



LIVES OF EMINENT KOREAN MONKS:

THE HAEDONG KOSEUNG CHUN

KAKHUN

Translated by PETER H. LEE

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Lives OF EMINENT KOREAN MONKS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ENDNOTE

for C. Y. L. and C. S. L.

PREFACE

The text I have used in translating *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks* is that in the *Taishō Tripitaka*, not because it is a basic text, for it is marred by wrong punctuation and by textual errors, but because it is readily available in major libraries. The earliest available edition in block prints is said to have existed until the outbreak of the Korean War (some say even the blocks themselves existed in *Suwŏn*, at the Yongju monastery, before 1950); it is now lost. In view of the absence of such an authentic text, I have collated all the versions available to me: among them the manuscript copy of the late Asami Rintarō and the texts in the *Pulgyo*, *Dainihon bukkyō zensho*, and *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongsa*. Such collating, together with necessary emendations for puzzling passages, is indicated in footnotes. Ideally, however, a correct text, with all errors eliminated but with collation and emendations, should accompany the translation; but owing to technical difficulties such a text must await another occasion.

This study was completed under a grant from the American Philosophical Society and the University of Hawaii Research Council, and I am grateful to both institutions for their assistance. I am also indebted to Professors Fang Chao-ying, Richard B. Mather, Joseph Needham, and Johannes Rahder for answering my queries; and to

Professors Chow Tse-tsung, Masatoshi Nagatomi, Richard H. Robinson, Edward W. Wagner, and Arthur F. Wright for reading the translation and offering constructive criticism. To Professor Leon Hurvitz go my deep thanks for going over with me the moot points in the texts. However, I alone am responsible for any errors which may remain.

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Abbreviations

- A* Asami Rintarō's manuscript copy in Berkeley, Calif.
- AM* *Asia Major*.
- BD* Herbert A. Giles. *A Chinese Biographical Dictionary* (Shanghai, 1898).
- BEFEO* *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d' Extrême-Orient*.
- BHSD* Franklin Edgerton. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary* (New Haven, 1953).
- BKD* Ono Gemrayō, ed. *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten* (12 vols.; Tokyo, 1933-1936).
- CG* *Chōsen gakuho*.
- CH* *Chindan hakpo*.
- Chavannes (1) *Mémoires composé à l'époque de la grande dynastie T'ang sur les religieux éminents qui allèrent chercher la loi dans les pays d'occident* (Paris, 1894).
- Chavannes (2) "Voyages de Song Yun dans l'Udyāna et le Gandhāra (518-522p.C.)," *BEFEO*, 3 (1903), 379-429.
- Chavannes (3) "Les pays d'Occident d'après le Wei Lio," *TP*, 6 (1905), 519-571.
- Chavannes (4) "Les pays d'Occident d'après le Heou Han chou," *TP*, 8 (1907), 149-234.
- Chavannes (5) "Seng Houei," *TP*, 10 (1909), 199-212.
- CJS* *Chōsen jisatsu shiryō* 朝鮮寺刹史料 (2 vols.; Keijō, 1911).
- CKK* *Chōsen kosho kankōkai* 朝鮮古書刊行會 edition.
- CKS* *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 朝鮮金石總覽 (2 vols.; Keijō, 1919).
- CMP* Pak Yong-dae 朴容大 et al. *Chūngbo munhōn pigo* 增補文獻備考 (KKH; Seoul, 1957).
- CTP* Yi Nūng-hwa. *Chosŏn pulgyo t'ongsa* (2 vols.; Seoul, 1918).
- CSTCC* *Ch'u san-ts'ang chi-chi* (T. 55, no. 2145).
- HBGR* *Hōbōgirin: Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises* (Tokyo, 1929-1931).

- HJAS* *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*.
- HKC* *Haedong kosŭng chŏn* (T. 50, no. 2065).
- HKSC* Tao-hsüan. *Hsü kao-seng chuan* (T. 50, no. 2060).
- HTS* *Hsin T'ang shu* (Erh-shih-wu shih edition).
- Hurvitz Léon Hurvitz, tr. Wei Shou, *Treatise on Buddhism and Taoism* (ed., Tsukamoto Zenryū), in Yün-Kang, XVI, supplement (Kyoto, 1956).
- JA* *Journal Asiatique*.
- JAOS* *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.
- JAS* *Journal of Asian Studies*.
- KHMC* *Kuang hung-ming chi* (T. 52, no. 2103).
- Kim Tong-hwa (1) “Koguryŏ sidae ŭi pulgyo sasang,” *Asea yŏn'gu*, 2 (1959), 1-44.
- Kim Tong-hwa (2) “Silla sidae ŭi pulgyo sasang,” *Asea yŏn'gu*, 5 (1962), 1-57.
- KKH* Kojŏn kanhaeng hoe 古典刊行會 edition (Seoul).
- KRS* Chŏng In-ji et al. *Koryŏsa* 高麗史 (Tongbanghak yŏn'guso 東方學研究所 edition; Seoul, 1955-1961).
- KRSCY* *Koryŏsa chŏryo* 高麗史節要 (KKH; Seoul, 1960).
- KS* Maema Kyōsaku. *Kosen sappu* (3 vols.; Tokyo, 1944-1957).
- KSC* Hui-chiao. *Liang kao-seng chuan* (T. 50, no. 2059).
- KT* *Korean Tripitaka* (Seoul, 1957-).
- Lamotte Étienne Lamotte. *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nāgārjuna* (2 vols.; Louvain, 1944-1949).
- Legge James Legge. *The Chinese Classics* (5 vols.; reprinted, Hong Kong, 1960).
- LTSPC* *Li-tai san-pao chi* (T. 49, no. 2034).
- Maspero (1) “Le songe et l'ambassade de l'empereur Ming: Étude critique des Sources,” *BEFEO*, 10 (1910), 95-130.
- Maspero (2) “Communautés et moines bouddhistes chinois aux 2e et 3e siècles,” *BEFEO*, 10 (1910), 222-232.
- Maspero (3) “Les origines de la communauté bouddhiste de Lo-yang,” *JA*, 225 (1934), 87-107.
- Maspero (4) *Mélanges posthumes sur les religions et l'histoire de la Chine* (3 vols.; Paris, 1960).
- MBD* Mochizuki Shinkō. *Bukkyō daijiten* (10 vols.; Tokyo, 1960-1963).

- MCB *Mélange Chinois et Bouddhiques.*
- MH Édouard Chavannes. *Les mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien* (5 vols.; Paris, 1895-1905).
- MT Morohashi Tetsuji, ed. *Dai kanwa jiten* (13 vols.; Tokyo, 1955-1960).
- MTB *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko.*
- Pelliot (1) “Deux itinéraires de Chine en Inde à la fin du VIII^e siècle,” *BEFEO*, 4 (1904), 131-413.
- Pelliot (2) “Les kouo-che ou maîtres du royaume dans le bouddhisme chinois,” *TP*, 12 (1911), 671-676.
- Pelliot (3) “L'origine du nom de ‘Chine’,” *TP*, 13 (1912), 727-742.
- Pelliot (4) “Encore à propos du nom de ‘Chine’,” *TP*, 14 (1913), 427-428.
- Pelliot (5) “Les noms propres dans les traductions chinoises du Milindapañha,” *JA*, 11series, 4 (1914), 379-419.
- Pelliot (6) “Meou-tseu ou les doutes levés,” *TP*, 19 (1918-1919), 255-433.
- Pelliot (7) “Encore un mot à propos du Sūtra des Causes et des Effets et de l'expression siang-kiao,” *TP*, 25 (1927-1928), 92-94; and “Le terme de siang-kiao comme désignation du bouddhisme,” *TP*, 26 (1929), 51-52.
- Pelliot (8) *Notes on Marco Polo* (Paris, 1959).
- SG *Seikyū gakusō.*
- SGSG Kim Pu-sik 金富軾. *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (Chōsen shigakkai edition; Keijō, 1928).
- SGYS Iryōn 一然. *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Ch'oe Nam-sōn edition; Seoul, 1954).
- SH Soothill and Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (London, 1937).
- SKSC Tsan-ning. *Sung kao-seng chuan* (T. 50, no. 2061).
- SPPY *Ssu-pu pei-yao.*
- SPTK *Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an.*
- SR *Shirin.*
- SZ *Shigaku zasshi.*
- T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (100 vols.; Tokyo 1924-1934).
- TG Tōyō gakuho.
- TP *T'oung Pao.*

TSCC *T'u-shu chi-ch'eng*.

Tsukamoto *Gisho Shakurōshi no kenkyū* (Kyoto, 1961).

TYS No Sa-sin et al. *Sinjŭng Tongguk yōji sŭngnam* 新增東國輿地勝覽 (KKH; Seoul, 1958).

WYWK *Wan-yu wen-k'u*.

Yang Yang Chu-dong. *Kukhak yŏn'gu non'go* 國學研究論攷 (Seoul, 1962).

YSGYS Yi Pyŏng-do. *Wŏnmun pyŏng yŏkchu Samguk yusa* 原文并譯註三國遺事 (Seoul, 1956).

Zürcher Erik Zürcher. *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (2 vols.; Leiden, 1959).

**LIVES OF EMINENT
KOREAN MONKS**
The Haedong Kosŭng Chŏn

INTRODUCTION

The *Haedong Kosŭng Chŏn*[1] 海東高僧傳 or *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks* is the only extant book of its kind in Korea. The book was compiled by royal command in 1215 by Kakhun[2] 覺訓, abbot of the Yŏngt'ong monastery[3] 靈通寺 in the capital of Koryŏ 高麗, and it was used by Iryŏn [4] 一然 as one of his primary sources for the compilation of the *Samguk yusa*[5] 三國遺事 in or about 1285. The *Lives*, lost for almost seven centuries, was known only by title and by a few quotations. The book became known to the academic world with the discovery in the early part of this century[6] of a manuscript which contains only the first two chapters, on propagators of the faith.[7] It is not known by what happy chance the book came to be preserved, but we have at least the discoverer's name. He was Yi Hoe-gwang[8] 李晦光 (1840-1911), abbot of the famous Haein monastery[9] 海印寺, the repository of the wood blocks *for the Korean Tripitaka*, and it is said that he found the manuscript at a certain monastery in Sŏngju[10] 星州 in the southwest of North Kyŏngsang Province. The manuscript was immediately reproduced by the Kwangmun hoe[11] 光文會 and circulated among specialists. In 1917 it was published in the *Dainihon bukkyō zensho*, Yūhōden series 2. A year later, in his *History of Korean Buddhism* 朝鮮佛教通史, Yi Nŭng-hwa 李能和 (1868-1945) offered a

number of corrections. The late Ch'oe Nam-sŏn 崔南善 (1890-1957) published his critical edition in the magazine *Pulgyo* 佛教, no. 37 (July 1927).^[12] It was also included in the *Taishō Tripitaka* (L, no. 2065). Unfortunately, however, no studies have been made,^[13] in Korean or any other language, of this invaluable document.

The two extant chapters of the *Lives* contain eighteen major and seven minor biographies of eminent monks and cover a span of five hundred years. The first chapter, which deals with three Koguryō monks, two Silla monks, and three monks of foreign origin, is the more important of the two. It throws new and often brilliant light on the development of Korean Buddhism from the time of its introduction to the seventh century. The second chapter, dealing with Silla monks who went to China or India, consists chiefly of excerpts from the *Hsü kao-seng chuan* and from the *Ta-T'ang hsi-yü ch'iu-fa kao-seng chuan* 大唐西域求法高僧傳 (ca. 705) of I-ching ^[14] 義淨 (635-713), except for the life of the monk Anham 安含 an account found nowhere else.

In compiling the *Lives*, Kakhun was working within a well-established tradition. He had at least three prototypes, not to mention a large body of historical and literary materials from China and Korea. The Korean sources he cites are documents and records of great antiquity, of which a few are still extant. Among the Chinese sources, he is most indebted for form and style to the three *Kao-seng chuan*, from which he seems to have adopted the subordinate biography, the *lun* 論, and the eulogy, the *ts'an* 贊.^[15] There are, however, differences. The

lun, which normally is found at the end of each category in Chinese biographical collections, comes only at the beginning, and the *ts'an* following the individual biography is composed not in verse but in ornate, allusion-packed prose. The *lun* (*non* in Korean) outlines the history of Buddhism in China and Korea from the time of its introduction to the thirteenth century. Here Kakhun, out of Buddhist piety, uncritically accepts the dates of the Buddha as 1027-949 B.C., as advocated by T'an-wu-tsui 曇無最.[16] Similar critical lapses can be found in the entries on Tamsi 曇始 and Hyōnjo 玄照. In the first case, perhaps out of respect for his Chinese colleague, Kakhun copies almost verbatim the account of Tamsi (T'an-shih or Hui-shih 惠始) in the *Kao-seng chuan*, without fully understanding the nature and significance of the Buddhist persecution under the Northern Wei.[17] As for the famous T'ang pilgrim Hyōnjo (Hsüan-chao),[18] we are simply told that he was a Silla national, without documentation.

Such minor lapses aside, Kakhun is a conscientious recorder of facts. Time and again he laments the paucity of materials. The ravages of time and havoc of wars were such that it is frightening to learn how little was preserved even in his own time. We glimpse Kakhun fighting desperately to shore up whatever remains there were of the civilization of the Three Kingdoms and Silla periods. In the biography of the anonymous correspondent of Chih Tun 支遁[19] he laments: "After the introduction of Buddhism into Korea from Chin, there must have been heroic personages during the times of Sung and Ch'i, but regrettably no

record of them exists.”[20] He registers his sorrow again at the end of the same section: “What is really regrettable is that no good historian kept a detailed record.”[21] Concerning the unreliability of the sources on Sundo 順道, either of Eastern Chin or of Former Ch’in,[22] Kakhun comments: “What a waste of the man and his excellences! For there should be records on bamboo and silk glorifying his admirable accomplishment. Yet only a [small] number of his writings remain; one wonders why this is so.”[23] For the historian the only solution is, as Kakhun declares in the biography of Hyōnyu 玄遊, that his contribution “be recorded in history and [thus] shown to posterity.”[24]

Kakhun, then, as a writer versed in Chinese historiography, was a transmitter, not a creator; and he was quick to point out that his work was transmission.[25] He respected the materials at hand and was careful to cite his sources. In cases involving reconstruction owing to the poor condition of the manuscript or kindred materials, he clearly admits this, as in the biography of Anham: “Ten logographs on the slab are eroded and four or five more are unclear. The author takes what is legible and reconstructs the text by surmise.”[26] When he cannot supply the dates of his subjects he says so with disarming frankness, as with the death date of Ŭiyōn 義淵: “History does not relate his end; I therefore leave it unmentioned.”[27] Cases involving conflicting information on a given topic offer him a chance to make an exhortation to posterity to do research, as with the two Buddhist names of Pōpkong 法空: “Those who are interested in antiquity will do well to study the

matter.”[28] In yet another instance, after giving us no less than four theories[29] concerning the introduction of Buddhism into Silla, he adds, “What a discrepancy concerning the dates of Ado’s life! Old records must be scrutinized carefully.”[30]

Because Buddhism enjoyed seven centuries of uninterrupted prestige and protection as the state religion, Kakhun did not have to naturalize monks or to advance their status in Korean history.[31] What he wanted to do, however, was to prove that his subjects were on a par with their Chinese counterparts in every respect. For this purpose, he brings in Buddhist notables of the past and uses them figuratively, in ways that involve parallelism or imply contrast or superiority. Sundo, the first missionary to Koguryō, is termed a “peer of Dharmaratna 法蘭 and Seng-hui 僧會” [32] for his crusade in a foreign country and for his “great wisdom and wise counsel.”[33] Wŏn‘gwang 圓光, who used the *ko-i* 格義 method[34] in his exegesis of Buddhist doctrine, is rightly compared with Hui-yüan 慧遠 (334-416), [35] who used the same technique of *explication de texte* extensively two hundred years before. And the hardships suffered by five Silla pilgrims to China and India are compared with those of the envoys Chang Ch‘ien 張騫[36] and Su Wu 蘇武.[37]

But equalization was not enough. To Kakhun’s eye, some of his subjects were decidedly superior to their Chinese counterparts. Such is the case of Ado 阿道, the first missionary to Silla, who is praised for the prudence and judiciousness wherewith he “tried [his] plans first before

carrying out the work of propagation.”[38] The author’s appraisal ends with more than a comparison: “Even Li-fang 利方 of Ch’in or [Kāśyapa] Mātanga 摩騰 of Han could not surpass [him].”[39] Again, as a parallel and contrast to Pōpkong, who had renounced the throne to join the religious order, Emperor Wu of Liang is brought in only to be dismissed as a less-than-ideal monarch. Kakhun comments: “It is. . . wrong to compare him [Pōpkong] with [Emperor] Wu of Liang, for while the latter served in the T‘ung-t‘ai monastery as a servant and let his imperial work fall to the ground, the former first surrendered his throne in order to install his heir and only afterwards became a monk.”[40] Pōpkong is an ideal ruler, argues Kakhun, for his Buddhist fervor brought about not the downfall but rather the consolidation and prosperity of the kingdom.

True, the age of Buddhism in Korea began with Pōpkong. But this would not have been possible unless Silla had been a land chosen and blessed by the former Buddha and unless former kings had accumulated meritorious karma from the beginning of the country’s history. Thus arose, from about the beginning of the sixth century, a belief that Korea was the land of the former Buddha. Such a belief is present in several episodes in the *Lives*. The first time we encounter it is in the biography of Ado, where Ado’s mother, before dispatching him to the barbarous country of Silla to propagate the faith, remarks: “Although at this moment there is no oral transmission of the doctrine in that land of Silla, three thousand months from now an enlightened king, a protector

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