

Community, Outsider, and Literature: Memorial Stones for Stone Bridges of the Chosŏn Dynasty and “The Epigraph of Kwangnigyo”

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This study examines the bridge memorial stones of Chosŏn, considering the intersection between public literature and exile literature. Bridge memorial stones are erected to commemorate stone bridge construction in a community. The entire community—from the local administration to the people—contributed to the bridge construction and the composition of the epigraphs on bridge memorial stones. The genre developed into a type of public literature, forming a practical style without personal narratives. This paper categorizes the contents of bridge memorial stones into three parts: prose, verse, and name lists, and analyzes the general characteristics and literary style of each part. Furthermore, this paper introduces “The Epigraph of Kwangnigyo” by the exile Sim Yŏlchi (1707–1759?) and compares it with conventional epigraphs of bridge memorial stones in Chosŏn. Although written by an outsider to the Kijang (Gijang) community, it captured the local identity by adopting folklore of the dragon king *Kwangniwang* and affirmed the leading power of the local people. In addition, the author included an image of himself as marginalized from the community in a fictional story. This unique manuscript presents a new perspective on exile literature as a result of active participation in a community.

Keywords: Bridge memorial stone, public literature, exile literature, Sim Yŏlchi, “The Epigraph of Kwangnigyo”

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