

nuno (cloth wrapped around the hips)" (108). On page 113 this same element is referred to as the "under-robe," and the line drawing of the configuration (Illustration 15c, "Diagram of Bosatsu's Drapery") is annotated with the term "Loin Cloth" for a drape located between the "apron" and the "skirt." The discrepancy is probably the result of repeated drafts describing the configuration while trying to avoid repetition of identical phraseology. Such minor errors do not, however, prevent understanding of this text in any way.

To the folklorist, the material in chapter three, "The Origin of the Zenkōji Amida Triad," is probably the most immediately accessible. However, the conclusions drawn in chapter eight, discussing the relationship between icon, myth, believers, and priesthood, are of equal interest and importance. Moreover, it would be a shame to skip McCallum's masterful analysis of visual aspects and clear historical structure in the central chapters of this finely honed text. We can look forward to his treatment of another important lineage of icons, the Sciryōi Shaka images of the historical Buddha, in the near future.

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KOREA

HABOUSH, JAHYUN KIM, translation, introduction and annotations. *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyōng: The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. xii + 372 pages. Map, illustrations, appendices, glossary, index. Cloth US\$50.00; ISBN 0-520-20054-3. Paper US\$17.95; ISBN 0-520-20055-1.

By any measure, *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyōng* is a remarkable and astonishing work. Subtitled *The Autobiographical Writings of a Crown Princess*, this work, brilliantly translated and annotated by Jahyun Kim Haboush, tells the dark and tragic story of the execution of Crown Prince Sado at the age of twenty-seven by his father, King Yōngjo (r. 1724-1776). The method of execution was particularly cruel: Prince Sado was sealed in a rice chest and left to die by asphyxiation.

But the *Memoirs* are much more than a political and historical murder mystery. They chronicle the observations, thoughts, feelings, and experiences of a highly intelligent and perceptive Korean woman whose life was changed forever when she was selected at the age of nine to be a bride for Prince Sado, son of King Yōngjo during the Chosŏn dynasty. From an idyllic childhood Lady Hyegyōng was plunged into the maelstrom of political intrigue, rivalries, and power struggles that characterized the court of her father-in-law. During her lifetime at the court, Lady Hyegyōng had to endure the execution not only of her husband but also of her brother and her uncle as well as the disgrace and ruination of her father, Hong Ponghan, a distinguished minister to the king. She wrote the *Memoirs* to defend the honor and integrity of her father, uncle, and brother, to tell the truth about her husband and the circumstances surrounding his death, to justify her own behavior during her years as a member of the royal family, and to cry out at the perceived injustice and incomprehensibility of the many blows that she and her family had suffered.

In Korea these *Memoirs* are known as *Hanjungnok* (Records written in silence) and are considered "a great literary masterpiece and an invaluable historical document" (3). There

are four memoirs, the *Memoirs* of 1795, 1801, 1802, and 1805, the last one written just ten years before Lady Hyegyŏng's death at the age of eighty. They were all written in Korean *han'gul* script rather than in the literary Chinese employed by Korean men. As Haboush points out in her illuminating Introduction, of the four memoirs, only the last is devoted to the execution of Prince Sado. The first three "focus on the author and lives of people other than the central players in that incident" (4). But while the four memoirs were written "as separate works on separate occasions in defense of specific individuals," they nevertheless "constitute an integral whole that moves from the personal to the public" (4). It is the fact that a woman of her time and place is, through her writing, entering the public domain, the man's domain, in such a candid, forthright, and critical way that makes this autobiography a unique literary and historical document. The first memoir of 1795 was written at the request of a nephew; complying with his request, Lady Hyegyŏng decided to record "what I have experienced and how I felt in the past, to let others know" (50). She tells of her childhood and of her love and devotion to her parents, and in a postscript she sketches the lives of other members of her family. This happy picture ends with her marriage to Prince Sado and her life in the palace that, according to Haboush, "soon turns into an unremitting ordeal, first because of her husband's strange illness, and then after his death because of labyrinthine court politics..." (4).

The "strange illness" that Haboush mentions was Prince Sado's madness, which manifested itself in erratic, irrational, and increasingly violent behavior, culminating in the beating and even murder of some of his servants. Lady Hyegyŏng defends Sado's character and blames his growing mental instability on Sado's father, King Yŏngjo. According to Lady Hyegyŏng, Yŏngjo was harsh and unloving toward his son, and this absence of love and affection from his father darkened the heart and mind of Sado until it eventually drove him to violence. At the same time that she criticizes her father-in-law, Lady Hyegyŏng also presents what could only be described as a defense of his actions regarding his son. When it became clear that Sado's madness disqualified him from becoming king, it then became important that the dynastic line pass to Lady Hyegyŏng and Sado's son Chŏngjo. Sado was a threat to the royal family and the stability of the court and had to be gotten rid of. It is at this point that King Yŏngjo ordered the rice chest to be brought and Sado, begging for his life, to be sealed inside.

The last three memoirs are addressed to Lady Hyegyŏng's grandson, King Sunjo. "If I do not record events as they occurred," she writes, "there is no way in which he [Sunjo] will come to know them sufficiently" (197). The *Memoir* of 1801 is a defense of her uncle and her younger brother, both of whom had been executed. This *Memoir* was written "in the heat of passion," according to Haboush, presenting a "rancorous and gloomy view of life" (20). Lady Hyegyŏng's son Chŏngjo, who had become king in 1776, died in 1800 at the age of forty-nine. With the death of her son the regency passed to Queen Dowager Chŏngsun, a member of the rival Kyŏngju Kim family. The atmosphere changed, and without her son to protect her, Lady Hyegyŏng felt herself to be "persecuted and humiliated and others anxiously awaited my death" (188). She periodically expressed a strong desire to kill herself but then reaffirmed the will to live in order to vindicate the honor of her brother, her uncle, and her father.

The final *Memoir* of 1805 "traces the father-son relationship from its euphoric beginning when Yŏngjo welcomes the long-awaited heir in 1735 to its tragic end when Sado dies in a rice chest in 1762" (29). Lady Hyegyŏng had decided that the mandated silence surrounding the "unmentionable" execution had to be broken in order to end the poisonous speculation, rumor-mongering, and false allegations that went on in court circles and that threatened the stability of the court and indeed of society. But Haboush tells us that this is not a mere exercise in finger pointing. Rather, Lady Hyegyŏng attempts to understand and

describe the agony of both father and son. She displays remarkable psychological acuity as she probes the motives, the fears, and the passions that seemed to make a tragic denouement almost inevitable. She concludes that, as Haboush says, "the human psyche is unknowable" (31) and the workings of Heaven are unfathomable.

This book is an example of scholarship at its best. The translation is superb: it is fluent, elegant, and closes the distance between reader and narrator. We come to know Lady Hye-gyōng, at least the persona she presents us with; we hear her voice, we feel her anger and despair. Never mind the centuries that separate our time from hers; never mind the cultural, political, philosophical, social, and class differences: through her writing we come to know her as a flesh-and-blood human being, struggling to cope with the extraordinary difficulties and complexities of the time, place, and circumstances in which she found herself.

Haboush has made Lady Hye-gyōng available to us, the modern reader, and for that we owe her a debt of gratitude. We are also grateful to Haboush for making this a reader-friendly book. She provides us with appendices giving us the genealogical charts for the main players in the story: the Yi royal family, the Hong family, and the Kyōngju Kim family. She has also provided excellent endnotes and footnotes that illuminate, but do not overwhelm, the text. At the beginning of the book she presents a list of the principal actors in the story and a brief description of each—very useful when you are trying to keep track of who is who.

For this work, Professor Haboush was given the Korean Literature Translation Award established by the Korean Culture and Arts Foundation. I predict that this book will (and should) become required reading in all courses on Asian literature, history, and culture, where heretofore Korean literature has not been well represented. It will also be invaluable to scholars and students in the field of women's studies. My advice to readers of this review is: Get this book, order a copy for your school library, but above all, read it!

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CHINA

PORTER, DEBORAH LYNN. *From Deluge to Discourse: Myth, History, and the Generation of Chinese Fiction*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996. xviii + 284. Figures, bibliography, index. Paper US\$24.95 pages; ISBN 0-7914-3034-0.

The author, an assistant professor in the Department of Languages and Literature at the University of Utah, tries to draw a bold picture in this book about the generation of Chinese fiction, focusing on the interpretation of a single narrative work, the *Mu T'ien-tzu chuan* (Narrative of the Son of Heaven, King Mu).

The first chapter, "Contextualizing the Text: The Discovery, Compilation, Transmission, and Traditional Appreciation of the *Mu T'ien-tzu chuan*," begins with a description of the discovery of this text, which narrates King Mu's westward trip to K'un-lun mountain, during the era of the Chin emperor Wu-ti (AD 279). The vault where the text was found is generally believed to have been the tomb of King Hsiang of Wei (d. 296 BC) and contained a number of texts as well as objects of jade and precious metal. Structured as a daily record of events, the *Mu T'ien-tzu chuan* was at first thought by many scholars to be a historical record of King Mu's journey. Other scholars, however, questioned the text's historical authenticity because