

Dream Sky

By Shin Chae-ho

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Literature Translation Institute of Korea

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About Shin Chae-ho

Shin Chae-ho (1880 – 1936) was an independence activist, historian, and journalist during the Japanese colonial rule over Korea. In a broader sense, he can be considered a man of letters and an advocate of national enlightenment. His pen name was Dan-jae, he was born into a noble *yangban* family in Daedeok, South Chungcheong Province, and he studied Chinese classics but gave up plans to pursue a government position when the signing of the Treaty of 1905 with Japan took away Korea's national sovereignty. He then started writing opinion columns in the *Hwang Seong Daily*. Afterwards, he worked as chief editor of *The Korea Daily News*, always trying to instill national consciousness. He also engaged himself in the patriotic enlightenment movement through *Sinminhoe*, an independence movement organization. In 1910, he went into exile in China, and in 1922, he was invited to Shanghai by the head of *Uiyeoldan*, a group of patriotic Koreans with heroic spirit. Early the next year, he composed and presented the group's manifesto, titled the *Declaration of the Joseon Revolution*. He insisted in this document on the necessity of a direct revolutionary fight by the people through violent action.

His view on the independence movement, which did not allow any compromise with the enemy, also influenced his view of history. He understood history as a “fight between self and non-self,” thereby establishing a theory of nationalistic history and founding modern Korean historical studies, seeking new interpretations of the history of Joseon and the Revolt of Myocheong, among other historical issues. He wrote such history books as *Joseon's Ancient History*, *Joseon's Ancient Cultural History*, *The Basics of Research on the History of Joseon*, and *The Theory of the History of Joseon*, as well as biographies of historical heroes, such as *The Biography of Eulji Mundeok*, *The Biography of Yi Sun-sin*, and *The Biography of Choe Yeong*. He also translated books, such as *The Biography of the Three Founding Heroes of Italy*, and he wrote such literary works as *Dream Sky* and *Big Battle among Dragons*, as well as other writings.

About *Dream Sky*

Shin Chae-ho's nationalist novella *Dream Sky*, written in 1916, reads like a cross between *The Apocalypse of St. John* and *Pilgrim's Progress*. The first several lines depict the protagonist Hannom seeing a divine figure revealed in the heavens who announces the necessity of struggling for national survival. Battles in the sky follow and reflect battles on earth. Hannom, however, is called on not merely to observe and record,

but also to join in a celestial battle against Japanese invaders. Yet, he encounters various tests and temptations along the way that distract him from his goal of reaching the battle, and that teach him of his own weaknesses and shortcomings. The story is not an easy read, for it is long and didactic, demanding attention to detail and knowledge of history. Lengthy passages present lists of foreign villains, national traitors, and Korean heroes. This might all sound mind-numbing, but the story is often related in an unexpectedly lively manner that retains the interest of the reader, who – even if non-Korean – comes to identify with Hannom and suffer with him. Perhaps readers won't emerge from the experience as Korean nationalists, but the story makes Korean nationalism more explicable.

Dream Sky

1.

It was a day of some month in the year 4240 since Dangun's founding of Gojoseon, or 1907 by the Western calendar. I do not recall if the place was in Seoul, or somewhere abroad, but I saw myself as Hannom seated upon a room-sized flower blooming on a several thousand furlong branch of a Rose of Sharon.

Suddenly, the heavens above opened, a reddish light streamed forth, and there appeared in the sky in the form of soft clouds a heavenly being. He wore the traditional Korean hat *gat* glowing with splendor, was clad in the traditional Korean overcoat *durumagi* glowing with even more glorious light, and was seated but wielding a sword of lightning in the right hand. He spoke in a thunderous voice.

“For humans, fighting is the only way to live. If they win, they survive, but if they lose, they die. That is the Lord's order.”

No sooner had the voice finished, than the beam of light and the heavenly being both vanished, and sunlight spread across flat ground that came into view as the distant rumble of a great multitude was heard. From the east rose a flag displaying five differently colored rings denoting an army's five ranks, under which marched advancing men who seemed our countrymen in language, but whose heads and bodies were strangely clad and who were of strong build and imposing air never before seen.

In the west, under a flag emblazoned with a dragon on the left and a phoenix on the right, thronged millions of soldiers, some with horns and tails, but no neck or arms, warriors of strange features pressed from behind by a cold wind.

Then, as Hannom, though troubled but also curious, was about to clamber down from the branch to see more clearly, the flower smiled and spoke, “You stay here. If you leave this place, darkness will pervade everywhere, and you will see nothing.”

As he sat back on the flower petal, clouds suddenly gathered together, blocking the sunlight, and an abrupt downpour flooded the ground and turned it to sea. There arose a great gust of wind with a thunderous roar, harsh beyond description, blasting and snapping trees, striking and blowing stones, and churning the sea with the power to break houses, mountains, everything! The seawater itself was as great as the wind. Struggling against each other, the wind and the water attacked and counterattacked so harshly that they met each other half in the air, like roaring dragons, breaching whales,

or great, rushing armies springing into battle, the high rising water against the strong wind causing the entire earth to tremble.

“Despite wind and wave, we fight to our utmost,” rang the battle cry from each side as the warriors under the five-circled eastern flag and those under the dragon-and-phoenix western flag flung themselves toward each other wild-eyed, intent on the kill. The fight between wind and sea matched that between the two great armies of men and their leaders.

The fight was such as not seen in the history of East or West. The fighters bore no weapons in their hands, but as their mouths opened wide, fire and water, sword and arrow poured forth, and with sword against sword, arrow against arrow, fire against fire, water against water, the weapons fought each other first, only afterwards attacking people, who fought on with arms when heads were sliced off, and with legs when arms were lopped off. The people fought until their very flesh was wholly cut away and even their bones entirely broken apart. After but a short while, vast was the land with death, unendurable the stench of blood, and hideous the gore-splattered sky.

Hannom squeezed his eyes shut, unable to watch the horrible truth of the universe, but the flower smiled and spoke again, “Hannom, open your eyes! Don’t be a weakling! This is reality. Had you not come into the world, you would have avoided this, but as you came, you must therefore fight, lest you prove irresponsible. Hannom, open your eyes now!”

Hannom first had to wipe away his tears before opening his eyes to look around. The fight now seemed finished, as all was silent on earth and in heaven, the wind and rain all gone, the high risen sun warming the earth, and a repeated harmonious sound, as if the drumming of a wise, benevolent sage deep in the mountains, soon drawing near from high above, pressing its way down through the clouds, a sound of peace in a place of horror.

Those associated with this sound were none other than the officers and men from the east, united under the flag of five circles, returning to the beat of a drum for complete victory after fighting against the men of the west and killing several tens of millions of that enemy.

The commander who led them was wearing a conical hat with a golden flower pattern, and black clothes showing badges of rank on the shoulders. His face was clear but dignified, fiery but benevolent, like a Buddha at first glance but a tiger at second glance, lovely but dreadful together.

He approached the Rose of Sharon, where Hannom was sitting, and burst into tears at seeing the flower. “Ah, the Rose of Sharon is blooming,” he said, and then started

singing in a heroic tone:

What flower might this be?
The spirit of snowy Mount Baekdu.
The lovely crimson light of Joseon.
Invigorating this blossom
requires rain, wind, and splattered blood.
Then shall it flourish!
In balmy days foregone,
we saw the flower so great,
one petal covered the land from the West Sea to Balhae,
another stretched over the Ussuri River and Manchuria.
Why, then, these days,
has the flower shrunk so much?
I mustered all my strength in every fight,
earlier in Salsu and Pyeongyang battles,
using my arms as bolted doors, my chest as a shield,
myself as a wall for the flower garden
to stop filthy water from the west
from ever permeating Joseon's spring light.
Why, then, has my flower
grown so weak today?

He seemed to have more verses, but tears choked his singing, so the Rose of Sharon itself answered in clear song, though also shedding tears, as if the flower could sense the song's emotion:

My beloved dressed me in a lovely spring costume.
To return his generosity,
wiping my face as I fought rain and wind,
I grew so very pale from boasting the beauty of Joseon.
The cool tears of a hero,
the hot blood of a patriotic martyr,
bring these in a bowl or dipper,
for I do thirst.

As the voice grew more pained and aching, even hard-hearted stones and trees stood up and called to one another in sadness. Hannom, who had been sitting on a flower petal, prostrated himself as the second of the two songs ended and felt so touched that he burst into tears, unable to get up.

The flower then called him, admonishing, “Hannom! Stop crying! You can’t neglect worldly affairs over your sorrow.”

At these words, Hannom lifted his head to look around and discovered the commander standing before him. Upon scrutinizing the man’s face, he found him very familiar, as if someone previously encountered. After some reflection, he said, “Ah, I now remember! From your eyes, forehead, and long, thin beard, as well as your manner of dress, you’re exactly like the image carved into the tombstone outside the north gate of Anju, in Pyeongan Province. You’re Eulji Mundeok! I’ve long wished to meet you, if only in a dream.”

Getting up and bowing to the man, he wanted to ask something but did not know how to address him, and as he hesitated, he also puzzled over the wonder standing before him. Eulji Mundeok had lived about 2945 Dangun (AD 612), and Hannom had come into the world in Dangun 4240 (AD 1907), so the time difference was greater than 1,000 years, but the affectionate manner of the man from some 1,000 years earlier toward a youth of some 1,000 years later seemed like the warmth among friends or family.

The man smiled at Hannom and said, “You’re hesitant about how to address me. Just treat me as your senior and call me *seonbae*. When Dangun came down to Mount Taebaek, he established three capitals and five departments for three gods and five kings. As he wanted his descendants to rule this land well for tens of thousands of years, he set up an ethics of three parts and five commandments and put three *rang* officials and five *ga* officials in charge of education. This led to the birth of a somewhat religious warrior’s spirit in Korea, and that spirit flourished and took fire in the time of the Three Kingdoms, and everybody elevated warriors, greeting them and proudly calling them by courteous titles. According to the *History of the Three Kingdoms*, Silla loved and called the warrior youth *doryeong*, a term translated as *seonrang*, while Baekje loved and called the middle-aged warriors *sudu*, translated as *sodo*, and Goguryeo loved and called the virtuous warriors *seonbae*, translated as *seonin* with regard to the meaning and the pronunciation. Because I’m a man of Goguryeo, you may – as I said – call me *seonbae*.”

At these words, Hannom again bowed, this time politely in the manner of Goguryeo, kneeling with one knee down. “*Seonbae*, who were those two armies from

east and west that fought each other?”

To this question, *seonbae* responded, “The army in the east was of Goguryeo, that of the west was Sui’s army of China.”

Surprised and suspicious, Hannom stepped forward and asked, “Have I been lied to? I’m told that the good who die go to heaven and the defeated to hell, but is that false? Is the spirit world like the material world with its cruel stabbing of sword and killing by gun?”

Seonbae lamented, “Yes. The spirit world reflects the material world. If battles continue in the material world, they also continue in the spirit world. Religious reformers like the Buddha or Jesus spoke of heaven and hell, but their words were swallowed undigested, such that the foolish fell ill with all manner of ailments deadly to the country and the people. Hearken to what I say, and keep it in your heart. A cow cannot give birth to a dog, nor can a peach tree bear plums, so how could war in the material world beget peace in the spirit world? A child in the material world becomes a child in the spirit world. The adult remains an adult, the master a master, and the servant a servant there in the spirit world, so those spirits there, those *doggaebi*, whether high or low, sad or happy, receive the same there as in the material world. Inasmuch as I won the Battle of Salsu, I occupy the winner’s seat in the spirit world today, whereas the defeated Emperor Yang Guang of China’s Sui Dynasty, along with his defeated army, was also vanquished today in the battle you saw, losing two million soldiers to slaughter and returning in sadness; yet you are now the son of a defeated country, praying to Buddha or God to be received into heaven after death. That scarcely differs from looking for the sun with eyes shut tight.”

No sooner had *Seonbae* Eulji fallen silent than red clouds appeared and formed themselves into letters. Within the heavens was written: “Yes, yes, Eulji Mundeok is exactly right. Both the material world and the spirit world belong to the winner. Heaven is occupied only by those with hard fists, while those with weak fists are thrown into hell.”

- 2.
- 1) Body’s Left Fights Against Body’s Right
- 2) How the Battle of Salsu Looked
- 3) Eulji Mundeok Also Organized Battle Troops
- 4) General Sabeopmyeong of Baekje Dynasty Passed By above Clouds

Hannom was thus awakened early to his country’s history and had such great

respect for Eulji Mundeok that he wrote and published a booklet about him titled *Eulji Mundeok, the Very Greatest Man in Four Thousand Years*. But it was neither a biography nor a thesis, for it lacked detailed research on account of Hannom's impatience and was based only on the 18th-century history book *Dongsa Gangmok*.

When Hannom first came to this world, he carried a bundle of *jeong* and *han*, affection and resentment, and he had nowhere to go, nowhere to stay, no one to trust, and nobody to love. He was utterly alone in his coming and going, as implied by his name "Hannom" (one person). One generally reflects on one's family roots when there's nothing else to depend on, and Hannom did much the same, caring about his nation's ancestors as he otherwise had nothing to rely on: how long the earlobes of the first king of Goguryeo were; how big the eyes of Silla's King Jinheung were; how many the beautiful court women throwing themselves from Nakhwa Rock at the end of the Baekje Dynasty were; who the strong man fighting Emperor Yang of China's Sui Dynasty was; how high the Yimryugak, a pavilion from the Baekje Dynasty, was; how long the holy belt *Seongjedae* of King Jinpyeong of the Silla Dynasty was. He tried to detect traces of Daejoyoung, the founder of Balhae, on the high mountain of Dongmyo; he shed tears at the river of Ungjin, thinking of the greatness of General Gyebaek of the Baekje Dynasty; he remembered a painting by Solgeo, the great artist of the Silla Dynasty, whenever he saw a pine tree; and he thought of the song of Silla's musician Okbogo whenever he heard birds singing. Though only a person of limited understanding, he had traveled through 5,000 years of history wishing to meet great people among the ancestors, and he had so much to ask and talk about when he finally met the great man Eulji Mundeok, but the experience was strange. As he listened to what was said about the spirit world, his head ached and his heart became so perturbed that he lacked the mind to form proper questions, for his suspicion and fear gathered like clouds in the May sky and finally made something strange happen to his mind and body.

His right hand grew numb and bigger and bigger, stretching out so far that the fingertips almost vanished, and each of the five fingers became a hand itself and grew longer, each fingertip giving birth to a new finger whose tip became a hand again, like a son having a grandchild, and that grandchild having a great-grandchild. The right hand thus became several tens of thousands of hands, and not to be outdone, the left hand followed the right in also becoming several tens of thousands of hands, the right hands all holding blue flags and the left hands all holding black flags. The two parts started to fight each other. The right hands under the blue flags became tigers and sprang out with their jaws open wide, and the left hands under the black flags became deer and fled.

A large body of water suddenly appeared, trapping the deer with no exit, so they all changed into fish as they sprang into the water; but the tigers changed into snakes and chased after them, whereupon the fish then changed into pheasants and fluttered out of the water. The snakes changed into hawks and chased the pheasants, which changed into bigger hawks landing in a large field, whereupon the snakes that were the smaller hawks turned into fire and incinerated the larger hawks and set the entire field alight. The remains of the hawks drifted up to the sky, becoming clouds that poured rain and extinguished the fire, but a powerful wind scattered the clouds and overturned the world. This fight had started from Hannom's fingertips, but his fingertips could not stop it.

As Hannom rubbed his eyes to see the fight more clearly, the Rose of Sharon petal under him clucked its tongue and said, "It's heartrending, what's going on! Iron eating iron, flesh eating flesh!"

His goose bumps rising at such words, Hannom first sat in utter silence, but finally inquired indirectly, "What do you mean? You proclaimed earlier that fighting is necessary. Do you now speak against fighting?"

The flower responded in a lovely voice, "If I have to fight, I should fight against another. Fighting against oneself is suicide, not a real fight."

Hannom grew impatient and asked, "What does this 'I' actually mean? Haven't you said that if I open my eyes wide, the universe will become my body, but if I open my eyes only a little, my right arm will treat my left one like a stranger?"

The flower rebuked him sharply, making him alert. "The 'I' expands or contracts according to time! Family is 'I' in the time of familism, whereas the nation is 'I' during the time of nationalism! If you spring ahead of the time, your feet will tear off, and if you fall behind the time, your head will crack open! What is today's era? Do you even know? Greece lost power as a strong nation because of its headstrong provinces, and India is courting national disaster because of tribalism."

Deeply moved by this explanation, Hannom wept with appreciation and touched his right hand with his left, returning his right hand to its normal size; then he touched his left hand with his right, returning his left hand to its normal size, as in days gone by. At his side, Eulji Mundeok sat embracing the sunlight and reciting:

Our country is like a set of scales.
Capital Buso is the body of the scales,
Capital Baeka is the head of the scales,
Capital Odeok is the weight for the scales.
Beating all enemies in one day and

making three places capitals,
the country will be balanced,
such that none of the three should be lost.

Eulji Mundeok finished and turned to Hannom. “Do you know this passage?”

“I read it in *The History of Goryeo* by Jeong In-ji,” said Hannom.

“That’s right,” Eulji Mundeok confirmed. “Long ago, Dangun defeated all enemies and divided the land into three, setting up capitals. The first capital was chosen in the land of Joseon, southeast of Mount Taebaek, and it was called Buso; the next capital was chosen in Manchuria, west of Mount Taebaek, and it was called Baekagang; and the third capital was chosen in Yeonhaeju Province of Manchuria, northeast of Mount Taebaek, and it was called Odeok. Concerned lest his descendants should grow weak if even one of the three capitals were lost, Dangun wrote down this prophecy and entrusted it to a *sinji*, or tribal chieftain, but no one knows today where the capitals were located, and even the original passage has been forgotten. Although Jeong In-ji quoted it in *The History of Goryeo*, he made two mistakes: first, he quoted it as if it had been spoken by a fortune-teller; second, following the geographical texts of Goryeo, he described the three capitals of Dangun as located within the territory bounded by the Daedong River.”

Hannom asked, “How were the three capitals lost?”

Eulji-Mundeok replied, “Remember what I said before? That power is the ladder to heaven? Not many Koreans know this truth. Each of the 21 Chinese dynasties compiled a book on Korea and its people, and they characterized Koreans as benevolent and virtuous every time. This description worked toward our decline. If a people describes itself as benevolent and virtuous, such a description can help them flourish, but the same description by an enemy only contributes to a people’s fall . . .”

3.

(Skipped text) As Eulji Mundeok was speaking fervently, and Hannom listening closely, the sky in the east abruptly opened, spewing forth entities of destruction: fire swords, fire arrows, fire stones, fire guns, fire cannons, fire braziers, fire caldrons, fire tigers, fire lions, fire dogs, and fire cats. Startled, Eulji Mundeok cried, “Why should this be happening right now?” and quickly flew over the rainbow and into the melee.

4.

Neither holding *seonbae* back nor following him, Hannom remained seated but restless, wondering aloud, “Where should I go now?”

The flower spoke to him in a gentle tone, “You don’t know? You should follow Eulji *seonbae*. He went into the war between the Lord and the devil.”

Surprised, Hannom asked, “I should go also?”

“Of course you should,” the flower replied. “You should definitely go. This sort of war is one in which all our people fight.”

“But how,” asked Hannom, “can I go as I am?”

The flower replied, “I’ll give you wings.”

Hannom felt below his armpits and found two wings attached.

The flower added, “Go together with friends.”

Never having had a friend in his thirty years of living, always crying alone and laughing alone, tears welled up in Hannom’s eyes to hear this. “But where are my friends?” he asked.

“Call one from the sky,” said the flower.

As Hannom lifted his head and called with all his strength, a voice from the sky answered, “I’m coming,” and someone like Hannom came down.

The flower spoke again, “Call one from the earth.”

As Hannom bowed his head low and called with all his strength, a voice from the ground answered, “I’m coming,” and someone like Hannom sprang from the earth. Following the flower’s directions, Hannom called to the east, to the west, to the south, and to the north. Four other friends came, making six friends in all, seven counting Hannom; in fact, there were seven Hannoms, for they all looked the same in face and feature and had the same purpose. Because they were hard to distinguish from one another, they were called First Hannom, Second Hannom, Third Hannom, Fourth Hannom, Fifth Hannom, Sixth Hannom, and Seventh Hannom. “Where is the battlefield?” they cried in unison.

A great voice was heard from the east: “Hither! March!”

Off they marched at the voice’s call, while the flower sang a song called “Brandishing the Sword”:

As I was born, the Other was also born.

As the Other was born, it became my enemy.

If I live, my enemy dies.

If my enemy lives, I die.

I therefore came with a sword.
Enemy, enemy,
let us fight to see whose sword is stronger.
The soul killed from sickness sinks into the ground.
The soul killed from fighting rises unto heaven.
Think not that heaven is far.
The way is but a span.
Think not that heaven is near.
Through earth, it's myriad miles.
My little ones, First Hannom, Second Hannom,
all my little ones, there is our enemy.
Don't lie down thinking the sun is down.
Don't sleep thinking the night is deep.
Until this sword succeeds,
there's no time for us to rest.

The tone was so sad and angry that it brought both tears and fury.

As representative of the seven, Hannom responded with a song titled "My Friend," but all has been forgotten, impossible to write down here, save only the first two lines still remembered:

As I was born, the sword was born,
the sword was born, it was my friend.

As they finished the song in response, the seven continued eastward, holding one another's wrists, comforted by the fine day, the perfume of flowers, and the songbirds singing everywhere.

They had taken only a few steps when the sky grew dark, and a cold rain poured down. The seven all cried in unison, "We go regardless of rain, be it warm or cold!" Next, a strong wind blew dust so thickly mixed with sand that they could hardly open their eyes, but they still looked only for the straight path and said, "Let us go on though we can scarcely open our eyes."

They continued to walk, soon reaching a field of thorns, and said, "Yes, we can even make our way through thorns."

They walked on, trampling down the thorns, but after a few steps, something like sharp swords protruded from the soil, piercing their feet and bringing forth blood, but

they still remained firm and said, “We go on even with bloody feet.”

They were walking on, holding onto one another, when something pressed down upon their heads with such force that they could not stand upright, for a huge maw as wide as outstretched arms was biting and tearing their flesh, causing them great suffering and an unbearable itch, and a smell almost like burning hair or peppers stank in their nostrils and stifled their breath. As fireballs swooped down from all sides, burning their flesh, the seventh Hannom fell backward in collapse and said, “Ah, I can go no further.”

Hannom and the other five friends tried to encourage and lift him, but he would not listen and said, “By lying here, I have no more pain.”

Hannom scolded him. “How can you seek comfort on the way to war?”

Despite this scolding, Hannom lost that one, leaving only six of them.

“We should endure hardship,” they said, encouraging each other, but the way was dark, and by all sorts of motions – running, walking, crawling, even rolling – they had to forge ahead with aching bodies. As an old woman hobbled by with a walking stick, they called, “Hey, old woman, which way to the battlefield?”

She lifted her stick and pointed. “That way,” she said, a bright beam of light shining from the end of the stick.

“Where have we been so far?” they asked.

“Through the punishment of hardship,” she replied.

As they followed the light, the land before them grew bright, making the way clear, which both gladdened and saddened them. “We made a vow to live together or die together, bracing ourselves, but among us seven, the Seventh Hannom gave up, and only six of us have pressed on. O Seventh Hannom, if you had only endured a little more, you would now be seeing this, but because you could not endure, we have reached this place without you. That’s why people say one should finish the last fight well, or use one’s last five minutes well. But those words won’t help now. The six of us should take care when our time comes.”

They conversed as they walked through the lovely place. Under the shade of many trees grew Korean lawn grass, with flowers blooming everywhere and birds singing happily, tigers coming and going peacefully, and various plants exuding fragrance. The six Hannoms strolled along a road paved with jade, and reflected on the beauty of the landscape. Many things revealed themselves to their eyes, like the varied rocky features of Mount Geumgang, the beautiful and picturesque mountains such as Moranbong Peak in Pyeongyang, Mount Namhan with its flower willows, and Mount Bukhan with its autumn foliage; lovely scenes like the Three Treasures and Eight Strange Landscapes in

Gyeongju; the sweet brier blooming by the beautiful beach of Wonsan; the frolicking carp of the Han River; the great weeping willow of the Cheonan three-way crossroads; the Bakyeon Falls in Songdo rushing down like liquid marble; and the lacquer and bamboo blinds of Sunchang. Such were the landscapes that made Hannom and his friends forget all the pains inflicted on the way of painful punishment.

They looked around at each other wide-eyed, surprised by the lightness and vitality of their bodies, and asked, "Where are we now? Is this the Land of the Lord? How could we be in the Land of the Lord without passing by the battlefield?" As they walked stupefied, a mountain suddenly appeared in the distance, shining brilliantly and blinding their eyes; upon it was carved, in red script, "Golden Mountain." Upon nearing the mountain, they saw that it was covered with gold and lined with tens of thousands of long paths. Atop the mountain sat a pair of baby boys, singing the Golden Mountain song:

Who among you is superior?
I'll give this mountain away.
With this Golden Mountain,
you'll enjoy clothes and food
in a grand house
and live forever and ever.
With this Golden Mountain,
your first son will become emperor,
your second son will become feudal lord,
your third son will become minister,
and your fourth son will ride in a sedan chair
borne along by two horses.
All will bow to you.
If you desire this mountain,
leave Dangun and make me your forefather.
Leave Jindan, the land of Dangun,
and reside in my house.
If you live on this mountain,
I'll make your hat of diamonds,
your scarf of pearls,
and your clothes of rubies.
Who among you is superior?

You are off on a fool's errand!
When you reach the battlefield,
your necks will be food for swords,
your eyes the target of arrows,
and your bodies the prey of bullets.
Is life long, that you refuse luxury
and enter the path of pain?
How foolish and pitiful you are . . .

As the song pierced clear and lovely through the ears to the heart, Sixth Hannom fell on his face and said, "Ah, I can go no further. Brothers, go on without me."

Another companion of Hannom was giving up! Baffled, the faithful Hannoms struck and scolded him, and they tried to drag him along, but Sixth Hannom held fast to the mountain and would not budge.

Giving Sixth Hannom up for lost, Hannom continued on with the four remaining companions and came unexpectedly upon a large stream. Dismayed at his own ignorance, Hannom turned to the others and asked, "What is this stream called?"

But the answer came from the stream itself. "My name is Sae-am."

"What does 'Sae-am' mean?" asked Hannom.

"It means the talentless hating the talented, those without merit abhorring those with merit and trying to kill them."

"With such a name," said Hannom, "you must have destroyed many homes and countries."

"Of course! Even in Dangun's era, I had the desire to destroy, but I couldn't do much under his ethical rule. By the end of Buyeo, however, my name finally came to prominence. The sons of Geumwa drank from my waters and tried to kill the first ruler of Goguryeo, King Dongmyeong. Prince Birye, a son of that same king, drank from me and separated himself from his own brother, King Onjo. The sixth king of Goguryeo, King Taejo, along with his son, was slain by Suseong, who had imbibed of my waters and become Goguryeo's seventh king. The fourteenth king of Goguryeo, King Bongsang, drank from me and cut off the head of the meritorious and loyal subject Dalga. By my allure did Baekga, a vassal of Baekje, slay King Dongseong and prevent him from establishing his rule. Possessed by the evil spirit of my waters, Jwagaryeo detested the ninth king of Goguryeo, King Gogukcheon, and aligned himself with Yeonna to rebel against him. Wherever my waves reached, they brought misfortune and care, preventing through my influence even the three kingdoms from becoming

powerful. Would that I might say my control were complete, but the right way was still stronger than I was at the time, so I couldn't run rampant; however, as the world grew entirely corrupt by the end of the three kingdoms, I succeeded everywhere I went. King Euija of Baekje and his vassals knew my taste and distanced themselves from benevolent prime ministers and gallant warriors like Seongchung, Heungsu, and Gyebaek, thereby leading to the kingdom's fall. Namsaeng and his brothers fought one another in the time of Goguryeo because of my intoxicating waters, and brought doom upon themselves and their kingdom by offering Guknae Fortress, Gaemo Fortress, and even the city of Pyeongyang to the enemy. King Pung tortured the great general Boksin cruelly by piercing his hands and feet and leaving the general's vision of Baekje's revival only a dream. King Anseung of Goguryeo cruelly slew that most prominent man of integrity, Geommojam, who had drawn upon the vision of Damul, or Dangun, for his own land of Goguryeo, leaving that vision to vanish like the dew. Things have gone more in accordance with my will ever since." The boastful stream paused in pride before continuing.

"The kings of the Goryeo and Joseon Eras all seemed to be in my hands as kings and vassals distrusted each other, upper and lower classes hated each other, civil and military servants fought each other, and the four political schools tried to devour each other. Thus was General Jeong Se-un, who defeated two million Chinese Red Turban Rebellion invaders, killed; General Choe Yeong, who made his name in military victories on both land and sea, eliminated; Admiral Yi Sun-sin, who ruled the seas during the eight-year sea battle against Japan and gained fame as King of the Sea, arrested; and Jeong Mun-bu, merely a young Confucian student who fought against the Japanese, defeating the Japanese general Cheong Jeong and recovering Hamgyeong Province, killed. All of this ultimately made the beautiful land of Korea smell like a slaughterhouse, as was my aim."

A shiver running down his spine at such a bloody boast, Hannom turned to his friends and said, "Do you think we can securely cross this river?"

The Fourth and Fifth Hannoms smiled in response. "What do you think? Do you believe that the righteous and loyal Baeki and Sukje of Chinese history would've had a change of heart if they had drunk from the Stream of Avarice?"

As those two Hannoms stepped into the water, Hannom, Second Hannom, and Third Hannom plucked up their courage and followed, reciting a poem by Choe Yeong, commander of the Goryeo army:

The raven clad in snow looks pale, but remains a dark bird still.

The moon so bright can never grow dark, not even by shade of night.
Could my devotion to my lord, then, ever disappear?

Upon reaching the other shore, they looked at one another and at the river behind them and said, “How could we have a change of heart because of such a river? Although young, some of us have taken to heart the chivalry of Silla’s *Hwarang* while working for the good of our country; some of us are well versed in Chinese teachings, immersed in the ethics of Confucius and Mencius; some of us have undertaken Buddhism and learned the teachings of the Buddha; and some of us have attended church and studied the New Testament of the Western God and His Son. How, then, could we envy one another because of the Sae-am, mere water in a shallow dish?”

They went on their way even more gallantly.

The battlefield was near. The Land of the Lord was near. They could see the flags. They could hear the drum beat. They hurried on, and the fleetest of them, running ahead, was Third Hannom.

Fourth Hannom tried to catch up with him but fell further behind with heavily labored breathing and a darkening face. “There’s the enemy camp!” cried Fourth Hannom, raising his gun and firing, not at the enemy camp but at Third Hannom.

Seven brothers had started on the path. One dropped out because of pain he couldn’t bear; another dropped away because of greed of gold; and a third dropped his brother with a shot fired because of envy. Such was the first killing among these brothers!

The disastrous tug of Sae-am’s current was truly tenacious.

Unable to help the murdered one, they still could not ignore the murderer, so they burnt Fourth Hannom to death, leaving only three brothers – First Hannom, Second Hannom, and Fifth Hannom – to continue together on their quest.

Although they had been taught on earth that the devil would cower when faced by the Lord and fall to him in fighting, what they saw on the battlefield did not accord with that belief.

As the Lord grew several tens of meters, the devil also grew the same; as the Lord’s hand extended a great length, the devil’s did the same; as lightning flashed in the Lord’s eyes, it flashed in the devil’s eyes the same; as the Lord flew with thunder in his mouth, the devil flew the same; as the Lord leaped forward, the devil did the same; and as the Lord’s army reached nine hundred times nine hundred, namely 810,000, the devil’s army increased exactly the same.

According to the *History of Goguryeo*, King Dongcheon smiled after winning the

first battle against General Mogugeom of China's Wei Dynasty, and said, "What's the point of using a big army to fight against such a corrupt mass of enemies?" The king let his select troops sit out the next battle and fought with only five thousand soldiers against several tens of thousands of the enemy, which put him in great danger.

Now the same risk was being run in the Land of the Lord, for when the battle started, the Lord commanded, "Not all troops need to go into battle today, only a ninth of them, ninety-thousand, who will fight without weapons, just with bare hands, so that the devil's party will be astounded and never even think of attacking us again."

His vassals on each side, both right and left, pleaded with him to reconsider, advising him that the strategy would not work, but he turned a deaf ear to their words.

As the camps fought each other, the Lord's troops, nimble though they were, could not compete against the troops with weapons. A sad scene unfolded as the onlookers watched how the devil's minions attacked the Lord's troops with swords, guns, fire, and water, with everything. The bare fists of the Lord's troops were sundered by swords, their white chests penetrated by gunshot, their bodies burnt by fire as they fled, and their lungs filled by the water they crawled into, none with hope of survival. With their mouths alone as weapons, they shouted, "We're sons of justice. The devil, however strong he be, cannot defeat us." But what use would even a "grandfather of justice" be when faced by a strong enemy under such conditions? The Lord's troops were the ones overthrown and slaughtered. Although the sons of justice lay scattered as corpses everywhere across the vast field, the powerful enemy still kept wielding the sword.

Fifth Hannom bowed his head in sorrow and lamented, "The Land of the Lord is now lost. Where should I go?" He packed his bundle, intending to become a friend of nature in the lush mountains and among the white clouds.

Second Hannom stepped forward impatiently and said, "How can a man live in solitude? We should live in the world, even if forced into servitude." And he left for the enemy camp.

Hannom himself now wondered what to do, for he had come with his burden, just as they had come with their own. He would not pursue those who had thrown down their burdens and fled. Those who wanted to go were allowed to go, and he would do what he needed to do, but they had held his wrist as he had held theirs in vowing that they would live or die together; however, out of the seven, only three had remained, and as they had no other brother older than he, he likewise had no other brothers younger than they, so to abandon them and go his own way would not have been right, but *they* had abandoned *him*!

Hannom found himself at wit's end and so sat down by the path, asking, "Is the

world always like this? Is this because I could not find a true friend? Of those who so solemnly vowed, some dropped away because the path was too hard, some ran away unable to endure, and only I among the seven am left.”

As he lamented, the sun was slowly setting behind the western mountains, as though unconcerned with his fate. Resolving to go on no matter what, and clenching his fists, he rose and ran on, but clouds suddenly gathered and darkened the sky even more. Tigers, wolves, and lions blocked his path and left him no way to go but back. Feeling helpless at first, he took a step back the way he had come, but then shouted, “I cannot sheath the sword I have drawn!” He then pushed his way forward and heard his Lord’s voice, though he saw no form.

“Are you coming? Are you alone?” asked the Lord.

Hearing that benevolent voice, tears welled in Hannom’s eyes, for he had gone through troubled times and endured much loneliness. With constricted throat, he just managed to answer, “Yes, I’m coming . . . but alone.”

“That’s all right,” the Lord assured him. “Don’t be so sad. The righteous gain friends only after hardship.” He then tossed Hannom a special sword, explaining, “This is the sword whose blade is engraved with the words *sam-in-geom*, the three-tiger-sign sword, the very sword used by Jeong Gi-ryong, the army leader against the Japanese Invasion of Korea in 1592. Use it to attack the enemy’s position.”

As Hannom received the sword, the sky brightened as the sun emerged from behind the clouds, and the tigers, wolves, and lions all fled, leaving the forward path wide open. Entrusted with the Lord’s order and wielding the sword from the Lord, what had he to fear? As he had heard rumors that the enemy was encamped at Fox Pass, he went forth and perceived their swords flashing, and a cold wind brought the smell of blood. “Ugh,” he grunted, “the enemy is now at hand.” He entered their presence wielding his sword, and several hundred thousand enemy troops divided like a great sea parting. He pursued the path between them and saw an enemy general with a horrible, ugly face leaning forward to watch the battle.

At that moment, Hannom’s sword shook with anger and pointed to the enemy general, crying out, “That bastard is Toyotomi Hideyosi, highest of rank under the Japanese Emperor! That ugly bastard defiled Joseon during the Japanese Invasion of 1592!”

Hannom finally cornered this unforgivable enemy. With divine anger in his eyes and holy rage filling him from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head, he was preparing to wield his sword and swiftly slice up the bastard’s flesh when Toyotomi Hideyosi smiled at him and the horrible, ugly face disappeared, replaced by a lovely

woman's, and Hannom was like a butterfly desiring a beautiful flower, a lecherous man with desire soaring like a half moon into the heavens . . .

As Hannom beheld the woman, the strength in his arms drained out like water, leaving him unable to wield the sword, which dropped from his hands; as he bent down to retrieve it, the beautiful woman changed into a dog barking and trying to bite him, such that he could not get the sword back. He tried to flee bare-handed, but slipped, crying, "Oh my God!"

Only after falling a long, long time did he hit the ground. Fearing his skull was shattered, he touched his head and discovered it was whole, but when something as hard as iron struck the back of his skull, the pain was difficult to endure. A chain appeared from somewhere to bind his hands and immobilize him, while his body throbbed from head to toe because of a barrage of needles and sharp swords of fire. Shocked, Hannom cried, "Oh no! I'm in hell! What is my guilt, that I should be here?" He could not understand what sin he had committed in his approximately thirty years of life. Looking about, Hannom saw many others seated as he was, also enduring instruments of torment. "For what reason am I here?" he asked, but they knew not his guilt, so he asked them, "For what sins are you here?" but they also knew not that. Hannom screamed in frustration, "How can one sit here without knowing why?"

There came an answer to that: "The inspector of hell will soon come, so ask him."

5.

Aside from the pain, the most unbearable thing was not knowing what sin he had committed to be thrown into this hellhole. "The inspector of hell is supposed to come and tell me," muttered Hannom, "but when is he coming?"

Hannom waited several days with craned neck and open eyes, and finally, accompanied by the sound of 365 kinds of music, an announcement came. "The new inspector Gang Gam-chan, a general and minister of Goryeo, has deigned to visit."

The whole prison fell silent, and as Hannom looked around to see the faces, one prisoner said gladly, "I didn't commit any sin, so the inspector will let me go soon."

Another spoke up indifferently. "What should I do? My sin deserves a more terrible hell than this."

With a wan face, another spoke. "Oh no! I'm in trouble. I don't know if I'm guilty or not, but the inspector will kill me anyway."

There were some who knew not what heaven and hell were, nor whether the inspector was coming or going, and another said, "All right, confine me to hell. It won't hold me very long, and when I get out, I'll rob again."

Another said, “My mother will shed so many tears if she finds out about me. Inspector, please! Free me!”

Another said, “Prison or sesame dregs, all the same to me. I just wish I had some real food.”

Another said, “Come on, Inspector, I’ll try for death or life. I had such hardship in the human world, and again . . . I have a million *nyang* in coins, so I need only give the inspector a little nudge in the ribs.”

Another said, “I’m a woman, and the inspector won’t kill me unless he hates me.”

All their faces expressed different attitudes, as did their words.

The scribe made his rounds in the prison, and Inspector Gang Gam-chan then appeared carrying a stick. He was only five *cheok* high – barely five feet! – and he looked small and shabby, but his eyes were filled with a vital force, and the decorative paper flowers on his *eo-sa-hwa* hat seemed almost to fly.

At this moment, Hannom looked around, but could no longer see the tough one, the one with the long legs, the fearful one, the wealthy one, or the pretty young woman, for all of these, both male and female, had knelt on the floor and were weeping, shedding tears like a babe seeing its mother after long hungering for her milk.

Gang Gam-chan gazed at them in sorrow, asking, “Didn’t you know how terrible hell would be? Why did you sin?”

The prisoners all remained silent, so Hannom came forward and answered, “The Lord sent us into the human world though we did not wish to go, and the Lord threw us here into hell though we did not wish to come, so we cry out of ignorance of the Lord’s will.”

Gang Gam-chan smiled. “Did you say that the Lord sent you into the human world? Also that the Lord threw you here into hell?”

“Who else could have?”

In a loud voice, Gang Gam-chan cried out, “You don’t *know* what you did? And you ask *me*?”

At these admonishing words, Hannom and all of hell’s other captives fell to their faces. “We fools know nothing,” they confessed, “so please treat us with love and lead us out of confusion.”

Shifting his stick, Gang said to them, “If you committed no sin, hell would be nowhere, so this hell was not made by the Lord but by you.”

“If hell was made by us,” said Hannom, “might we also tear it down?”

Gang replied, “You could tear down the hell of a minor sin, but not of a great sin. Not even the Lord could do that, not even if he so desired. For a great sin, hell’s

punishment lasts forever.”

Hannom asked, “What are the great sins?”

Gang replied, “In the beginning, Dangun gave the Five Commandments:

- 1) Be loyal to the nation.
- 2) Be true to your family.
- 3) Be dependable to your friends.
- 4) Be courageous in battle.
- 5) Be careful in taking life.

Hell was once the punishment for breaking any of the five commandments, but the nation’s affairs are now so urgent that four of the great sins are no longer being punished in hell. Only the sin against the nation is a sin great enough for hell.”

Hannom questioned him further. “How many sins are there against the nation?”

“Sit up and listen!” Gang commanded, starting to count them off. “First are the seven hells for the enemies of the nation:

- 1) Those who become king or ministers through the entreaties of the people and who bear responsibility for the nation’s rise and fall, but who barter away the nation to others out of their self-interest and let themselves be used by the enemy to defile the legacy of our ancestors and exterminate the people – for example, Imsa of the Baekje Era, Namsaeng of the Goguryeo Era, Inchan the last king of Balhae, and Min Yeong-hwi and Yi Wan-yong in the final days of the Korean Imperial Government – are traitors too wicked just to kill, but also too wicked to let live. Therefore, pulling out their tongues, plucking out their eyes, cutting their flesh from the bone, and then bringing them again to life, repeating this fatal torture, is the ‘hell of layers,’ which torments those traitors to the country.
- 2) Those who suck the blood of the people to fatten themselves and their families are put into a jar with bedbugs and snakes which suck their blood, and this is the ‘hell of coils.’
- 3) Those orators and journalists who laud the enemy’s policies with their tongues and pens, thereby driving ignorant people into a net, have their tongues pulled out and replaced with dogs’ tongues to bark with every day; this is the ‘hell of yapping dogs.’
- 4) Those who have no work to earn their bread and hire themselves out to spy on upright people and have them arrested by the enemy are covered by pigskin until they grunt like pigs; this is the ‘hell of pigs.’
- 5) Those who pretend to be patriots but run errands for the enemy are hated,

and upon their heads they must wear bats as caps, and from their bellies is taken their large intestine, which is then given to black kites; this is the 'strange hell.'

6) Those who wear wooden shoes and walk in imitation of the enemy, even so far as to wear the enemy's clothes and eat the enemy's food, and those who discard their own language and teach their children the enemy's language, have their heads cut off and thrown into fire, their legs cut off and thrown into water, and their waist twisted till it is wasp thin; this is the 'hell of wasps.'

7) Those whores and bastards who marry the bastards and whores of the enemy have their bodies cut in half, and this is the 'hell of the half body.'"

Gang continued: "Second, there are twelve hells for contributors to the fall of the nation:

1) Those who imagine themselves going to heaven just by believing in Jesus, regardless of the nation's decay, or who read only the writings of Confucius to pursue their own goodness, oblivious that the nation is falling apart and that their parents, wives, and children are becoming slaves, pursuing only their limited goodness and the personal reward of heaven – such narrow-minded moralists are scalded in hot shit water and covered by cowhide, and this hell is called the 'hell of shit water.'

2) Political parties are necessary, but those individuals dividing people into parties based on locale, religion, or private interest, dividing the country into factions and even fighting one another abroad, which they think of as their duty, are ground beneath a millstone, giving way to new sprouts. This is called the 'hell of the millstone.'

3) Those who listen only to foreigners, pursue foreigners' customs, and regard foreigners' religion, scholarship, and history as their own, such that they become Russians when they go to Russia or Americans when they go to America, are disemboweled to become like crabs, so this hell is called the 'hell of crawling.'

4) Those who think we can gain independence only when a certain Asian country flourishes and that we can do something only when a certain Western country takes care of our affairs are so dependent on diplomacy that they weaken the people's spirit. These are twisted into Korean Moonseed vines and wrapped around a big tree. This is called the 'hell of Korean Moonseed.'

5) Those who try to awaken the people slowly through education and technical training instead of calling for rebellion against injustice or for assassination,

thereby chilling hot blood and deadening the living spirit, go to the ‘hell of darkness.’

6) Those who lose their willpower through acquiring wealth and indulging in sex with many women go to the ‘hell of the crock.’

7) Those who pretend to be knowledgeable without knowledge and passionate without passion, and who don’t want to die but do want to gain honor through lying, will suffer burning through being fried. This is called the ‘hell of frying.’

8) Those who don’t crack skulls and shed blood for the nation, but just imitate others, copying Mazzini’s *Young Italy*, or translating Sun Yat-sen’s *Provisional Constitution of the Republic of China*, using it as their own ideology, and thus make a business of publishing, but lack any ideas of their own for building up their own nation, these monkey-see, monkey-do sorts go to the ‘hell of monkeys.’

9) Those wily foxes who come forward when there isn’t much to do as if they are willing even to dance on a knife blade, but then turn around and look for a resting place when there is work to be done, are put into a cauldron and boiled. This is called the ‘hell of the cauldron.’

10) Those who say ‘It’s useless,’ blocking others’ guns with their left hand, uttering empty words, giving up easily, and accepting the fall of the nation, are put under an iron pot, where they will never see the sky. This is called the ‘hell of the iron pot.’

11) Those who take wealthy students out to restaurants and flatter the naïve, making them out to be ‘heroes’ just to use them to corrupt society, considering it a means to an end, these go to the ‘hell of starving ghosts.’

12) Those who can talk about Confucius, Jesus, Napoleon, and Washington, but know nothing about any of their own country’s great heroes, have to relearn Korean and they go to the ‘hell of the whipped calf muscle.’

There are some more hells, but these are enough for you to know.”

All the prisoners cried out loudly in voices like croaking toads, “Inspector, please have the generosity in your heart to forgive us and let us leave this place.”

Gang replied, “Meritorious deeds and criminal deeds all get what they deserve.”

All the prisoners were covered with a fan and hidden, but Hannom stepped forward and asked Gang to release all of them except the traitors.

Touching Hannom’s back, Gang said “With such a heart, you could go to the Land of the Lord, but because you had two loves, you were cast into this place.”

At these words, Hannom recalled his bewitchment by the beautiful woman, whereby he had lost his battle with Toyotomi Hideyosi, so he asked, “Those who love the nation cannot love a beautiful woman?”

Gang responded by pointing to a sword on the ground and saying, “Can you put something else where the sword lies without moving the sword?”

“No, of course not. Two things cannot occupy the same place at the same time!”

Clapping his hands, Gang said, “Exactly. Two things cannot occupy the same place at the same time, and two thoughts cannot exist in one head at the same time. By analogy, if you try to have two loves in life, you cannot achieve even one love, not even with great effort. Hence the admonishing proverb, ‘Divide not thy loyalty between two things.’”

Hannom asked again, “Can you say this another way?”

Gang replied, “The blind have good ears, and the deaf have keen eyes, so they go one way. That’s why the Buddha left wife and child and sat nine years under a linden tree.”

“Is the duty of a patriot the same as that of a pious individual?”

“One is the duty of someone who leaves the world, and the other is of someone who enters it, so these duties are different. If the pious have love for things other than their faith, they are not truly believers; if patriots have love for things other than their nation, they are not patriots. Therefore, even though all people wish to protect themselves, faithful subjects would not refuse to die even twelve times if required, and even though all men love their wives and children, a truly patriotic martyr would sacrifice his family for the nation. Patriotism is possible only if one does not love other things as much as the nation. If people love alcohol as much as they love their nation, they forget the nation through drinking, and if men love beautiful women as much as they love the nation, they forget the nation because of beautiful women.”

Bowing in appreciation for the teaching, Hannom asked to be released from hell.

Gang asked him, “Who’s keeping you here?”

“Nobody holds me,” answered Hannom, “but I cannot leave because my body is chained.”

Gang laughed and asked, “Who’s chaining you?”

Upon hearing these words and fully understanding that an unchained body need not be loosed from chains, Hannom shook himself and saw neither chains nor prison – just himself alone.

People believe that heaven is beyond the sky and hell beneath the ground, and therefore very far apart, but the ground is actually one thing at a time, either the Land of the Lord if one is victorious, or hell if one is not victorious. If one jumps up, the ground is the Land of the Lord, but if one jumps down, the ground is hell; if one flies, the ground is the Land of the Lord, but if one crawls, the ground is hell. If one catches a thing, the ground is the Land of the Lord, but if one drops that thing, the ground is hell. So tiny is the distance between the Land of the Lord and hell.

Hell had already fallen away, and as Hannom raised his head, he beheld a golden house surrounded by a wall of glimmering jade, stone piled upon stone, and the grounds within were tiled with pearls and diamonds. A clean fragrance permeated the air, satiating hunger without the need of food, and every tree bloomed in the spring light; beautiful birds, each with a pleasant sound, were there, such as parrot, peacock, golden pheasant, crane, and nightingale, as were animals such as tigers and leopards, each tame and unaggressive. Every street displayed Silla's exquisitely crafted Buddha statues known as *manbulsan*, and in every house were spread the fur blankets of Goguryeo, and people wore *munsu*, the silk clothing with patterns from Buyeo, and *gyeompo*, the double-woven light yellow silk from Jinhan, and wrapped themselves with silk from Balhae and with the precious *yongcho* silk from Silla; the music of the *gayageum* from Byeonhan could be heard, as could the miraculous wind instrument of Silla, the ancient instrument *gonghu* of Baekje, and the traditional music of Goryeo.

Hannom shouted for joy, "Now I've finally arrived in the Land of the Lord." As he came eagerly forward, everything in the Land of the Lord seemed to welcome him. But he could not succeed in his efforts to see the Lord through his small human eyes, for the Lord was as high as the sky, as wide as the sea, as bright as the sun, as round as the moon, as warm as the spring, and as cool as the fall. Seated beside the Lord on both sides was a vast multitude of heroes: faithful were the sage King Dongmyeong, the first king of Goguryeo, and Myeong-rim-dap-bu, the prime minister of Goguryeo; good rulers were Baekje's King Chogo, and Balhae's King Seon; visionaries were Silla's King Jinheung and Silla's *Hwarang* leader Seolwonrang, whose *Hwarang* warrior horsemen followed a code of chivalry; royal advisors well versed in history were Yi Mun-jin of Goguryeo, Go Heung of Baekje, and Jeong Ji-sang of Goryeo; contributors to Korean writing systems were King Sejong, Seolchong, and Ju Si-gyeong; skilled military men were King Dae Jo-yeong, the first king of Balhae, Yeon Gaesomun, and Eulji Mundeok; skilled naval men were Sa Beop-myeong, Jeong Ji, and Yi Sun-sin; expanders of Korean territory were King Gwanggaeto, King Dongseong, Yun Gwak, and Kim Jong-seo; compilers of law books were Eulpaso and Geochilbu; heroes who

attempted to revive declining kingdoms were Boksin of Baekje and Geom-mo-jam of Goguryeo; defenders against foreign invasions were Choe Yeong and Gang Gam-chan of Goryeo, and Yim Gyeong-eop of the Joseon Era; colonizers of foreign lands were King Seo-eon of the ancient Dangun Dynasty and the two founders of the vassal kingdoms Eom and Gojuk in ancient China; Korean kings in foreign lands were Go Un, Yi Jeong-gi, and Kim Jun; strong patriots were Silla's King Munmu the Great, who expressed the wish to become a dragon after his death and slaughter Japan, and Bak Je-sang, who said he would rather be a dog in Silla than become a Japanese subject; Jeong Se-un defeated two million Chinese Red Turban Rebels, but was killed through treachery; Myocheong, a monk of the Goryeo Era, offered incense to eight Buddha images and wanted to attack China's Jin Dynasty; great teachers were Prince Buru, son of Dangun, who taught Yu the Great of China's Xia Dynasty how to prepare against flooding based on the teachings of the Five Elements, the great monk Hyeja of Goguryeo, and the knowledgeable Wang In, a scholar of Baekje, both of whom crossed the East Sea on a small ship to enlighten the primitive people of an island nation; great warriors were Yang Man-chun, who plucked out the eyes of Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty at Ansi Fortress, and Kim Yun-hu, who killed the Mongol general Sartai at the battle near Yongin; virtuous itinerant teachers were Yeongrang and Namrang; revivers of declining kingdoms were Yi Ji-baek, who deeply regretted that the spirit of the Goryeo Kingdom was faltering and tried to revive the *Hwarang*, Gwak Won and Wang Gado, both of whom wanted, in righteous rage, to save Balhae for its people, and Yi Saek, Jeong Mong-ju, and the seven classical scholars of fidelity, all nine of whom shed their blood out of loyalty to their dynasty; sacred assassins were Milu, Yuyu, Hwang Chang, and An Jung-geun, all of whom aimed to restrain the powerful; strivers for justice were Yi Gang-nyeon, Heo Wi, Jeon Hae-san, and Chae Eung-eon, all of whom tried to hold together the derelict house of their country; virtuous were the *gisaeng* and court women who threw themselves from Nakhwa Rock at the fall of Baekje, as well as Nongae and Gye Wol-hyang, two pure and loyal women of Korea who refused to be defiled by thieves during the Japanese Invasion of 1592; Buddhist patriots were the Seven Monks of Goguryeo, the Zen Master Hyeon Rin of Goryeo, the Great Monks Seo San and Samyeongdang of the Joseon Era; great Buddhist scholars were Won Hyo and Eui Sang, who enlightened the Joseon Era even though Buddhist teachings were not formally recognized by official schools, and great Confucian scholars were Hoeje and Toegye; sages were Han Yuhan and Yi Ja-hyeon, with fresh minds and strong fidelity, both living in leisurely detachment from the world; ascetics of the Yeonjin school were Cham Si and Jeong Yeom; great were the architects of such

sacred architecture as Imryugak Pavilion and Hwang Yongsan Temple; artistic were the weavers of the orange fur blanket of *manbulsan*, Silla's beautifully crafted work with Buddha statues; experts were Budo in arithmetic, Solgeo in art, and Ureuk and Okbogo in music; skilled were Gaya's master craftsmen of swords, Balhae's strong men who defeated tigers with their bare hands, the astronomer O Yun-bu, and the magus Jeon U-chi; independent thinkers were Seo Gyeong-deok, pen-named Hwa-dam, who talked about the principle of immortality in his poem *Gwigwi-Raerae (Coming Back)*, and Jeong Yeo-rip, pen-named Jukdo, who opposed the theory of servitude that taught, "Loyal men do not serve two kings," who expressed instead the bold view, "A tyrant can be killed," and who was hounded to death by order of the tyrant Seonjo; inventors were Bachi of metal type and Jeong Pyeong-gu of the flying wagon; not to mention those with large eyes, those with large mouths, those with long arms, those with stout bodies, those who defeated foreign invaders, those who did good deeds for the people, those enlightened in philosophy, those on ethical heights, those good at natural laws, those good at literature . . . many were the ancestors whom Hannom knew not, and many whom he would not later remember, and are thus not listed here in their entirety. Hannom not only felt happy to be in the Land of the Lord but also appreciated his encounter with so many kings, sages, and ancestors.

Wondering what they were all doing there, assembled in the Land of the Lord, Hannom raised his eyes and saw something so strange that his mind reeled from astonishment. Nothing less than the heroes' making many thousands of brooms, with broomsticks so long that their ends seemed to stretch out endlessly. The assembled heroes all lifted their brooms in unison and began sweeping the sky.

Again astonished, Hannom nevertheless found his voice and asked, "Why are you sweeping the sky? Dust on the ground is to be swept away, but why the sky?"

They all answered, "Haven't you seen the sky? Our sky these days is far dustier than the ground."

Hannom looked at the sky and saw it all covered with milky-white dust. The heroes were hastily sweeping it with their tens of thousands of brooms, but as they swept one side, the other side would become milky white with dust, and when they swept the other side, the former side would become milky white. The blue sky was gone, and a milky-white sky, never mentioned in the old books or stories, loomed overhead.

"Can the sky really be milky white?" cried Hannom in a loud voice.

A man clad in yellow and wearing a red belt responded. "It's a sky I'm seeing this white for the first time, too. Around 3,500 years after the Lord founded things, the blue color began to slip away, fading a little every day and slowly turning to this milky-white

color over the years until now, 4,240 years since the beginning, the sky's blue color has almost completely disappeared, leaving the sky as milky white as the eyes of the blind. This misfortune began over 700 years ago, and there has never been such a disaster as this before."

He then started crying loudly in a rhythmic way that became a song:

As the sky sheds its color,
little to say of the rest . . .
Mount Taebaek shrank to under a meter.
The Aprok River moved 500 *li* from its place.
Child, oh child, our child,
please wake up, though it be hard to do.
Cold wind has struck the branches
of the blooming Rose of Sharon.

When finished, he pointed to the western sky and called, "Hannom!"

Looking up to see sun and moon rising together, both of them square and black, Hannom was surprised. "The sky is milky white, the sun and moon are square and black! Is this the difference between the Land of the Lord and the human world?"

At this, the man was deeply troubled and rebuked Hannom. "What are you saying? The sky is blue, and the sun and the moon round, in both the Land of the Lord and in the human world, but now it's different because a misfortune has occurred."

Hannom asked, "Can the Lord not oppose these changes?"

The man replied in tears, "What disaster could happen in the Land of the Lord? It's always spring there, the ground is golden, and the animals are gentle, so what disaster could happen? The fault lies with twenty million people who have made the sky dusty and caused the sun and the moon to lose their light, such that even the power of the Lord can do little to oppose it."

Hannom asked, "If people resist doing wrong, will the sun become like the original sun, the moon the original moon, and the sky the original sky?"

The man responded, "Of course! That goes without saying! Generally speaking, since the end of the Goryeo Era, various skies have overwhelmed our country, even the sky of Bodhisattva, not to mention those of Confucius and the Buddha, skies of emperors and kings, the sky of the Chinese general Guan Yu, and even of the ascetics, all these have blocked the sky of the Lord so completely that twenty million people's eyes have been turned aside, to see and do things that have led to the destruction of

national law and treasure. Lord Dangun was excised from the first chapter of our history books, and the Buyeo Kingdom was ignored in favor of that traitor from the Chinese Han Dynasty, Wiman, whose kingdom was falsely interpreted as the precursor of our nation's identity; Balhae was renamed Bukmaek, as though it were the northern tribe of the Maek, instead of being recognized as the successor of Goguryeo; the dauntless courage of Baekje was hated, and it was called a "country without morals"; our ethical teachings were replaced by foreign education, and those who tried to keep our country's culture and spirit alive were punished cruelly, like Jeong Yeo-rip, pen-named Jukdo, a strong general without trickery, who went to Mount Guwol to perform the ancestral rites for Dangun and to correct the false moral teaching of the day, that "Loyal men do not serve two kings," maintaining in an impassioned speech, which led to his death at Jukdo Temple, that this teaching was not meant by the holy sages. It is impossible to know how many wise ministers, great generals, great men, talented men, and chivalrous fighters have been put to death under the milky-white sky, but if we in the human world now repent of our past flaws and sweep them away with these brooms, belated though we may be, the sun and the moon will still easily be able to recover."

At these words, and drenched with tears shed like rain, Hannom experienced such profound emotions that he said, "I shall do my part," and started to sweep the sky with a borrowed broom, throwing himself into the task completely till his hands were swollen and chapped, his feet ached so much that he could no longer stand to lift the broom, and his eyes had grown as hollow as those of someone who has not eaten for many days; after twenty-one days, with no more strength remaining, he looked up to find the sky still milky-white.

Hannom said, "My strength is exhausted, but if one comes after me and continues, the sky will someday be blue again." He then chanted some phrases using the Korean letters *Hanguel* in alphabetical order:

Ga-gya, geo-gyeo, let's go, let's go, let's step farther to sweep the sky;
Go-gyo, gu-gyu, a work hard and tough, but the firm heart won't let go;
Geu-gi, ga, that the moon at month's end rise, that the setting sun rise
again;
Na-nya, neo-nyeo, if I perish, you will sweep, if you die, I'll do the same;
No-nyo, nu-nyu, if we go with no rest or play, who could stop us then;
Neu-ni, na, don't say it's now too late to go, let's clench our fists and grit
our teeth;
Da-dya, deo-dyeo, a dull sword is still a worthy sword, if the heart grows

ever sharper;

Do-dyo, du-dyu, by receiving the chivalric spirit of *doryeong*, all fear is gone;

Ra-rya, reo-ryeo, to trumpets and drums, we'll unsheathe our swords;

Ro-ryo, ru-ryu, by working and fighting, become first of ten thousands;

Reu-ri ra, reureureung ara, reureung aria, like one's own child;

Ma-mya, meo-myeo, lady, you should also go see that spring's arrived in the distant east;

Mo-myo, mu-myu, chasing everyone and all, swinging arms of iron;

Meu-mi ma near or far, pushing and going farther;

Sa-sya, seo-syeo, if everybody does it right, we'll have a menacing look;

So-syo, su-syu, even hair-raising *doggaebi* goblins won't do anything against the men;

Seu-si sa, following the master's will, running and falling every which way;

A-ya, eo-yeo, not that it matters, but don't say my child grew up without a mother;

O-yo, u-yu, how old our country is, our *bakdal*, our nation, our people;

Eu-i, a, even a crying baby will grow alert at this spirit.

Hannom was about to read *ja-jya, jeo-jeo* when a blue gap opened in the midst of the milky-white sky, and a voice from the opening said, "Hannom, you're making a sincere effort, but a sincere effort alone cannot result in a meritorious deed. Stop what you're doing and go see the 'Camp of *Doryeong* Chivalry.'"

Hannom asked, "What is the 'Camp of *Doryeong* Chivalry'?"

"What! You don't know the 'Camp of *Doryeong* Chivalry'? You have learned history, haven't you?"

At this, Hannom closed his eyes and recited aloud what he had learned. "*Doryeong* generally refers to the chivalric *Hwarang* of Silla. The song of *doryeong* composed by Seol Won-rang, contained in the 'Music Part' of *The History of the Three Kingdoms*, is the song of the *Hwarang*. *Doryeong* is the transliteration of the Chinese word *doryeong*, literally 'leading group,' while *Hwarang*, or 'Flower Boys,' is the official Korean translation of the Chinese word. The *Hwarang* didn't actually first appear during the time of Silla, but at the time Dangun came down to Mount Taebaek accompanied by three *rang* and three thousand *do*, much as there was also a gathering of *Hwarang* when Goguryeo's founding figure Haemosu of Cheonwangdang brought several hundred

followers and gathered at Mount Ungsim. Goguryeo's *seon-in*, or 'senior,' was a nickname for the *Hwarang*, and its *Dongmaeng* harvest festival was a ritual of reverence toward the *seonin*, while Baekje's *sodo* was a nickname for the *Hwarang*, and *cheongun* was the sacred name of the ritual for the *sodo*, so the names have changed over time, but the spirit is the same, as expressed in the *Hwarang* leading one another in adventure, respect for martial arts, music and dance, learning, love, solidarity, passion, and courage. In ancient times, this spirit reached the level of a religious martial spirit, as King Jinheung of Silla, a magnanimous visionary, reduced harmful things among the *Hwarang* and added beauty and strength, opening a new era for the *Hwarang*, which led to glory for the kingdom whether they won or lost in battle; Yeongrang and Namrang's teachings spread everywhere among the *Hwarang*, and the 'blood flower' sacrifice in battle by young men such as Sa Da-ham and Kim Heum-chun shone through history, and even the pro-Chinese historian Kim Bu-sik admired the flowery names and beautiful acts of the *Hwarang*. Documents afterwards were imperfect, and no one knows how the *Hwarang* declined and disappeared, but according to the *History of Goryeo*, during the time of King Seongjong, when the Tungusic people of Manchuria invaded with several hundred thousand soldiers, Yi Ji-baek believed the spirit of the *Hwarang* could stand against the invaders; King Yejong issued a royal proclamation instructing that all traces of the *Hwarang* be kept, including *Namrang* and *Yeongrang*, and King Euijong possessed the ambition to enhance the spirit of tradition through selecting *Hwarang* for *Palgwanhoe*, a Buddhist ritual with dance and music, along with martial arts. I see that the 'Camp of *Doryeong* Chivalry' occupied an important part of the kingdoms with *Hwarang* spirit, but what has happened since then?"

As Hannom was recalling his learning and reflecting upon it, the voice from the sky said, "There is one thing more to remember from history. According to what is written about Choe Yeong in the *History of Goryeo*, as Cheo Yeong was fighting against the Ming Dynasty's first king Zhu Yuanzhang, he remembered that Goguryeo had defeated a million-strong army of Chinese Tang with thirty thousand 'monk' soldiers, and he decided to recruit some 'monk' soldiers as well. Those 'monk' soldiers of Goguryeo were the *seonin* army, namely, like the *Hwarang* of the Silla Kingdom. They were called 'monks' because they did not marry and care for a family. Choe Yeong could not recover the system of *seonin* or *Hwarang* and thus chose real monks, but if he had not been killed and Goryeo had not fallen, the spirit of *Hwarang* set up by the Lord would have already flourished again five hundred years ago."

At these words, Hannom knelt down, bowed his head in appreciation, and said, "I have long known that the 'Camp of *Doryeong* Chivalry,' namely the *Hwarang*, is the

backbone of our history and the flower of our nation, and I have had the desire to demonstrate its spirit myself, but such books as *Shin-Ji-Si-Sa* or *Seon-Sa*, the latter by Geo Chil-bu, and *Hwarang Segi* by Kim Dae-mun have been lost. I did not know the origin and thus fell into solitary resentment, but now that the Lord has reminded me of the ‘Camp of *Doryeong* Chivalry,’ my appreciation cannot possibly be expressed in words, and I wish to be quickly led along the way to see the ‘Camp of *Doryeong* Chivalry,’ a boon I have longed for my entire life.”

As he called upon the Lord repeatedly, like a baby calling its mother, a red lantern descended from the sky, illuminating his way, and he passed by the Five-Color Stream and the Jade Mountain to arrive at a place where a stone gate was carved with golden script reading “Training Grounds of the Camp of *Doryeong* Chivalry.”

A powerfully built guard stood before the gate, and Hannom spoke to him, saying, “Allow me entrance. I have come from the capital of the Land of the Lord to see this place.”

The guard responded, “You are allowed in if you have something to offer.”

“What manner of offering? Money? Rice? Jewelry?”

“What are you saying? Money, rice, and jewelry are precious in the eyes of humans, but of low worth in the Land of the Lord.”

“What, then, do you want?”

“Only those with a warm heart and deep experience of suffering are able to learn from our training. How many tears have you shed in your life of thirty years? Those who have shed many tears possess a warm heart and deep experience of suffering, and they will become the most-honored guests of this training ground; the rest will be middle- and lower-class guests. Those with very few tears cannot go in.”

“Is the tear of a baby crying for milk also a tear?”

“No. That tear is useless.”

“Is the tear shed when vexed while fighting at age eleven or twelve also a tear?”

“No, that tear is also useless.”

“Are the only tears of worth those shed for love of the nation and its people, and those shed in righteous rage against the enemy?”

“Yes, and even among those tears, only the sincere ones are accepted.”

As Hannom was talking, he looked around and saw his friends thronging from elsewhere and gathering before the gate. Reflecting on the worthiness of his tears, Hannom considered that he should be last of all, for he judged himself naturally heartless, a hard man who had not shed tears for the people. (the rest omitted)