\*

Cloth is woven of hemp and ramie,

though where the best came from I could not discover,

Paper manufactured of mulberry bark and cocoons,

and the best produced by a fulling process.\*

Such cloth is as fine as close-woven silk,

Such paper so thin it will roll in tight scrolls;

485 Soaked in oil, it will keep out the rain,\*

Joined in widths it will keep out the wind.\* [page 55]

Although it is said that the men wear hats in T’ang style,

They do so no longer.

Their miniature ponies are not three feet high;\*

490 And only Korea has five-leaved ginseng and flowered mats,\*

Which at New Year and other times

They send as offerings to the suzerain emperor.

For a hundred and twenty years

Korea has received frequent and generous gifts,

495 Bestowed, of course, by imperial favour,

But acknowledging her uninterrupted tribute.

My song, though in verse, is a straightforward record

That hardly accounts for my month-long stay.\*

Moreover my wit, threadbare as old stockings,\*

500 Is meagre as the wispiest fish in the sea.

I have done my best with rapid brush

To describe the Empire’s prosperity,

And if only I have seen and heard aright,\*

I may perhaps bear scrutiny without shame.

[page 56]

**NOTES**

*Numbers refer to lines of the text.*

Introduction: geography, history, laws

6 The country is bounded the sea to the south and east, by Manchuria to the north and west, with the Mao-lien and Hai-hsi tribes due north. [The Malgal were a Tungusic people of north-eastern Manchuria.]

14 Kyonggi, Ch’ungch’ong, Kyongsang, Hwanghae, Kangwon, Yongan, P’yongan and Cholla are the names of the provinces. P’yongan is the former territory of Pyonhan, Kyongsang of Chinhan, and Cholla of Mahan. [Yongan, ‘lasting peace’, was Hamgyong. The setting of Pyon-han in P’yongan is wrong: it was in the south of the peninsula.]

15 According to geographical accounts the country is 2,000 li from east to west, 4,000 from north to south.

16 Silla, Paekche and Tamna all now belong to Korea. [Tamna was Cheju.]

20 In the second year of Hung-wu of the present dynasty [1369] the king of Koryo, Wang Chon [Kongmin], sent congratulations on the accession of the emperor and was authorized to govern by the bestowal of a golden seal with a tortoise pendant.

21 [The Odes and Documents are the pre-confucian classics, Shih ching and Shu ching.]

23 [These phrases are cliches.]

24 They keep the imperial calendar. Provincial examinations are held every fourth year, and royal examinations in the year after the provincial examinations. [P eng is the mythical roc-like bird of Chinese legend (see Chuang tzu 1). The superior man changes like the leopard’ is a phrase from the I ching (hexagram 49). The information about the intervals between public examinations is one of the two points commented on by the Tongguk yoji sungnam editors as being wrong and due to failure on the part of the interpreters.]

27 Palace eunuchs are not castrated: those who are injured in childhood or congenitally defective are employed in this function, and so there are few of them. Thieves are not treated leniently. I enquired of three or four interpreters about these matters, and they all agreed.

31 The people are not allowed to hoard coinage, gold or silver. Those who amass grain or hempen cloth are counted wealthy. These commodities [page 57] form the basis of their commerce. Hence there are few greedy officials.

33 The kyol is the amount of land an ox can plough in four days [i.e. the tax is four bags per kyol.]

35 The Songgyun-gwan [national confucian college in Seoul] normally accommodates 500 men. Every three years those selected for exposition of the classics are named saengwon, those who study poetry become chinsa. Those who are promoted from the four schools, South, Central, East, and West of the capital, are called sunghak. The four schools do not include one called the North School, out of deference to the court. Saengwon and chinsa live in the upper school and sunghak in the lower school. Saengwon and chinsa degrees are given at the chonsi examinations. Those who go on to pass the royal examinations known as singnyon get state appointments or else are maintained at the Songgyungwan. Singnyon examinations are held every three years and thirty-three men are selected.

36 Junior officials all wear plain silk, not hemp. The silk is deep blue in colour, and worn only on festal occasions, not at ordinary times.

37 These cellars are like those of Liao-tung.

39 Every year in late autumn the king feasts people of eighty and over in the palace. The queen entertains the old ladies in her quarters.

41 National custom requires three years of mourning in a hut of reeds. Servants are usually permitted to mourn thus for 100 days, but some who ask for three years are allowed the full time.

42 [The Office of Supreme Excellence or Kwihu-so, was set up in 1406 to make and sell coffins and to undertake funerals for ordinary people. It was abolished in 1777. Its name came from Tseng-tzu’s words in Analects I ix: ‘Reverent funerals and perpetual sacrifices maintain the moral force of the people in the highest excellence (kuei-hou, Korean Kwi-hu).]

43 Most Korean coffins are made of pine. It appears that suitable material is scarce, so this office is set up in the capital to provide assistance.

45 The rite is the same as in China, save that the name of the king is substituted for the name of the Ming emperor.

48 Secondary marriages are customarily considered shameful. Sons born of them are like the sons of fallen women, and neither are permitted to enter public service as gentlemen.

51 Since long ago officials have been grouped into the ‘yangban’, or ‘two classes’, civil and military. The sons of yangban are permitted only to read books, and may not practise crafts. If their behaviour is not good, their countrymen all criticize them. [Li is the confucian virtue of courtesy, involving all forms of ritual behaviour and propriety.]

52 Paduk [the ‘pebble game’ or Japanese go], backgammon and such like are forbidden to the young people of the nation.

57 All the above matters can be verified in the illustrated album of customs [page 58] provided by the Secretary of the Board of the Civil Office, Ho Chong. [See introduction. For Ch’i Tzu, see below lines 110 ff.]

The journey

64 Uisun is a rest-house on the east bank of the Yalu at Uiju. The Yalu is the boundary between China and Korea. Sunch’on is a county seat east of Uiju. [See poem YJSN LIII 11b]

65 The Dragon-and-Tiger is Yongho, the hill above Yongch’on county town; Bear’s Bones is the hill behind Ch’olsan county seat. [See poem YJSN UH 20b]

66 Kwaksan is a county. There is a fortress on a mountain-top there called in the records Nunghan-song, ‘Milky Way Fort’. [See poem YJSN LIII 40b]

67 Sinan is a rest-house at Chongju, with a pavilion in front of it. The Taejong is a river in Pakch’5n county. It was there that Chumong [legendary founder of Koguryo] during his flight southwards came upon a bridge of fishes and turtles. It is also called the Pakch’on River. [See poem YJSN LIV 13a. At Chongju Tung watched archery before the Chongwon Pavilion, whose name he changed to Yonghun-nu. [See YJSN LII 25b]

68 The Horse (Ch’onma) is the mountain behind Chongju, the Phoenix (Pongdu) that behind Kasan county seat. On this pass are two points called Hyosong and Manghae. All these are points on the envoy’s journey. [See poems YJSN LII 34a and 35a]

69 Anju overlooks the Sal River, above which is the Paeksang Pavilion, where the Sui general was defeated when he came to conquer Koguryo [in 621]. The same river is also called the Ch’ongch’on. Inside the city is a rest-house called Anhung-gwan. [See poem YJSN LII 19b]

70 [See poem YJSN LII 12b]

72 The guesthouse of ‘Reverent Peace, (Sungnyong-gwan) has a pavilion in front of it. ‘Quiet Repose’(Anjorig-gwan) belongs to Sunan magistracy. [See poem YJSN LII 31b]

Pyongyang

79 P’yongyang was already in existence before Ch’i Tzu was enfeoffed here. In Koguryo times its low site was considered disavantageous and another fortification was built to the north. Eastwards it overlooks the Taedong River, northwards it reaches to Kumsu-san. After Chi Tzu’s days, in the time of Eastern Han, his successor was a man named Chun, who was chased out by Wei Man of Yen, and took his settlement to Mahan territory. He has no descendants today.

86 What appear to be straight paths within the old city are traces of the [page 59] ‘well-field’ system established by Ch’i Tzu. [The well-field system divided square plots into nine equal parts, cultivated by eight men who contributed the produce of the ninth part to the state. The map of a field thus divided has the shape of the Chinese character for ‘a well’.]

89 The willows here are as tall as in China.

93 Yongsan is a mountain also called Kuryong-san or Noyang-san, twenty li north of Kumsu-san. There are ninety-nine pools at the top of it. The Taedong River used to be called Pae River. [See poem YJSN LI 10b]

94 The Kirin (CWi-lin) Stone is below the Pusok Pavilion. Legend has it that King Tongmy5ng entered the earth by riding a ch’i-lin horse into this cave. When he emerged he ascended into heaven from the Choch’on Rock, where the horse’s footprints can still be seen. There are remains of stone horses and bronze camels among the brambles. [See poem YJSN LI 17a]

109 The scholars all wore soft gauze caps, and had girdles over their blue coats. Their low leather shoes had pointed toes.

Ch’i Tzu’s shrine

115 Tan’gun founded a state here in chia-ch’en of Yao [2297 BC — not the date most frequently given], but later went to Kuwol-san [in Hwanghae province] and that is all we know of him. The Koreans have built a shrine to him as founder of the nation and sacrifice to him there. It stands to the east of Ch’i Tzu’s shrine, and the tablet in it is inscribed: Spirit tablet of Tan’gun, Founder of Choson. [Ch’i Tzu, ‘the viscount of Ch’i known in Korean as Ki-ja, was said to have left China when the Chou dynasty began, because he could not forsake his loyalty to the ousted Shang. The story of his founding a state at P’yongyang is no longer accepted as history. See poem YJSN LI 29a.]

117 Ch’i Tzu’s tomb is on Tosan, a high hill not half a li southwest of the city. [See poem YJSN LI 29b]

The journey toward Kaesong

133 Tradition has it that this camp was made by the T’ang army when it came to subdue Koguryo, but there is no system or orderly arrangement of the mounds. It is all very much like Chi-chou. When I first saw Chi- chou I was puzzled and asked an old soldier, who said that when the Tang emperor was subduing Korea he made these false piles of grain. They were heaps of earth covered with rice, comparable to the stratagem of Tan Tao-chi, who pretended that sand was rice. [The reference is to a story about a Sung general during the division between the North and South of China in the 5th century AD.] This Korean camp seemed to be the same sort of thing. [page 60]

135 We were now in Hwanghae province, which is mountainous to the north and has the sea to its south.

137 Songbul and Chabi are passes.

139 Songbul Pass has mountains to the north and the sea to the south. The peaks are so high they go above the clouds. At one barrier there was a great pile of discarded foundation stones from an old brick fortress. I asked an interpreter what it was and he said that Chabi Pass, to the north, had been the national boundary in Yuan times, and this had been a frontier post. If that were the case, Pyongyang and everything east of the Yalu would have been part of China, and Korea deprived of rather more than one whole province. Our Ming T’ai Tsu accepted this as the boundary, but it ought, I respectfully submit, to be reconsidered with reference to antiquity. The pass belongs to Hwangju county.

140 A river and a rest-house. [See poem YJSN XLI 34a]

141 A county-town and a rest-house. [See poem YJSN XLI 23b]

142 Hwanclrwi is the ‘pavilion amid the greenery’, in the government rest- house at Pongsan. [See poem YJSN XLI 33b]

143 The mountains form cliffs by the river. I changed the first character of the name Ch’ongsu from one meaning ‘brilliance’ to one meaning ‘shallots’ and wrote a commemorative essay on it. [The text is in YJSN XLI 12a 8 ; the contents are as follows. The envoys passed the pretty valleys of Ch’ongsu-san with their bubbling streams, strange rocks and twisted pines, late in the afternoon as they were hurrying towards Posan reat- house, still about an hours journey further on. When they arrived at Posan, Ho said how sorry he was that they had not been able to stop at Ch’ongsu and enjoy the place, and was pleased when the Chinese agreed to pause there on the return journey. Ten days later, on the 22nd of the 3rd moon (13 May), they arrived at Posan before noon. Accompanied by Yun, governor of Hwanghae — a man with an impressive beard — they set out for Ch’ongsu, where they found tents had been set up in readiness. The tents irked the Chinese, who strolled off towards a stream. It was then that Tung, fancying the peak resembled a green onion, suggested changing the name of the place. H5 promised the name should be changed. (It was.) Straddling the rocks, they sat and watched some fishermen at work, naked except for short trunks (‘calf-nose trunks). Suddenly they heard the sound of pipes echoing down the valley, and Wang spied two soldiers who had clambered up a huge rock, like monkeys’, at the order of the governor. This diversion was much appreciated. The envoys returned to the tents to eat broiled roe-venison and small fishes. Some of the fishes were so pathetically small that Tung had them released. He recited part of an essay on pisciculture by Ch’eng I, and was satisfied that in the future the fishermen would use nets of larger mesh. [page 61] The rest of the afternoon was passed in drinking wine and enjoying the scenery. They spent the night at Yongch’on. Ho, Wang and Yun all wrote poems. Wang’s poem (YJSN XLI 13b) is virtually a metrical version of Tung’s chi.]

145 Posan and Kumam are rest-houses belonging to the county of P’yongsan. [See poems XLI 17b; 18a]

147 Songgo, Songak, and Ch’onma are mountains, Pagyon is a waterfall on Songak-san. Songgo and Ch’onma have five peaks that pierce the sky to the north-east. Three of them are like men sitting in a row, the middle one taller than those on either side, which look like attendants. They are always wrapped in mist, and so lovely that I wrote a poem about them. [See poem YJSN IV 16a]

150 The Wibong Gate was the gate of Wang Kon’s palace.

151 The tombs to the east are those of ancestors of the present Yi Kings. [This is the other point criticized by the editors of the Tongguk yoji sungnam, who attribute the error to a misunderstanding with the interpreters.]

153 At the top of the hill is the Dragon Pool waterfall (Yongch’u P’okp’o). Tradition says that when Wang Kon was founding his capital there was a drought. The king himself came to pray at this spot, but nothing happened, until a magician summoned a dragon which rose out of the water and presented itself before the king, who struck it and knocked off several of its scales. Those scales are said still to be preserved in the national treasury. Yi Ui, one of the interpreters, was a Kaesong man and had already told me all this and offered to ask the king to get the scales brought out for me to see; but I thought there was no point in it and made him drop the matter.

157 What is now the county school was the national college (Songgyun- gwan) in Koryo times. The images of the sages are like those in P’yong- yang. The guest-pavilion was the guest house for the imperial envoys during the Wang dynasty, and so it is taller and much finer than the other rest-houses. [See poem YJSN IV 14b]

158 [This line is virtually a quotation from Shih ching IV ii 3 i, and has become a classic cliche for training scholars.]

168 In 1389 King Kongmin of Koryo went mad, killed a great many people and lost the loyalty of the nation. The people urged his servitor and minister Yi Songgye to take over the government and sent the councillor Cho Pan to ask for imperial approval. After that Songgye changed his name to Tan and asked for the country’s name to be changed. The emperor replied that Ch’aohsien [Korean: Choson] was the oldest and best name for the people of the east and ordered that Korea should be called Ch’ao-hsien. When imperial approval for the change of dynasty [page 62] was received, the capital was moved to the present Hansong (Seoul) and Kaesong became an open city.

Arrival at Seoul

169 The Imjin is a river, belonging to Changdan city. [See poems XII 7a and 8b]

171 Pyokche is a rest-hcuse [See poems YJSN XI 30] and Hongje a pavilion.

174 Samgak-san, the mountain behind the capital, is a massif of great power. The royal palace is built on its flank, and the crest of the range is jagged like the teeth of a saw.

176 Half a li east of the Hongje Pavilion is a natural pass between Samgak-san to the north and Nam-san to the south, where only one rider can pass at a time. It is incredibly steep.

177 The mountains curve round to the east, encircling the city,

178 From Samgak-san to Namsan the hills are white, slightly flushed with a reddish tinge, so that they look snow-covered.

180 The Mohwa-gwan [building for the greeting of the imperial envoys on arrival at the city area] is eight li from the city. There is a hall in it, and a gateway before it. When the imperial rescript arrives, the king comes out to meet it here, standing on the left hand-side of the road. The Sungnye-mun is the great South Gate of the capital.

181 [The phrase used here is an echo of Shih ching II 1 iii 2,an ode traditionally interpreted as both complimenting and instructing an imperial envoy.]

182 [It was considered that royal grace emanated from the throne southward through the palace gates, and thence through the south gate of the capital, carrying its beneficent influence throughout the whole country.]

187 The dwellings along the streets all hung out coloured silks and pictures according to the ceremonial rules promulgated by the imperial government.

193 [The phrases of these two lines are based on descriptions in the Han shu of an ancient sport.]

194 The following passage describes the entertainments given in honour of the imperial rescript. Outside the Kwanghwa-mun (main gate of the royal palace) two ‘turtle-mounts’ (stages) stood to east and west, with magnificent decorated arches.

195 Men danced with a boy on each shoulder. [Wu-shan is introduced here as an abode of fairies.]

196 [Hsiang-kuo was the name of a temple in the Sung capital. In front of it was a space where performing bears were displayed.]

197 [Arab horses pulling salt-drays were a traditional symbol of talent left unused. Presumably Tung Yueh thought these acrobats good enough for the Chinese court.]

198 [The water-fairy cliche suggests feminine grace.] [page 63]

199 [The simile is also used to refer to cat-burglars.]

203 In Pyongyang and Hwangju [capital of Hwanghae] stages were set up with various entertainments to honour the imperial rescript, but those of Seoul were by far the most spectacular. [The typical folk entertainments described here were performed in much the same fashion until the end of the first half of the twentieth century. The mask plays of Hwanghae province are still preserved.]

The T’aep’yong-gwan

204 The T’aep’yong-gwan [guest-house for the imperial envoys] stands inside the south gate of the city. It consists of a hall fronted by a double gate and with a pavilion behind. There are wings of lodgings to the east and west, all for the sake of the imperial embassies. The bell-tower stands over the crossroads at the centre of the city [the present Chongno intersection where the bell is now hung in a kiosk at the side of the road]. It is tall and imposing.

208 They do not normally hang many pictures, but their official buildings have screens lining all four walls, decorated with paintings of landscape or bamboo and rocks, or with ‘grass-writing’ calligraphy. These screens are two or three feet high. Sleeping quarters are arranged in the same fashion.

210 Every day the king sent a man of ministerial rank and a junior official to greet us.

The palace

218 Korea has no vermilion, so they use cinnabar. Nor have they any t’ung oil.

219 Gateways and subsidiary palace buildings too are roofed with tiles of the kind used in China on public buildings. [The tiles referred to by Tung Yueh are here usually translated as ‘round tiles’. He sometimes uses a term meaning ‘mandarin duck’(i.e. ‘male and female’) tiles. The tiles are approximately semi-circular in section; the roof is covered with rows of such tiles running down from ridge to eaves, laid with the concave side up (‘female tiles’). Rows of tiles with the convex side up (‘male tiles) are then laid down the ridges produced by the edges of the rows of female tiles.]

220 The first or outside gate is the Kwanghwa-mun, the second or middle gate is the Hongnye-mun, and the third or inner gate [giving on to the throne-room courtyard] is the Kunjong-mun. They are ornamented only with iron studs and rings.

221 Green glass is used only in the main throne-hall called the Kunjong-jon, and not elsewhere, [page 64]

222 The steps are all made of granite, and covered with grass-mats for walking on.

The reception of the rescript

223 The east and west walls of the throne-hall are made so that they can be raised on hinges and fastened on hooks when the imperial rescript is ceremonially received.

225 The Kunjong and Injong halls [the throne-rooms of the main, or Kyong- bok-, and the summer palace or Ch’angdok-kung] have separate gates because of these limitations imposed by the formation of the hills. [In fact they were designed as separate palaces, the summer palace intended to be a place for vacation.]

233 The plinth and steps before the throne-hall were shaded by a white cloth awning, because Koreans highly esteem the colour white.

235 [More literally: ‘The music started and stopped by the rapping-stick’ The stick is drawn smartly along the ridged back of a wooden animal looking like a tiger with its fur standing on end along its spine.]

236 [The translation shows the parallelism of the verse, but obscures the meaning. Hou means ‘tiger’ but was the name of a lord who ‘bowed with his head to the ground and said, “May the Son of Heaven live for ever!” ‘ And when Wu-ti of Han went up Sung-shan, the mountain itself is supposed to have cheered three times. The meaning of the line is simply that the whole Korean court bowed three times and roared “Manse!’]

239 The ceremonies were modelled on those of China. When incense was thrice offered and the acclamation of the emperor shouted thrice with kotows, all those present bowed with folded hands.

243 When the rescript had been read aloud, a chamberlain guided the envoys from the centre of the dais to an awning on the east side. After the king had changed his robe, the chamberlain escorted the envoys up the steps in the centre to a place on the dais to the east; then escorted the king to a place on the dais to the west. The envoy stood eastwards, facing west, and the king stood westwards, facing east. They bowed twice and then sat down. The king’s seat was opposite the deputy envoy’s, but about half a place lower down.

252 [A quotation from the Shih ching II 4 viii. See note on 255.]

253 [See following note.]

255 When we had sat down in the appointed places at the throne-hall and drunk a cup of ginseng tisane, the king rose and stepped into the centre, where he spoke through his interpreters, Chang Yusong and a secretary named Yi: ‘It is fitting that our little country’s subjects should show all due honour to the Imperial House; but I have been so honoured myself in receiving this letter that it is hard to repay such overwhelming favour.’ [page 65] The deputy envoy and I answered, ‘Because Korea has always shown loyalty and reverence to the Imperial Court, it receives favour such as is given to no other country.’

The king raised this joined hands respectfully to his forehead and repeated, ‘It is most difficult to repay.’

After this exchange we two were escorted to the Hongnye-mun where the king waited till we had entered our palanquins before he withdrew. We returned to the T’aep’yong-gwan, where the officials in order made their bows.

The king followed us for a banquet at the T’aep’yong-gwan. He stood waiting outside the gate, facing eastwards, till a messenger came in to tell us that all was ready. We went out to meet the king and invited him in. Once inside the court, we bowed again. Then we sat down in the appointed places and exchanged cups of wine. As we were about to drink, the king ordered the interpreters to say:

‘In the Shih ching it says:

Beautiful the lowland mulberries,

Ample their leaves:

When I have seen my lord,

How great my joy !

Now I have seen your excellencies, my happiness knows no bounds.’

We responded by praising his goodness and thanking him for the entertainments we had received along the way as well as for the generosity of the banquet. Then we stood up and exchanged bows again.

The king continued. ‘According to the protocol of the Spring and Autumn Annals [Ch’un ch’iu Ku-Iiang chuan V 8 i], the emperor’s representative, however insignificant his own rank may be, takes precedence over all other rulers. Your excellencies, be your rank what it may, are men close to the son of Heaven, come from afar to our little realm. I cannot offer sufficient apologies [for your inadequate reception].

Then smiling, he said to the interpreters, You do not know what it is like to be close to the Son of Heaven. It means that one is always under his eye.’

We also smiled, and replied through the interpreters, ‘We had heard that your majesty was fond of reading and loved ceremony. Now we

have seen for ourselves.’

The king folded his hands and repeated, ‘Not at all, not at all.’

The banquet

261 Three servants were in attendance with rolled mats, which they unrolled for us to make our bows on.

265 [I. e. Chinese banqueting manners] [page 66]

269 The five-layer piles were not built up with fruit, but with square and round cakes made of flour and honey, fried in oil. They were carefully and prettily arranged in cylindrical heaps a foot high, surrounded by tiny octagonal fretted fences of silver or white brass, decorated with hanging green gems. Each heap had on top a cover shaped in four petals and made of green or crimson gauze. The sections of the fretted fences were riveted with tiny brass nails like the ‘pearl-flower’ headdress ornaments of China. On the summit of each pile was a phoenix, a peacock, or a flying immortal, made of bronze wire covered with brightly-coloured silk thread. Their tails were displayed, or their wings were spread, and their heads bowed towards the guests. These were removed when the

jointed meats were served. [The phrase ‘jointed meats’ is from Tso chuan VII 16 v.]

271 The tables were arranged as long straight trestles.

272 These consisted of things like Chinese dumplings and water-pepper plant.

274 They do not use kiao-liang.

276 The wine was of excellent flavour, similar in colour and bouquet to the ‘Autumn Dew’ of Shantung. [Ch’ing-chou was in the prefecture of Ch’i, and ch }i is a pun on the Chinese for ‘navel’, so the secretary going as a messenger to Ch’ing-chou means a good wine reaching down into the stomach. Fing-yuan was in Ke, and ke is a pun on ‘diaphragm’, so what reaches only the post-station fence there is a bad wine that produces indigestion.]

278 The tables were set out in a row, the one in the middle covered with red silk. Over this was oiled paper, on which the dishes were set.

281 When we first approached the table, the chair was three feet away from it and I could not understand why. Then when I saw the king bringing a table to it, I realized that it was because he wanted to make a special demonstration of respect.

282 There were four kinds of flesh: beef, mutton, pork, and goose, all cooked. The last tray had a huge man-t’ou (dumpling) on a dish with a silver cover. A high-ranking courtier took the knife, and after the meat was carved, divided the man-t’ou. Inside it were small dumplings, the size of walnuts, just right for a mouthful each.

284 The triple stomach that lies high under the sheep’s back was stuffed with fruits and cooked.

285 Meritorious men of the royal clan are enfeoffed as princes and known as ‘princely subjects’. Men of military merit are also enfeoffed as princes, and likewise meritorious civil officials.

286 When the cup was offered the king always left his place and followed the rising and sitting of the offerer. [page 67]

287 The king did not offer it himself. This was the only point of difference from Chinese custom.

288 The table was very narrow and there were so many dishes of food that they had to be set one atop the other.

289 When side-dishes and soup were brought in a second time, if there was no room for them on the table, they were placed on the floor between the seats. Such is the custom of the country.

290 [For water-plants sweetening the breath cf Tso chuan I 3 iii]

291 The servants all kotowed as they went out.

292 The eunuchs wore black gauze caps and black horn belts. They knelt at the feet of the king’s chair, while the interpreters and secretaries knelt on either side, waiting for orders. There were interpreters behind us too, but no eunuchs.

296 The three banquets at the T’aep’yong-gwan were first the ‘dismounting feast’, then the ‘principal feast’, then the ‘stirrup feast’. The banquet at the Injong Hall (in the Ch’angdok Palace) was called the ‘personal feast’. At first I thought these ceremonies were improper and wanted to discuss correcting them, until I learned that the T’aep’yong-gwan and the Mohwa-gwan both ranked as royal halls and were used exclusively for entertaining the imperial envoys. At other times the king never visited them. Whenever he went to them for feasts with us, he invariably waited in a small building outside the gate of the establishment before he was asked to enter. So I realized there was no need to change anything.

Departure

303 [Mencius VI a 16. See the note to 308]

305 [Yen Ying, died 493 BC, was a model adviser to his king. Cf ‘Yen Fing-chung’, biography in Shih chi LXII.]

308 That day the king repeatedly offered us farewell presents, which we declined. Through the interpreters, he said, ‘From our ancestors’ times we have offered trifles to express our esteem for the envoys of the emperor. I understand your feelings and I am compelled, out of respect, to insist no more. I have learned, however, that the ancients taught how a good man bids farewell with good words, but an inferior man bids farewell with money. Since I cannot offer suitable words of farewell, in spite of the misgivings of my heart, I have offered you these small gifts. I recall what Mencius said: “The ancients strove for heavenly nobility, and human nobility followed upon it.” Your excellencies show that you strive for heavenly nobility, and you will surely receive great favour from the emperor. This is my farewell admonition.’

We replied saying, ‘Your majesty does us great favour with your virtue.’ [A compliment based on Li chi II a 18, where it is said that the [page 68] magnanimous man cherishes through his virtue.]

We had not drunk all the wine, so he made the interpreters ask us, ‘Empty this cup, because tomorrow we shall be far apar: as the sky and the sea.’

The interpreter made a mistake and said ‘as far apart as heaven is from us’, but we caught the words and explained them to the interpreter. The king laughed at this, then accompanied us out of the gate and offered us wine once more, with the phrase: ‘We are to part by thousands of li.’ Again the interpreter got it wrong and said, ‘We are to part for ever.’ Chang Yusong spoke good Chinese but had read little, while the secretary Yi was well-read but his spoken Chinese was poor一whenever he had to interpret we saw him getting into a sweat and making things worse for himself. He was a funny sight.

That night we stayed at Pyokche-gwan, [see poems YJSN XI 30] where I learned from the Board Secretary Ho Chong about the King’s farewell poem, and understood for the first time what had happened.

Seoul

316 The Songgyun-jon (tablet-hall) is at the front, the Myongnyun-dang (teaching hall) behind. The four schools are divided to east and west. [See poem YJSN II 16b] 318 The saengwon and chinsa groups live in the upper lodgements, the sunghak (‘freshmen’) in the lower lodgements. Saengwon are selected every three years for exposition of the classics, chinsa for poetry composition. Sunghak are outstanding men from the nation, and are also called kijae (‘lodgers’).

325 [Chech’on-jong, later called Wolp’a-jong, was a place in the present Hannam-dong, much used for entertaining envoys. See poem YJSN III 27b]

331 [Mangwon-jong at Yanghwa ferry; see poem YJSN III 32b.] 344 The main streets have government-owned buildings, with tiled roofs, standing on either side and allotted to various people. From the outside it is impossible to tell which are poor and which rich, but inside they vary.

354 [The double-comma roundel of the t’aeguk symbol.]

360 The walls are made of sticks, not woven, but set up and tied together with straw rope. The interstices of the sticks are like the holes in a net, and each hole is plugged with a Jump of mud. Houses in Seoul side streets are built like this, but many are completely plastered with mud.

364 [The reference here is to the first chapter of Chuang tzu.]

371 The main hall is one k’an in size, the wings three k’an.

374 Although the main building has all its doors facing south, they do not open in the centre, but at the southern end of the east wing. Because [page 69] the floor is high, steps are necessary. The east and west wings are alike.

377 Their custom is to sit on mats (or cushions) spread on the floor. They have a square mat for each person, and a large pillow of hemp or silk, filled with grass, for the sitter to lean on. In official establishments the mats have flowered designs, but they also are square. The grass pillows are made of green ramie. These are carried about after one by a servant.

381 More people use horses than use oxen.

384 [Cf Chuang tzu xxvi for the trapping vocabulary.]

385 We saw these things in both P’yongan and Hwanghae provinces.

387 [There is an old tale of an aged man who lived on vegetables, but once tasted mutton. That night the God of the Five Viscera appeared to him in a dream and complained that a sheep was trampling his kaleyard.] Government departments have sheep and pigs for use at village drinking rites. [Cf above 44. The rites referred to are prescribed in Li chi xlvi, and were held under the leadership of local officials at the confucian schools (hyanggyo) during the tenth moon. They consisted of wine-drinking to honour the village elders, and sometimes included archery contests.]

389 From P’yongan to Hwanghae we saw graves ranged like battlements on all the hill-tops. The nobility choose gravesites for their geomantic power, and erect ornamental pillars (Korean mangju) and stone sheep by the graves, but I saw no memorial inscriptions.

Dress and customs

393 The gauze band (manggon) used by Korean men for binding their hair is woven of horsehair. Its buttons show the wearer’s rank: 1st grade, jade; 2nd,gold; 3rd and below, silver. Commoners wear buttons of bone, horn, or nacre.

407 Coolies wear split coats only in P’yongan and Hwanghae provinces, not in Kyonggi. The pikemen are chosen for their height. They wear huge hats and yellow hempen coats, with cords on their round collars, but no feathers in their hats.

412 Their custom is for men to carry things on their backs.

413 The custom is to show respect by sitting on the heels. When called by a superior, they run with bent body to answer.

417 A chair needs twenty-four men, before and behind, as well as others who help to support the sides. The chair itself is like a Chinese one, with short legs and two long poles, one each side, just as in China; but under the seat is a long transverse pole, protruding six or seven feet at each side. Two other transverse poles, of the same length, are set fore and aft. When the chair is raised, red hempen bands are tied to the ends of these transverse poles on both sides, and the men slip these bands over [page 70] their shoulders and support the poles with their hands as they walk. In the middle of the chair, at front and back, are fastened two long hempen bands which are divided over the bearers’ shoulders like horses, yokes, to stop the chair from veering to one side. The remaining ten or more men pull from the front.

421 I noticed this on the road from Kaesong to Seoul.

422 Rich and noble women wear on the head a framework like a huge hat, with black silk hanging from the brim to hide the face; but even though their faces are hidden, they avoid men. This was noticeable in Seoul.

425 This couplet comes from Ho Chong’s ‘Album of customs’.

427 Lower class women wear leather shoes, upper class women deerskin. Their stockings are usually of hemp. Three or four interpreters agreed about this.

442 [The virtues of the riverside women are described in Shih ching I 1 ix Han-kuang.]

Before I went as envoy to Korea I was told that it was the custom there for women to work as post-station servants. I thought that degradation hateful, and was relieved, when I went to Korea and saw for myself, to discover that the servants of the guesthouses were all ajon (men of the lower official class) belonging to the magistracies. The women cooked the food outside the post-station in separate rooms. This custom, they say, was changed by King Yu (Sejo) after his accession to the throne in the time of Ching-t’ai (1450-57). Vice-brigadier Han Pin of Liaotung told me this. The story of batning together in the streams comes from an old record, but this also has now changed. [The ‘old record’ was presumably the Hsuan-ho feng-shih Kao-Ii t’u-ching, written by Hsu Ching, who visited Korea as envoy of the Sung in 1123, and recorded this custom.]

Fauna and flora

443 [The word translated ‘quails’ may mean larks.]

444 The water-deer resembles the roe. It has one horn, and the flesh is very tasty. There are no elk in the hills. [The water-deer in fact has no horns, but Strong tusks. Tung Yueh probably ate it, but never saw it alive, and was confused by the interpreters again.]

445 Tangle is the shape of palm-leaves and is green; laver looks like dark purplish greenstuff and is large.

446 Mandarins resemble crucian carp with round bodies. Mullet are like snappers, but I saw only dried ones, when a batch was included in a present of food sent to us by the king. Cornet are like the red-eyed carp of China, with lips like a horse’s muzzle, and of excellent flavour. The young ones are like young stoneheads, tiny and plentiful. The octopuses resemble Chekiang octopyses. Their flavour is poor, but big ones are [page 71] four or five feet long.

447 They live in the Ch’ongch’on, Taejong, Imjin and Han rivers. Some of the crucian carp are over a foot long.

449 The rock abalone (ormer) is classed as a tonic. Its flesh is attached to the shell above, the rock beneath. It is also called pogo. There are holes round the edge of the shell. It lives in the midst of the sea.

450 There are two kinds of fern, green and purple, like those that grow in China. Koreans do not gather them properly. The soil should be cleared from the roots with a hoe, so the cut can be made very low in the root itself. I taught the Board Secretary Ho the way to do it, and he was delighted to learn.

452 I tasted the shoots of the Solomon’s seal, and found them sweet and slippery. I do not know what the leaf is like but some say it is like a yellow polygonatum. Ground cherry has pointed sepals, either green or red. The taste is bittersweet. All the people of Seoul and Kaesong grow purple cress (minari) in little pools at home.

454 Cakes are made by stripping pine-bark, mixing the tender white inner part with ordinary non-glutinous rice and steaming them together. Mountain ginseng [todok?] is not what goes into medicine. It is finger length and shaped like a radish. In Korea it is mixed with rice, steamed and baked into cakes. On the 3rd day of the 3rd moon young leaves of mug wort are gathered and mixed with beaten steamed rice into mugwort cakes, which are then steamed again. The non-glutinous rice is white and of excellent flavour.

458 Pears, jujubes, and hazels are commonest, being found everywhere. Oranges and tangerines come from Cholla province.

459 What the Koreans call sable is really marten or wild-cat and they do not know the difference.

462 [It is difficult to know exactly what shrubs are meant here. The ‘white rose’ may be the dog-rose; the ‘bush cherry’ Prunus japonica.]

464 When I left the capital on the 18th of the 3rd moon [8 May] the wild pear-blossom was nearly over, [see poem written at Pyokche-gwan YJSN XI 30] but after crossing the Yalu a few days later I found it just beginning to bloom. This was because Korea, being to the southeast, is warmer.

466 This is because the soil of the hills is so sandy and rocky.

468 Such pinewood is very strong, yellow like firwood, and has little resin. It is found everywhere.

470 There two kinds of pine. The bark of the nut-bearing kind is not very tough, its branches and needles point upwards. The nuts can be gathered only every other year. One meets them first in Kyonggi province.

473 Wherever a road has to cross water, a bridge of pines is made. The branches are cut off to make railings, and the needles are used to bind [page 72] the earth on both sides. There is such a bridge, more than twenty feet wide, near the Posan-gwan, over a stream called Cho-t’an. [Near P’yongsan in Hwanghae.] It is hard to find straight pines for beams and columns. If the building has two storeys, the pillars can be made in two sections, one above the upper storey and one below it.

Miscellaneous products

475 The brass of the country is strong and reddish. Food bowls, chopsticks, and spoons are made of it―the famous ‘Korean brassware’.

476 This prohibition is because the king’s robes are crimson.

478 Korea has two ways of speaking. In reading (sc.Chinese), the plain tone is not distinguished from the oblique tones, so that hsing (‘star’, first tone) sounds the same as sheng (‘saint’, fourth tone), yen (‘smoke’, first tone) sounds the same as yen (‘swallow’, fourth tons), and so forth. [The differences in vowel length made by Koreans, which to some extent correspond with the tones of the original Chinese words, seem to have been of no significance to Tung Yueh.] Their everyday speech, however, closely resembles the language of the Jurched tatars, and uses three or four syllables for one Chinese character, such as yeh-te-li-pu [i.e.Korean yodolp] for pa (‘eight’). Very often they use two syllables to pronounce one character, such as a-pi [Korean abi] for fu (‘father’), and e-mi [Korean omi] for mu (‘mother’).

479 Among the products listed in the I-t’ung chi [an imperial geography first edited during Yuan times] are wolf-tail writing-brushes with shafts as fine as arrows and hair-points about an inch long.

480 Their bows are shorter than Chinese ones, but they shoot well.

482 It used to be said that Korean paper was made of silk cocoons, but it is now known that it is made from the bark of the paper-mulberry, with great skill. I proved this point by testing it with fire.

485 Truck papery sometimes four breadths to the sheet, sometimes eight, is commonly called ‘oiled flooring’. The Koreans themselves are aware of its quality.

486 When travelling they use tents made of white hempen cloth, which are loaded on horses for overland journeys.

489 According to the Wen-hsien t’ung-k’ao [11th-century bibliographical encyclopaedia] Korean men wear headdresses in the T’ang style, with soft or round caps. In fact the men now all wear wide hats, and only those in the capital who carry the king’s sedan-chair wear six-pointed caps of soft cloth, with bobbles of white cotton attached to each of the six points. They also wear purple silk tunics with round necks, and leather shoes with pointed toes, so they look like drawings of T’ang horse-grooms. I suspect that because that was the style of dress at the time when the [page 73] Wen-hsien t’ung-k’ao extract was written, it has come to be said that Koreans all wear T’ang costume.

I-t’ung chi also says that ponies from Paekche were only three feet high and could be ridden below the boughs of fruit trees. Paekche was the territory now south across the water from Yanghwa ferry, no more than twenty or thirty li from Seoul. I asked about these horses and was told that they have not been bred for a long time; but the horses I saw carrying packs on the roads of Korea, though more than three feet tall, were smaller than Chinese horses, and were probably the kind in question, so I have recorded them as such. [The word used for these ponies, ko-hsia-ma, literally ‘under-fruit horse’ is ancient. According to the Hou Han shu such ponies existed among the Maek tribes of north-eas-tern Korea. Paekche sent them as tribute to T’ang, They were possibly diminutive stock from Cheju of tarpan origin, but the phrase ko-hua was applied to oxen as well, and may be a transliteration of some now untraceable non-Chinese word. Three feet high’ is a symbolic indication of small size, and not to be taken as mathematically accurate.]

490. Five-leaved ginseng is what the pharmacopaeias call ‘Silla ginseng’. The flowered mats are made of yellow reeds and are pliable, so they do not break when rolled, and are superior to those from Suchow.

Conclusion

498. [The text refers to fu as one of the six forms of verse, which comprise the three manners (hsing or allusion, pi or metaphor, and fu or description) used in the Shih ching. The author is again insisting on the factual quality of his record.]

499. [The reference to old stockings uses a phrase from the story of Han Chao of the Former Shu kingdom (10th century) who was proud of his lute- playing, archery, verse-making and other accomplishments. Li T’ai-hsia remarked that Han’s accomplishments were worth no more than an inch of thread from a worn-out sock.]

503. [There is another quotation here of the phrase from the Shih ching II 1 iii 2,used before in line 181.]