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# Archetypes in *Samguk Sagi* 三國史記: from Confucian Virtue/Vice-Bearers to Campbell's Hero's Journey and Transformations

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In Korean studies, the prevailing consensus has long been that Kim Pusik's 金富軾 (1075-1151) *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 narrative is predominantly Confucian, dry, and rational. However, in the 21st century, this view has been vigorously and successfully challenged by scholars who find profound drama and undeniable literary merit in this chronicle. Following this trend, I analyze the methods of creating archetypes in Kim Pusik's narrative, dividing these archetypes into two categories. Along with the obvious "functional" role models reflecting various Confucian virtues and vices, the *Samguk sagi* also contains more subtle, "hidden" archetypes rooted in a deep mythological consciousness. The biographies of historical figures reflect motifs of Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey" and the Transformations of the Hero, while unexpected parallels in the structure and narrative of the adventures of the "protagonists" Kim Yusin 金庾信 and "antagonists" Kungye 弓裔 offer intriguing comparisons. The interplay of "functional" and "Campbellian" archetypes throughout the storyline allows for a better appreciation of the literary talent of Kim Pusik and his predecessors, revealing cosmogonic motifs in the presentation of historical events seemingly uncharacteristic of Confucian historiography, and confirming the deeply syncretic nature of ancient and medieval Korean culture, which persisted until at least the 12th century. It can be surmised that Kim Pusik's historiography did not reject myth *perse*, but on the contrary, embraced dramatic mythologization of historical figures that enhanced their *significance* for the history.
**Keywords:** archetype, myth, historiography, *Samguk sagi*, Hero's Journey, Transformations of the Hero, cosmogonic cycle, Kim Yusin, Kungye

## Introduction

An archetype in in the Jungian tradition is defined as innate and inherited repetitive patterns of psychological behavior stored in the subconscious. The extension of this interpretation to the study of culture and myth has caused and continues to cause enormous skepticism among many cultural scholars, ethnologists, anthropologists, and folklorists. Claude Lévi-Strauss doubted viability of "Jung's idea that a given mythological pattern — the so-called archetype — possesses a certain signification"[1] and lamented that "psychoanalysts

* This is a substantially revised and expanded article based on two previously published Russian-language studies by the author: "Hero's Journey in Korean Confucian Historiography: Biographies

and many anthropologists have shifted the problems to be explained away from the natural or cosmological towards the sociological and psychological fields."[2] Alan Dundes, after citing Yung's own premise that archetypes are by definition *unknowable*, would reasonably ask: "So, if archetypes are unknowable, how can we know them?"[3] Himself an accomplished adept of both structural and psychoanalytic readings of folklore, Dundes was also a staunch opponent of archetype as an analytic category: "I believe there is no single idea promulgated by amateurs that has done more harm to serious folklore study than the notion of archetype."[4] He considered the key flaw in the archetype concept to be its claim to universalism, which in effect denied the uniqueness of cultures and cultural diversity: "The universalistic premise of unity, coupled with the claim that archetypes are inherited, leaves little room for the influence of cultural relativism and the formation of oicotypes."[5]

However, in other areas of humanities, the attitude towards archetypes is more liberal. For example, literary scholars readily attribute compositional, structurally organizing properties that determine the composition, methods, and direction of narrative development to the archetype. Archetype-making is understood as a way of creating figures, tropes, and characters. This function of the archetype does not completely deprive it of its Jungian psychological component, but instrumentalizes it, making it part of the author's idea rather than a primary structural element of the collective unconscious. To this end, a distinction is often made between the *archetype* itself and the *archetypal image*, although Jung himself considers these concepts to be interchangeable. Orientalists also refer to the concept of the archetype,[6] often interpreting it as a philosophical category.

Prominent Russian sinologist Anatoly Luk'yanov noted that "primordial chaos carries archetypes of nature that are subconscious to Confucian civilization and is capable of creating any kind of cosmos,"[7] and compared the ideal Confucian image of a noble man—*junzi* 君子, who allegorically impregnates "the proto-cosmic womb with the genetic code of Confucian civilization"—with the Daoist archetypes of the Mysterious Mother-Female of All-under-Heaven 天下之玄牝,

of Kim Yusin and Kungye in the Context of J. Campbell's Monomyth," *Concept: Philosophy, Religion, Culture* 7, no. 3 (2023): 67–89; and "Cosmogony and Cosmology in Korean Confucian Historiography Based on the *Samguk Sagi* by Kim Busik," *Concept: Philosophy, Religion, Culture* 8, no. 4 (2024): 37–61.

[1] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth," *The Journal of American Folklore* 68, no. 270 (1995): 429.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Alan Dundes, "Folkloristics in the Twenty-First Century (AFS Invited Presidential Plenary Address, 2004)," *The Journal of American Folklore* 118, no 470 (2005): 397.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid., 400.

[6] See, for example Robert Arens, "C. G. Jung and Some Far Eastern Parallels," *CrossCurrents* 23, no. 1 (1973): 73–91; William E. Savage, "Archetypes, Model Emulation and the Confucian Gentleman," *Early China* vol. 17 (1992): 1–25; William H. Nienhauser, Jr., "Tales of the Chancellor(s): The Grand Scribe's Unfinished Business," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 25 (2003): 99–107, esp. 100–101.

[7] Anatoly E. Luk'yanov, "Dve kosmogonii — dva tipa civilizacij: konfucianskaya i daosskaya" [Two Cosmogonies, Two Types of Civilizations: Confucian and Daoist]. *Chelovek i kul'tura Vostoka. Issledovaniya i perevody* 1.5 (2016): 39.

"the infant 兒 who has not yet smiled," etc.[8] All these images are quite consistent with Jungian images of the *wise old man*, the *chthonic mother*, and the *child*. Japanese philosopher and scholar of culture Masayuki Sato discusses "the archetype of history in the Confucian Oikoumene." [9] In both cases, archetype appears more as an allegory of philosophical abstraction, which may indicate the illustrative rather than analytical function of this concept. In the first case, Jungian features of archetype are evident, although they are dialectically linked to the world-building/harmonization — that is, socio-political, civilizational role of the *junzi*. The archetypal nature of this figure is somewhat paradoxical: it is obviously socially constructed and, as such, knowable — unlike the Jungian archetype. However, it is at the same time unattainable (i.e., incomprehensible in practice) [10] and absolute, ideal. Hence, *junzi* can be considered an archetype of the Confucian ideal man and used as an allegory. This is obviously the case when the Tang emperor Taizong referred to Silla in an apocryphal [11] conversation with Kim Ch'unch'u: "Truly, [Silla] is a country of noble men" 誠君子之國也.[12]

Masayuki Sato uses the term "archetype" in even more paradoxical way—to define written history and historiography both as social pursuits and as elements of culture (Anatoly Luk'yanov also discusses the archetype of Confucian culture and philosophy[13]). These pursuits are usually considered rational and antagonistic to the subconscious. Sato himself begins his article with an unequivocal declaration that "East Asian historiography... shared, at the phenomenological level, a commitment to an *objectivist* (emphasis mine — *A.S.*) method of historical writing that 'writes the past as it was'," [14] referring to the canonic historian — "a transmitter, not a maker." [15]

Such ambivalent use of the concept of "archetype" bids, at the very least, a clarification whether in each specific case we are talking about the "original Jungian," "unconscious," "hidden" archetype or a "functional-methodological," "positivist" archetype, although it is not always possible to clear-cut one from another.

## History, Historiography, Archetype, and Myth

[8] Ibid., 40–41.

[9] Masayuki Sato, "The Archetype of History in the Confucian Ecumene." *History and Theory* 46.2 (May 2007): 218–232.

[10] Confucius did not consider himself *junzi*: "躬行君子，則吾未之有得…若聖與仁，則吾豈敢?" *Lunyu* 論語 7:33, 34.

[11] Richard D. McBride, "The Structure and Sources of the Biography of Kim Yusin," *Acta Koreana* 16, no. 2 (2013): 524.

[12] Kim Pusik 金富軾, *Samguk sagi*, j. 41:1320. Page numbers of the original manuscript given according to the Russian 3-volumes edition.

[13] Anatoly E. Luk'yanov, "Shi czin: arhetip konfucianskoj kul'tury i filosofii" [*Shijing*: Archetype of Confucian Culture and Philosophy]. *Chelovek i kul'tura Vostoka. Issledovaniya i perevody* 1.4 (2014): 109-130.

[14] Ibid., 219.

[15] Authority of James Leggie's fundamental translation of Confucius's motto "述而不作" is seldom doubted. Yet, the character 述 has more definitions and they include such as "to narrate," "to relate," "to recount" and even "to explain and discuss" which implies less stringent "objectivist" constraints on historiographer.

Somewhat similar ambivalence is evident in perception of history, especially when historical science in its modern reading is compared with ancient and medieval historiographical practice. Even more so when it comes to Confucian historiography, whose methodology was laid down by Confucius himself and developed over centuries before taking shape in its more or less complete form in dynastic histories such as the *Tang shu* 唐書. Along the way, historiographical canon changed, incorporating traditions of oral lore, myths and legends, and practices of normative moral and philosophical assessments, various forms of narrative, and methods of structuring information. It has strayed far from both the literal adherence to the principle of "transmitting, not making" and Hegel's definition that "history among the Chinese comprehends the bare and definite facts, without any opinion or reasoning."[16] In fact, this characteristic can be applied to the methodology of compiling the most ancient temple chronicles[17] and veritable records 實錄, on the basis of which historical writings were compiled, while among 'histories' (historical records, dynastic or 'national' histories) only *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋 can meet these requirements — albeit with certain reservations.

However, the tradition of positivist perception of traditional East Asian historiography (including *Samguk sagi* 三國史記) dominated academia until the end of the 20th century. Serious study of this document in Russia (then the USSR) began in the mid-20th century,[18] while in Europe and the US, the first works on this masterpiece of Korean medieval historiography appeared only in the 1970s,[19] although, of course, it had been referred to earlier.[20] For more than half a century, there was a consensus in Korean studies that the *Histories of the Three Kingdoms*[21]

[16] Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 135.
[17] This work was apparently connected with ancestor worship and the veneration of deities, and had a sacred and deeply ritualistic character. This had a profound impact on the historiographic canon of East Asia. On the one hand, it reinforced a profound, almost religious respect for the past in general and for historical texts as such, and on the other, it provided the preconditions for the incorporation of myth and legend into historiography, that is, for the "historical rationalization" of myth.
[18] Annotated translation and publication of the *Samguk sagi* was led by the eminent Russian Korean scholar Mikhail N. Pak. The first volume, *The Annals of Silla*, was published in 1959. The three-volume transaltion was completed in 2002. Until the publication of Lee Byeong-kon's English translation in 2015, it remained the only complete, annotated translation of this chronicle into a European language. However, the commentary in Lee Byeong-gon's edition is extremely sparse, and the translation style itself has drawn criticism from the academic community. See Na Sanghoon, You Jinsook, and Shin Jeongsoo, "Chapter 41, 42, and 43 of the *Samguk sagi*: An Annotated Translation of Biography of Kim Yusin" *The Review of Korean Studies* 21.1 (2018): 194, note 4.
[19] The pioneering one appears to be that of Kenneth Gardiner, "The *Samguk Sagi* and its Sources," *Papers on Far East History*. no. 2 (1970).
[20] See Richard Rutt, "The Flower Boys of Silla (*hwarang*): Notes on the Sources," *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 38 (1961): 1-66; or Kenneth Gardiner, *The Rise and Development of the Korean Kingdom of Koguryŏ from the Earliest Times to A.D. 313* (Ph.D. thesis., SOAS University of London, 1964)
[21] I follow this translation of the chronicle's title (and not "History of the Three Kingdoms"), after Jonathan Best and Remco Breuker, whose arguments (Remco Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea, 918-1170. History, Ideology, and Identity in the Koryŏ Dynasty* (Leiden: Brill's Korean Studies Library, 2010) seem quite convincing to me. The Russian, more "positivist"

was primarily a rational text: "...Kim Pu-sik's rational narration of the *Samguk sagi,*" [22] "...dry [23] Confucian rationalism of the *Samguk sagi*," [24] "...rational, politically oriented *Samguk sagi*."[25] Korean historians also traditionally adhere to a positivist approach and uphold the thesis that Kim Pusik, a "rational Confucian," completely rejected myths and legends.[26]

The rationalism of *Samguk sagi* was generally contrasted with the "irrationalism" of another chronicle compiled about a century later, the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms). In 2004, Edward Shultz noted that "many contemporary students of Korean history readily admit to preferring *Samguk yusa* to *Samguk sagi* because of its intriguing anecdotes and mysterious tales."[27] Indeed, in *Samguk sagi*, "...even vivid legends and myths are presented as a list of *arbitrarily dated facts* (emphasis mine — *A.S.*) of the history of states, as if they were the deeds of real people." [28] This assessment clearly demonstrates the positivist dichotomy between the *rational* (reliable) and the *irrational* (unreliable, "mythical").

Perhaps, in defining the narrative of *Samguk sagi* as rational (that is dealing with "earthly matters," as opposed to "irrational" stories about miracles), is not so much the narrative itself as the context of its perception by researchers leads the way. Positivist legacy of the Western (and Russian) historiographical school is superimposed on Confucius's "positivist" maxim: do not speak of "extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings." [29] And if the historiographer comes to select, interpret, treat, or evaluate facts (i.e., to "distort" in one way or another what the outstanding Russian philosopher Alexei Losev called the "natural-material layer" of history[30]), then he is undoubtedly pursues "rational-political" interests, be they class, group, clan, or even personal. Even Remco Breuker, who believes that Kim Pusik's assessment as a "rational Confucian" speaks reductionism,[31] nevertheless asserts that Kim Pusik 'rejected' myths and "established the ancestry of Koryŏ[32] on the basis of those facts that he

translation—"Historical Records of the Three Kingdoms"—is also valid, although it does not convey the multiple, pluralistic nature of the historical presentation in the *Samguk sagi* that Breuker emphasizes. Pluralism of narratives, incidentally, is also characteristic of myth.

[22] Ch'oe Yŏng-ho, "An Outline History of Korean Historiography," *Korean Studies* 4 (1980): 9.

[23] Richard McBride refers to "Kim Pusik's narrative" as *terse* (Richard D. McBride II, "The Structure and Sources of the Biography of Kim Yusin," *Acta Koreana* 16.2 (2013): 528), but terse is not only "laconic," but also "expressive," and in the past, also "elegant."

[24] Mikhail N. Pak, "Kim Busik kak istorik" [Kim Pusik as historian], Introduction in: Kim Busik, *Samguk sagi. Letopisi Koguryo. Letopisi Pekche. Hronologicheskie tablitsy* [Samguk sagi. Koguryŏ Annals. Paekche Annals. Chronological Tables], trans. Mikhail N. Pak (Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 1995), p. 27.

[25] Edward Shultz, "An Introduction to the *Samguk Sagi*," *Korean Studies* 28(2004): 4.

[26] Remco Breuker cites a long list of such arguments. Remco Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea* (Leiden: Brill's Korean Studies Library, 2010), p. 323.

[27] Edward Shultz, "An Introduction to the *Samguk Sagi,*" 4.

[28] Mikhail N. Pak, "Kim Busik kak istorik," 27.

[29] *Lunyu* 論語, 7:21.

[30] Alexei F. Losev, *Dialektika mifa* [The dialectic of Myth] (Moscow: AST, 2023), p. 259

[31] Remco Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea, 918-1170. History, Ideology, and Identity in the Koryŏ Dynasty* (Leiden: Brill's Korean Studies Library, 2010), p. 324.

[32] Remco Breuker maintains the *Samguk sagi* is not merely a history of Three Kingdoms, but also as a history of the creation—i.e., the prehistory—of Koryŏ. In this context, he believes that the

thought he could prove, refusing to admit those stories that he considered mythical, confabulated, or implausible."[33] In other words, even for Breuker, Kim Pusik's approach remains ultimately rational and positivist.

The manner, style of narration, and clear, logical structure of the document, apparently, compelled scholars to perceive the narrative of *Samguk sagi* as rational, because Confucian historiography *must* be rational—especially in comparison with Buddhist historiography. After all, Iryŏn himself challenges Confucian dogma in the preface to his work: "... [although] supernatural [events], power, chaos [and] spirits belong [to] what [noble men] do not speak of...," and after listing canonical Chinese stories about the supernatural origins of legendary and historical rulers and dignitaries, he asks a rhetorical question: "[If this is] so, then all the founders of [our] three states [also] came [into being as a result of] miraculous [and] amazing events — why should this be [considered] strange?"[34]

Yet, "Confucian rationality" by no means prevents heroization, that is, the construction of images or functional archetypes (more on that in the next section). Kim Seung-ho emphasizes that Kim Pusik constructs the heroic figure of Kim Yushin 金庾信 (595-673) by demonstrating didactic conformity of his character's actions to the "five moral principles" 五倫 relative to the sovereign, the state, and the family[35] — that is, through his socio-political behavior. Thereby, morality is rationalized, but the manifestation of virtue requires an appropriate context that emphasizes the necessity of such a manifestation, that is, conflict and drama. Ultimately, adherence to Confucian virtue often induces the heroes of *Samguk sagi* to completely "irrational" actions — self-sacrifice of a level that was considered excessive in the Chinese moral canon.[36]

Moral and ethical assessment of the past in Confucian historiography made it one of the instruments of direct and indirect power and encouraged historians to typify heroes and their deeds. The chronicle is created to "reveal (i.e., codify — *A.S.*) the good or evil of rulers and rulers, the loyalty or treachery of their servants, peace or turmoil in the state, the prosperity or unrest of the people, which could

"canonical historiographical legitimation" (i.e., documented historical evidence) of the founding of Koguryŏ, Paekche, and Silla is no less important for Kim Pusik than the moral and political legitimation of Wang Kŏn's right to establish Koryŏ.

[33] Remco Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, p. 94.

[34] Iryŏn 一然, *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 [Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms], trans. Yu. Boltach (St.-Petersburg: Giperion, 2018), pp. 197-198.

[35] Kim Seung-Ho, "Kim Yusin chŏn'gi e nat'anan yŏng'unghwa pangsikkwa yubul sasangŭi kaeip: *Samguk sagi*wa *Samguk yusa* rŭl chungsimŭro" 김유신 전기 (傳記)에 나타난 영웅화 방식과 유불 (儒佛) 사상의 개입: 『삼국사기(三國史記)』와 『삼국유사(三國遺事)』를 중심으로 [Making a Hero of Kim Yusin and Intervention in Confucianism and Buddhist Thoughts - Based on the *Samguk Sagi* and the *Samguk Yusa*], *Eomunyeongu* 94 (2017): 81.

[36] In the "Historiographer's comments" section that follows the biographies of Hyangdŏk 向德 and Sŏn'gak 聖覺, who fed their parents with their own meat during the year of famine, Kim Pusik challenges Chinese historiographer Song Ci's admonition that harming one's body can hardly be considered true filial piety: "... when in a remote province, where they have no concept of scholarship and etiquette, [people] selflessly sacrifice themselves for their relatives, demonstrating true feelings of filial piety, don't [they] deserve approval and inclusion in biographies?"— Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 48: 1454.

serve as an edification for ... tens of thousands of generations, so that it (the history — *A.S.*) would shine like the sun and the stars."[37]

The norms for this codification were set by the system of moral virtues and vices. Thus, the very task of compiling a chronicle implied organizing the plot with all its necessary structural elements, identifying key characters, and, ultimately, the need to complete the story with an appropriate moral. Hyden White specifically noted the demand for *moral meaning* and demand for *significance* in historiography, "a demand that sequences of real events be assessed as to their *significance* as elements of a *moral drama*."[38] He was referring to 19th-century European historical narratives, but this observation is also quite applicable to didactic Confucian chronicles, whose central characters were rulers, courtiers, heroes, philosophers, poets, usurpers, rebels, murderers, and other colorful personalities whose deeds were evaluated by the historiographer, and moral drama always (or almost always) formed the ideological basis of the plot.

Gradually, scholars of Korea, too, began to pay attention to the dramatic component of the *Samguk sagi*, moving away from the former academic consensus that the *Histories* rejected mythological plots, confining the narrative instead to the presentation of political events. While in 2004 Edward Shultz called the *Samguk sagi* "rational" and "politically oriented,"[39] eight years later, in the introductory article to the English translation of *The Silla Annals* he together with his colleague Hugh H. W. Kang spoke somewhat differently: "More than being simply a 'Confucian-rationalist' history, the *Samguk sagi* conveys a *sense of the tragedy of life* (emphasis mine — *A.S.*). Kim Pusik had an eye *for the dramatic* (emphasis mine — *A.S.*), an appreciation of life's transience (he was, after all, Buddhist), and an abiding sympathy for the human condition... while other histories offer just 'dust and bones'[40] and lack human drama, *The Silla Annals* provides a *sense of the human significance* (emphasis mine — *A.S.*) of ancient Korea... the enduring relevance of this extraordinary history."[41] Richard McBride strayed even further from a positivist interpretation: "I would suggest," he notes, somewhat wryly, "that Kim Pusik and his team allowed for significant literary license and did not necessarily let facts obstruct the telling of a *good story with good morals* (emphasis mine — *A.S.*)."[42]

The demand for significance and the perception of historical narrative as moral drama, apparently, lays solid ground for convergence of Confucian historiography and political myth,[43] understood phenomenologically as a social process, or "work on myth" (*Arbeit am Mythos*), which assumes that "1) myth operates with figurative means; 2) it is not limited to a particular set of contents; 3) it takes place around a narrative; and 4) it provides what Blumenberg has called 'significance'

[37] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, 記表 (presentation note).
[38] Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 21.
[39] Edward Shultz, "An Introduction to the *Samguk Sagi*," 4.
[40] See reference to Alexei Losev's definition above.
[41] Edward Shultz and Hugh H. W. Kang, Introduction in *The Silla Annals of the Samguk sagi*, (Seongnam: The Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2012), pp. 8-9.
[42] Richard D. McBride II, "The Structure and Sources of the Biography of Kim Yusin," 502.
[43] Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 213.

(*Bedeutsamkeit*)."[44] Remko Breuker seems to think along similar lines, noting the interdependence of historiography and myth in Koryŏ: "Koryŏ historiography exercised a strong influence upon the formation and development of Koryŏ ideologies and the mythomoteurs associated with these, while being exposed to their influence at the same time."[45]

Of course, the very viability of deliberation about convergence of myth and Confucian historiography deserves a special in-depth discussion. Here, it suffices to note that the foundation of Confucian historiographical method, coupled with the appeal to the universal myth of the "golden age" — i.e., the Zhou era — as a normative and ideological justification for both history and virtue, becomes both a mythologem that ensures trust in the chronicler's and historiographer's work, provided the chronicle meets the audience's demands for significance, and a "mythomoteur" constructing the identity of the historiographer, his society, and his descendants.

## Functional Archetypes in *Samguk sagi*

One of the most striking and characteristic examples of creating (and working on) functional archetypes in Confucian historiography is biographies 列傳. This genre has been studied thoroughly, so here it will suffice to make a few remarks specifically on archetype-making techniques. The binomial, "constructed" by the great Han historian Sima Qian 司馬遷, by itself implies the creation and interpretation of a certain typology (its first character means "to arrange in a row," "to arrange in order," "to list," while the second is synonymous with the aforementioned 述 of Confucius and means "to transmit (including to subsequent generations)," "to describe," "to expound," "to interpret," "to disseminate," "to comment (including on classical canons)." Under this title, Sima Qian himself collected stories about those who "upheld justice, were confident in themselves, and acted decisively, not missing their opportunities, who made their names famous under Heavens through their achievements."[46] The biographies in *Shiji* 史記 were grouped into chapters 卷 according to a specific theme or quality that defined the character of the heroes (one chapter often contained the biographies of two or more people). This approach, as William H. Nienhauser noted, was "intended to reinforce an *archetypical pattern* (emphasis mine — *A.S.*) that the historian had in mind, clearly reflected in the chapter title."[47] This approach ensured the transmission of ideas and qualities that the author considered necessary for his contemporaries and descendants to perceive and follow.

Such techniques are, of course, not confined to the organization of biographies in historical works solely. For example, in "Seven-character verses

[44] Ibid., pp. 12-13.
[45] Remco Breuker, "Writing History in Koryŏ: Some Early Koryŏ Works Reconsidered," *Korean Histories* 2.1 (2010): 84; Remco Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, p. 322.
[46] Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Grand Historian) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 130.4027.
[47] William H. Nienhauser, Jr., "Tales of the Chancellor(s): The Grand Scribe's Unfinished Business," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 25 (2003): 101.

commemorating virtue" 七言記德詩 by Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn from the collection *Kyewŏn p'ilgyŏng chip* 桂苑筆耕集, a three-part classification of those who possess the virtuous/benevolent power of *de* 德 can be distinguished: the warrior type, the scholar type (poet and calligrapher), and the official type (statesman).[48]

Colorful personal stories and the vivid drama of the situations when characters' qualities are put to the test made the narrative in these sections the most "literary": "biographies... demonstrate the unity of history and literature."[49] The conflict around which the narrative develops is usually of a socio-ethical nature and is resolved in the same way as in fiction prose—either by constructing an "ideal society" or by "rejecting social life altogether."[50] The first observation relates to the *Shiji*, and the second — to the traditional Korean prose, yet both can be applied to the *Samguk sagi* as well.

Just as in Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn's poems, the actions of the characters in biographies have a world-building purpose (to tame/harmonize chaos and to establish/restore order), even if they concern seemingly insignificant, "profane" episodes. Master Paekkyŏl composed a "pestle-song" 碓樂 in response to his wife's grievances about poverty and thus calmed the "mini-chaos" — discord in the family — by demonstrating sincere humility before the will of Heaven.[51]

Creation of an archetype sometimes is confined to a characteristic episode from a person's biography, and biographies often boil down to a story about one or a couple of striking manifestations of archetypal traits—virtues or vices. Characters become bearers of such qualities and are of interest to the historiographer primarily as behavioral type models. Chronicles highlight positive examples of archetypal virtues: loyalty 忠, righteousness 義, filial piety 孝, benevolence, humanity 仁, etc., as well as negative examples — manifestations of their opposites.

Sima Qian reinforced his system of archetypes by giving them appropriate names. Kim Pusik did without this, yet Sin Hyŏngsik in his seminal study of *Samguk sagi* offered a detailed classification of the characters in biographical section in comparison with the canonical Chinese dynastic chronicles and the *Koryŏsa* (to save space, I will only give the structure of the biographies in the *Samguk sagi* below).[52] Richard McBride reproduced the same table from a later reprint of Sin Hyŏngsik's book,[53] offering his own version.

Sin Hyŏngsik's typology (not chapter/*kwŏn*-related) is as follows: Kim Yusin 金庾信, famous ministers [generals] (*myŏngsin* 名臣 [*changgun* 將軍]); famous subjects (*myŏngsin* 名臣) — remonstrators (*kan* 諫), counselors (*po* 輔), loyal subjects (*ch'ung* 忠)); scholars (*hakcha* 學者); loyal and righteous (merit subjects and their descendants) (*ch'ungŭi* 忠義); other — filial sons (*hyo* 孝), flatterers (*nyŏng* 佞), virtuous women (*yŏllyŏ* 列女), recluses (*ŭnil* 隱逸), and so forth; rebel subjects (*yŏksin* 逆臣) — Ch'ang Chori 倉租利 and Yŏn Kaesomun 淵蓋蘇文;

[48] Larisa V. Zhdanova, "Cikl Chhve Chhivona «Semislovnye stihi, v kotoryh opisyvaetsya *de*»," 175-180; Natalia A. Chesnokova, "Istoriya vymyshlennaya i real'naya," 111–112.
[49] Rudol'f V. Vyatkin, "Vstupitel'naya stat'ya," p. 22.
[50] Adelaida F. Trotsevich, *Mif i syuzhetnaya proza Korei*, p.6.
[51] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 48: 1457-1458.
[52] Sin Hyŏngsik, *Samguk sagi yon'gu* 三國史記 研究 [Study of *Samguk sagi*] (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1995), p. 338.
[53] Richard McBride, "The Structure and Sources of the Biography of Kim Yusin," 530-531.

traitorous subjects (*pansin* 叛臣) — Kungye 弓裔 and Kyŏnhwŏn 甄萱. McBride's typology basically follows suit (see Table 1).

Table 1. Typology of Biographies in Samguk sagi per McBride[54]

| Chapter of *Samguk sagi* | General Contents of Biographies |
|---|---|
| Chapters 41–43 | Kim Yusin and his descendants (viz. Loyal generals and ministers) |
| Chapter 44 | Loyal generals and ministers |
| Chapter 45 | Loyal ministers and subjects |
| Chapter 46 | Eminent scholars and subjects who studied abroad in Tang China |
| Chapter 47 | Loyal subjects and warriors who died for their country and/or earned merit or fame in battle |
| Chapter 48 | Ordinary people of virtue, musical talent, calligraphic skill, and artistic ability |
| Chapter 49 | Wicked ministers and tyrants |
| Chapter 50 | Villainous usurpers |

McBride's typology obviously appears more sparse and "functional" (he himself calls it rough), setting out broad generalizations without highlighting specific qualities. However, archetypical patterns are clearly discernible in both typologies.

Digressing slightly, it is worth discussing one detail. Shin Hyŏngsik singles out a group designated by the character 佞, which McBride translates as "flatterers" following the Chinese chronicle-biographical tradition that offeres two interpretations — either, indeed, 'flatterer' or 'rhetor' — though often with a negative connotation: "smooth talker," "boaster." But the presence of such a group in Kim Pusik's typology raises some doubts. Judging by the fact that in Shin Hyŏngsik's table this character type is placed between filial children and virtuous women, and the sequence of the typology fairly accurately repeats the sequence of biographies in the section, the biographies of flatterers should be: a) in *kwŏn* 8 of "Biographies" part (*kwŏn* 48 of *Samguk sagi*; b) located in between the biographies of the filial sons Hyangdŏk and Sŏn'gak and the biography of the filial (virtuous) daughter Chiŭn 孝女知恩. However, there is not a single example of flattery in the biographies of Sirhye 實兮, Mulgyeja 勿稽子, Master Paekkyŏl 百結先生, Kŏmgun 劍君, Kim Saeng 金生, and Solgŏ 率居. Perhaps this is due to the stereotypical perception of the character 佞. Aside of the already mentioned "flatter" and "eloquence" it has another interpretation — abilities, talents (with a hint of self-deprecation).

Sirhye and Mulgeja are, above all, unyielding in their propriety and righteousness; they belong better to the group *ch'ungŭi* 忠義 — loyal and righteous,

[54] Ibid., 508.

and, having been slandered and denied rewards, they retreated into seclusion. Master Paekkyŏl is exceptionally unpretentious and possesses enormous musical talent (Kim Pusik compares him to the cheerful and unassuming Rong Qiqi 榮啓期 praised by Zhuangzi 莊子, and, allegedly by Confucius as well — the sage saw in Rong Qiqi an example of a man who knew how to follow the natural course of things). Kŏmgun is sincere, fair, and unyielding to such an extent that he earned a rebuke from Kim Pusik.[55] Kim Saeng and Solgŏ are outstanding calligraphers and artists.[56] In other words, the category 佞, understood as "talented people," is, of course, more appropriate than "flatterers," but it still does not describe everyone, and the archetypal qualities (i.e., the didactic significance of those) that Kim Pusik highlights in their biographies are still different. The characters of *kwŏn* 45 (*kwŏn* 5 of "Biographies") are more distinguished by their eloquence, but in the table they are grouped into the category of *myŏngsin* 名臣 "famous subjects" (*kan* 諫 "remonstrators," *po* 輔 "counselors," *ch'ung* 忠 "loyal subjects").

Mulgyeja, in fact, deserves extra attention. His biography seems to be a perfect illustration of Richard McBride's thesis that Kim Pusik, in order to create an expressive (archetypal) image, "did not let facts obstruct the telling of a good story with good morals." According to *The Silla Annals*, he lived during the reign of *isagŭm* Naehae 奈解, i.e., at the very beginning of the 3rd century AD. As Vladimir Tikhonov rightly notes, by this time Confucianism had not only not yet taken root on the Korean peninsula, but had not even really begun to penetrate there.[57] However, a commoner demonstrates exemplary Confucian behavior (showing courage and self-sacrifice in service, modesty, and, in the end, twice passed over for a well-deserved award, he decides on the maximum possible social protest for a Confucian — he goes into voluntary exile),[58] and quotes Confucian classics — Kim Pusik puts into Mulgyeja's mouth a saying composed of quotations from the *Lunyu* 論語 and the *Liji* 禮記 : "Once [I] heard that the true way (duty) of a [loyal] subject is to sacrifice oneself [in times of] danger, not to think of oneself when faced with difficulties."[59]

Of course, as American sinologist Derk Bodde aptly put it, "when speeches of this kind occur in the biographies of the *Shih Chi*, they cannot be accepted as

[55] Kŏmgun's rigor and integrity that led him to refuse to seek help in the face of threats from dishonest officials apparently equaled false pride in the eyes of Kim Pusik: "The nobles said: 'Kŏmgun died for nothing. One could say that for him, Mount Taishan was lighter than swan's down'" (Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 48: 1458-1459). In a similar (and even more harsh) manner, Kim Pusik comments on the suicide of Prince Hodong 好童, son of the Koguryŏ king Taemusin by his second wife: "...while observing minor propriety 小謹, he proved incapable of seeing what great justice 大義 is" (Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 14: 436). In other words, Hodong effectively failed both his filial duty and his duty as a subject.

[56] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 48: 1459-1461.

[57] Vladimir M. Tikhonov, "Hwarang Organization: Its Functions and Ethics," *Korea Journal* 38.2(1988): 334-335, note 27.

[58] This is yet another detail that hints at the incorrect timing of Mulgyeja's story: he went into exile "with hair disheveled and lute in hand" 遂被髮携琴 (Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 48: 1457). This lute could be either *hyŏngŭm* 玄琴 or *kŏmungo* or *kayagŭm* 加耶琴, both described in chapter 32 "Sacrifices [and] Music" 祭祀樂. According to the description, *hyŏngŭm* did not make its appearance on Korean peninsula before 4th Century AD, first in Koguryŏ, while *kayagŭm* originated even later (Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 32: 1093-1095).

[59] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 48 1456-1457.

anything more than literary embroideries."[60] This holds true for the similar episodes in the *Samguk sagi*— statements by the heroes of the biographical section (unlike those of the rulers) are rarely historically accurate. But the tradition of giving the most prominent characters in the chronicle "the right to speak," established by Sima Qian in the *Shiji*, gave the historiographer the opportunity to highlight and (re)construct significant episodes from the past, allotting them with *significance* that was relevant to his own time. In this sense, the work of the historiographer seems to have had much in common with the *work on myth*, and the limits of this work were set by the Confucian perception of history as a representation of the past.

Another remarkable technique for enhancing the significance of an archetypal character or quality was combining several qualities (or figures) in one story. This technique enriched the plot and made the story much more dramatic. Thus, in the episode with the suicide of Prince Hodong 好童, Kim Pusik reflected on two virtues at once — filial piety and loyalty (this socio-ethical binomial will later form one of the foundations of political thinking in Korea). They are also linked in the story of the pride, disobedience, and suicide of another Koguryŏ prince, Haemyŏng 解明, to whom his father, King Yuri, sent a sword along with a rebuke for failing to fulfill his filial duty, so that he could decide his own fate. Haemyŏng understood the hint correctly and committed suicide. Kim Pusik harshly condemned both of them: "...it can be assumed that neither the father was a [worthy] father, nor the son a [proper] son."[61]

The significance of the figures of Kwisan 貴山 and Ondal 溫達, who clearly belong to the category of *ch'ung* 忠 "loyal subjects," is not only due to their devotion to the sovereign and self-sacrifice. Kwisan's biography serves as a dramatic backdrop to the activities of Wŏngwang, an outstanding figure of the Silla period, and an example of following the "Five Precepts of Secular Conduct" 世俗五戒 introduced by Wŏngwang.[62] And in Ondal's story, there are motifs similar to Slavic and other European fairy tales — about Ivan the Fool, about the princess who never smiled (king's daughter cried all the time), about salt that is more precious than gold (king banished his daughter when she reminded him of his promise to marry her to Ondal); in the course of the action, the princess becomes a patroness of a hero, similar to Vasilisa the Wise.[63]

## Monomyth and Confucian Heroes

When historical narrative becomes personal it both makes historiography "literary" to the maximum extent and also brings biographies as close as possible

[60] Derk Bodde, *Statesman, Patriot and General in Ancient China: Three Shiji Biographies in the Ch'in Dynasty* (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1940, repr., NewYork: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1967), p. 41.

[61] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 13: 419.

[62] Ibid., j. 45: 1401-1403.

[63] Ibid., j. 45: 1403-1408. Fairy tale motifs in *Samguk sagi* deserve in-depth discussion with reference to Vladimir Propp's seminal works.

to Losev's definition of myth ("a wondrous personal story related in words").[64] These stories are made wondrous by both the explicit fairy-tale elements of the narrative (the participation of spirits in the lives and activities of the heroes, miracles, prophecies, etc.) presented in a socio-political context, and by the "implicit" references to myths, which, however, can be extracted from the narrative.

Joseph Campbell's concept of the monomyth ("Hero's journey") and heroic archetypes allows to make several important observations about the composition and other properties of the narrative of the *Samguk sagi*. The monomyth concept proved particularly useful for analyzing the biographies of historical heroes, as they are the most fictionalized. Russian scholars have already taken on the task to deconstruct the motif of the "Hero's journey" in Korean traditional prose.[65] But even in the *Annals* one can trace 'Campbellian' mythological narratives. These can be universal myths of the cosmogonic cycle (for example, the myth of the founding of the state reflects the myth of the creation of the world, and the narrative of its fall reflects the myth of its destruction; more on this in the next section), myths about heroes and deities, as well as "hidden" mythological motifs that the chronicler uses consciously or subconsciously.[66]

Campbell's concept suggests that the Hero's first mission in search of his true essence is to "...break through to the undistorted, direct experience and assimilation of what C.G. Jung has called 'the archetypal images.'"[67] As Adelaida Trotsevich and Inna Tsoy have convincingly shown, in traditional East Asian narrative prose (including Korean), the tasks and ordeals heroes face are very similar to those outlined by Campbell. As mentioned above, the conflict experienced by the hero is resolved either by building an "ideal society" or by "rejecting social life altogether."[68] The heroes of traditional Korean prose "either follow the path of exemplary social behavior or seek harmony... in merging with the true reality that lies beyond the phenomenal world."[69] Those heroes can be called archetypal, since they have a predetermined and almost unchanging basis (usually one or more virtues or vices) and are reproduced from story to story, from conflict to conflict.

And if characters in traditional literature can "assume the functions of mythical heroes,"[70] then the heroes of biographies must also be capable of this, because biographies are the most fictionalized, personal, and dramatic version of historical narrative, which comes closest to myth, responding to the "need for significance" through the representation of history as a "moral and ethical drama."[71]

The three-part structure of the Hero's journey implies that each part of this journey — *Departure*, *Initiation*, *Return* — is divided into several stages. For

[64] Alexei F. Losev, *Dialektika mifa*, p. 348.
[65] Adelaida F. Trotsevich, "Funktsii 'puteshestviya geroya' v korejskoj syuzhetnoj proze," 264–275.
[66] See William Nienhauser's note above.
[67] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, commemorative ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 16.
[68] Adelaida F. Trotsevich, *Mif i syuzhetnaya proza Korei*, p. 6.
[69] Inna V. Tsoi, "Put'geroya (antigeroya) v sovremennoj yuzhnokorejskoj proze XX — nachala XXI v.(v sravnenii s tradicionnoj literaturoj)" [The Hero/Antihero's Journey in contemporary South Korean prose of the 20th and early 21st centuries (in comparison with traditional literature)], *Sovremennye problemy Korejskogo poluostrova* (2021): 267.
[70] Adelaida F. Trotsevich, *Mif i syuzhetnaya proza Korei*, p. 162.
[71] Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 22; Chiara Bottici, *A Philosophy of Political Myth*, pp. 212–213.

analysis, I chose the biographies of the two main antagonists of *Samguk sagi*—Kim Yusin, undoubted and unchallenged paragon of Confucian virtue, who was as close as possible to the image of a *junzi* 君子, and the usurper and tyrant Kungye. Each of them, in their own way (but surprisingly similar to each other), follows his own "Hero's journey." Selected episodes from their biographies typologically correspond to Campbell's model[72] and reveal traces of the deep mythological substratum assimilated by Korean Confucian historiography.

The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 2. The stories of the two protagonists are supplemented by the stories of their companions, Kim Ch'unch'u 金春秋 and Wang Kŏn 王建, whose parallel fates highlight the parallels between the "journeys" of Kim Yusin and Kungye. Both Kim Yusin and Kungye belonged to the topmost layers of Silla nobility, but acted in different periods and with opposite results — which makes the common features in their biographies that allow to identify the algorithm of their "journeys" all the more interesting. Below, I will present these episodes step by step[73] and reflect on them.

[72] Main characters in these episodes are not always the main characters of the biographies.

[73] The table does not necessarily reflect the exact sequence of events in the biographies, but various mythological narratives do not necessarily have to follow Campbell's model exactly either (see Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 227-228); what is important is that these stages can be located within the narrative and they, as a rule, fit within the constraints of the larger stages.

Table 2. Stages of "Hero's journey" for Kim Yusin, Kungye and their companions — Kim Ch'unch'u and Wang Kŏn

| **Monomyth stage** | **Kim Yusin** | Kim Ch'unch'u | **Kungye** | Wang Kŏn |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Departure*** | | | | |
| **The Call to Adventure** | [was filled with] noble anger and determination to repel the onslaught of enemies | Murder of the daughter and relatives (Propp's «Villainy») | Received a sign from the crow, the "herald of adventure" — the character 王 *wang* | Call from Kungye's vassals to overthrow the tyrant |
| **Refusal of the Call** | All three unconditionally accept the call, demonstrating "self-achieved submission," i.e., a willingness to take on the role offered to them by the historiographer/mythmaker. | | | "...I dare not become a double-dealer [traitor] in order to take the place of the sovereign while being a subject." |
| **Supernatural Aid** | Multiple cases | The Fable of the Turtle and the Hare | Multiple claims to get that (to the point of proclaiming himself a Buddha) | A prophecy on the mirror |
| **The Crossing of First Threshold** | A mysterious old man named Nansŭng repeatedly rejects Kim Yushin's pleas for help, testing sincerely of his intentions. | | Leaving the nurse, becoming a monk (alternatively) | |
| **The Belly of the Whale** | staying in a cave (seclusion in a temple) (a recurring motif, "the hero's journey in miniature") | Captivity in Koguryŏ | Motif of a rebel's (tyrant's) self-destruction | - |
| ***Initiation*** | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **The Road of Trials** | a series of battles in the "world of the living" and a gradual increase in fame and power | Diplomatic mission to Koguryŏ in pursuit of revenge for his daughter; diplomatic mission to Tang China (alternatively) | a series of battles in the "world of the living" and a gradual increase in fame and power | a series of battles in the "world of the living" and a gradual increase in fame and power |
| **The Meeting with the Goddess** | Absent from the *Samguk sagi*. In the *Samguk yusa*, encounter and conversation with mountain spirit girls who reveal a secret. | - | - | Hero's wife joins the pleas of Kungye's vassals and finally persuades the Hero to lead the rebellion, herself donning him the armor. |
| **Woman as the Temptress** | | In the *Samuk yusa* and in the *Silla Annals* – Kim Yusin's younger sister | His own wife (murdered) | |
| **Atonement with the Father** | The reverse plot — he ordered his own son to be executed for cowardice. | | chopped up the image of his ancestor with a sword;<br>killed his children (whom he had previously named after bodhisattvas) | |
| **Apotheosis** | Comprehension of the Will of Heaven and his own destiny | Diplomatic successes | Proclaiming himself as Buddha Maitreya | Returns from darkness (unrest), which is the source of images of the day, brings with him knowledge of the secret of the tyrant's demise. |
| **The Ultimate Boon** | Unification of the state; achievement of "moderate prosperity";<br>numerous awards;<br>lifetime and posthumous recognition | The opportunity to avenge his daughter; attaining of her remains | A mirror with a prophecy that is deliberately misinterpreted | The armor donned to the Hero by his wife; the end of turmoil and the founding of Koryŏ |

| ***Return*** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Refusal of the Return** | Immune from that peril from the beginning | | Refusal of the prophecy | |
| **The Magic Flight** | Crossing the P'yoha river;<br><br>The flight of Kim Yushin's future mother (see also Propp's motif of bride abduction) | | | |
| **Rescue from Without** | | The Fable of the Turtle and the Hare; The news that Kim Yusin had assembled a rescue party | | |
| **The Crossing of the Return Threshold** | Exiting the cave (temple) with new knowledge, a magic sword, etc. | | | Following the pleas of Kungye's vassals, leads a rebellion against the tyrant. |
| **Master of the Two Worlds** | Passes by the house three times without stopping, on the way to battle. | | | |
| **Freedom to Live** | Knew the Will of Heaven and could correctly interpret it.<br><br>Became the ideal of loyal subject | Became a *wang* | Arrogance and false sense of exceptionality leads to the shameful death. | Becomes a state-founder |

The first part of the Hero's journey—*the departure*—begins with a *call to adventure*: destiny calls upon the Hero to leave his familiar world of everyday life and venture into the unknown.[74] The call may come from outside, through a messenger, "the herald of adventure" (Propp's *Dispatcher*), but the Hero may also embark on an adventure of his own accord. Kim Yusin acts of his own free will: "He ... [was filled with] noble anger and determination to repel the brigands."[75] Kungye receives a call from a mystical messenger—a raven drops a piece of bone with the character *wang* 王 into the alms bowl that Kungye, then a Buddhist monk, is holding.[76] Kim Ch'unch'u begins his journey after receiving news of Propp's *Villainy* — his daughter and son-in-law were killed in a Paekche attack on the Silla region of Taeryangju[77] (the attacks by Koguryŏ, Paekche and Malgal in Kim Yusin's biography are the same Propp's *Villainy*), and for Wang Kŏn, the "heralds of adventure" are the subjects of Kungye, who, unable to bear his cruelty and debauchery any longer, turned to Wang Kŏn with a plea to oppose the tyrant.[78]

Sometimes a Hero may *refuse the call*, attempting to renounce his destiny. Wang Kŏn initially angrily rejects the appeals of Kungye's vassals: "... I dare not become a double-dealer [traitor] in order to take the place of the sovereign while being a subject. This is called a mutiny!" then he expresses doubt in his abilities: "In truth, I do not have the virtues to dare to do deeds equal to those of the founders of Shang-Yin and Zhou!"[79] The other heroes accept the call unconditionally, "The Hero is the man of self-achieved submission,"[80] taking the role that the myth-making historiographer has prepared for them. Another examples of *refusal* can be found in other cases (troops may lose heart in battle,[81] hesitate before a difficult crossing,[82] generals may be afraid to go on a campaign,[83] and Kim Yusin's son, Wŏnsul 元述, yielding to the persuasion of his servant and succumbing in the face of mortal danger, withdrew from battle, too scared to sacrifice himself).[84] In these episodes, the "Campbellian" functions of the main characters changes: the first three cases become Kim Yusin's steps on the *Road of Trials*, as he overcomes the doubts and fears of his subordinates and inspires them

[74] One of the variants of the *call to adventure* singled out by Vladimir Propp in the fairy tale narrative is *Villainy* — Vladimir Ya. Propp, *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki* [Historical Roots of Wonder Tale]. (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Leningradskogo universiteta, 1986): 46.
[75] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 41: 1309. English translations here are done on the basis of both the Russian translation (Kim Yusin's biography translated by Vladimir Tikhonov, the rest translated by me) and the English translation completed as part of the AKS project and published in various issues of *The Review of Korean Studies*.
[76] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1479.
[77] Ibid., j. 41: 1311.
[78] Ibid., j. 50: 1487-1488.
[79] Ibid., j. 50: 1488.
[80] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 15.
[81] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 41: 1310-1311.
[82] Ibid., j. 42: 1336.
[83] Ibid., j. 43: 1343-1344.
[84] Ibid., j. 43: 1349-1350.

to follow him, while the third case becomes the reverse of the stage of *Atonement with the Father* (see below).

In such cases, Kim Pusi's Hero often either rectifies the situation himself or plays a special role that Campbell does not highlight. This role is that of a *Gatekeeper*—not the *guardian of the threshold* whom the Hero must face at the first threshold, but more of a 'quest-starter' who combines the functions of Campbell's "herald of adventure" and Propp's *Dispatcher*. The *gatekeeper* is capable to assess the potential Hero and form a call to adventure for him. In this way, Kungye becomes the *gatekeeper* for Wang Kŏn, after he made Wang Kŏn one of his generals, and then created conditions that forced Wang Kŏn to embark on the "Hero's journey." Kim Yusin acts as a *gatekeeper* several times, giving his subordinates orders that are fraught with mortal danger (and a journey into the unknown), but allowing new heroes to prove themselves and gain considerable fame (often posthumously). Those are Kim Yusin's orders to his officers Pinyongja 丕寧子, Yŏlgi 裂起, and others.[85]

A Hero who has accepted the call to adventure can count on *Supernatural Aid*—the appearance of a mystical protector or patron who shows the right path, sometimes accompanies the hero, or grants magical items. Kim Yusin is bestowed with such an aid multiple times. These include a mysterious old man who taught Kim Yusin "secret techniques [of magic]" 授之方術[86] and Kim Yusin's own appeal for help to the Daoist "Heavenly Ruler" 天官 on Mount Inbaksan[87]; his appeal for help from otherworldly forces during the defense of the fortress of Puk'ansansŏn ("human forces are exhausted, but mystic forces can help [us]" 人力既竭 陰助可資)[88] Finally, Kim Yusin's house is guarded by a "army of spirits" 陰兵,[89] whose departure signals the approach of his death.

Kungye also claims supernatural patronage—and of the highest order at that[90]: "Sŏnjong (Kungye's monastic name — *A.S.*) proclaimed himself Maitreya — the Buddha of the future, wore a golden crown on his head and a monastic robe on his body. He named his eldest son Ch'ŏnggwang-posal 青光菩薩 (Bodhisattva of Pure Light) and his youngest son Sin'gwang-posal 神光菩薩 (Bodhisattva of Divine Light)."

[85] Ibid., j. 41: 1319; j. 42: 1337.
[86] Ibid., j. 41: 1310.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., j. 42: 1331.
[89] Ibid., j. 43: 1346.
[90] Kungye's worldview was formed primarily at the Buddhist monastery of Sedalsa, where he spent his adolescence and youth. The central figure of the Buddhist pantheon at Sedalsa was the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, and the worship of Maitreya had been one of the central Buddhist cults in Silla since at least the 7th century CE. The temples of Sedalsa and Hŭngnyunsa became the source of Kungye's authority and power, and the monks of these monasteries were among his closest associates. Kim Taek-Kyun, "Kungye-wa Sedalsa" 弓裔와 世達寺 [Goongyae and Sedal Temple], *The Review of Korean History* 史學硏究 no.75(2004): 57-92.

He wrote sutras himself, but "all their words were delusional, absurd and non-canonic (heretical)" 其言妖妄皆不經之事.[91]

Kim Ch'unch'u's biography also contains allusions on divine protection. While staying as a hostage in Koguryŏ, where he went to ask for troops to attack Paekche in order to avenge the death of his daughter, Kim Ch'unch'u was told a fable about a turtle and a hare by a sympathizing Koguryŏ official. Taking the hint hidden in the fable (a cunning hare, initially fooled by the turtle into coming to the dragon of the East Sea only to deliver his liver as medicine for the sick dragon's daughter, avoids a looming peril by giving a false promise[92]) Kim Ch'unch'u was able to find a way out of his predicament. The Buddhist roots of this parable, as well as the correlation of Kim Ch'unch'u himself in this context with the hare—one of the incarnations of Buddha—can be considered signs of divine protection.

Wang Kŏn and Kungye's fate is tied to a mystic prophecy written on a mirror that a stranger "of unusual appearance, dressed in ancient clothing" sold to Wang Changjin, a Tang merchant who had settled in Silla. Ancient verses, revealed on the mirror under the sunlight, predicted the fall of Kungye and the rise of Wang Kŏn ("learned men" did not dare to reveal the true essence of this prophecy to Kungye himself, relaying "fabricated words" to him).[93]

The next stage of the Hero's journey is the *Crossing of the First Threshold*, the gate to the unearthly realm. This threshold is watched by a guardian standing at the border between worlds — the world of everyday life and the world of the unknown. The Hero must defeat this guardian, but, as a rule, an attempt to overcome him in direct confrontation ends in failure, for in order to win, the Hero must renounce his ego, renounce stereotypical, profane ideas about himself and the world around him.[94]

For Kim Yushin, this guardian is the mysterious old man called Nansŭng 難勝,[95] who rejected Yushin's requests several times in order to test his determination and purity of thought. Eventually, Kim Yushin convinces Nansŭng, and the old man agrees to teach him. For Kungye, the symbolic crossing of the threshold could have either departure from his nurse, who had secretly raised a child sentenced to death by the king, or, alternatively, becoming a Buddhist monk (one of the stable metaphors of becoming a monk is 出家, which literally translates as "to leave the family/kin/ home," that is, "to leave the [mundane] world").

[91] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1484-1485.
[92] Ibid., j. 41: 1312-1314. This parable originates from the Buddhist Jataka tale of the monkey and the crocodile (in East Asian retellings, they became, respectively, a hare and a turtle). The monkey and hare are incarnations of Buddha.
[93]Ibid., j. 50: 1485-1486. Cosmogonic elements of this prophecy will be addressed later.
[94] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 71, p. 82.
[95] Nansŭng is a bodhisattva of the fifth stage of the ten-staged trial that a bodhisattva must pass in order to attain supreme enlightenment described in The *Avatamsaka Sutra* 華嚴經, also known as the *Flower Garland Sutra.* Na Sanghoon et al., "Chapter 41, 42, and 43 of the *Samguk sagi*: An Annotated Translation of Biography of Kim Yusin," p. 207, note 43.

After crossing the threshold, the Hero enters the metaphorical *Belly of the Whale*. He dies to one (mundane) world in order to be reborn in another. Similar symbolism is found in staying in a cave[96] and in seclusion in a temple (abandoned or active). This is a recurring theme in Kim Yushin's biography: he repeatedly meditates in caves and temples, appealing to mystic forces, and emerges either with magical weapons or with new sacred knowledge.[97] In these episodes, Kim Yusin actually completes a microcycle of the "Hero's journey" and fulfills both of the most important missions — he removes himself from the mundane world and makes a breakthrough to a righteous existence, in order to "return then to us, transfigured, and teach the lesson he has learned of life renewed."[98] For Kim Ch'unch'u, the metaphorical belly of the whale is obviously his captivity in Koguryŏ—he returns from there having achieved both spiritual and diplomatic victories.

In Kunye's biography, the motif of the belly of the whale is not expressed explicitly, but if we accept that "the passage of the threshold is a form of self-annihilation,"[99] and consider that the rebellion against a legitimate sovereign is a constant process of self-destruction — both moral and physical — then Kungye has been in the belly of the whale practically all the time — ever since he raised the rebellion.

Along the *Road of Trials* the Hero goes through a series of adventures on the path to initiation. Campbell illustrates the road of trials with references to shamanic practices[100]. At first glance, the trials that Kim Yushin and Kungye undergo together

[96] It is believed (see, for example, Alan Dundes, "Folkloristics in the Twenty-First Century," 196) that in the East Asian mythological tradition, the motif of the initiation of a hero through his absorption and eruption by a monster in its "pure form" does not exist (similar motifs in Korean folklore recorded in the 20th century are, most likely, folk interpretations of the Christian myth of Jonah, see: James M. Grayson, *Myths and Legends from Korea: An Annotated Compendium of Ancient and Modern Materials* (London/New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 261-262. However, in the story of the Lady Suro swallowed and returned by the sea dragon in the *Samguk yusa* (Iryŏn, *Samguk yusa*: 323-324), and in the figure of the miracle turtle, which conceives a child in its head and spits it out into the world, this motif is seen quite clearly. for a detailed analysis of these stories, see: Marianna Nikitina, *Mif o zhenshchine-solnce i ee roditelyah i ego «sputniki» v ritual'noj tradicii drevnej Korei i sosednih stran* [The Myth of the Sun Woman and Her Parents and Its "Companions" in the Ritual Tradition of Ancient Korea and Neighboring Countries] (St.-Petersburg: Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, 2001), pp. 13-15. Be that as it may, both the whale's belly and the cave (and even a secluded temple at night) are persistently allegorically associated with the womb—hence the motif of birth and the rebirth of a hero: the she-bear, the future mother of the mythological founder of Korea, Tangun, had to spend several days in a cave to transform into a woman; the goddess Amaterasu, frightened by the dissolute behavior of her brother Susanoo, hides from him (and from the world) in a cave in order to be reborn into the world by emerging from it.

[97] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 41: 1309; 42: 1331, 1335.

[98] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 18.

[99] Ibid., p. 84.

[100] Ibid., pp. 90-92. Vladimir Tikhonov referred to Kim Yusin as a "…shamanic caretaker and spiritual leader of his society" Pak Noja (aka Tikhonov, Vladimir M), "*Samguk sagi* yŏlchŏn Kim Yusinchoga naep'yohanŭn ŭiŭi" 『三國史記』列傳 金庚信條가 內包하는 意義 [Significance of Kim Yusin's Biography in *Samguk sagi*]. Inhwahak yŏn'gu 22(1995): 257. While Richard McBride would share this assessment (Richard McBride, "Hidden Agendas in the Life Writings of Kim Yusin." *Acta Koreana* 1

with their companions take place in the everyday world—a series of battles and victories constitute significant parts of their biographies. However, considering that the goals of both Kim Yushin and Kungye have a world-building (i.e., sacred) significance, their battles and victories in everyday life are only a reflection of their journey in the otherworld.

Kim Pusik remarkably describes Kungye's early military successes in a complimentary manner: Kungye and his associates "shared joys and sorrows, hardships and leisure with officers and soldiers, so that even rewards and punishments [were distributed] collectively, rather than by personal [decision of the commander], which is why the troops were completely loyal to him and treated him as a [true] general."[101] Here, Kungye does not appear to be an utter villain — although his initially unworthy aspirations preordain his inevitable downfall.

The next stages of the Hero's journey can be represented as a three-part structure for overcoming the Oedipus complex: *the Meeting with the Goddess*, *Woman as the Temptress*, and *Atonement with the Father*. This adventure is usually represented as the "the mystical marriage with the queen goddess of the world" and "the hero's total mastery of life; for the woman is life, the hero its knower and master."[102] He gained necessary strength and knowledge, "his consciousness came to be amplified and made capable of enduring the full possession of the mother-destroyer, his inevitable bride. With that he knows that he and the father are one: he is in the father's place."[103]

Moreover, at the next stage — in the *apotheosis* — the Hero comprehends that the male and female hypostases are not opposites, but parts of a single whole, like time and eternity, that they are identical to each other, and the Hero is identical to them: "…the two are the same, each is both, and the dual form is only an effect of illusion, which itself, however, is not different from enlightenment."[104]

It is precisely this overtly psychoanalytical interpretation of the myth (illustrating the stage of apotheosis, Campbell refers to the image of a hermaphroditic or

(1998): 139), other scholars developed more skeptical approach: Na Sanghoon, You Jinsook, and Shin Jeongsoo called that stance "somewhat ambivalent" (Na Sanghoon et al., "Chapter 41, 42, and 43 of the *Samguk sagi,*" 200.)

[101] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1480.

[102] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 111.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid., p. 157. The motif of mystical marriage is quite common in Korean narrative literature and mythology. Adelaida Trotsevich, for example, identified a common theme in the myths about the founders of the Korean states: the myth of the death and birth of a fertility deity, in which the participants in the birth are a pair of antagonists: a solar father and a chthonic mother, with the nature of father and son being identical. The myth focuses on world order: "the transition from chaos to harmony culminates not in the struggle and victory of the bearer of goodness over the forces of evil, but in the marriage of two opposing heroes and the birth of a young world-builder" (Adelaida F. Trotsevich, *Mif i syuzhetnaya proza Korei*, pp. 161-162.) Furthermore, motifs of mystical marriage and androgyny can be found in the triad of Hwanin-Hwanung-Tangun in the myth of the primal ancestor of the Koreans, as well as—oddly enough—in the political mythology of modern North Korea. One of late Kim Il-sung's honorifics, "ŏbŏi," which is usually translated as "Father of the Nation," actually translates as "parent" and combines two morphemes: "father" and "mother."

androgynous bodhisattva and examples of other hermaphroditic deities and heroes[105]) — as well as Campbell's other references to complexes and traumas — often provokes the above-mentioned criticism from anthropologists and folklorists. For the scholar of the East Asian tradition, the very idea that official Confucian historiography could exploit the theme of the Oedipus complex is tantamount to heresy — for "a father should be father, a son should be son" 父父子子 and "for a woman, there is a rule to obey three men (before marriage — her father, after marriage — her husband, after her husband's death — her eldest son),"[106] and within the Neo-Confucian system of the five constant virtues, "relations between husband and wife are guided by difference (i.e., division of roles)" 夫婦有別. No identity between them is possible whatsoever.

The theme of conflict with one's father (without which no atonement is possible) and, even more so, of patricide in the Confucian cultural sphere is traditionally considered taboo even in literature — not to mention official historiography, in which patricide cannot be interpreted other than the capital offence. Researchers usually believe that filial piety — one of the key Confucian virtues — together with the rigid stratification of society, had suppressed the issue of conflict with one's father (more so, the "Oedipal" type of conflict) out of the social consciousness in Confucian culture and, respectively, out of the focus East Asian authors.[107]

To some extent, this is true, but a careful study of the *Samguk sagi* reveals a surprising number of episodes that can be interpreted in a Freudian touch. The most striking of those surfaced in the biography of Kungye. His father ordered the infant to be killed, but his wet nurse saved him (though she damaged his eye in the process).[108] Later, having already declared himself king, Kungye "saw an image (fresco) of Silla *wang* on the wall of the Pusŏksa temple, grabbed a sword, and chopped up the image. The scars [on the fresco] remain to this day."[109] The symbolic patricide of the king (it is completely irrelevant whether this image was a portrait of Kungye's biological father — in the Confucian ethical system, the sovereign is a symbolic father to all of his subjects) by a son whom his father-sovereign had condemned to death in infancy — a classic storyline of the Oedipus complex.[110]

[105] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 140-150.

[106] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 43: 1351.

[107] Ming Dong Gu, "The filial piety complex: variations on the Oedipus theme in Chinese literature and culture." *The Psychoanalytic quarterly* 75/1 (2006): 163–195.

[108] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1478-1479.

[109] Ibid., 1482.

[110] Ming Dong Gu notes that traces of the Oedipus complex can also be found in classical Chinese historiography—in Sima Qian's biography of one of the most virtuous rulers of antiquity, Shun, whom his father, stepmother, and younger brother all wanted to kill (Ming Dong Gu, *The filial piety complex*, pp. 169-170). The same motif can be traced in the story of the ill-fated Koguryŏ prince Hodong, who, unable to refute the slander against him before the king, which was spread by the king's first wife, who was jealous of the fact that Hodong was the king's favorite son, committed suicide — similar to Shensheng 申生, the heir to the Duke Xian of Jin 晉獻公, whose other heir, Ji Chong'er 重耳, later Duke Wen of Jin 晉文公 was forced to flee for his life and wandered for nineteen years. Kim Pusik mentions both Shensheng (14:436) and Ji Chong'er (6:216).

Another spectacular story is Kungye's murder of his wife and children. Driven with hatred over Lady Kang's admonitions, Kungye (falsely) blamed her with adultery which "was revealed by divine providence." Then "he heated an iron pestle[111] in a blazing fire, struck her in a secret place and killed her, and then killed both her children"[112] . The sexual undertones of the episode ("secret place" is a euphemism for the groin[113] ) are obvious here, and the connection between symbolic intercourse (a red-hot pestle/club is associated with the phallus) and death may indicate an appeal to the darkest depths of the subconscious.

Wang Kŏn's spouse's participation in his fate is diametrically opposed. After Wang Kŏn refused Kungye's vassals' call to lead the uprising against the tyrant, his wife, Lady Yu, addressed him herself: "It has always been the case that the humane/benevolent defeats the cruel. Now, [when I] heard your conversation, even [I], a woman, felt offended. What will you, great man, say?! Since the mood of the people has changed so much, it means that we must follow the will of Heaven!" Then she herself donned him with his armor.[114] Of course, the most obvious interpretation of this episode is a manifestation of Confucian loyalty. However, this interaction can be compared to the story of the sincere kiss of the king's son, which transformed the ugly old woman who guarded the well into a beautiful girl named Royal Power referred to by Campbell. "The goddess," writes Campbell, "requires that the hero should be endowed with what the troubadours and minstrels termed the 'gentle heart'"[115]. Gentle heart is a necessary condition for understanding love, "which is life itself, enjoyed as the encasement of eternity."[116] The resonance of 'gentle heart' with the Confucian benevolence/humanity 仁 to which Lady Yu appeals, urging her husband to understand that to oppose Kungye is to follow the will of Heaven, is quite obvious. In fact, in this situation, Lady Yu acts as a Campbellian goddess, bestowing upon the Hero (Wang Kŏn) the "divine elixir" — knowledge and understanding of Heaven's will.

Kim Yusin's biography also reveals a vivid (albeit, reversed) conflict between father and son: Kim Yusin ordered the execution of his son Wŏnsul, who fled the battlefield and thereby "not only dishonored the royal commission, but also betrayed the covenants of our family!"[117] The king did forgive Wŏnsul, but his family did not. He never dared to show himself to his father, and his mother refused to see or speak to him even after Kim Yusin's death. Much later, Wŏnsul managed to wash away the shame by fighting valiantly, but "grieving that his parents had not forgiven him, he

[111] One of the meanings of the character 杵 used in the original is indeed "pestle," but there is another meaning: club, battle club, or pole.
[112] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1485.
[113] The combination of characters 陰殺 used here in the original can simply mean "secret (hidden) murder," but in all the translations I know of, one or another variant of the concept of "secret place" is used.
[114] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1489.
[115] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 108.
[116] Ibid., p. 109.
[117] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 43: 1350.

refused to take the [state] service until the end of his days."[118] Examples of this kind — and the opposite — are abundant both in biographies and in the main records (Annals) of the *Samguk sagi.*[119]

Having reached *the Apotheosis* of his journey, the Hero, who has completely rejected his self and accepted that "not only that the Everlasting lives in them, but that what they, and all things, really are *is* the Everlasting,"[120] receives *a reward* from the hands of the goddess — a miraculous elixir, the source of life, Absolute knowledge, etc. And in this, the hero becomes not just like the gods, but "penetrates beyond them to the void that was their life and source."[121] In *Samguk sagi* the moral and social — archetypal — antagonism of the two main characters is established and resolved at this stage. Kim Yushin comes as close as possible to the archetype of the Confucian ideal of *junzi* — he has comprehended the will of Heaven and can interpret it, giving wise advice to the sovereign;[122] he sees his own future and has no doubts. His earthly reward, in full accordance with the Confucian canon, is the highest recognition of his talents and merits: Kim Yu-sin in Silla "was kept close, not estranged; entrusted with responsibilities, not doubted; Yushin's plans were welcomed, and his words were listened to; he was not troubled by mistrust...[123] Therefore, Yushin was able to achieve his purpose... he united the Three Lands (three states) and turned them into one home, and was able to end his life earning merit and renown."[124]

For Kim Ch'unch'u, the *apotheosis* and *reward* came in form of successful completion of the diplomatic mission, the opportunity to avenge his daughter's death, and, ultimately, the discovery of her remains.

The *apotheosis* of Kungye's journey is his double usurpation—he proclaims himself both king and Maitreya Buddha. By undeservedly appropriating the Mandate of Heaven his political action, which at first glance takes place in the ordinary world, is

[118] Ibid., 1351.

[119] Marianna Nikitina highlights the legend of Chumong and his son Yuri as a description of the ritual of a Father's Recognition of his Son, in which the Recognition, received after the son has passed the trials, bestows divine status upon him. Marianna Nikitina, *Mif o zhenshchine-solnce*, p. 110, pp. 131–132.

[120] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 154.

[121] Ibid., p. 177. An episode from the biography of Kim Yusin, which fits Campbell's stage *of meeting the goddess* — Kim Yu-sin's communication with the mountain spirit maidens, who reveal an important secret to him — was not included by Kim Pusik in his chronicle. This episode is known from *Samguk yusa*. Iryŏn used the same sources as Kim Pusik, so we have every reason to believe that Kim Pusik knew about this episode but deliberately did not include it in the biography of his hero, even though, as we have already seen, the historian mentions other cases of supernatural protection.

[122] More than that, Kim Yusin is even able to imitate Celestial intervention, turning an ominous omen into a sign of impending victory, as happened during the suppression of the rebellion of Pidam 毗曇 and Yŏmjong 廉宗. Kim Yusin's extremely "rationalized" attitude towards omens and their interpretation in this episode (the organization of a "counter-omen" in the form of a kite with a burning effigy tied to it, which was supposed to demonstrate the "return" of a star that had fallen into the camp of loyalists the day before) is accompanied, however, by a demonstration of his insight, based precisely on his ability to correctly interpret the will of Heaven. Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 41: 1317-1319.

[123] Or, alternatively, "which did not make him feel resentful for not being appreciated."

[124] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 43: 1355.

in fact a villainous attempt at the Celestial order. This is the threshold beyond which, driven by a false, selfish conceit of his own exceptionality,[125] the hero turns into a monster-tyrant. "The inflated ego of the tyrant is a curse to himself and his world—no matter how his affairs may seem to prosper."[126] Hence, the demand for the hero who will challenge the tyrant.

This hero is Wang Kŏn, who returns from darkness (political turmoil), which is the source of images of the day and brings with him the knowledge of the secret of the tyrant's demise (the symbolic material embodiment of this knowledge is the armor presented to Wang Kŏn by his wife). The reward for these closely related characters is the same: a prophecy on a mirror, revealed by the light of the sun — only for Wang Kŏn it is a Gift, and for Kungye it is Retribution. The false hero receives a misinterpreted prophecy, while the true hero receives a genuine one.[127]

Along with the gift from the gods, the Hero of the monomyth receives his second mission—*to return* "to everyday life with his life-transmuting trophy." [128] However, sometimes the Hero refuses to fulfill this mission, doubting either his own abilities or the world's readiness to accept a new revelation. As a result, the hero completely withdraws from the mortal world. Echoes of such *a Refusal to Return* can be found in Confucian biographies in stories about those who, for one reason or another (due to slander, lack of demand, or shame), refused to serve, preferring to lead the life of a hermit or wanderer.[129]

Kunye, who failed the hero's test and remained "in the belly of the whale," was symbolically denied a return — the interpreters told him a false version, and he "became infinitely enraged," which was the last straw for his vassals. It was after this that they turned to Wang Kŏn with a call to stand against the tyrant. Kim Yushin, on the other hand, most likely had immunity from non-return from the outset, as he initially acted in the interests of the common good: while his goals are emphatically social and "rational," their ostensible transience (repelling enemies) is refuted by Kim

[125] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 221.
[126] Ibid., p. 14.
[127] The mirror is an extremely significant symbol in East Asian mythology and ontology. Campbell mentions the mirror as a symbol of the world, a sphere of reflected images in which the deity sees its own glory (Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p.198.) In Confucian historiography, the mirror is a symbol of objectivity, and history itself is a normative mirror for the entire Oikumene (Sato Masayuki, "The Archetype of History," 225.) — Sima Guang's 司馬光 *Zizhitongjian* 資治通鑑 [Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance] perfectly illustrates this thesis. The mirror also plays a very important role in Buddhism—it symbolizes consciousness (see, for example, the story of the famous poetic controversy between the future Sixth patriarch of Chan Buddhism, Huineng 慧能, and the disciple of the fifth patriarch, Shenxiu 神秀, the central element of which is a reference to the mirror). The correlation of written text and the mirror is deeply imbedded in Korean myth and ritual, see Marianna Nikitina, *Drevnyaya korejskaya poeziya v svyazi s ritualom i mifom* [Ancient Korean poetry in connection with ritual and myth] (Moscow: GRVL Nauka, 1982), pp. 48-49.
[128] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 179.
[129] In this case heroes embark on a special kind of journey described by a very ambiguous term *yu* 遊, which has a complex syncretic meaning and a very wide range of interpretations — see below.

Yusin himself, who, summing up his journey on his deathbed (and at the same time instructing the king), proclaimed the beginning of the era of "Small Tranquility /Moderate Prosperity" 小康.[130]

Sometimes the Hero's return can take the form of *a Magical Flight* — if, for example, the Hero has stolen his elixir or otherwise displeased mystic forces.[131] During the flight, the Hero throws his pursuers off the trail or slows them down with cunning and magic. Such motifs are characteristic of Russian fairy tales in particular, but they can also be found in Kim Yusin's biography — specifically, in the description of the battle at the P'yoha river. A similar storyline of escape with the help of supernatural forces is played out at the very beginning of the Kim Yusin's biography — the escape of his mother, Manmyŏng 萬明, to her lover, Kim Sŏhyŏn 金舒玄. Manmyŏng's father, upon learning that the young people had "come together without any intermediaries (matchmakers)," flew into a rage and locked her in a separate room, assigning guards to watch over her. But a sudden lightning strike created a lucky opening; the girl made the most of it, escaped, and fled with Kim Yusin's father-to-be.[132] This storyline echoes Propp's motif of imprisonment (isolation) of a girl who must be freed by her betrothed.[133]

Sometimes, the Hero may need *Rescue from Without*— "the world may have to come and get him"[134] back. Kim Yusin did without such a boon, while Kungye could no longer be saved, but for Kim Ch'unch'u, such help came in the form of the fable of the turtle and the hare, which suggested a strategy for him to follow (above, it was cited it as an example of *supernatural aid*, but the narrator of this fable was precisely a messenger from the ordinary world — a Koguryŏ dignitary), as well as the news that Kim Yusin, in fulfillment of the oath that he and Kim Ch'unch'u had made to each other before the latter left for Koguryŏ, was gathering an army to free him from captivity.[135]

The next important stage of the hero's journey is *Crossing of the Return Threshold*. The main obstacle on this path is the "inconsistency between the wisdom brought forth from the deep, and the prudence usually found to be effective in the light world"[136] (in Confucian world — between the restored true virtues of the age of sage kings and their "devalued" interpretation). This inconsistence may incline the Hero not to return to the mundane world at all, or, alternatively, through the Hero's negligence — destroy the sacred knowledge he has acquired. Careless contact with the ordinary, profane world profanes sacred knowledge.

Kim Yusin completed several such "microcycles," departing from the mundane world into the otherworld and successfully returning from there with new knowledge.

[130] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 43: 1347.
[131] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 182.
[132] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 41: 1307.
[133] Vladimir Ya. Propp, *Istoricheskie korni volshebnoi skazki*, pp. 42-43.
[134] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 192.
[135] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 41: 1314-1315.
[136] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 202.

For Wang Kŏn, crossing this threshold means agreeing to lead the uprising against Kungye — thereby he completes his initiation and becomes a true Hero.

Having crossed the return threshold, the Hero becomes the *Master of Two Worlds* and gains "the freedom to pass back and forth across the world division, from the perspective of the apparitions of time to that of the causal deep and back."[137] This ability to enter a liminal (intermediate, borderline) state[138] at will is hardly a trait of a true Confucian, since for Confucius, crossing the border between worlds is one of the gravest debaucheries: "violation of limits (norms) — *kwa* 過."[139] It is much better suited to the Daoist-Buddhist *yu* 遊 "journey-game."

Lo Yuet Keung noted that the Daoist classic *Zhuangzi* 莊子, who readily used this concept, interpreted it, among other things, as a practice of wanderings of the body and spirit in different metaphorical planes of existence, up to the journey of the mind and spiritual conversion in the Daoist imaginary world.[140] In these journeys, the Daoist sage easily crosses the boundaries of the mundane world (if ever notices them at all), the world of people through which Confucius traveled, and his sole companion becomes the Great Dao itself.[141]

Kim Yusin's affiliation with the concept of *yu* stems from his membership in the aristocratic *hwarang* 花郞 corps, whose activities ("games" or "journeys") were described such.[142] When assigning a dangerous task to his subordinate Yŏlgi 熱起, Kim Yusin recalls their shared *hwarang* past: "I played with you when I was a child" 吾少與爾遊.[143] Syncretic nature of the *hwarang* worldview that fused Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist tenets with local tradition into a single system of beliefs created a cultural polyphony that resonates with the "habitat" of the myth.

Another appearance of Kim Yusin as the *Master of Two Worlds* in his biography follows the story of Kim Ch'unchu's release from imprisonment in Koguryŏ. During that period, Silla almost constantly clashed with Paekche, and Kim Yusin, having barely completed one order, received a new one and went into battle without stopping by his home. This happened three times. Even when his family came out of the gate to meet him, he, nevertheless, passed the gate of his house and rode on without looking back. "Only after riding about fifty paces did he stop his horse and ordered boiled rice

[137] Ibid., p. 212.
[138] Usually, when describing the monomyth, its second stage is called liminal. However, *the Master of Two Worlds* is also in a liminal state—at least in relation to these worlds; he is both present and absent in them. In relation to himself at this stage, he is, of course, already deprived of duality: "His own ambitions being totally dissolved, he no longer tries to live but willingly relaxes to whatever may come to pass in him; he becomes, that is to say, an anonymity. The Law lives in him with his unreserved consent." Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 220.
[139] Lo Yuet Keung, "Wandering and Imaginal Realms in *Analects* and *Zhuangzi,*" *Monumenta Serica* 50 (2002): 77.
[140] Ibid., " 82.
[141] Ibid., 88.
[142] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 4: 135-136; j. 47: 1442.
[143] Ibid., j. 42: 1337.

water from the house. After tasting it, [Yusin] said, 'The taste of the water in our house is the same as before.'"[144]

Naturally, the most obvious interpretation of this episode—in the strict Confucian spirit—is a demonstration of the ultimate manifestation of loyalty 忠. All the more so because it ultimately boosts Silla troops' spirits: "All the soldiers said, 'If this is how our commander behaves, how can we lament separation from our families?'" followed by a military triumph (Paekche troops retreated, frightened by the determination of the Silla troops).[145]

However, in the context of the monomyth, this episode can be viewed somewhat differently. Being on a world-building mission by order of the sovereign (i.e., following the will of Heaven, and thus spiritually remaining in the Celestial world), Kim Yusin refuses to cross the threshold of the house (the border between worlds), fearing to undermine the status of the mission by colliding with everyday life. At the same time, he is able to show himself to his family, who remain in this mundane world, and even interact with them indirectly. Since this action is repeated several times, it takes on a ritualistic, and therefore mythological, character. By accepting water (rice broth) from home, Kim Yusin risks profaning his mission to the least extent possible, since water in Daoism is a potent "magical" substance endowed with enormous power: "Highest good is like water. Water excels in benefiting the myriad creatures without contending with them (Silla won without a fight—*A.S.*) and settles where none would like to be. Therefore, it is close to Dao."[146]

The final stage of Hero's journey — *Freedom to Live* — implies that the Hero, "having reconciled individual consciousness with the universal will… realizes the true relationship of the passing phenomena of time to the imperishable life that lives and dies in all."[147] In the Confucian canon, this is the closest approximation to the state of *junzi*, which demonstrates the unity of intentions (aspirations) and actions. Kim Yusin, who became the paragon of a loyal subject (i.e., who came as close as possible to the state *of junzi*), freely and correctly understands and interprets the will of Heaven and acts accordingly. Kim Ch'unch'u and Wang Kŏn took the throne (obtained the Mandate of Heaven), with the latter (who came from a family of merchants, or, according to some sources, was a descendant of the Koguryŏ aristocracy) becoming the founder of a new dynasty. As for Kungye, who fell victim to the illusion of his own exceptionalism and failed to reconcile his ambitions with the universal will, all that remains — at first glance — is disgrace and shameful death. However, Kim Pusik's assessment of him — "they (Kungye and another adversary of Wang Kŏn, Kyŏn Hwŏn — *A.S.*) were mere 'men-drovers (gatherers)' 歐民者 for T'aejo (the throne name of Wang Kŏn — *A.S.*)"[148] — suggests that even a tyrant can have a positive mission in the Confucian world-ordering myth.

[144] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 41: 1316-1317.
[145] Ibid.
[146] *Dao de jing* 道德经 9:1, Based on trans. D. C. Lau (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1989).
[147] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 221.
[148] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1511.

## Cosmogony, Cosmology and the Transformations of the Hero

Confucian canon traditionally confined the role of the hero to his cosmological (world-ordering) function—the hero acts in a world that has already "come into being," while matters of world creation (cosmogonic) remained for Daoism to deal with. However, cosmogonic motifs still surface in the narrative of *Samguk sagi* — thanks to the 'residual' mythological element of the chronicle. Perhaps, it is somewhat counterintuitive, but they make the most fascinating appearance in the stories of authentically historical figures, and their "Confucianized" mission sometimes coincides with the "mythological" mission described by Campbell.

Noting that "If the deeds of an actual historical figure proclaim him to have been a hero, the builders of his legend will invent for him appropriate adventures in depth,"[149] Campbell coined the cycle of cosmogonic metamorphoses (trasformations) of the hero, tracing "the course of the legendary history of the human race through its typical stages, the hero appearing on the scene in various forms according to the changing needs of the race."[150]

Of course, the easiest way to find mythological motifs related to the creation and destruction of the world is to look at the stories of cultural heroes. Their stories have been studied in depth, so there is no point in dwelling on them here. Suffice it to say that the "former rulers"—Kija 箕子, the founders and first rulers of the Three Kingdoms — had sufficient virtue to "create the world" (that is, to found the state and establish world order), and no active measures were required to prevent disorder and chaos. Enemies refused to attack the country, recognizing the virtue of the ruler and the people.[151] A noble man *junzi,* thus, is another type of cultural hero, since without *junzi* "the state could not exist."[152]

The composition of the biographies of noble heroes and their villainous counterparts also allows (and even implies) the appeal to cosmogonic motifs, since their activities are large-scale and significant for the entire country, and the connection between "heavenly destiny (Mandate of Heaven)" and human destiny provides a link between the macrocosm and the microcosm. Yet, Confucian world-ordering is primarily a socio-political process, so cosmogony is often "masked" (or substituted) with cosmology — or they interact, like yin and yang, forming a mutually reversible whole.

An analysis of the trasformations that figures of Kim Yusin and Kungye go through (the symbolic roles they play) is presented in a table that reproduces Campbell's cycle of tarsformations (see Table 3). While the first stage is "saved" for the primal forefathers and founders, whose stories even Confucian "rationalization" is unable to completely "cleanse" from the cosmogonic mythological motifs of the "birth-death"

[149] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 296.
[150] Ibid., 36
[151] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 1: 32-34.
[152] Ibid., j. 44: 1359.

cycle, the interaction of the solar hero with his chthonic wife/mother, the birth of the hero from an egg, etc., then almost all subsequent stages can be found in their biographies in one way or another.

Table 3. Elements of the cosmogonic cycle of Kim Yusin and Kungye

| **Monomyth** | **Kim Yushin** | **Kungye** |
|---|---|---|
| *The Primordial Hero and the Human* | This stage is inaccessible for both heroes. It is for founding heroes, cultural heroes: Kija, Chumong, Hyŏkkŏse, etc. (ultimately, in Korean political mythology, this place is occupied by Tangun). | |
| *Childhood of the Human Hero* | Signs and omens before birth; mother's 12-month pregnancy; unusual appearance | Signs and omens before birth; born with teeth; the sovereign was going to kill him; the wet nurse maimed him |
| *The Hero as Warrior* | Worldly heroism — fights valiantly in battle; outstanding commander; fights for the right cause ("dragons" — Koguryŏ and Paekche) | Wins battles with other rebels/usurpers; fights to "avenge the destruction of Koguryŏ" |
| *The Hero as Lover* | Obstacles seem to disappear on their own, enemies flee. In the text of *Samguk sagi*, he does not suffer a single defeat.<br>His betrothed is justice and loyalty to the sovereign | Obstacles seem to disappear on their own, enemies flee (in the first stage of his rise).<br>His betrothed is personal power |
| *The Hero as Emperor and as Tyrant* | none | Usurpation and separation from the father |
| *The Hero as World Redeemer* | Signifies the onset of an era of "Small Tranquility" | Acts as a symbolic "cannibal father" |
| *The Hero as Saint* | Understood the will of Heaven and followed it unflinchingly | Proclaimed himself Maitreya. Wrote the sutras himself (delusional, absurd and heretical) |
| *Departure of the Hero* | Accepts his fate calmly and with dignity | Tried to cowardly avoid death |

Campbell's trasformations commence at the stage of transition from prehistory to history, where "creation myths begin to give place to legend," and "legend opens into the common daylight of recorded time."[153] The protagonists of the first stage of transformations are "cultural heroes, founders of cities." In *Samguk sagi*, these are the primal forefathers and founders who "... were very modest, benevolent towards people, few were the offices they established, their rule was distinguished by simplicity."[154] A typical cultural hero is Kija, who "taught his people etiquette and justice, how to cultivate fields, breed silkworms, and make silk fabrics, and established the 'Eight Prohibitive Articles.'"[155] While, Kim Yusin "united the Three Kingdoms and turned them into one home," instructed his subordinate generals in the art of command and the sovereign on fundamental principles of dignified rule, while Kungye founded a state of his own and established ranks and positions, personally wrote Buddhist sutras, the scale of all these deeds is incomparable with the world-building feats of Kija, Chumŏng, Hyokkŏse 赫居世, and Tangun 檀君.

Wang Kŏn, in fact, does compare himself to the founders of Chinese statehood, and although he claims lack of such virtues for himself, the very comparison of the task of "re-founding" the Korean state with the "deeds of the founders of Shang-Yin and Zhou" retrospectively affirms both *the significance* of such virtues and their presence in Wang Kŏn (thereby legitimizing him). Therefore, he can also claim a place among the "primordial heroes."

The cosmogonic trasformations of Kim Yusin and Kungye begin from the second stage—the hero's childhood. The birth of both of them was accompanied by miraculous phenomena and omens (in Kungye's case, unfavorable ones). Kim Yusin's father "saw in a dream how two stars, Mars and Saturn, descended upon him," and his mother "saw in a dream a boy in golden armor descending to her room on a cloud. After some time, she conceived and gave birth to Yushin after twenty months [of pregnancy]."[156] On Kungye's birthday, "a white glow resembling a long rainbow appeared above the house, rising up to the sky."[157] Kungye was born with teeth — such stories are typical for the description of heroes in many cultures: "the tendency has always been to endow the hero with extraordinary powers from the moment of birth, or even the moment of conception."[158] Kim Pusik endows many heroes in the biographical section of *Samguk sagi* with such characteristics: "[Kim] Yang was gifted and outstanding [from birth],"[159] the mother of the outstanding Silla diplomat and Confucian scholar Kangsu 薑首 "[once] saw a horned man in a dream, and then became pregnant and gave birth to a child who had protruding bones (bumps) on the

[153] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*: 291.
[154] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 12: 399.
[155] Ibid., j. 22: 618.
[156] Ibid., j. 41: 1308. Yushin's mother's dream plays on the theme of the "death-birth of the hero," his solar nature (golden armor), and the hero's descent to earth.
[157] Ibid., j. 50: 1478. The court astrologer considered this sign to be extremely unfavorable.
[158] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 294.
[159] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 44: 1369.

back of his head,"[160] Sŏl Ch'ong 薛聰 "understood Daoist wisdom from the birth"[161] and so on.

Campbell derives a generalized storyline of the hero's *childhood*: "the child of destiny has to face a long period of obscurity. This is a time of extreme danger, impediment, or disgrace. He is thrown inward to his own depths or outward to the unknown... the young world-apprentice learns the lesson of the seed powers, which reside just beyond the sphere of the measured and the named."[162] In our case, at first glance, this description fits (partially) Kungye's destiny only — his father orders the newborn to be killed, a servant throws the child under the porch of the house, where he is found by a slave nurse, who secretly raises the child; then Kungye leaves her and hides in a monastery, taking monastic vows and changing his name. However, although Kim Yusin does not hide in obscurity and does not fall into disgrace, he still turns to the knowledge of the primordial forces for "secret magic" — and receives it. Of course, such a pattern will be reproduced in the biographies of legendary heroes more readily, than in biographies of historical figures. Specifically, the story of Chumong's son, Yuri, follows that pattern almost verbatim. Abandoned by his father, he grows up in obscurity, but following his father's instructions, he discovers (not on the first try) the treasure (a sword) left for him, by which his father later recognizes and accepts him.[163]

The *Warrior* stage in the biographies of Kim Yusin and Kungye is the easiest to trace—their activities are mainly related to battles and wars. Kim Yusin is a valiant warrior himself and an outstanding general — on the pages of the *Samguk sagi*, he did not lose a single battle and turned retreats into cunning maneuvers to defeat his enemies. Kungye also goes undefeated — at least until he ascends to the throne, transforming from a heroic warrior into a tyrant. In these victories, they both are allegorically portrayed as *Lovers* — nothing is beyond their power: "Unpredicted helpers, miracles of time and space, further his project; destiny itself (the maiden) lends a hand and betrays a weak spot in the parental system. Barriers, fetters, chasms, fronts of every kind dissolve before the authoritative presence of the hero."[164] The difference between them is that Kim Yushin's "betrothed" is justice, while Kungye's "betrothed" is personal power and revenge.

Both Kim Yushin and Kungye (before his usurpation of the throne) are "the champions of things becoming, not of things become"[165]: Kim Yushin fights for the unification of the state, and Kungye — for the creation of his own. Kim Yushin's "dragons," whom the hero is called upon to defeat, are his opponents — Paekche and Koguryŏ (and even Tang China); Kungye's "dragons" are initially other rebellious

[160] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 46: 1410.
[161] Ibid., 1421.
[162] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 301-302.
[163] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 13: 410-411. Another opponent of Wang Kŏn, Kyŏn Hwŏn, is breastfed by a tigress as an infant (Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1490).
[164] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 318.
[165] Ibid., p. 225, p. 311.

pretenders to power in the weakened Silla and hapless Silla military leaders, but as the story progresses, he proclaims that his goal is to avenge Silla on behalf of the fallen Koguryŏ.[166] However, Kim Pusik immediately exposes this statement, pointing out that "[Kungye] was deeply offended that [in Silla] he was abandoned as soon as he was born."[167] Thus, Kungye becomes a double impostor — both as an aspiring ruler-turned-tyrant and as an avenger. All his aspirations turn out to be false, and he becomes a proud tyrant, which is his downfall — for, having proclaimed himself sovereign, he now fights to preserve this status, that is, for what "has become" and not for what "is becoming."

According to Campbell, the hero's affirmation as a ruler occurs through the search for his father and reconciliation with him (through his blessing; the hero represents his father among the people), and his transformation into a tyrant occurs through the loss of contact with higher powers and reliance solely on the power of his personal, egotistic authority.[168] Kungye emphatically alienates himself from his father — he cuts down the image of the Silla ruler on the temple wall with his sword, committing a double sacrilege. Kim Yusin, on the other hand, does without this entirely — the story of search for the father and reconciling with him through some kind of confrontation is not applicable to the biography of the figure of the ideal loyal subject, one of whose attributes is impeccable filial piety 孝.

For the same reason, the form of the *World Redeemer* in Campbell's interpretation, which envisages that the Hero is to "slay the tenacious aspect of the father (dragon, tester, ogre king) and release from its ban the vital energies that will feed the universe,"[169] is inaccessible to Kim Yusin — and simply unnecessary. The essence of his world-building exploits is to establish an era of "Small Tranquility," that is, a version of the Golden Age that is accessible in the existing socio-political and moral-ethical reality, as well as to warn the sovereign that this era is also transient: "...since ancient times [among] the rulers who sat on the throne, there were none who did not have [good] beginnings, but few [remained virtuous until] the end."[170] Kungye cannot become a redeemer, since he himself is a tyrant-cannibal who is defeated by a new hero "summoned" (or symbolically "born") by him—Wang Kŏn. This can be seen as parallel to Campbell's interpretation: Wang Kŏn, being Kunye's vassal and symbolic son, overthrew his "parent" and took the throne himself.

The stage of the *Saint* or ascetic who has withdrawn from the mundane world[171] is not formally relevant to either Kim Yusin or Kungye — it is befitting the Daoist sages or Confucians who have condemned themselves to voluntary exile, such as Ch'oe Ch'iwŏn[172] . However, one of the essential attributes of a Campbellian *saint* is unity

[166] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1482.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 311-312, p. 320.
[169] Ibid., pp. 325-326.
[170] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 43: 1347.
[171] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 327-329.
[172] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 46: 1418-1419.

with the Unseen, with the highest, supra-, and extra-mythical substratum. For Kim Yusin, this is the knowledge of Heaven's will and the ability to interpret it — an ability available only to the sages of old. For Kungye, it is the claim to such an ability, the claim to the divine nature of Buddha Maitreya and the creation of sutras.

The final stage—the *Departure of the Hero*—summarizes his entire life. It determines, first and foremost, his attitude toward death, reconciliation with which is "the first condition" [173] of heroism. At this stage, Kim Yusin and Kungye, whose deaths are predicted by corresponding omens (that is, determined by Celestial causes), behave in completely opposite ways. Kim Yusin accepts his death with dignity and humility, hoping that "the foundations of statehood will remain unfading"[174] — that is, that the macrocycle of life and death will be broken in favor of eternity. Kungye, on the other hand, "changed into simple clothes and hid in the forest. [However], he was soon killed by ordinary people from Puyan."[175]

Finally, cosmogonic motifs can be found in the very structure of the chronicle — in the composition of the "dynastic cycle" of the *Samguk sagi*. If the history of each dynasty is finite,[176] then the repetition of dynastic cycles can — ideally — continue forever. Describing the cosmogonic cycle, Campbell notes: "The cosmogony cycle is normally represented as repeating itself, world without end. During each great round, lesser dissolutions are commonly included, as the cycle of sleep and waking revolves throughout a lifetime." [177] Each change of dynasty is a kind of Campbellian "reattainment": [178] lost virtue is restored as the Mandate of Heaven passes to the founder of the new dynasty. In principle, this "recovery of what has been lost" is the mythological basis of Confucianism, since its main task, as formulated by Confucius himself, is to restore the lost rituals of the Zhou dynasty.

"Reattainment of the lost," together with the reasons for this loss, are described in the prophecy that foretold the fall of Kungye and the rise of Wang Kŏn. The text of the prophecy itself read as follows:

> [Supreme Lord] Shangdi will send his son to the lands of Chin and Ma to first catch a hen and then catch a duck. In the year of the Snake, two dragons will appear — one will hide in a blue (green) tree, the other will appear in black iron in the East 上帝降子於辰馬 先操鷄後搏鴨 於巳年中二龍見 一則藏身青木中 一則顯形黑金東[179]

The two dragons are, respectively, Wang Kŏn and Kungye. The predestined fall of the latter — that is, the "appearance/manifestation" of the dragon in black iron — can be

[173] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, p. 329.
[174] Kim Pusik, Samguk sagi, j. 43: 1347.
[175] Ibid., j. 50: 1489. The *Silla Annals* state that he was killed by a soldier (Kim Pusik, Samguk sagi, j. 12: 384). The biography assigns Kungye an even more despicable and insignificant fate than the *Annals*.
[176] This is precisely what Kim Yusin says on his deathbed to king Munmu.
[177] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, pp. 242-243.
[178] Ibid., p. 36.
[179] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 50: 1486.

explained by the mismatch between the color and the element of direction: black and iron are strongly associated with the north, not the east.[180] In other words, Kunye's fate is linked to a disruption of the harmony of the elements, which means he is doomed.

"Reattainment of the lost" is cyclically repeated with the establishment of Koryŏ. The "Three Han" are united again, the cycle has repeated itself. But at the same time, the descent of the new dynasty from Silla (although "its fate was exhausted and its moral principles lost" 新羅數窮道喪[181]) was preserved (Kim Pusik established the bloodline descent through Hyŏnjong 顯宗 [the eighth king of Koryŏ], who was "a descendant of the kings of Silla on his mother's side…, and after that, his descendants continued the [line] of rulers. Is this not a reward for the innermost virtues [of king Kyŏngsun]?"[182]). In other words, the world was not completely destroyed, and cosmology once again "triumphed" over cosmogony, once again providing a civilizing, world-ordering influence on the social chaos into which the country had been plunged by the loss of virtue among the rulers of the previous dynasty.

Through the communion of "heavenly destiny" and human destiny, the dynastic cycle reflects the cosmogonic cycle of "birth-death-rebirth." The destiny of the hero (or sovereign) as the creator or guardian of the world is "embedded" in this cycle. Therefore, traces of the cosmogonic cycle can also be found *within* the dynastic cycle. Thus, the establishment of "Small Tranquility" in Silla after the fall of Koguryŏ and Paekche and the unification of the country — a milestone in its history — is proclaimed by Kim Yusin on his deathbed: "Although we have not yet achieved Great Peace, Small Tranquility has been established" 雖未至太平 亦可謂小康,[183] that is, the death of the Hero (the end of the heroic microcycle, the microcosm) marks the birth of a new era (the beginning of the historical cycle, the macrocosm). It can be said that, from the perspective of a cosmogonic reading of the *Samguk sagi*, Kim Pusik does not so much politicize the mythologem through socio-political action as he mythologizes the history of socio-political action.

Alas, Kim Yusin's hopes for the immortality of the foundations of statehood were not fulfilled. At the very end of Kim Yusin's biography, Kim Pusik recounts that in the

[180] According to the teachings of Zou Yan 鄒衍 (336-280, — per *Shiji*, alternatively — 305-204 BC) on the cyclical cycle of elements 五行終始說 or 五德終始說, dynastic changes occur in accordance with this cycle and the legitimacy of a dynasty is determined by its relationship with one of the five primary elements. Later, Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 revised this theory, arguing that the basis of legitimacy is not the cyclical rotation of elements, but the degree of governability and unity of the country. However, during the Koryŏ period, the teachings of Zou Yan (or its Korean version) were clearly popular. Remco Breuker, *Establishing a Pluralist Society in Medieval Korea*, pp. 80–81. Further on interpretation of the text of the prophecy, see: Alexander V. Solovyov, "Biographies in *Samguk Sagi*. Literature *vs.* History?" *History, Language and Culture in Korea. Proceedings of the 20th Conference of the Association of Korean Studies in Europe (AKSE),* comp. Pak Youngsook and Yeon Jaehoon (2001): 18-19.

[181] Ibid., j. 50: 1510.

[182] Ibid., j. 12: 400-401.

[183] Ibid., j. 43: 1347.

year when Kim Yusin's great-great-grandson, Kim Am 金巖, returned to his homeland from Japan in the year 779 AD, "whirlwinds rose from Kim Yushin's grave until the burial of the great founding king Mich'u 未鄒."[184] This accident was followed with descent of mud and fog, sounds of bitter weeping and mournful lamentations were heard in the midst of darkness. The reigning king Hyegong 惠恭 was very frightened and tried to remedy this ominous situation with sacrifices, apologies to the spirit of the deceased and a donation to Chwisŏn Monastery to pray for Kim Yusin's repose in the afterlife.[185] The weeping and wailing—obvious signs of the spirit's discontent—were caused, as can be seen from the *Silla Annals* for the same year, not so much by disregard for the memory of the deceased as by the deplorable state of affairs in the state, symbolically indicated by the earthquake in the capital. The following year's record explains the reasons for such discontent: "[Due to the fact that] the king ascended the throne at a very young age and, in his mature years, became mired in debauchery and indulged in unrestrained revelry, the affairs of state administration were disrupted, natural disasters occurred repeatedly, the people became rebellious, and the altars (foundations) of the state were threatened. The rebel leader, Kim Chijŏng laid siege to the palace."[186]

This was a direct violation of Kim Yusin's covenant: "Keep petty men away [from yourself] and keep noble men close 疏遠小人 親近君子, and act so that the top (the government) [would remain in] harmony and peace, and at the bottom, the people and all living things [would remain] in prosperity and tranquility. [Then] there will be no natural disasters or turmoil, and the foundations of statehood will remain unshakable."[187] But even Kim Yusin turned powerless against the cycle of "birth, decay, and death."

## Conclusion

The methods of creating archetypes in *Samguk sagi* are diverse and not confined to the representation of Confucian virtues and vices, although these still constitute the backbone of historical narration. Yet, "non-Confucian" (including, but not limited to, the monomyth) motifs, in interaction with "Confucian" ones, create a complex and diverse palette of figures and images that reflects the rich cultural syncretism of the Three Kingdoms.

The "Hero's journey" is neither a universal nor an exhaustive scenario for the characters' storylines of the *Samguk sagi* (or for any historical hero). In addition to the

[184] The parallel with king Mich'u is not accidental. As in this episode, associated with the posthumous influence of the spirit of a great man on world events, the spirit of king Mich'u helped Silla repel the invasion of enemies, with the same "army of spirits" 陰兵 that guarded Kim Yushin's house being involved (Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 2: 86-87).
[185] Kim Pusik, *Samguk sagi*, j. 43: 1354.
[186] Ibid., j. 9: 308.
[187] Ibid., j. 43: 1347.

archetypes already mentioned, it is worth noting the figure (archetype) of the trickster, who can surface even in the model Hero's (such as Kim Yusin) story.[188]

Furthermore, a historiographical hero does not necessarily have to undergo a fundamental cathartic purification, demonstrating the destruction of his ego. Moreover, not all stages of this catharsis are mandatory for him (nor is he obliged to adhere to their strict order). If, as in the case of Kim Yushin, he is initially a whole personality and has pure aspirations, his path will resemble a constant linear ascent (if the hero becomes an arch-villain, then his inevitable downfall awaits him). However, even for characters in fiction, the motif of overcoming inner turmoil through renunciation of the self is not strictly mandatory: "During the journey, the hero *demonstrates his virtues* (emphasis mine — *A.S.*) or reevaluates his past."[189]

The pronounced didactic component of the official chronicle is a world-building narrative, that is, a story about *politics*. However, due to the fact that the political (i.e., the ability to establish world order) is revolving around the hero's ability/inability to correctly interpret the will of Heaven (to obtain the magic elixir in Campbell's metaphor) and act in accordance with it, this narrative will inevitably take on a mythological character.

It is not so important whether Kim Pusik believed in myths and legends; what is important is that he relied not only on the formal norms of the Confucian historiographical canon, but also on the authority of tradition. And given that this canon retained its deep mythological foundation (the myth of the Golden Age, the dramatic and didactic heroization, the myth of the cyclical nature of time, etc.), in the *Samguk sagi*, "rational-functional" archetypes coexist quite harmoniously with "mythological" archetypes, those close to Jungian. Perhaps this is why, for Korean Neo-Confucians, the *Samguk sagi* was not "dry and rational" at all and evidently "not quite Confucian enough."

Ultimately, Kim Pusik's historiography does not reject myth *perse*, since it is itself based on moral and ethical mythologems, the dramatic mythologization of historical figures, and their *significance* for the state.

[188] The trickster figure is by no means foreign to East Asian culture: for example, the Monkey King Sun Wukong 孫悟空 or the Korean "noble robber" Hong Kiltong 洪吉童 are both undoubtedly tricksters. Examples of cunning military tricks can be found in the biography of Kim Yushin and in the biographies of other commanders: Ŭlchi Mundŏk 乙支文德, Kŏdo 居道, and Isabu 異斯夫. Kim Yusin's role in the plot of Kim Ch'unch'u's marriage betrays trickster's traits (unbecoming of the paragon of Confucian virtue) in Yusin character as well. Perhaps, it was the reason to omit this rather frolicsome anecdote in his *Samguk sagi* biography and tell this (modestly abridged in comparison to *Samguk yusa*) version in *Silla Annals* instead.

[189] Adelaida F. Trotsevich, "Funktsii 'puteshestviya geroya," 12.

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