

HAHN MOO-SOOK, *And So Flows History*. Translated by Young-Key Kim-Renaud. Hawai'i Studies on Korea. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005. xv + 282 pages. Illustrations, glossary. Paper US\$20.00; ISBN 0-8248-2908-5. Hardcover US\$50.00; ISBN 0-8248-2888-7.

Yöksanün hüründa [*And So Flows History*], written by Hahn Moo-Sook (1918–1993), was originally published in 1948 and covers primarily the lives and turmoil experienced by three generations of the Cho family from the late Chosön dynasty (1392–1910) through the post-liberation years after the conclusion of the Pacific War. This period in Korean history was one of social upheaval, tragedy, and monumental transformations in the lives of the people. Hahn's novel realistically captures the flavor of times and her characters oftentimes draw readers into the work as they incite either the sympathy or anger of the reader. The work is valuable as a snapshot of these times and that alone is reason enough to warrant a hearty recommendation by this reviewer.

However, this review will be less concerned with the political and social history rep-

resented in Hahn's novel regardless of its utility for understanding the period. Rather, the focus here will be on the work's value as a window into the folk customs of the times, and further as a reflection of the lives of women in those fast changing times.

In the view of folk customs, it was the opening chapters of the novel that captured this reader's attention. The work unfolds as the festivities surrounding the lunar New Year and the first full moon of the New Year are taking place. In the revelry of these important holidays, readers can glimpse the involvement of peoples of all classes in the festivities and the importance attached to events such as the tug-of-war. This contest was not a minor event, but rather one partaken by all the villagers of the lower status groups as the winning team was assured a good harvest by the deities overseeing the match. Hahn's descriptions create vivid images of the festivities and help bring such events to life.

The work describes numerous other rites and folk customs ranging from shamanic rites, Confucian-based ideals for behavior, and marriage ceremonies. Truly noteworthy is Hahn's frequent shift in focus from male activities and thought to those of women, thus allowing readers to vicariously see the world through the eyes of both genders. However, her descriptions of the world via women and their lives are where the work unequivocally excels. Hahn effectively portrays the lives, hopes, and emotions of women ranging from slaves to those in the uppermost status groups. Such depictions permit readers cognition of the difficulties for women in the late Chosŏn period, a time heavily influenced by hierarchical Confucian beliefs concerning males and females. Yet, at the same time the novel demonstrates that women were far from helpless in this time and managed to contend with the patriarchal system in various ways. To this reader, the balance presented in the novel seems an accurate reflection of how women and men really lived in this period.

Beyond being an interesting Korean novel that is now available in English, I envision that this work will have strong merit as a teaching tool in the classroom. The translation of the novel by Young-Key Kim-Renaud, Hahn's daughter, is excellent and well captures the rhythm and flow of the original Korean text. Consequently used as a reading in a Korean culture, literature, or religion class, this work will greatly assist students in appreciating the range and syncretic nature of customs in late Chosŏn and early twentieth century Korea, not always an easy task for instructors. Accordingly, I highly recommend this work and welcome a valuable addition to the materials available for teaching Korean culture.

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