

Buddhist Faith and Conceptions of the Afterlife in Koryŏ

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The Koryŏ government based its rule on Confucian ideology, but Buddhism was the popular religion of the period. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that Buddhist ideas of death and afterlife were widely propagated. As shown in this article, the Buddhist concept of reincarnation based on one's karma was indeed widespread in the Koryŏ period. Consequently, people turned to Buddhism to avoid the evil rebirth of hell and attain a better rebirth in heaven. Especially popular were the heaven associated with Maitreya, Tuṣita, and Amitābhas Western Paradise. However, it seems that people believed that rebirth in Tuṣita did not guarantee escape from the cycle of rebirth; thus Tuṣita came to be almost synonymous with "the afterlife," a better destination in the next life, but not necessarily a conduit to liberation. By contrast, rebirth in the Western Paradise would guarantee the attainment of Buddhahood and thus escape from the cycle. Special rituals, the copying of sūtras, and the commissioning of paintings were all popular practices designed to obtain a better destination for the deceased. However, the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass, based on a scripture that explains how to divine one's retribution, was especially prominent, thanks to the certainty it provided about one's karmic state and how to improve it.

Keywords: Death, afterlife, Buddhism, Koryŏ, divination

Introduction

Funerary epitaphs from the Koryŏ period (918-1392) show that people were keenly aware of their mortality. They attributed death to the will of Heaven or the intervention of vengeful spirits. Sometimes death was said to be the result of the disintegration of the four elements (earth, water, fire and wind), while Sŏn Masters attributed death to the fact that all dharmas and the three realms (*samgye* 三界; desire, form and formlessness) are empty.

Beyond wanting to know the cause of death, people wondered what happened after a person dies. In the late Koryŏ period, the renowned Sŏn Master and National Preceptor Hyegŭn 惠勤 (1320-1376) lost a close friend at the age of twenty; vexed by his elders' inability to answer

his question about what happened to the dead, he left household life to become a monk and find the answer.¹ There were actually various explanations about the afterlife current in his time. Some believed that a part of the spirit of a person, *hon* 魂, went up to Heaven while the other part, *pak* 魄, remained in the grave. What the nether world was imagined to be like can be gleaned from expressions such as the yellow springs (*hwangch'ŏn* 黃泉), the nine sources (*kuwŏn* 九原), or the great mountain (*taesan* 垓山; i.e. *T'aesan* 泰山 or Mt. Tai in China). Besides these concepts derived from Chinese imaginings of the afterlife, there is also evidence of Buddhist concepts such as rebirth in paradise, or reincarnation into one of the six paths (six possible destinations) such as Tuṣita Heaven, the realm of hungry ghosts (*pretas*), or hell.

In short, various beliefs regarding death and the afterlife coexisted in the Koryŏ period, reflecting a varied worldview. The descriptions on funerary epitaphs for the ruling class, however, reflect their Confucian ideas as well as an idiom borrowed from Confucian and Taoist scriptures and literary works. A person from the upper social class, no matter how fervently he believed in Buddhism during his lifetime, would be given an epitaph featuring a variety of Confucian and Taoist expressions. But it should be noted that the most prevalent conceptions of the afterlife at the time seem to have been Buddhist in nature, because from commoners to the ruling class, funerals and rituals for the dead were in Buddhist style.²

In this article, I aim to look at the Buddhist dimension of conceptions and practices related to the afterlife in Koryŏ. For this purpose, I have examined a wide range of sources, including not only published sources such as the *Koryŏsa* 高麗史 (History of Koryŏ), the

¹ Yi Saek, *Hoeamsa Sŏn'gak Wangsa pi* (檜巖寺禪覺王師碑, Stele for the royal preceptor Sŏn'gak at Hoeamsa), in Hŏ Hŭngsik ed., *Han'guk kumsŏk chŏnmun* (Complete Collection of Korean Epigraphy), vol. 2 (Seoul: Aseamunwhasa, 1984), p. 1198. (hereafter *kŭmsŏk chŏnmun*).

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² After participating in the memorial rite for his wife's grandmother, Yi Saek sang that "because the Eastern [i.e., Korean] funerals and rites are steeped in Buddhism, this old man took part in the banquet for the [late grandmother] Ch'ae." *Mog'ŭn sigo* (牧隱詩藁; The songs of Mog'ŭn [Yi Saek]), 25.20b, in *Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* (Complete Edition of Korean Literary Collections), (Seoul: Minjok munhwa ch'ujinhoe, 1988-2005). (Unless noted otherwise, all citations from literary collections are taken from this edition, and located according to the traditional system through the fascicle (*kwŏn* Ch. *juan*), page number within the *kwŏn*, and register)

Koryŏsa chŏryo 高麗史節要 (Condensed history of Koryŏ), literary collections, and writings by monks, but also inscriptions, Buddhist paintings and their painting records. Through these fragmentary descriptions of death, afterlife, and the road to the afterlife, we will try to recreate the mental outlook and ascertain the characteristics of contemporary conceptions of the afterlife. I will start by examining the evidence for the general belief in reincarnation, then look at the two most frequently mentioned reincarnations (Tuṣita heaven and hell), and finally the escape from the cycle through paradise. In the fourth and final section I will also look into the co-called Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass (*Chŏmch'alhoe* 占察會), a divination ritual that centered on determining one's reincarnation.

Suffering without end: The belief in reincarnation

According to Buddhism, death is not the end. After death a person will reincarnate through the so-called six paths (*yukto* 六道), the main categories of reincarnation: heaven, humanity, asuras (titans), hungry ghosts, animals, and hell. The former three are considered good, the latter three bad reincarnations. People enter a path according to their karma, which includes everything committed through their body, mouth and mind during their lifetime. This belief in reincarnation, an endless cycle of karmic retribution, was introduced with Buddhism in the Three Kingdoms period, and probably clashed with the established belief that the ruling class went to Heaven after death. Generally, however, people seem to have had no clear conception of the afterlife, and these new ideas played an important role in the initial propagation of Buddhism on the Korean peninsula. In the Three Kingdoms period, the people of Koguryŏ and Paekche hoped to “avoid reincarnation in the three evil paths [hell, hungry ghosts, animals]” through the merit produced by making statues of Buddha.³

The belief in reincarnation can be found in occasional writings, *somun* 疏文, commissioned from literati to be read as prayers at Buddhist assemblies in the Koryŏ period. To quote but a few representative examples: “in this life or the next, people are fixed to the

³ Kim Young Mi [Kim Yŏngmi], “Pulgyo ūi suyong kwa Sillain ūi chugŭmgwan ūi pyŏnhwa” (The acceptance of Buddhism and changes in views on death in the Silla period), *Han'guk kodaesa yŏn'gu* 20 (2000): 162-162.

perimeters of reincarnation,”⁴ and “a person does not disappear after death, but is born according to karma, his good and evil deeds, through the cycle of reincarnation.”⁵ Even the loss of many lives by foreign invasion was said to have occurred because grudges built up over aeons could only be released in the course of many lives.⁶ The Koryŏ literatus Yi Kyubo 李奎報 (1168-1241), who befriended and journeyed with the Taoist teacher Kim Chimyŏng 金之命 (n.d.), described his meeting with Kim as the result of “good relations of many lives.”⁷

This belief in reincarnation was advocated and widely propagated by Buddhist monks, and at the end of the Koryŏ period, a tale about the previous lives of dynastic founder T’aejo Wang Kŏn’s (877-943) circulated. The contents of this tale can be found in the following complaint to King Kongyang (r. 1389-1392), written in 1391 by scholars at the Sŏnggyun’gwan 成均館, including Pak Ch’o 朴礎 (1367-1454):

Those students of Buddhism made up heterodox stories from the beginning, deceiving the king and his ministers above and tricking the ignorant masses below; then they made statues of the nine lives of T’aejo, claiming that he “was born as a head monk in one life and built a certain monument and printed a certain sūtra in another, and in still another life was an ox belonging to some temple; and then finally becoming king in one life, the end of which resulted in him becoming a Bodhisattva.” These writings were then carved on printing blocks, which were kept deep in the mountains and have lead countless generations of people astray; seeing the account,

⁴ Yi Kyubo, “Chŏmch’alhoe so” 占察會疏 (Statement for a Chŏmch’al Dharma Mass),” *Tongguk Yi sangguk chip* (東國李相國集; The Collected Writings of Yi Kyubo), 41.15b.

⁵ Kwŏn Kŭn, “Chingwansa Suryuksa Chosŏng ki” 津寬寺水陸社造成記 (Record of the establishment of the Land and Water Society at Chingwansa),” *Tongmun sŏn* (Anthology of Korea Literature), 78.23b-25b.

⁶ Yi Kyubo, “Kwijŏngsa chuji haeng Wŏn’gak pŏphoe so” (歸正寺住持行圓覺法會疏; Prayer text for the conducting of a Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment Dharma assembly by the abbot of Kwijŏng-sa), *Tongguk Yi sangguk chip*, 41.19a.

⁷ Yi Kyubo, “Moip yugog’yŏk yŏ Kim kun ūm chu chŭng chi” 暮入幽谷驛與金君飲酒贈之 (Drinking with Mr. Kim at dusk, Yugok postal station),” *Tongguk Yi sangguk chip*, 6.19b. The “Mr. Kim” to whom the poem is offered is identified by some as the Taoist Kim Chimyŏng; see Kim Ch’ŏrung, “Yi Kyubo ūi Togyogwan” (The Taoist Perspective of Yi Kyubo), in *Han ’guk sasang sahak* 13 (1999): 90.

King Kongmin (r. 1351-1374; here identified by his tomb name Hyönnŭng玄陵) revered and believed in it.⁸

According to this complaint, Buddhist monks of the time sculpted images of T'aejo's nine lives and insisted that his kingship was just retribution, the reward for his deeds in previous lives. According to the account, in previous lives he had been a head monk; had erected Buddhist monuments and printed sūtras; and had even been born as an ox. Only after completion of these previous lives' actions had he been reborn as a king, finally becoming a Bodhisattva in his reincarnation.

The monks' account about T'aejo was obviously based on the theory of reincarnation, and similar arguments about being reborn as a human being by the virtue accumulated during life are found in the writings of monks in the early Koryŏ period. Ŭich'ŏn 義天 (1055-1101) thus wrote a letter to his king, Sŏnjong (r. 1083-1094), before he went to China to study Buddhism, in which he asserted that Sŏnjong could become king because in his other life he had faithfully carried out the unselfish deeds of a Bodhisattva. He also wrote that Sŏnjong became king in order to save the world, in other words to save the lives of the people.⁹ The monk Yŏngnyŏm 英念 (n.d.), of the *sŭngt'ong* rank, the highest in the monastic bureaucracy, was in the habit of saying that in the next life he would reincarnate as a monk and return to his temple, Hyŏnhwasa, to preach Buddhism again. He died and became the monk Tŏkkyŏm 德謙 (1083-1150). On the day Tŏkkyŏm left home to enter Hyŏnhwasa, Sunjin 順眞, a monk of the fourth rank, dreamt that Yŏngnyŏm was coming; Tŏkkyŏm himself believed that he had been Yŏngnyŏm in his previous life.¹⁰ In these cases, monks believed in pledges to be reborn as a human being in order to preach Buddhism.

⁸ *Koryŏsa chŏryo*, 35.30b (6th month of 1391); *Koryŏsa*, 120.39b-40a (biography of Kim Chasu).

⁹ Ŭich'ŏn, "Ch'ŏng ip Taesong kubŏp p'yo" 請入大宋求法表 (Entreaty to the King upon entering Song to study Buddhism), *Taegak Kuksa munjip* (大覺國師文集; The collected writings of State Preceptor Taegak), *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* (Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo, 1980-2002) 4.534a. (hereafter *Pulgyo chŏnsŏ*)

¹⁰ Hwang Munt'ong, "Kim Tŏkkyŏm myojimyŏng" 金德謙墓誌銘 (Epitaph of the monk Kim Tŏkkyŏm), in Kim Yongsŏn ed., *Koryŏ myojimyŏng chipsŏng* 高麗墓誌銘集成 (Collection of epitaphs from the Koryŏ period; 4th edition), (Ch'unch'ŏn: Hallim taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2006, pp. 116-117 (hereafter *Myojimyŏng chipsŏng*). Here it is necessary to point out that in real life, the three were related: Sunji was Tŏkkyŏm's uncle; Yŏngnyŏm in turn was likely Sunji's uncle.

During the late Koryŏ period, Kwŏn Chun 權準 (1280-1352) was believed to be the reincarnation of Yi Chayŏn 李子淵 (1003-1061), a powerful official during the mid-Koryŏ period.¹¹ The reason was that Kwŏn rebuilt Chahyosa 慈孝寺, Yi Chayŏn's memorial temple. This belief was reflected in Kwŏn's epitaph, which was written by Yi Inbok 李仁復 (1308-1374), a non-Buddhist.¹² One may assume that belief in reincarnation was widely held indeed, since even a non-believer wrote about reincarnation on an epitaph.

Of course people wished to be reborn as a king, monk or nobleman, and wanted to avoid the three evil paths. One of these “bad reincarnations” was as an animal. However, in the tale about T'aejo's previous lives it is said that he was also born in the form of an ox, and this motif is found in other stories as well. In *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), there are two accounts of an ox being reborn as a human due to his work in carrying sūtras. Sabok 蛇福, burying his mother, remarked to Wŏnhyo 元曉 (617-686) that “the ox that carried sūtras for us [in its previous lives] has just died.”¹³ The girl servant Ungmyŏn, the first person said to have gone to Paradise through recitation of Buddha's name, had also been an ox in her other life. Originally she was a man who joined a devotional society (*kyŏlsa* 結社) but broke the rules and was therefore reincarnated as an ox at Pusŏksa; because of the merit gained by carrying sūtras the ox was reborn as Ungmyŏn.¹⁴ All these accounts are claimed to be events of the Silla period. However, Iryŏn 一然 (1206-1289), commenting on Ungmyŏn's tale ventures that this is probably where the saying “in order to do one's own work, one should hurry to do the Master's work” originated. This means that such stories were prevalent into the late Koryŏ period, when Iryŏn wrote *Samguk yusa*.

¹¹ Yi Inbok, “Kwŏn Chun myojimyŏng” 權準墓誌銘 (Epitaph for Kwŏn Chun), *Myojimyŏng chipsŏng*, p. 634; An Pyŏngu, “Koryŏmal ōnu kwallyo ūi Yunhoejŏk Sasaenggwan” (An official's outlook on life and death through reincarnation in late Koryŏ), in *Kyŏnggi chiyŏk ūi yŏksa wa munhwa* (The History and Culture of Kyonggi Province), (Osan: Hansin taehakkyo ch'ulp'anbu, 2003).

¹² *Koryŏsa*, 112.13b (biography of Yi Inbok). On his deathbed, he rejected his brother Yi Inim's advice that he chant the name of Buddha, saying “I cannot deceive myself after a whole life of unbelief in Buddhism.”

¹³ “Sabok purŏn” 蛇福不言 (Snake boy does not speak), *Samguk yusa* 4.

¹⁴ “Ungmyŏn pi yŏmbul sŏsŭng” 郁面婢念佛西昇 (Female servant Ungmyŏn rises into the Western Paradise by chanting the Buddha's name), *Samguk yusa* 5.

In the *Hyŏnhaeng Sŏbang kyŏng* 現行西方經 (Manifesting activities [for entering] the Western Paradise), allegedly written by the monk Wŏnch'am (元岳; n.d.) in 1298, it is stated that by chanting ten thousand times the mantra illustrating the mysterious original mind of Amitābha (*Amit'a ponsim mimyo chinŏn* 阿彌陀本心微妙真言) and throwing *kanjas* 簡子, one's next life will be revealed.¹⁵ The characters inscribed on each of the 41 *kanjas* (wooden slips) reveal one's retribution. These included, in descending order: attaining supreme enlightenment; rebirth in the ninth grade of paradise, in a palace, in Heaven, as *sŏnch'wi* 仙趣 (supernatural being), as *cakravartin* (wheel-turning king), as a rich householder, as a private slave, or as a public slave; or worse, as a hungry ghost, animal, in hell or in Avici hell (the lowest hell). All of the traditional six paths of rebirth are mentioned except that of asura, which is here replaced by the *sŏnch'wi* as a separate category.¹⁶ As for rebirth in the world of humans, many distinctions are made, from the *cakravartin* to someone suffering various ailments. It is also noteworthy that “woman” is included as a separate sub-category among the humans, together with three categories of slaves (temple slaves, public slaves, private slaves). These distinctions are made probably because women and slaves, though receiving a human body, are still thought to be rebirths to avoid. Among possible animal rebirths are listed fish, cattle, tiger, wolf, fox, bird, snake and insect.

The six paths of reincarnation are depicted on a great circular board in the mouth of a hungry ghost in the transformation picture (*pyŏnsangdo* 變相圖) at the beginning of fascicle 37 of the Flower Garland Sūtra (Avatamsaka Sūtra, *Hwaŏm kyŏng*), compiled in the mid-fourteenth century.¹⁷ The painting corresponding to fascicle 2 of the Lotus Sūtra, compiled in 1377, depicts the contents of the Chapter of Parables. According to it, someone who slanders sūtras is reincarnated after death as a snake, and is subjected to the pain of blood-sucking bites from small

¹⁵ Wŏnch'am, *Hyŏnhaeng Sŏbang kyŏng*, in *Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* 6.861.

¹⁶ According to Nam Tongsin, the exclusion of asuras reveals the influence of a theory of five paths as contained in the *Sūtra on the Contemplation of Amitāyus* (*Guan wuliangshou jing* 觀無量壽經; Amitāyurdhyāna sūtra). “Namal Yŏch'o ūi wigyŏng yŏn'gu” (Apocrypha from the transition period between the Koryŏ and Chosŏn dynasties), *Han'guk sasang sahak*, 24 (2005): 249.

¹⁷ Now in the Horim Museum. See National Museum of Korea, *Sagyŏng pyŏnsangdo ūi segye, Puch'ŏ kurigŏ maŭm – Sūtra Painting in Search of Buddhahood*, 2007, pp. 130-131. According to Kim Chŏnghŭi, “Saengsa yunhoedo ko” (A Study of illustrations of reincarnation), *Kangjwa misulsa* 11 (1998): 132, there is a similar scene in the illustration of the Flower Garland Sūtra fasc. 37 drawn in the twelfth or thirteenth century.

vermin, or as a fox lacking vision in one eye and covered with scabies and subjected to the beatings of children, or as a dwarf, cripple or blind man.¹⁸ And in the wood-carved transformation picture of *Pulsŏl yesu sibwang saengch'il kyŏng* 佛說預修十王生七經 (Scripture [on the prophecy to] King Yama concerning the seven lifetimes to be cultivated in preparation for [rebirth in the Pure Land], Treasure No. 734-4, *Xuzangjing* 1.21) the six paths of reincarnation are depicted on the left hand side in the illustration, Judgment by the King Who Turns the Wheel of Rebirth in the Five Paths (*Odo chŏllyun wang* 五道轉輪王).¹⁹ These pictures, illustrating the contents of sūtras, would have impressed people with their strong visual effect.

That belief in reincarnation was popular among the people of Koryŏ is furthermore confirmed by the words of Chŏng Tojŏn 鄭道傳 (1342-1398), the late Koryŏ critic of Buddhism. In the chapter “Pul ssi yunhoe chi pyŏn” 佛氏輪迴之辨 (Against the Buddhist [concept] of reincarnation)” of his treatise *Pul ssi chappyŏn* 佛氏雜辨 (Various arguments against Buddhism), he stated that he was “extremely indignant at how everyone was deluded by the Buddha’s theory of reincarnation.”²⁰ Belief in reincarnation during the Koryŏ period was expressed in various religious rituals and practices, by which people prayed to be born into Tuṣita heaven or the Western Paradise of Amitābha, and avoid rebirth in one of the three evil destinies.

The Two Worlds of Reincarnation

1. Hell

The most frightening of the three evil destinies is hell. But how did Koryŏ people conceive of this place? T’aejo, the founder of Koryŏ, during a conversation with the monk Iŏm 利嚴 (870-936), expressed his discomfort at the loss of lives during war against the Later Paekche and Silla kingdoms. Iŏm told him that it was wrong to kill innocent people, but that killing sinful people in order to save the rest was a good deed. T’aejo then replied that he had been deluded into fearing Yama (or *Yŏmma* 閻魔, the king of hell), but on the basis of Iŏm’s words, he confided that he

¹⁸ National Museum of Korea, *Sagyŏng pyŏngsangdo*, 160-161.

¹⁹ Kim Chŏnghŭi, *Chosŏn sidae Chijang sibwangdo yŏn’gu* (Studies on Chosŏn Dynasty Paintings of Kṣitigarbha and the Ten Kings), (Seoul: Ilchi-sa, 1996), 144-147.

²⁰ Chŏng Tojŏn, “Pulssi chappyŏn” in *Sambongjip* 9.2b.

could now talk of the realm of Heavenly denizens.²¹ Thus T'aejo, previously fearing judgment in hell because of his killing of lives in battle, finally gained comfort from the words of Iŏm and came to believe that he may be reincarnated in Heaven.

During the reign of King Mokchong (997-1009), Kim Ch'iyang 金致陽 (d. 1009) erected the Sibwangsa (Temple for the Ten Kings) outside the palace, and engraved on its bell, "Let us do good deeds while living in the East, and when we are reincarnated in the West, let us gain enlightenment."²² From this we may infer that belief in the Ten Kings, who judged the souls of the deceased in purgatory, was encouraged along with faith in Amitābha. The *Koryŏsa* tells us further about a donated illustration depicting the horrendous images of hell, and we may assume its vividness from the passage referring to it as "strange and impossible to describe."²³

The above two cases show that from the early Koryŏ period onwards people believed in hell, more precisely that based on one's karma, the Ten Kings of the underworld could sentence one to hell. An actual depiction of judgment by the Ten Kings can be found in the wood-carved transformation picture (Treasure no. 734-4) that is part of *Yesu sibwang saengch'il kyŏng* kept at Haeinsa.²⁴ Among all the Buddhist illustrations drawn in late Koryŏ there are ten of the Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha (*Chijang posalto* 地藏菩薩圖), eight of Kṣitigarbha with the Ten Kings (*Chijang sibwangdo* 地藏十王圖), and two of the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Kṣitigarbha standing side by side (*Kwanŭm Chijang posal pyŏngnipto* 觀音地藏菩薩竝立圖).²⁵ Since

²¹ Ch'oe Ŏnwi, "Kwangjosa Chinch'ŏl taesa pi 廣照寺眞澈大師碑 (Stele for the great master Chinch'ŏl at Kwangjosa), Han'guk yŏksa yŏn'guhoe ed., *Yŏkchu Namal Yŏch'o kūmsŏngmun* 譯註羅末麗初金石文 (Annotated and translated inscriptions from the late Silla – early Koryŏ period), (Seoul: Hyeon, 1996), vol. 2. 27-28.

²² *Koryŏsa* 127.5a (biography of Kim Ch'iyang); *Koryŏsa chŏryo* 2.62b.

²³ Kim Chŏnghŭi, *Chosŏn sidae Chijang sibwangdo yŏn'gu*, 140.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 141. Compared to illustrations of the Ten Kings from Dunhuang, images of male and female devotees holding sūtras or Buddha statues, ostensibly practices to create merit for deceased relatives, are more prominent.

²⁵ Kikutake Junichi 菊竹淳一 and Chŏng Ut'aek 鄭于澤 eds., *Koryŏ Sidae ui Pulwha* (Buddhist paintings from the Koryŏ Period), (Seoul: Sigongsa, 2000). This work shows seven illustrations of the Ten Kings from the Koryŏ period, and one illustration of the Ten Kings, the "First Far-Reaching King of Chin" (第一秦廣王); Yi Kisŏn, *Chiokto* (Illustrations of Hell), (Seoul: Taewŏnsa, 1992, 85. Appendix 5 shows the illustrations of the Ten Kings, each created in sequences of ten. One is the version kept in the Honolulu Gallery, Hawai'i, and two versions are kept in the Fuji Gallery, Japan. For the discussion of the numerous illustrations of the Ten Kings, see Cheeyun Lilian Kwon, "The Ten Kings at the Seikado Library" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton Univ., 1999).

Kṣitigarbha is the Bodhisattva who has sworn to work to save lives from hell, the numerous depictions of this Bodhisattva show the general fear of hell.²⁶

Remaining Buddhist illustrations of Koryŏ do not include any specific depictions of hell. However, depictions of reincarnation partly feature images of hell, mostly burning cauldrons.²⁷ This conception of hell was typical, and was known as *hwakt'ang chiok* 鑊湯地獄 (literally, burning cauldron hell). The *Hyŏnhaeng sŏbang kyŏng* also reflects hell as imagined by Koryŏ contemporaries. Hell is specifically divided into hell and Avici hell; while the former is simply a burning cauldron, the latter is not only full of fire, it is also full of all kinds of suffering. The hell described by Wŏnch'am consists mostly of pain from the burning fire. Sŏn Master Hyegŭn is more specific; according to him hell is categorized into various types, including the freezing hell, burning hell, hell with copper rods, and hell with iron boards.²⁸ These descriptions of hell preached by monks would have created in people the fear of hell.

It seems that the belief in hell was instilled through miracle stories told by monks, typically involving the escape from hell thanks to acts of charity by the living.²⁹ A foremost example can be found in the stele for the Tripitaka hall at Chikchisa, erected in the year 1185.³⁰ To emphasize the merit of enshrining the scriptures, it quotes a Chinese story. According to this

²⁶ It is likely that the temple of the Ten Kings erected by Kim Ch'iyang also contained paintings of hell. For the Chosŏn period, the so-called *kamnot'aeng* paintings (literally, paintings of sweet dew) carry detailed depictions of hell.

²⁷ Illustration for the *Flower Garland Sutra*, fasc. 37 (preserved by Horim Museum, Treasure no. 754); illustration for the *Lotus Sūtra*, fasc. 1 (preserved by Nabeshima Hōkōkai 鍋島報孝會, Japan, 1340). Another illustration for the *Lotus Sūtra*, fasc. 1 (preserved at the Daijōji 大乘寺 in Kanazawa, Japan, 1315), depicts a soul caught within flames.

²⁸ Hyegŭn, “Naong hwasang Sŭngwŏn ka 懶翁和尚僧元歌 (The monk Naong's song of Paradise), in *Naong hwasang kasong* 懶翁和尚歌頌 (Songs written by Preceptor Naong),” *Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* 6.750b.

²⁹ Ŭich'ŏn, *Sinp'yŏn chejong kyojang ch'ongnok* 新編諸宗教藏總錄 (Newly compiled catalogue of the doctrinal corpus of the various Buddhist Schools), *Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* 4.684. Among the works related to the Lotus Sūtra is mentioned an “Account in ten fascicles, written by Huixiang” (傳十卷 慧詳述), referring most likely to the *Hongchan Fahua zhuan* 弘贊法華傳 (The Accounts of Miracles found in the Lotus Sūtra). This work tells of the miraculous escape from hell by Falang 法朗 and Zhida 智達. This work was published by Tōgyŏn 德緣, the abbot of Honghwasa, in 1115, and a xylographic copy was passed on to Song China and Japan in 1120. See the postscript to the edition of this text in *Dai Nihon Zokuzōkyō* (Kyoto: Zokuzō shoin, 1912), 1.2b.22.1, 37a.

³⁰ “Chikchisa taejangjŏn pi” 直指寺大藏殿碑 (Stele for the Tripitaka Hall at Chikchisa), *Kŭmsŏk chŏnmun*, vol. 2, 880.

story, Arongshi 阿容師, who fell into the burning cauldron hell, was saved along with many others because his son copied the Flower Garland Sūtra by hand.³¹ Specifically, a man named Kang Alushan 康阿祿山, from the district of Mannian 萬年 in Yongzhou 雍州, died in an epidemic in the year 680, but returned to life five days later. Upon entering the nether world, he first met Yama, king of the underworld, and then Arongshi, who used to sell medicine in the east market (Dongshi 東市). Arongshi, who was dipped in a cauldron of boiling water, entreated him to tell his son to copy by hand the Flower Garland Sūtra. When Alushan came back to life and did as he was entreated and gave offerings, Arongshi and other spirits escaped hell. Through this story of saving parents from hell through the copying of a sūtra, the stele clearly wanted to stress the merit that could be gained from the reproduction of scriptures. This story was also included in the fifth volume of the *Huayanjing zhuanji* 華嚴經傳記 (Accounts of Miracles found in the Flower Garland Sūtra). The title of the book is also found in Ŭich'ŏn's Catalogue of doctrinal texts,³² proving that this particular account was known in the early Koryŏ period.

The dissemination of such Chinese records of miraculous responses (*kamŭng* 感應) formed the basis of similar stories created in Koryŏ. According to “Sŏnyul's Return to Life” in *Samguk yusa*, the monk Sŏnyul died while copying the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra (*Taebanya kyŏng* 大般若經) and went to the underworld, but was sent back to earth because he had not completed the work. On his way back to life he met a woman from Silla. She told him of her sufferings because her parents had committed the sin of stealing one furrow of rice paddy from a Buddhist temple, and, informing him where she kept some oil and hemp cloth saved up during her life, entreated him to offer a lamp for the Buddha using the oil and sell the hemp to pay for the copying of a sūtra. Sŏnyul, who came back to life after ten days, carried out her wish and prayed for her happiness in the afterlife. Then he was visited by the soul of the woman, who told him that she had escaped the suffering. The sūtra completed by Sŏnyul allegedly was kept in the storage room of the Monks' registry (Sŭngnoksa 僧錄司) of the Eastern Capital (Tonggyŏng 東京, the present Kyŏngju) and rolled out during spring and autumn to ward off evil, a practice still

³¹ Fazang 法藏, *Huayanjing chuanji* 華嚴經傳記 (Accounts of Miracles found in the Flower Garland Sūtra), T. 51.2073.171c20-172a13.

³² Ŭich'ŏn, *Sinp'yŏn ch'ŏngnok*, *Pulgyo chŏnsŏ* 4.684.

carried out at the time the *Samguk yusa* was compiled.³³ The story merely says that she had been caught by the “office of hell” (*myōngbu* 冥府), where Yama ruled as supreme judge. However, considering that she had been dead for fifteen years, and that Sōnyul had met her on his way back after judgment in the office of hell on his deeds during his lifetime, it is likely that she was dwelling in hell.

Five additional tales about people who escaped from hell can be found in the *Account of Miracles Concerning the Lotus Sūtra* compiled by Yowōn (n.d.) in the fourteenth century.³⁴ They all originated from China, but these stories of miraculous escapes from the suffering of hell after thanks to chanting or copying the Lotus Sūtra would have been propagated by monks and consequently well known to lay people. That Buddhist explanations of hell strongly affected people may be assumed from Chōng Tojōn’s treatise “On the Buddhist Notion of hell:”

A senior Confucian scholar, in discussing the Buddhist theory of hell, said “those who trust in the trickery of monks down on earth, and upon death donate all to Buddha and feed monks, argue that all these things for the dead shall erase one’s sins and by this virtue one shall be reincarnated in Heaven and live among pleasures, while the one that has not done these things shall fall into hell and his flesh will be cut, burned, beaten by a mortar, grated and subjected to torture, but it is not at all convincing.”³⁵

Chōng Tojōn quoted a senior scholar to describe the arguments of Buddhist monks, but it was a fair description of the situation at the time. In the 1391 complaint to King Kongyang, the Sōnggyun’gwan doctor Kim Ch’o (金貂; n.d.) writes that monks are spreading words to the effect that “one may unbolt and escape hell by the power of the laws of Buddhism, and enter paradise.”³⁶

³³ “Sōnyul hwansaeng” 善律還生 (Sōnyul’s Resuscitation), in *Samguk yusa* 5.

³⁴ Yowōn 了圓, *Pōphwa yōnghōm chōn* (法華靈驗傳 Accounts of miracles concerning the Lotus Sūtra), *Pulgyo chōnsō* 6.542c-570b. See the entries on “Ch’angje chi kyōng chiok kaegong” 唱題之頃地獄皆空 (Hell is emptied upon reading the title; 6.545b-c), “Sinin chiro” 神人指路 (A spirit points the way; 6.546c.547a), “Sasu chegyōn” 賜壽題肩 (Granting of long life marked on the shoulder; 6.563a-b), “Sōl pulgagyōng” 舌不可耕 (The impossibility of ruling the tongue; 6.556c-557a), “Mangmo t’algo” 亡母脫苦 (A dead mother relieved of sufferings; 6.563a-b).

³⁵ Chōng Tojōn, “Pulssi chiok chi pyōn” 佛氏地獄之辨 (On the Buddhist Notion of Hell), *Tongmunson* 105.15a.

³⁶ *Koryōsa chōryō* 35.11b.

However, it is not easy to copy sūtras or practice their teachings throughout a whole lifetime in order to escape hell. Since this difficulty increases the likelihood of going to hell, the fear of such consequences led to the seeking of easier ways, in other words to dependence on the power of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to assist sentient beings. As a result, it came to be believed that the three realms of evil and ultimately hell can be avoided by looking at or living in one of the following three mountains: Pogaesan 寶蓋山, P'ungaksan 楓嶽山 and Odaesan 五臺山. According to the “Record on the stone terrace on Mount Bogae,” written by Min Chi 閔漬 (1248-1326) in 1307, the monk Munil is quoted as telling a story he heard in China, which is that living on Mount Pogae (in Ch'ŏrwŏn), Mount P'ungak (or Mount Kūmgang) or Mount Odae ensured one to avoid falling into the three evil destinies. Munil's experience of a miraculous encounter on Mount Pogae with Kṣitigarbha is also given. Min Chi deduced that miracles were possible because Mount Pogae was “the place where Kṣitigarbha's eternally resides.”³⁷ Ch'oe Hae 崔滌 (1287-1340) wrote in 1329 that crowds of people were visiting Mount Kūmgang and that it became a scandal because widows and maiden were among them. He wrote that the reason of this gathering of people was that monks had deceived people by saying that hell could be avoided by looking at the mountain 61 times.³⁸ Mount Kūmgang was considered to be the eternal residence of the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata,³⁹ and Mañjuśrī was believed since the Silla period to reside on Mount Odae.⁴⁰ The monks inhabiting temples in these three mountains in the

³⁷ Min Chi, “Pogaesan sŏktaegi” 寶蓋山石臺記 (Record on the stone terrace on Mount Pogae), *Kūmsŏk chŏnmun*, vol. 2, pp. 1120-1122.

³⁸ Ch'oe Hae 崔滌, “Song sūng Sŏnji yu Kūmgangsŏn sŏ” 送僧禪智遊金剛山序 (Letter to the monk Sŏnji on the occasion of his travel to Kūmgangsŏn).” *Tongmunsŏn* 84.7b.

³⁹ That Mount Kūmgang was believed to be the main residence of Dharmodgata is mentioned in Yŏngjam's 瑩岑 “Kosŏng Paryŏnsu Kaech'angjo Chinp'yo yulsa chinsin changgol t'appi” 高城鉢淵藪 開耑祖眞表律師眞身藏骨塔碑 (Stele for the Ossuary stūpa of vinaya master Chinp'yo, founder of Paryŏn temple in Kosŏng), *Kūmsŏk chŏnmun*, vol. 2, p. 925; “Kwandong P'ungak Paryŏnsu sŏkki” 關東楓岳鉢淵藪石記 (Stone Inscription in at Paryŏn temple on [mount] P'ungak in Kwandong), *Samguk yusa* 4; Yi Kok, “Ch'angch'i Kūmgang Tosansa ki” 耑置金剛都山寺記 (Record for the construction of Tosansa on Mt. Kūmgang), *Kajŏng chip* 稼亭集 (Collected writings of Kajŏng [Yi Kok]) 3.2b.

⁴⁰ “Taesan oman chinsin” 臺山五萬眞身 (The Fifty-thousand Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of Mount Odae), “Myŏngju Odaesan Pochildo T'aeja chŏn'gi 溟州五臺山寶叱徒太子傳記 (The biography of crown prince Poch'ildo of Mount Odae in Myŏngju), “Taesan Wŏlchŏngsa oryu sŏngjung” 臺山月精寺五類聖衆 (The Five Types of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at Wŏlchŏngsa on [Mount] [O]dae),” *Samguk yusa* 3. Chŏng Ch'u 鄭樞, “Wŏlchŏngsa” 月精社, *Wŏnjae chip* 圓齋集 (The Collected Writings of Wŏnjae [Chŏng Ch'u]) 1.12b, mentions “an

late Koryŏ period would have insisted that mere visitation of these places meant escape from hell, and it seems that people were convinced.

However, since not everyone could undertake a pilgrimage to these mountains, other things like the sounding of a bell were supposed to save people from hell. This led to the donation of a bell to a temple in Kaegyŏng, the Koryŏ capital. The inscription on the bell of Yŏnboksa, manufactured in 1346, prays that those caught in the endless cycle of reincarnation may be awakened by its sound, and that all the realms from the heavens to the underworld may be awed by it.⁴¹ A comparison with the inscription on the bronze bell to honor King Sŏngdŏk (r. 702-737) reveals that, while the latter emphasizes enlightenment,⁴² the inscription on the Yŏnboksa temple bell is a fervent prayer to escape the torments of hell.

2. *Tuṣita Heaven*

Before Buddhism was accepted during the Three Kingdoms period, the king, thought to be a direct descendant of the gods, was the only one who was supposed to enter Heaven after death. The Shamanistic view of the otherworld was gradually replaced by a Buddhist conception of afterlife, viz. reincarnation. The idea of Heaven as the king's destination was reconceptualized as the Buddhistic Tuṣita Heaven (*Tosolch'ŏn* 兜率天) or Trāyastriṃśa (*Torich'ŏn* 忉利天; Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods). The inscription on a Koguryŏ statue of Buddha features a prayer for delivery from the three evil destinies and for the king's spirit to ascend to Tuṣita Heaven, where Maitreya dwelt.⁴³ Queen Sŏndŏk (r. 632-647) of Silla asked to be buried in Trāyastriṃśa,⁴⁴ and the death of King Kyŏngmun (r. 861-875) was also expressed as departure for Trāyastriṃśa.⁴⁵ In

old temple that Chajang 慈藏 built, where Mañjuśrī resides.” The words of Chŏng Ch'u (1333-1382) reveal that the people of late Koryŏ also believed Mount Odae to be the residence of Mañjuśrī.

⁴¹ Yi Kok, “Yŏnboksa chong” 演福寺鐘 (The bell of Yŏnboksa), *Kŭmsŏk chŏnmun*, vol. 2, 1171-1172.

⁴² Kim P'iro, “Sŏngdŏk wang sinjong” 聖德大王新鐘 (The New Bell in honor of Great King Sŏngdŏk), *Han'guk kodae sahoe yŏn'guso* ed., *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun* (Translated and annotated inscriptions of Ancient Korea), vol. 3, 390-391.

⁴³ “Sinp'osi chŏlgolt'ŏ kŭmdongp'an myŏngmun,” (Inscription on a gilt-bronze plate from Chŏlgol, Sinp'o), *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun*, vol. 1, 144.

⁴⁴ Sŏndŏk wang chigi samsa” 善德王知機三事 (How Queen Sŏndŏk knew three things in advance), *Samguk yusa* 1.

⁴⁵ Ch'oe Ch'i-wŏn 崔致遠, “Sŏngjusa Nanghye hwasang t'appi” 聖住寺 朗慧和尚塔碑 (Stūpa inscription for the monk Nanghye at Sŏngjusa), *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun*, vol. 3, 112.

Buddhism, heaven is one of the six paths of reincarnation, but in fact there are numerous kinds of heavens. There are six heavens in the realm of desires, or *kāmaloka*, seventeen heavens in the realm of form, *rūpaloka*, and four heavens in the formless realm. Tuṣita Heaven is one of the six in the realm of desire, above the Heaven of the Four Guardian Kings, Trāyastriṃśa and Yama Heaven, and below Nirmāṇa-rati (the Joyous Heaven) and Paranirmita-vaśa-vartin (The Heaven of Free Enjoyment of Manifestations by Others).

Despite their belief in numerous kinds of heavens, Koryŏ people wished most to be born into Tuṣita Heaven. This tendency was partly based on the Maitreya cult. Royal Preceptor Sohyŏn 韶顯 (1038-1096) was a special adherent of Maitreya and practiced Buddhist principles in order to enter the Inner Palace of Tuṣita Heaven. He had a painting made of Maitreya, and from 1075 onwards, for the twenty-two remaining years of his life every year on the fourteenth day of the seventh month he held a dharma assembly and practiced penitence. On his deathbed he chanted the name of Maitreya.⁴⁶ Sohyŏn was a monk of the Pŏpsang School (Ch. Faxiang), and this characteristic cult of Maitreya continued among this school of Buddhism. Tŏkkyŏm left a will in which he stated “on the memorial days of my death, bow as you read the Māhayāna sūtras, chant the name of Maitreya and offer to the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha) to ask for help.”⁴⁷ From this it appears that like Sohyŏn he wished to enter Tuṣita Heaven. Both Sohyŏn and Tŏkkyŏm, praying to be born into Tuṣita Heaven, chanted the name of Maitreya. Another example of the correlation between Tuṣita Heaven and Maitreya is the stele for Chajŏng Kukchon 慈淨國尊 Misu 彌授 (1240-1327), erected in 1342, which described his death as a return to Tuṣita Heaven.⁴⁸ As a monk of the Pŏpsang School, Misu like Sohyŏn and Tŏkkyŏm before him had a special faith in Maitreya.

In the early Koryŏ period, the Pŏpsang School was one of the major schools from which State or Royal Preceptors emerged. They seem to have specifically encouraged faith in Maitreya, and as a result Tuṣita Heaven became almost synonymous with the afterlife. Eminent literati also describe death as going to Tuṣita Heaven. Yi Kyubo wrote a poem as a response to the Chinese

⁴⁶ “Kūmsansa Hyedŏk Wangsa Chin’ūng t’appi 金山寺慧德王師眞應塔碑 (Stūpa inscription for Royal Preceptor Hyedŏk at Kūmsansa),” *Kūmsŏk chŏnmun*, vol. 1, 545.

⁴⁷ Huang Munt’ong, “Sūng Kim Tŏkkyŏm myojimyŏng,” *Myojimyŏng chipsŏng*, 117

⁴⁸ Yi Sukki 李叔琪, “Pŏpchusa Chajŏng Kukchon Pomyŏng t’appi” 法住寺慈淨國尊普明塔碑 (Stūpa inscription for State Preceptor Chajŏng at Pŏpchusa), *Kūmsŏk chŏnmun*, vol. 2, 1157.

poet Bai Juyi's (白居易; 772-846) *Xinshen wenda* 心身問答 (Questions and Answers between the Body and Mind), which included the passage "What good would the old house, the body be if the mind goes to Tuṣita Heaven after death?"⁴⁹ While Bai Juyi was a devout Buddhist and may thus be expected to express the wish to ascend to Tuṣita Heaven, it is still striking that the concept of dying is expressed as "going to Tuṣita." Yi, in his poetic response to his colleague Yu Kyōnghyōn 庾敬玄 (n.d.), expressed the wish that they may be reborn together in Tuṣita Heaven,⁵⁰ and said during a memorial ritual for the dead Sōn Master Chongŭi 鍾義 (n.d.), "since you master have returned to the palace of Tuṣita Heaven, how might I be able to follow and smile upon encountering you?"⁵¹ There are other examples from literary collections of the late Koryŏ period mentioning Tuṣita Heaven as simply "the afterlife."⁵² From these examples, it may be concluded that Tuṣita Heaven was widely accepted as the destiny of the afterlife. There are numerous kinds of heavens discussed in Buddhist literature, but Tuṣita Heaven was generally accepted as the "Heaven" par excellence.

We should also consider why people wanted to be reborn in Maitreya's Tuṣita Heaven. Yi Chŏm 李詹 (1345~1405), during a memorial ritual for the dead, hoped that the dead would be reborn in Tuṣita Heaven to hear the dharma directly from Maitreya.⁵³ Tuṣita Heaven was said to be divided into the Inner Palace and the Outer Palace, and while the latter was where the

⁴⁹ Yi Kyubo, "U hwa Nakch'ŏn simsin mundap" 又和樂天心身問答 (Another response to Bai Letian's [Bai Juyi's] *Questions and Answers Between the Body and Mind*), *Tongguk Yi sangguk chip hujip*, 2.8b.

⁵⁰ Yi Kyubo, "Yu sŭngsŏn Kyōnghyōn hwa pudapchi" 庾承宣敬玄和復答之 (Another response to the genial meeting with Yu Kyōnghyōn), *Tongguk Yi sangguk chip*, 18.9b.

⁵¹ Yi Kyubo, "Che Chongŭi sŏllo mun" 祭鍾義禪老文 (Statement for the Old Sōn Master Chongŭi), *Tongguk Yi sangguk chip*, 37.13b.

⁵² Yi Chehyōn, "Kukchae Kwŏn Munjōng kong mansa" 菊齋權文正公挽詞 (A Statement of Mourning for Kukchae Kwŏn Munjōng), *Ikchae nango* 益齋亂藁 (The Collected Writings of Ikchae [Yi Chehyōn]) 4.3b; Chōng Ch'u 鄭樞, "Indŏk wanghu kijin chaeso" 仁德王后忌晨齋疏 (Statement for the Memorial Ritual for Queen Indŏk), *Wŏnjaejip* 圓齋集 (The Collected Writings of Wŏnjae [Chōng Ch'u]) 3.33b; Sōng Sōngnin 成石璘 (1338-1423), "Ki Chang saye" 寄張司藝 (To the Doctor of Music, Mr. Chang), *Tokkokchip* 獨谷集 (The Collected Writings of Tokkok [Sōng Sōngnin]), 1.11a-b.; Yi Chip 李集 (1327-1387), "Chōngmyose kyeha wabyōng chōng Mog'ūn sōnsaeng" 丁卯歲季夏臥病呈牧隱先生 (Letter to Mog'ūn [Yi Saek] from the sickbed, late summer of the chōngmyo year [1387]), *Tunch'on chabyōng* 遁村雜詠 (Various songs of Tonch'on [Yi Chip]).

⁵³ Yi Chŏm, "Chŏn'in ch'ŏnbu yŏ che ch'amgyōng pŏpsŏkso" 前人薦父與弟懺經法席疏 (Statement at the assembly of penitence and sūtra chanting to lead father and brother to Heaven), *Tongmunson* 111.26a.

general residents of this heaven lived, in the former Maitreya lived and preached. Kwŏn Kŭn 權近 (1352-1409) emphasizes the pleasures of Tuṣita Heaven rather than the advantage of hearing Maitreya.⁵⁴ Kwŏn Kŭn prayed to be reborn first in Tuṣita Heaven and then in paradise, because he wanted to enjoy himself freely in Tuṣita Heaven before achieving enlightenment in paradise – presumably the Western Paradise of Amitābha. He distinguishes the two and expresses belief that Tuṣita Heaven is a place for enjoyment, unlike the realm of humanity, which is full of suffering.

Kwŏn Kŭn probably did not expect to become Buddha in Tuṣita Heaven because if he did, it would mean that he would have to be born as a human being, just as Maitreya was supposed to have done, and practice Buddhism on earth in order to become Buddha. This means Tuṣita Heaven was not a place of permanent residence. According to the *Sūtra of Contemplating Maitreya's ascent to Tuṣita* (*Guan Mile pusa shangsheng Doushuaitian jing* 觀彌勒上生兜率天經, T. 14.452), a person entering Tuṣita Heaven may meet and follow Maitreya back into Jambudvīpa (the continent lying to the south of Mount Sumeru, the Buddhist *axis mundi*). After Maitreya becomes a Buddha and teaches three times under the Nagapuṣpa (dragon flower) tree, the follower may, upon hearing him, become a Buddha. This is well reflected in the rumour created at the ritual carried out by Pog'am 宓菴 (n.d.) for the sake of sending Ch'oe Sarip 崔社立 (n.d.) to Heaven during the late Koryŏ period. Pog'am was confident that Ch'oe would soon sit upon the tower of Maitreya because he practiced Buddhism all his life. He also wished that Ch'oe would return to the human world.⁵⁵ People during the late Koryŏ and early Chosŏn period buried twigs of aromatic trees and prepared incense, and prayed to be reborn as humans at the time Maitreya would appear in the human world.⁵⁶ The fact that both of the only two remaining Koryŏ illustrations of Maitreya are based on the *Maitreya-vyākaraṇa sūtra* (*Mile xiasheng jing*

⁵⁴ Kwŏn Kŭn, “Pu ch'ŏn ch'ŏ sosangjae so” 夫薦妻小祥齋疏 (Statement at the first memorial banquet of a husband to lead his wife to Heaven), *Tongmunsŏn* 113.20b; “Ch'ŏnbu so” 薦父疏 (Statement on leading a father to Heaven), *Tongmunsŏn* 113.21b; Kwŏn Kŭn, “Myot'ongsa suryukchae so” 妙通寺水陸齋疏 (Statement for the Land and Water Mass at Myot'ongsa), *Yangch'onjip* 陽村集 (The Collected Writings of Yangch'on [Kwŏn Kŭn]) 27.2a.

⁵⁵ Sŏk Pog'am 釋宓菴, “Ch'ŏn Ch'oe Sarip so 薦崔社立疏 (Statement for leading Ch'oe Sarip [to heaven]), *Tongmunsŏn* 112.22a.

⁵⁶ “Samilp'o maehyang pi” 三日浦埋香碑 (Stele for the burying of incense at Samilp'o), *Kŭmsŏk chŏnmun*, vol. 2, 1105-1107; “Sach'ŏn maehyang pi” 泗川埋香碑 (Stele for the burying of incense at Sach'ŏn), (1387), *ibid.*, 1241.

彌勒下生經, T. 14.453-455), a text describing Maitreya's descent from Tuṣita to the human world, suggests that Tuṣita Heaven was not the final hoped-for destination of believers.

Tuṣita Heaven, therefore, was at times discussed as inferior to paradise, as a world within the cycle of reincarnation. In the *Hyōnhaeng sōbang kyōng*, being born into Tuṣita Heaven was said to be “because one had not been exempted from reincarnation,” quoting from *the Śūraṅgama sūtra* (*Lengyan jing* 楞嚴經, Sūtra of the heroic march, T. 19.945). Wōnch'am then went on to question Naksō 樂西⁵⁷ as to whether Tuṣita Heaven or paradise was the better reward. Although Naksō replied that there was no superiority of one over the other, he answered that Tuṣita Heaven was not as good as paradise, because being born in the Outer Palace meant reincarnation in human life, while paradise did not.⁵⁸ The Sōn Master Hyegūn also supported the same view, by writing that the Ullambana rite (*Uranbon chae* 盂蘭盆齋; the Ghost Festival for deceased souls) will ensure “at the very least being born in the Heavenly Palace and at the most being born in the Buddha's Pure Land,” i.e., respectively Tuṣita Heaven and Amitābha's paradise.⁵⁹

To sum up, Tuṣita Heaven was the best destination out of the six destinies of reincarnation. Followers of Maitreya wished to be born there, but it was still considered to belong to the world of transmigration, which entails suffering. The Western Paradise, therefore, was the superior destination after death, being beyond reincarnation, and the hope surrounding it encouraged the faith in Amitābha.

Paradise, the Utopia beyond Reincarnation

There are innumerable examples of faith in Amitābha with entreaties to enter his Paradise (*kūngnak* 極樂). Not only did people undertake individual discipline in the hope of going to paradise, but they also formed religious societies to practice to attain this goal together. Paradise

⁵⁷ “Enjoying the Western [Paradise],” a figure appearing to Wōnch'am after he had chanted the Amitābha mantra 10,000 times. Most of the work is taken up by Naksō's answers to Wōnch'am's questions.

⁵⁸ Wōnch'am, *Hyōnhaeng sōbang kyōng*, *Pulgyo chōnsō*, 6.867a.

⁵⁹ Hyegūn, “Chaja il Cho sangsō ch'ōng posōl” 自恣日趙尙書請普說 (Minister Cho requests teachings on the Dharma on pravāraṇā day [repentance ceremony at the end of the summer retreat]),” *Naong hwasang ōrok* 懶翁和尚語錄 (Loggia of Naong), *Pulgyo chōnsō*, 6.714b-715a.

was so desired because of its positive aspects. These are well shown by the entreaty to Buddha written by the monk Pog'am, living in the late Koryŏ period.

The realm decorated with seven folds of jewelled nets is called Paradise, and the Buddha who welcomes people by giving nine levels of Lotus Seats is named Amitābha. The power of the Forty-eight Vows are very intense, and the zillions of nirmanakāya (the many various forms of Buddha to deliver beings) are widely manifested; to rely on these generous offers we shall need to be true and sincere in our devotion. ... In the face of countless changes of appearance in the course of our many reincarnations, we should always repent and admonish ourselves, and bow many times with aching heart. ... In our present life, please give us succour, expel misfortune and make us receive many blessings, and in the future, please lead us to reincarnation in the other world to finally encounter Buddha.⁶⁰

Paradise is described as a beautiful place wrapped in seven layers of nets made of the seven treasures, and Amitābha was said to welcome entering believers in nine kinds of Lotus Seats. This means that Paradise is beautiful to look at, with nine levels of people who enter. Being born in Paradise is based more on Amitābha's Forty-eight Vows rather than one's own practice in life. At death's door, Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara or Mahāsthāmaprāpta are said to come to meet the dead; hence Pog'am writes of his wish to see Amitābha in Paradise, being led to it by one of them. Seeing Amitābha, one hears his words and becomes a Buddha.

As Sŏn Master Hyegŭn described in detail in his "Song written by monk Naong, in desire to go to Paradise,"⁶¹ monks would in general have stressed the beauty and superiority of Paradise. This meant depicting Paradise in illustrations, hanging them on the walls of temples, and showing them to the lay people. These are the Buddhist illustrations from the late Koryŏ period.⁶² There are about twenty-one remaining illustrations of Amitābha and the Bodhisattvas, such as the *Amit'a yŏraedo* 阿彌陀如來圖 (Painting of Amitābha), *Amit'a samjondo* 阿彌陀三尊圖 (Painting of Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta), *Amit'a p'aldae posaldo* 阿

⁶⁰ Sŏk Pog'am, "Mit'ajae so" 彌陀齋疏 (Statement for the Amitābha mass), *Tongmunsŏn* 112.20a.

⁶¹ Hyegŭn, "Naong hwasang sŭngwŏnga" 懶翁和尚僧元歌, in *Pulgyo chŏnsŏ*, vol. 6.749-750.

⁶² Kikutake and Chŏng eds., *Koryŏ Sidae ui Pulwha*, includes 52 of the Buddhist Illustrations of late Koryŏ related to Amitābha.

彌陀八大菩薩圖 (Painting of Amitābha and eight Bodhisattvas). “Coming to meet the dead” (*Imjong Raeyōngdo* 臨終來迎圖) was a type of illustration of Amitābha and the supporting Bodhisattvas coming out to meet the dead. These illustrations depict Amitābha and Bodhisattvas meeting those people intended for paradise, and there are twenty-six of them remaining. Furthermore, there are two illustrations on the motives of Buddha’s teaching of the *Amitāyurdhyāna sūtra* (觀無量壽經; Sūtra of the contemplation of Amitāyus, T.12.365),⁶³ and three on the sixteen objects of contemplation,⁶⁴ which depict Paradise, the way to it, and the entities born therein. While the number of each of these types of illustrations does not reflect how many of them were originally drawn, it may be assumed that they show what people of the late Koryŏ period expected from Amitābha.

Being met by Amitābha at death’s door was the hope of not only monks but also lay people, because it relieved them of fear of death and afterlife. For example, an illustration of the sixteen objects of contemplation, completed in 1323 and now in Jinshō-in (仁松院), Japan, has a colophon praying that the merit of making the picture would eliminate all obstacles at the hour of death and enable Amitābha to lead the deceased into paradise.⁶⁵ Cho Ingyu 趙仁規 (1237-1308) wrote about having seen Avalokiteśvara in his dream, whom he understood as having come to take him to Paradise. Cho had performed many virtuous deeds such as printing the Tripitaka. One day his family dreamt that a spirit came, saying that he had been sent as a messenger from the otherworld to meet Cho. The next day, his throat swelled up and though his state worsened, refusing all medication he waited for death. It was then that Cho dreamt of Avalokiteśvara standing high, almost reaching the skies, and ordered to have this scene painted. After that he knelt facing west, received an incense burner and chanted praises and gathās; he died sitting up straight.⁶⁶ It may be presumed that the object of his praises was Amitābha, and that he was wishing for entrance into his Paradise. That Avalokiteśvara’s image reached up to the skies is probably a symbolic description of Avalokiteśvara coming out to meet him to take him into Paradise.

⁶³ These are known as *Kwangyōng sŏ pun pyōnsangdo* 觀經序分變相圖.

⁶⁴ Known as *Kwangyōng sibuyuk kwan pyōnsangdo* 觀經十六觀變相圖.

⁶⁵ Kikutake and Chōng eds., *Koryŏ sidae ui Pulhwa*, 115-116.

⁶⁶ Pang Usŏn, “Cho Ingyu myojimyōng” 趙仁規墓誌銘 (Epitaph for Cho Ingyu), *Myojimyōng chipsōng*, 630.

As already hinted at above, Amitābha's Paradise was considered to be a world beyond reincarnation. In *The Sūtra on the Buddha of Infinite Life* (*Wuliangshou jing* 無量壽經; the Larger Sukhāvātīvyūha Sūtra, T. 12.360), becoming Buddha in paradise is guaranteed in the eleventh of the forty-eight vows of Amitābha, according to which one meets Amitābha and hears his preaching in order to become a Buddha.⁶⁷ That this belief was popular can be seen in the contents of prayers offered during *Ch'ōndojae* 薦度齋, rituals performed for the purpose of leading the soul to heaven or paradise, in late Koryŏ. Yi Talch'ung 李達衷 (1309-1384) took it upon himself to write a prayer for the deceased wife of Deputy Director (*chehak* 提學) Kim, to be read on the forty-ninth day after her death. He prayed that she may quickly gain enlightenment in paradise.⁶⁸ Yi Chŏm wished either to go to paradise, meet Apramāṇābha-Amitābha (Amitābha of infinite light) and hear the prophecy that he will become a Buddha himself, or become enlightened and escape the body of a mundane man.⁶⁹ This is something that is in common with passages from the prayer of Kwŏn Kŭn, mentioned earlier. The Great Sŏn Master Wŏngyu 元珪 (n.d.) wished, in the written prayer dated 1377 for the Lotus Sūtra, for the soul of his dead mother, the lady Yi from Ch'ōlsŏng district, to be born in paradise and to meet Amitābha to receive the prophecy of enlightenment and gain the perfect knowledge.⁷⁰ This written prayer is specifically stating that the ultimate purpose of going to paradise was to become a Buddha.

⁶⁷ Praying to become a Buddha in Paradise is based on the eleventh of the forty-eight vows of the monk Fazang, who said "I will never gain enlightenment if those born in Paradise are not guaranteed of becoming Buddhas." *Muryangsu kyŏng*, K. 6.1042. In the summarizing poem of *The Sūtra on the Buddha of Infinite Life*, the lyrics "just by going to that sublime Paradise, mystic powers will be ensured, Amitābha's prophecy endowed, and ultimate understanding achieved" are found. See *Muryangsu kyŏng*, K. 6.1049-1050.

⁶⁸ Yi Talch'ung, "Kim chehak ch'ōnch'ŏ ch'ilch'il so" 金提學薦妻七七疏 (Statement for the forty-ninth-day mass to lead the wife of counselor Kim to Heaven), *Tongmunsŏn* 111.21b-22a.

⁶⁹ Yi Chŏm, "Tae Yi Hwanyŏng ch'ōn manggu so" 代李和寧薦亡舅疏 (Statement at leading the dead father-in-law of Yi Hwanyŏng to Heaven), *Tongmunsŏn* 111.24a-b; Yi Chŏm, "Tae Yi taejung ch'ōn mo so" 代李大從薦母疏 (Statement at leading the dead mother of *taejung* Yi to Heaven), *Tongmunsŏn* 111.25b; Yi Chŏm, "Kang p'anmil puin Chŏng ssi so" (姜判密夫人鄭氏疏; Prayer to lead Lady Chŏng, wife of *p'anmil* Kang to Heaven), *Tongmunsŏn*, 111.28b.

⁷⁰ See the copy of the Lotus Sūtra in the Horim Museum. Kwŏn Hūigyŏng 權熹耕, *Koryŏ sagyŏng ŭi yŏn'gu* (Study of hand-written sūtras of the Koryŏ period), (Seoul: Mijin ch'ulp'ansa, 1986), pp. 441-442; *Koryŏsa* 112.32b

Thus, there was no restriction on exactly who may, by devotion to Amitābha, be freed from reincarnation and enter paradise to become Buddha. However, it was believed that women did not exist in paradise. This is related to the thirty-fifth vow of the Bodhisattva Dharmakāra. He vowed that “women hate their own bodies, and I would not reach out for enlightenment if they are to reincarnate in their female bodies again” and as a consequence of his vow, gained enlightenment and became Amitābha.⁷¹ The last fascicle of Yuanzhao’s 元照 (d. 1116) commentary on the *Amitāyurdhyāna sūtra*,⁷² said to have been the philosophical basis of the sixteen objects of contemplation illustrations, states clearly that there were no women in Paradise. It was not that women could not go to Paradise but that Paradise did not deal with women’s retribution.⁷³

However, it seems that some people of Koryŏ believed that one may go to Paradise in the form of a woman. In the lower part of two illustrations of the sixteen objects of contemplation, both completed in 1323, those people who entered Paradise appear. The structure of both pictures is similar, but there is a difference between the depictions of the people. In the picture kept at the Inshō-in, there are no women among the people in Paradise. The one from Chion-in 知恩院, however, features women. In its center there is a female devotee, and women among the high, medium and low categories of people in Paradise.⁷⁴ This picture seems to have informed women believers that they may go to Paradise as women. However, this does not seem to have been universally accepted, because prayers written by contemporaries expressed their wish to discard the form of woman and change into a man and consequently into Buddha.⁷⁵

⁷¹ *Muryangsu kyŏng*, K. 6.1043.

⁷² Kikutake and Chŏng, *Koryŏ sidae ūi Pulhwa*, 82. Yuanzhao, *Guan wuliangshoufo jingyi shu* 觀無量壽佛經 義疏 (Commentary on the Amitāyurdhyāna sūtra), T.37.1754.299c.

⁷³ Yuanzhao, *Guan wuliangshoufo jingyi shu*, T.37.1754.304c.

⁷⁴ Kikutake and Chŏng, *Koryŏ sidae ūi Pulhwa*, 82.

⁷⁵ “Changgoksa Yaksa yŏrae Pokchang parwŏnmun (na)” 長谷寺 藥師如來坐像 腹藏 發願文 (ㄴ) (Votive text stored inside a seated Bhaiṣajyaguru statue (b)), Yi Kibaek 李基白 ed., *Han’guk Sangdae komunsŏ charyo chipsŏng* (Collection of Korean documents from the Ancient and Middle Ages) (Seoul: Ilchisa, 1993), p. 180; “Kamji ūnja Myobŏp yŏnhwa kyŏng sagyŏng palmun” 紺紙銀字 妙法蓮華經 寫經 跋文 (Epilogue to the Lotus Sūtra written in Silver upon Indigo), ibid. pp. 208-209; Min Sap’yŏng 閔思平, “Kang’anjŏn Uranjae mun” 康安殿孟蘭齋文 (Text for the Ullambana feast in the Kang’an hall [of the palace]), *Gŭb’am sijip* 及菴詩集 (Collected poems of Gŭb’am Min Sap’yŏng), *Han’guk munjip ch’onggan*, vol. 3, 88.

The Prevalence of Divination Regarding the Afterlife: the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass

It may be inferred from the descriptions above that the reception of Buddhist notions of afterlife makes it a very fearful thing indeed to fall into the three evil rebirths of hell, animals, or hungry ghosts. The kind of retribution one receives is determined by actions of the body (what one does), mouth (what one says) and mind (what one thinks). However, it is not easy to predict a person's retribution on the basis of each word or action or thought that may have harmed another person. It was this uncertainty that led people to pray to be born into a good place after death, partaking in various Buddhist practices including the recitation of the Buddha's name or the chanting of sūtras. People also formed societies to recite the names of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas together for ten thousand days (*Manil yŏmbulhoe* 萬日念佛會), praying to enter Paradise. There were also rituals to pray for deceased parents or other family members so that they may escape the three evil rebirths and enter Tuṣita or Paradise. Historical documents describe various types of rituals, such as the ritual performed on the forty-ninth day after death (*Sasipkujae* 四九齋), the one on the hundredth day (*Paekilchae* 百日齋), the one held on the first anniversary (*Sosangjae* 小祥齋), the Ullambana feast on the fifteenth of the seventh months, the compassionate penance ritual (*Chabich'am toryang* 慈悲懺道場),⁷⁶ and the Water and Land maigre feast (*Suryukchae* 水陸齋). Praying for a better reincarnation for one's deceased parents was an important Buddhist ritual, and was praised as an act of filial piety.

But such rituals did not bring any certainty about the retribution meted out at the court of the underworld. People were still left wondering where they themselves would go after death, and about the destination of their deceased parents and families. The Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass was a device to solve such lingering questions. It involved the throwing of a kind of wooden dice to divine what kind of retribution lay in store, as well as cultic practices, mainly repentance, to obtain a better retribution. The ritual was introduced by the Silla monk Wŏngwang 圓光 (fl. 589-630) after his return from China ca. 600, and henceforth organized at Hŭngnyunsa 興輪寺 in Kyŏngju. During the reign of King Kyŏngdŏk (742-765), Chinp'yo 眞表 and his disciples Yŏngsim 永深 and Simji 心地 popularized the ritual by holding it at the temples where they

⁷⁶ Based on the *Cibei daochang chanfa* 慈悲道場懺法, T. 45.1909.

resided, including first and foremost Kūmsansa, and also Paryōnsa, Songnisa and Tonghwasa. The theoretical basis of the Chōmch'al Dharma Mass was provided by the *Sūtra for divining good and evil retribution*.⁷⁷ This sūtra prescribes the making of six dice-like wooden sticks, each of them to be inscribed with three numbers between 1 and 18, and to be thrown in order to find out the good and bad retribution of the three realms. Each of the 189 different possible outcomes meant a specific reward or punishment, also described by the sūtra. The Chōmch'al Dharma Mass carried out by Chinp'yo differed from that prescribed by the sūtra, in that it made use of the 189 *kanjas* 簡子 (inscribed slips) alleged to have been given by Maitreya.⁷⁸ This method was probably effective in that it told people their retribution in a much easier way than through calculation of the number of possible outcomes. Other evidence on the ritual in the Silla period can be found in the context of the Mañjuśrī cult at Odaesan. A devotional society styled the Vajra society (Kūmgangsa 金剛社) held Chōmch'al rituals at night in the "Kṣitigarbha hermitage" (Chijang pang 地藏房) on Mount Odae, preceded by the chanting of the *Sūtra on Kṣitigarbha Original Vow and The Perfection of Wisdom in Three Hundred Lines*.⁷⁹

The Chōmch'al Dharma Mass played an important role in instilling in the populace the Buddhist conception of the afterlife, but its widespread propagation was only achieved during the Koryŏ period. During this period the Chōmch'al Dharma Mass in the format prescribed by Chinp'yo became the norm. Many prominent people, including Koryŏ kings such as T'aejo and Yejong (r. 1105-1122), were interested in the 189 *kanjas* of Chinp'yo. The Monk Sŏkch'ung 釋冲 (n.d.) presented King T'aejo with a monk's robe and the 189 *kanjas* of Chinp'yo. King Yejong brought Chinp'yo's 189 *kanjas*, originally kept at Tonghwasa, to the palace to worship. At the loss of the ninth of the *kanjas*, he ordered to have it replaced by a new one made of ivory, before returning them to the temple.⁸⁰ Descriptions of Chinp'yo's 189 *kanjas* can also be found in the 1199 inscription by Yŏngjam 瑩岑 and Yi Kyubo's travelogue.⁸¹ The Monk Iryŏn offered

⁷⁷ *Zhancha shan'oye bao jing* 占察善惡業報經, T. 17.839.

⁷⁸ See "Chinp'yo chŏn kan" 眞表傳簡 (Chinp'yo transmits the *kanja*), *Samguk yusa* 4.

⁷⁹ "Taesan oman chinsin," *Samguk yusa* 3. The scriptures are the *Kṣitigarbha-pranidhana sūtra* (*Dizang pusa benyuan jing* 地藏本願經), T. 13.412; and the *Vajracchedika Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*Jin'gang banruopoluo jing* 金剛般若波羅經), T. 8.235~237; the latter is more commonly known as the Diamond Sūtra.

⁸⁰ "Simji kyejo" 心地繼祖 (Simji succeeds to the position of patriarch), *Samguk yusa* 4.

⁸¹ Yŏngjam, "Chinp'yo yulsa chinsin changgol t'appi;" Yi Kyubo, "Namhaeng wŏlilgi" 南行月日記 (Diary of a journey south), *Tongmunsŏn* 66.12b.

a detailed description of Chinp'yo's *kanjas* in his *Samguk yusa*.⁸² According to Yŏngjam, the eighth and ninth among the 189 *kanjas* were the finger bones of Maitreya, and Iryŏn concurs in his biography of Chinp'yo. This seems to have been the belief propagated after the mid-Koryŏ period. The *Hyŏnhaeng Sŏbang kyŏng* criticizes this belief, stating that many have fallen into evil ways, having been tricked by Chinp'yo's disciples into thinking the eighth and ninth among the *kanja* kept at Tonghwasa are really the finger bones of Maitreya.⁸³ This suggests that the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass, involving the throwing of 189 *kanjas* as prescribed by monks belonging to the sect of Chinp'yo, was prevalent throughout the Koryŏ period.

On the other hand, from 1123 to 1129, Odaesa on Mount Chiri was renovated and the Sujŏngsa水精社 society was formed. Chinŏk津億 (n.d.), a monk of the Pŏpsang School, led this society, and was joined by monks of both the doctrinal and meditation orders, including Iksŭng翼乘 (n.d.), of the *sŭngt'ong* rank and abbot of Haeinsa, Pŏb'yŏn法延 (n.d.), of the *sujwa* rank, and Yŏngsŏng永誠 (n.d.), of the *sŏnsa* rank. He was also joined by approximately three thousand people of all classes, from officials including Kwŏn Chŏk權適 (1094-1146) to the general populace. The objective of this society was to enter Paradise, probably that of the West, even though the *Sūtra for divining good and evil retribution* they claimed to follow did not mention the reward of being born into the Paradise of Amitābha. The rewards closest to this were attached to the 183rd, the 184th and 185th case, respectively going to Tuṣita Heaven, entering the Pure Land of Buddha, and seeing the Buddha right after death. The fact that the devotees at Sujŏngsa had the objective of entering Paradise despite the fact that the sūtra did not specify such a destiny shows that Amitābha's Paradise was the most preferred rebirth for Koryŏ people. All the names of the participants of the organization (both the deceased and the living) were inscribed on bits of wood, which were taken out every fortnight to divine each person's retribution. Those who received a bad retribution by this process carried out acts of repentance until they obtained good retribution. It was also feared that someone who gained good retribution might lose it again, so that the divining process was repeated every year, with the same acts of

⁸² "Chinp'yo chŏn kan," "Simji kyejo," *Samguk yusa*, 4.

⁸³ On the evolution of perceptions regarding the 189 *kanjas* handed down by Chinp'yo, see Nam Tongsin, "Namal Yŏch'o ūi wigyŏng yŏn'gu," 255-257.

repentance in case bad retribution showed up.⁸⁴ These methods were alleged to adhere to the *Sūtra for divining good and evil retribution*, so it seems that six dice were used.⁸⁵ The notable features of this type of Chōmch'al Dharma Mass were that it was an annual event, and used to divine the retribution of the dead as well as the living, with the latter carrying out the acts of repentance for the dead.

Such prevalence of the Chōmch'al Dharma Mass led to a form of national assembly in the twelfth to thirteenth century, in which the king held the Chōmch'al Dharma Mass in order to lead into heaven those who died unjustly. In the first month of the sixth year of Injong's reign (1128), the king contracted a contagious disease and this prompted the organization of a Chōmch'al Dharma Mass, together with the associated practices of repentance and prayer for the souls of the dead to enter a better destination in afterlife.⁸⁶ This was probably done to pacify the souls of the many who died during the reign of Sukchong, including Yi Chagyōm 李資謙 and his family, who died in the 1126 plot. This Chōmch'al Dharma Mass was held in Songnisa (now Pōpchusa, Songnisan), which was built by Yōngsim, who continued the teachings of Chinp'yo. On the other hand, a prayer text for a Chōmch'al Dharma Mass by Yu Hūi 劉羲 (fl. 1152) describes a Chōmch'al Dharma Mass held for the ministers who died unjustly at the time of the revolt of the military men,⁸⁷ in which it was prayed that their souls would soon meet the Buddha

⁸⁴ Kwōn Chōk, "Chirisan Sujōngsa ki" (智異山水精社記; Record of the Sujōngsa on Mount Chiri), *Tongmunsōn* 64.30b-33b.

⁸⁵ On Sujōngsa, see Kim Yōngmi [Kim Young Mi], "Koryō chōn'gi Amit'a Sinang kwa kyōlsa" (The Faith in Amitābha and devotional societies the early Koryō period), *Chōngt'ohak yōn'gu* 3 (2000): 148-153. On the other hand, Kim Namyun, "Koryō chunggi Pulgyo wa Pōpsangjong" (Mid-Koryō Buddhism and the Pōpsang school), *Hanguksaron* 2 (1992): 142-143 and Ra Chōngsuk, "Koryō Sidae Jijang Sinang" (Belief in Kṣitigarbha in the Koryō period), *Sahak yōn'gu* 80 (2005): 131-132, assert that two characters designating good and evil were inscribed on the *kanja*, which were thrown then put into two boxes each inscribed with one of the two letters. However, it seems that the historical description of "ch'ulgan ch'ōngnyun" 出簡擲輪 (taking out the *kanja* and throwing the dice) signifies the process of taking out the *kanja* inscribed with the name of a person, followed by the throwing of dice in order to divine his retribution. And according to the outcome, which could be categorized into good or evil, the inscribed *kanja* was put into either of two boxes representing each then followed by repentance if necessary. Also, see Kim Namyun, "Koryō chunggi Pōpsangjong," pp.144-145 for a view of the Chōmch'al Dharma Mass held by the state as intrinsically the same as *yōje* (Rite for Revengeful Ghosts) in the Chosōn period, performed to appease vengeful souls causing disasters such as epidemics.

⁸⁶ Kim Pusik, "Songnisa chōmch'alhoe so" 俗離寺占察會疏 (Prayer for the Chōmch'al Dharma Mass held at Songnisa), *Tongmunsōn* 110.22a-b. Kim Young Mi [Kim Yōngmi], "Koryō sidae Pulgyo wa chōnyōmbyōng ch'iyu munwha" (Buddhism and the culture of epidemic healing during the Koryō Dynasty), *Ihwa[Ewha] sahak yōn'gu* 34 (2007): 129-130.

⁸⁷ Kim Namyun, "Koryō chunggi Pōpsangjong," p.144.

of All Lands and become enlightened.⁸⁸ The same document mentions “Yulsa 律師” and “the eighth and ninth *kanja*,” alleged to be the bones of the Maitreya Bodhisatva, suggesting its relationship with the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass held by the disciples of Chinp'yo, who was called Chinp'yo yulsa (Vinaya master Chinp'yo). The prevalence of the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass resulted in the phenomenon of praying for those who had died unjustly, so that they may enter a better destination in the afterlife.

Yi Kyubo also wrote a prayer for a Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass, praying for the dead to enter paradise. The Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass was held for the dead, officially to resolve the fear that the begrudged souls of the three worlds would remain in the sea of suffering and inflict damage on the living, and privately to pray for dead parents and siblings who may be stuck in the underworld. Ultimately it was hoped that deceased parents, siblings and relatives would gain enlightenment, and ascend to the nine seats and see the image of the Buddha.⁸⁹ The nine seats refer to the Nine Lotus Seats of Paradise. Yi Kyubo wrote this work on behalf of Ch'oe I 崔怡 (d. 1249),⁹⁰ and the expression “my deceased parents” seems to refer to Ch'oe Ch'unghŏn (1149-1219), for whom Ch'oe I probably held the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass at some point after the death of his father, which was in the ninth month of the sixth year of King Kojong's reign (1219). Ch'oe I knew well that his father had many people killed, not only during the process of acquiring power but after having succeeded. This probably made him hold the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass for his father and his mother, who had died earlier, and to divine their destinations in afterlife by throwing *kanjas*, and to hold rituals of repentance for them.⁹¹

The *Hyŏnhaeng sŏbang kyŏng* by Wŏnch'am was written as a result of the prevalence of the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass. In this work, it is stated that chanting ten thousand times the mantra illustrating the mysterious original mind of Amitābha (*Amit'a ponsim mimyo*

⁸⁸ Yu Hŭi, “Tosŏlwŏn Chŏmch'alhoe so” 兜率院占察會疏 (Prayer for the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass held at Tuṣita priory), *Tongmunsŏn* 110.23a-b.

⁸⁹ Yi Kyubo, “Chŏmch'alhoe so” 占察會疏 (Prayer for a Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass), *Tonguk Yi sangguk chip* 41.15b-16a.

⁹⁰ See Yi Kyubo, “Ch'oe sangguk yang Tanbyŏng hwa Kwanŭm chŏm'an so” 崔相國攘丹兵畫觀音點眼疏 (Statement on prime minister Ch'oe drawing an Avalokiteśvara and dotting the eyes in order to defeat the Khitans), *Tongguk Yi sangguk chip* 41.5b-6b. In the detailed explanatory note of this document, the nineteen-stanza prayer is described as the work of Yi, which he wrote instead of “prime minister Ch'oe,” i.e. Ch'oe I.

⁹¹ Yi Kyubo, “Chŏmch'alhoe so.” In the Prayer, Yi states “We learned the rite of throwing *kanjas* made by Sir Chin [Chinp'yo], and the sound of Indian chants was as loud as thunder and a sweet scent was like a cloud (講眞公擲簡之儀 梵唱雷宏 眞香雲布). “Indian chants” (*Pŏmch'ang*) is thought to refer to the recitation of the name of Kṣitigarbha, as described in *the Chŏmch'al Sutra*.

chin'ŏn 阿彌陀本心微妙真言) and throwing *kanja* will tell one's destination in afterlife.⁹² The procedures are as follows. Forty-one *kanja* are made in total, each inscribed with one of the 40 characters of the verse prescribed by Naksŏ and the character for Buddha (*Pul* 佛). These are gathered in a clean bowl, and the senior member of the monks at the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass throws them, kneeling in front of the statue of Buddha, who then gathers up only those that fall with the characters showing upwards and throws them again. The last remaining character to show signifies the specific retribution. Throwing *kanja* is done four times for a single person at the meeting, each time preceded by the chanting of the Mantra 10,000 times, then 2,000, 1,500 times and 500 times. If the character signifying the Pure Land of Buddha comes up within the first three throws, *kanja* are not thrown for the fourth time. After finding out the person's retribution, he or she is seated according to the foretold destination. The notable feature of the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass based on this particular Sūtra is that the chanting of the Mantra of Amitābha was emphasized. It simplified the procedures of divination, the types of afterlife (one's retribution) and the ways of practice, inviting those who were unable to chant whole sūtras to participate.

The fact that the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass was prevalent throughout the Koryŏ period shows that the Buddhist ideas of the afterlife were widely accepted by people, making them fear reincarnation, especially the three evil destinies, and to wish to enter Tuṣita Heaven or Paradise. These tendencies resulted in the prevalence of Buddhist rituals for oneself and the whole family.

Conclusion

Koryŏ people had a strong faith in reincarnation, to the point that they made up tales of the nine lives of King T'aejo. They believed that beyond the end of their present lives, they would be born as new entities according to karma. They prayed to avoid the three evil reincarnations, especially hell, and instead to go to Heaven (Tuṣita Heaven) or Paradise (the Western Pure Land), and to escape reincarnation through attainment of Buddhahood. Such faith was encouraged by the miracle stories about people who escaped the sufferings of hell, propagated by monks, and by illustrations of the judgement of the Ten Kings and similar subjects. Hell was expressed as a burning cauldron, provoking people's fear, and Buddhist rituals including those to lead the dead

⁹² Woncham, *Hyŏnhaeng sŏbang kyŏng*, *Han'guk Pulgyo chŏnsŏ*, 6.861.

into Paradise, such as the forty-ninth day memorial rite, and those to pacify vengeful souls, such as the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass. It was also widely believed that residing on the Kŭmgang, Odae or Pogae mountains ensured escape from hell or other evil rebirths.

Tuṣita Heaven, although it was still a part of the cycle of reincarnation, was accepted as a desirable destination. Tuṣita Heaven was believed to be a place of enjoyment and the residence of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, who was to be reborn as a human being. Returning to life at the same time as Maitreya and hearing him teach was thought to open the way to become a Buddha. Tuṣita Heaven, in short, was the most ideal destination among the six paths of reincarnation. On the other hand, Paradise was the ideal afterlife that put an end to reincarnation, because the teachings of Amitābha would ensure the listener to become a Buddha. This Paradise was thought to be completely free of suffering, and decorated with nets and trees made of the seven jewels; upon the entrance of a soul, Amitābha welcomes it into the Lotus Seat of nine levels, and sometimes comes out to meet the dead with Bodhisattvas.

People are afraid of death and afterlife, and this explains why the “Pictures of Amitāba’s descent,” expressing the belief that Amitābha and his Bodhisattvas descend to meet the deceased, are the most numerous among Amitābha paintings. There is also an image of Paradise in the *Kwan’gyŏng simyukkwan pyŏnsangdo*, in which there are nine different dwelling places according to karma. According to the sūtra this illustration is associated with, women are absent from Paradise, meaning that Paradise does not accept women’s karmic results rather than that their being female makes their entrance impossible. However, another version of this scene, kept at the Jinshō-in, remarkably does feature women.

During the Koryŏ period, faith in Buddhism and its conception of the afterlife was widespread. The fear of afterlife was an important element of the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass, which offered people the chance to divine their destiny after death and to pray for good paths such as Tuṣita Heaven or Paradise. After its initiation by Wŏngwang, Chinp'yo created the 189 *kanja* equivalent to the 189 images described in the *Chŏmch'al Sūtra*; these were used in the initial Chŏmch'al ritual, which became the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass later in the Koryŏ period. Active participants of the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass included both the ruling class and the lay people. The prevalence of the Chŏmch'al Dharma Mass led to the compilation of *Hyŏnhaeng*

sōbang kyōng at the end of the Koryō period, with its simplified descriptions of the divination process, the afterlife, and methods of practice.