

Kim Chǒng, 'Manners and Nature of Cheju Island' (Cheju p'ungt'orok', Ch'ungamjip kw. 4)

Marion Eggert & Yu Myoungin

Ruhr-Universität Bochum

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Introduction

During the Chosŏn Dynasty, Cheju Island was anything but a vacation spot. For most of the five hundred years of the dynasty, the island was regarded as a harsh, poor, uncultured backwater, its people uncouth followers of strange customs, its climate unpleasant because of the strong winds, and its land infertile. It did not help Cheju's reputation that, due to its remoteness, it also served as a convenient place of exile for disgraced officials. Even being sent to the island as a magistrate was considered a (mild) form of punishment, especially since the passage was dangerous and shipwrecks were not uncommon.¹ Having become part of the Korean territory only in Koryŏ times, Cheju was also devoid of places bearing historical significance for the mainlanders. In short, nothing could bring them there but ill fate. Accordingly, knowledge about the island brought back to the mainland remained sparse during the first half of the dynasty; the large majority of extant travel records on Cheju were written after the turn of the seventeenth century.² This makes Kim Chǒng's record especially valuable. His description of Cheju Island, while marked by its title³ as a "record", is in fact a letter that Kim Chǒng wrote during his exile to Cheju,

which lasted from 1519 to his death. The text has interlinear auto-commentaries which we have put in parentheses and printed in a smaller font so that it may be distinguished from the main text at one glance, just like the original does. Our own explanations are given in square brackets.

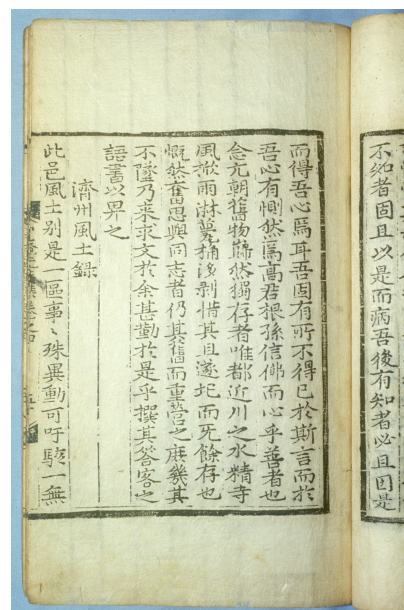


Figure 1: Cheju p'ungt'orok in Ch'ungamjip. photo: Academy of Korean Studies.

¹A famous case of shipwreck on a return trip from Cheju Island to the mainland was Ch'oe Pu's 1487 displacement to southern China which he barely survived; his record of his adventures, *P'yohaerok*, is an important eye-witness account of early Ming China as well as a document of Chinese-Korean relations in the early Chosŏn period. See John Meskill, trl., *Ch'oe Pu's Diary: A Record of Drifting Across the Sea*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1965.

²Kim Misŏn lists eleven travel diaries with Cheju as subject, eight of which were written in the 18th and 19th century. See Kim Misŏn, "Sŏm yŏhaeng-ŭl kirok-han Chosŏn sidae kihaeng ilgi", *Tosŏ munhwa* 53, 2019, 33-63.

³The title was presumably added by Kim Chǒng's great-grandson Kim Sŏngbal who prepared the extant edition of Kim's Collected Works, printed in 1636.

Translation

Kim Chǒng (1486-1521)

This municipality (*ŭp*) is by nature and manners a very special place; everything is different, and wherever one goes, one meets with a surprise. There is nothing magnificent to see. The climate is sometimes warm in winter and sometimes cool in summer; it changes all the time without any continuity. The air seems mild but the wind can be piercing. Thus it is difficult to regulate one's food and clothing, and easy to fall ill. Moreover, clouds and fogs create continuous gloom, and the sky seldom clears; violent winds and strange rains spring up at any time, the climate is damp and oppressive. Also, this earth produces a great variety of insects, and especially of flies and mosquitoes. These, as well as all the different worms and bugs like centipedes, ants and earth-worms, don't die in winter, so they are really hard to put up with. I imagine that in the harsh cold of the northern border this nuisance does not exist.⁴

The living quarters are all thatched; the thatch is not interwoven but just heaped on the roof and pressed down with long beams. Tiled roofs are extremely rare. Even the two prefectural offices {of the prefectures Chǒngŭi and Taejǒng} are thatched houses. The villages are built spaciouly and provide much seclusion. The different wings of a house are not connected to each other. Nobody except the higher officials has floor heating (*ondol*). They dig holes in the ground and fill them up with stones. Then they cover them with earth in the shape of a heated floor. After it has dried, they sleep on top of it. In my opinion, as this is a windy and moist region, many illnesses like coughs and spitting originate from this.

They abjectly revere shrines and spirits. Male

shamans are numerous. They frighten people with disasters and collect riches like dirt. On {annual} holidays, on the first and the fifteenth day of the moon or on the 'seven-seven' days {the seventh, seventeenth and twenty-seventh day⁵} they sacrifice animals for their heretical temples. Such heretical temples, numbering about three hundred, increase by year and month, and the supernatural deceits are steadily on the rise. When people fall ill, they are afraid of taking medicine, saying that it would offend the ghosts, and they are not enlightened till their death. They customarily have a suspicious fear of snakes. They install them as gods and on every encounter offer them wine and prayers; they do not dare to drive them away or kill them. When I only see a snake from afar, I set out to kill it. The locals at first were greatly alarmed by this. After some time they got used to witnessing it, but believed that I as a foreigner could do it {without harm}, and did not at all awaken to the fact that snakes have to be killed. Their delusion is really hilarious. I have heard in the past that this place is rich in snakes, and that when it is about to rain the snakes in unison drill their heads through the crevices in the city wall at every spot. When I came here I tried to verify it and found it to be empty words. Snakes are just more numerous than on the continent. This is probably also due to the exaggerated veneration of the locals.

The sound of the people's speech is high and thin, like the pricking of needles, and much of it is unintelligible. Whoever lives here for a longer while naturally understands it. The ancient saying 'the small boys understand the language of the barbarians' refers to this.⁶ They carry things on the back but not on the head; they have {small} mortars but no {big} mills. They beat their clothes but have no stone slab {they beat them with their hands}; they have smelting furnaces but without foot bellows {they pump the bellows by hand}.

Besides the local licentiate Kim Yangp'il, there are

⁴It seems that Kim Chǒng is pondering here the respective harshness of the two remotest places of banishment, the northern border region and Cheju Island.

⁵This refers to the sacrifices to the goddess Illwe halmang on the seventh, seventeenth and twenty-seventh day of each month. See Boudewijn Walraven, "The Deity of the Seventh Day- and other narrative *muga* from Cheju Island", *Bruno Lewin zu Ehren: Festschrift aus Anlass seines 65. Geburtstages*, Band III, (Bochum, 1992), pp. 309-328. P. 316.

⁶This "ancient saying" actually is a line from a poem by Du Fu (the fifth of the "Five songs on an autumn plain", *Qiu ye wu shou*).

very few people with some knowledge of literature. Their hearts are vulgar and unthoughtful. From the higher officials down to the humble, all try to contact the influential people at court {nobody there who has not someone who “prays to Buddha” for him}. The aristocrats among them try to obtain the military position of *chinmu*⁷ {since earliest Cheju history⁸ the local customs have been like this, so this is not surprising}. The next position in preference is that of officer {*yōsu*}⁹, and last come the clerks¹⁰. {Below that there are no ranked offices.} The seal-holders and those who studied at the local schools {these are all local clerks from among the commoners} occupy themselves all day with seeking their own profit. From the minutest of disputes they derive bribes, and they lack any idea of honesty and justness. The strong rule over the weak, the violent plunder the righteous. The proclamations of the sovereign do not reach down here; thus it is not surprising that the officials are rapacious like {the former Cheju magistrate} Yuk Han.¹¹ Those who are honest and just, although being cherished by the common people for their sentiments, are ridiculed by this brand of people as ‘off the mark’. If they are not educated with some learning to enlighten their hearts, there is no hope of their ever changing their ways. For their minds are preoccupied with gain and they do not know of anything else. If one talks to them about honesty and justice, they just think it’s not profitable and despise it. If a learned monk would use his rhetoric to depict heavens and hells to these people, it might effect something, but the local monks all have wives, live in the village and are dull like trees and stones. Those like the necromancers¹² who frighten

the people {into offerings of} cakes and wine also have only their profit in mind.

The three administrative districts {i.e. Cheju-mok, Chǒngŭi-hyŏn and Taejǒng-hyŏn are all placed at the foot of Halla Mountain, and the} ground is uneven and rocky, with not half an acre of flat land. Plowing it is like picking in a fish-belly. The land looks flat but one cannot see far, as it is so undulating. Though there are mounds, they are disordered and hard to keep apart, the features {of the earth} being similar to a net, or to a disorderly burial ground. Although there is much accumulated rock {the highest among the elevations are all such heaps of rock}, none of them are strange or elegant or in good arrangement; all are dull ores, dreary black and a hateful sight. Although there are hills here and there, they stand lonely, discarded, massive and bald {they stand alone but do not rise high, are massive but at the same time bald}. They lack winding and embracing formations. Only one great mountain rises in the very center, shaped like a vault, but it is merely an obstacle. This is a far cry from your words that ‘much bones and little flesh are the appearance of Kūmgang Mountain’.¹³ When I think back to the earthy mountains which I have looked down upon before, like when I governed Chǒnŭi and Ch’ōngju,¹⁴ how could I find them {here}? Also, the mountain’s summits are always indented like a pot, and floods of mud accrue in this cavity. All the peaks are like this, so that they are called ‘headless mountains’ (*tu-muak*). This is especially strange. However, when one climbs the ultimate peak of Halla Mountain, one sees into the blue distance in all four directions, can look up to the ‘Old Man’ in the extreme south {the

⁷A local military position of Junior third to Senior sixth rank.

⁸Literally, “since the times of the *sōngju*”, the title of the sovereign of Chejudo in Silla and Koryŏ times. The story to which this is traced back is to be found in *Koryŏsa*, “Chiriji”. Only in the early years of the Chosŏn dynasty was Chejudo integrated into the regular administration system, first by changing the titles from aristocratic to administrative ones.

⁹A *yōsu* led a squad of 125 men.

¹⁰*sōwŏn*, a low local office.

¹¹Yuk Han was dismissed for dishonesty in 1506.

¹²*mugwi*: those serving the spirits.

¹³The addressee might be a nephew of his. See Hŏ Pong (1551–1588), *Haedong yaŏn*, “Chungjong sang”. The appellation used for Kūmgang Mountain here is *kaegol*, literally “all bones”. Kim Chǒng had been to Kūmgang Mountain in 1516, after his release from an earlier exile.

¹⁴In Ch’ungch’ōng-namdo and Ch’ungch’ōng-pukto respectively; Kim Chǒng is revered in the shrine of a private academy (*sōwŏn*) in Ch’ōngju.

'old-man-star' is as large as the morning star and is situated on the axis of the sky's extreme south. It does not rise above the earth. To see it is an omen of righteousness and long life. Only when climbing Halla or the Southern Mountain {i.e. Hengshan} on the Central Plains is it possible to see this star}, can point to mountains like Wŏlch'ul {in Kangjin-gun, Chŏlla-namdo} and Mudŭng {near Kwangju, Chŏlla-namdo}, and can stir up one's sense for the extraordinary. Li Bo's words "Clouds lower, and the bird roc overturns;/ waves stir, and the sea-turtle {said to carry the earth} dives under" can be matched with this alone. I regret my confinement and my lack of power. But, having been born as a man to one place, having traversed the great vastness {i.e. the ocean}, being able to tread this alien region and witness these differing manners is also one of the extraordinary and splendid events in life. For there are those who want to come and cannot attain it, those who want to stay and cannot escape {from having to go}; this seems to be preordained by fate, how can one struggle with it?



Figure 2: Yŏngju-san taech'ongdo, a map of Cheju drawn in 1721. The island is represented as seen from the mainland, with the south at the top of the map. Courtesy of the National Palace Museum.

The region of Halla and the province town have very few fountains or wells. Some village people draw their water from a distance of five *li* and still call it 'nearby water'. Other fountains give water only once or twice a day and are salty. To draw water, they always carry a wooden bucket on the back {things are mostly carried on the back by women} to bring home as much water as possible. Moreover, there are very few local specialties. In animals, there are only roe, deer, and pigs in considerable numbers. Besides the badger, which is also numerous, there are crows, owls, and sparrows, but no cranes or magpies. Among wild vegetables and herbs, *myŏl* {*Houttuynia cordata*} and bracken are the most common, but 'fragrant vegetables' (*ch'wi*) {*Aster scaber*}, *ch'ul* {*Atractylodes japonica*}, ginseng, *tanggwi* {*Angelica acutiloba*}, and *toraji* {*Platycodon*

¹⁵Chŏng{-ŭn}, silver coins of mediocre quality (about 70% of silver).

grandiflorus} do not exist. In sea vegetables they have only seaweeds like *miyōk* {*Undaria pinnatifida*}, *umu* {known as agar-agar}, and *ch'ōnggak* {*Codium fragile*}, and no laver (*kim* {*Porphyra tenera*}), *kamt'ae* {brown algae, *Ecklonia cava*}, or *hwanggak* {brown variety of *Codium fragile*}. In sweet water fish there are none but those of the 'silver-mouth' {*Plecoglossus altivelis*} kind. As for ocean fish, they have abalones {*Haliotis discus*}, squid, red horseheads {*Branchiostegus japonicus*}, cutlassfish {*Trichiurus lepturus*}, mackerels and so on; besides these, the various common breeds like octopuses, male rock-oysters, clams, crabs, herring, sailfin sandfish {*Arctoscopus japonicus*}, and croakers do not exist. They produce neither stone products nor ceramics nor brassware; and they have extremely few rice paddies. The local aristocrats eat what they {get from} trade with the mainland; those who cannot afford this eat grains from dry fields. Thus clear rice wine is very expensive, and summer like winter they drink *soju* {crude liquor}. Cattle is plentiful, and they cost no more than three or four lesser-silver coins,¹⁵ but in taste they are inferior to those of the mainland, because they feed on wild pastures and do not get any grains. The most ridiculous thing is that they produce no salt although their land is surrounded by the ocean {for decocting 'field-salt' like on the west coast, there's not enough salt that could be plowed up {from the fields where} sea water has been left {to evaporate}}; for decocting 'sea salt' like on the east coast their sea water contains too little salt - they would have to do hundred times the work and still get very little out of it}. So they have to import it from Chindo {island off Chōlla-namdo} and Haenam {peninsula east of Chindo}. Thus it is very expensive for ordinary people. Among the local produce, most plentiful is the 'fragrant mushroom' {ordinarily called *p'yogo* {*Lentinula edodes*}} and the fruits of the *omija*

{*Maximowiczia chinensis*} which are deep black and as large as fully ripe wild grapes, indistinguishable from the latter. They also taste strong and sweet. The Chinese Herbarium (*Bencao*)¹⁶ says about the *omija* that 'those growing in Chosŏn are of good quality', and again 'the sweet-tasting are the best'. Now when seeing that the *omija* fruits growing in our country are purple, small, and sour in taste, and still are prized like this in the Herbarium, then the produce of this place must doubtlessly be the best in the world. Up to now people did not know this and made use of it only to fill their own cups and plates. I was the first to desiccate them; they are extraordinarily rich in flavor. This year, the district magistrate (*ūpchae*) and I both gathered a lot and dried them. I intend to send you a little to let you know the taste, but so far they have not completely dried up. Further, there is a wild fruit called *mōl*{*kkul*} {*Stauntonia hexaphylla*}.¹⁷ The fruit are the size of a quince; the skin is purple black, and if split open it shows the seeds, which resemble those of the clematis {*Akebia quinata*}, but differ in that they are slightly bigger and of slightly richer taste. For they are just a larger kind of clematis. I have heard that they also grow in places on the sea coast like Haenam, but do not know whether this is true. Besides this there are no valuable strange things. The various kinds of fruits of the mainland like pears, dates, persimmons and chestnuts are all extremely rare. Even when occasionally found, they are not delicious. There are absolutely no Korean pine {*Pinus koraiensis*} seeds, and pine trees {*Pinus densiflora*} are also very rare. The pine needles I take {as medicine} I have to get from far away. The valuable things of this place are oranges and pomelos, gardenia nuts {used for a yellow dye}, yew nuts {*Torreya nucifera*}, soapberry, logwoods {*Xylosma congestum*}, two-years-wood {prob-

¹⁶Such a passage is found in the *Bencaojing jizhu* by Tao Hongjing (456–536) (but of course it speaks about Ko{gu}ryō, not Chosŏn, thus the place where the high quality *omija* was to be found according to Tao may have been outside Chosŏn or modern Korean territory).

¹⁷The text gives a Chinese character compound read *marŭng* and glosses it with the Korean syllable *mōz* (𪛗 𪛖). Present Cheju dialect for *mōlkkul* is *mōngkkul*.

¹⁸In *Sinjŭng Tongguk yōji sŭngnam* (1530), kwŏn 38, "Cheju-mok", the *muhoemok*, which is given as 'No-ash-wood' above, is briefly described as follows: "[This] originates from Udo {a small island near Cheju}. When being on the sea, it is soft as well as brittle, and drifts on the waves; however, immediately upon leaving the water it becomes hard and solid."

¹⁹We assume that the phrase *aeng mu na ya cha* 鸚鵡螺椰子 should originally have read 鸚鵡螺 螺椰子, *aengmuna* being the nautilus and *nayaja* the coconut. It makes little sense to assume that parrots should have been washed ashore by the sea. On top, the *Sinjŭng*

ably an oak species, *Quercus glauca*}, **no-ash-wood**,¹⁸ **nautilus shells**,¹⁹ and **coconuts** {the last three things come over the sea. The natives don't know the name of the coconut; they obtain them only when floating fruits are swept onto the shore. The locals make calabash-like wine-utensils from {the nautilus shells}²⁰ which they call 'apricot kernels'}, **the more-time-chestnut and the red chestnut** {these two items are similar to the nuts of the chestnut-oak, but not bitter, and they can be used for gruel},²¹ and good horses. They have nine kinds of oranges and pomelos: The golden orange {it ripens in the ninth month, earlier than all others}, the milk-tangerine and the Dongting-orange {these two ripen towards the end of the tenth month. These three kinds are of about equal quality. The golden and the milk-orange are both larger and have a rich, sweet taste; the Dongting-orange is slightly smaller and tastes fresh, its sourness being somewhat superior to the others}, the green orange {this kind is too sour to eat in autumn and winter. After going through a whole winter, in the second and third month sourness and sweetness become balanced. In the fifth and sixth month the old fruits are yellowing, and the new fruits are green and small, both together on the same branches, a very strange sight. By this time they are sweet as honey, which harmonizes well with their sourness. By the seventh month, the seeds within the fruits have all turned to water, and the taste is still sweet. Till the eighth and ninth month and by winter, the fruits turn green again and the seeds come again into being. The taste is very sour, no different from the new fruit. As long as they are sour, people look down on them and don't eat them. The first three kinds are wonderful in taste at just that time; thus they are graded this way. But I think that the green orange deserves the top grade}, the mountain orange {the fruits are small

like pomelos, and they are sweet in taste}, the tangerine and the pomelo {everybody knows these two kinds}, the Chinese pomelo {the fruits are as large as quinces, able to hold more than one pint, and in taste they reach the pomelos. These being so, the large fruits hanging from the branches, yellow and ripe, are a great treasure}, and the Japanese orange {the fruits are smaller than those of the Chinese pomelo, and in taste they are also inferior; this is the lowest grade}. All nine kinds have quite similar branches and leaves, only the pomelo is very prickly and the peel of the fruits most fragrant; the tangerine has the thickest leaves, and its peel is least fragrant. This must be the reason they are graded so lowly. All the other kinds are not very thorny {nor is the tangerine}, and their leaves are slender; the fruit peel is of strong and not very fragrant odor, but when chewed it has a strong aroma, bitter and hot {this is the same with the Chinese pomelo and the Japanese orange}. One can't bear to eat it, but as medicine it is most effective. This must be the reason that they are graded highly. The trees grow no higher than a little more than ten feet, but the big ones among them look like pillars. They preferably grow in thickets, and their stems and branches are also quite large. As many as ten of them may intertwine like dragons, coiling and lumping together, archaic and tough. The bark of the old trees is yellow and red and covered with moss, that of young ones is dark green, fresh and lovely. The leaves are green throughout all seasons. In this place lacking all worthwhile sights, these groves are really a fascinating attraction.

My living place is half a *li* away from the eastern gate of the island's capital, on the former site of the Diamond Society Temple.²² I have no neighbors in

Tongguk yōji sūngnam, loc. cit., also mentions *aengmuna* as local produce.

²⁰The text we follow (*Han'guk munjip ch'onggan* vol. 23, the photomechanic reprint of the 1636 edition of Kim's works) has a lacuna of about three characters before this sentence. We suspect that the word missing here might be *aengmuna*, perhaps because the editor was bemused by the – in his eyes, incorrect – “na”. Nautilus shells were used for luxurious wine cups.

²¹The names of these two chestnuts (*sigayul* and *chōngnyul*) as well as the Two-years-wood (*inyōnmok*) are also given in *Sinjūng Tongguk yōji sūngnam*, loc. cit., but without any further information.

²²Kūmgangsa ku sa ki 金剛社舊寺基. A temple named Kūmgangsa 金剛社 existed in Kūmhae in Kyōngsang Province. It is not easy to verify the existence of a temple by the same name in Cheju. A later traveller to Cheju, Kim Songgu (1641-1707, Cheju magistrate 1679-1682), also speaks of this site, in the very same phrasing (Namch'ōn rok sang, *P'arohōn sōnsaeng munjip* kw. 5, 27b); it is possible that he references Kim Chǒng. Given that “Kūmgang Society” was also used for Buddhist gatherings, Kim Chǒng might be speaking generically of “a former Buddhist temple”.

this very secluded spot. A grass hut of several pillars²³ stands there, erected in the style of the north, very bright and spacious. It contains one small room with heating. Outside the living room there's a *maru*, an open veranda, of the size of half a room, so that I can avail myself of sun- as well as moonlight. Under the eaves of the *maru* an old persimmon tree with thick foliage spreads its shade. I often sit there on the *maru*, so close to the tree as to be able to stroke it. The living quarters are enclosed by a stone wall, built of ugly stones which are piled up for more than ten feet; on top of it, wooden railings in the shape of antlers have been attached. The wall is no more than half a *p'il* {roll of cloth} away from the eaves. This high and narrow enclosure is in accordance with the state law {regulating the abode of exiles}. But high and close stone walls are also local custom, serving to ward off violent winds and torrential snows. Moreover, as I am living all alone, I also have to be wary of robbers, so even if I had planned it myself, I would have had to provide this wall; I only wish it were a bit wider. The wall impedes my view and does not allow any aesthetic pleasure. Even to grow plants seems of little interest. Also, I am not in command over the time I spend here; without a sense of a future one has no leisure to concern oneself with gardening. Now that I got your words about having planted a juniper which has grown old by now, my interest has been roused, and I plan to plant, from next spring on, tangerines, oranges, and yews in a row. Straight north from my house, in twenty paces distance from the wall, there is an old pear tree of some ten feet height. It has sparse branches and thin foliage, not a good specimen, but recently it has been trimmed, supplemented with a pavilion, and surrounded by mottled bamboo. As the place is elevated, in the far distance one can see the ocean to the north {the sea is about a *li* away from the pavilion} and the Ch'uja islands {group of islands north of Cheju} line up below one's eyes. In the nearer dis-

tance, one can see into the town to the west, taking in the rising smoke, the willows around the office buildings and the fruit orchard in the southern city {south of the inner but inside the outer city wall, in front of the source of a fountain, the government has planted an orange orchard. The outer city wall has been erected because of the fountain, more than one *li* away, so as to have the water within the city wall. This orchard is separated from my pavilion by half a *li*, within hearing distance}. The orange grove is a very pleasant sight. In the closest vicinity, the orchard of the Diamond Society {also a government garden} can be seen, which is full of orange trees. This garden is about fifty to sixty paces removed from my pavilion. It is delimited by a stone wall, but a small bamboo alley leads through. Sometimes I am able to roam beneath those trees among the jade-green leaves and the golden fruit, the green and yellow ripe oranges giving a fragrant feast when cut open. These times are what you have called 'singing long in the woods of oranges and pomelos'. In such times, can I do otherwise but turn my neck in bewilderment and think of you? In this awful place, this pavilion is the one spot where to find some solace.

Also, I luckily live near to a fountain which springs from the eastern corner of the orchard in the southern city. The fountain is very big at its source {more or less like the wells of Pokch'ŏn-dong}²⁴ and flowing out from under the eastern wall, it provides me with water to draw {the place where I draw water is only forty and some paces removed}. It is cold as ice {in this place there is no ice, and one relies on this well to 'wash away cares'²⁵ and for cooling meat in summer days}, but the lower reaches are impure and unpleasant {as by then many have drawn their water from it before, it can only be muddled}. When mouthing into the sea, it forms a pool {here the water is clean again, and there is also a cavity in the clear pool too deep for people to tread, where one can row a boat; this produces most silver-lips. Reeds are growing on its sides, and it gives a little bit the

²³'Pillar' refers to a unit used for describing the size of houses, *ch'ae* in modern Korean.

²⁴Pokch'ŏn-dong is a place near (now in) Pusan well-known for its springs. However, the phrase *pok ch'ŏn tong su* 福泉洞水 also reminds of the common Daoist appellation for places where the immortals roam, *dong tian fu di* 洞天福地, so it has connotations of "waters for the immortals".

²⁵It is unclear what this signifies. We assume it might refer to getting clean water for tea.

feeling of the secluded pleasures one can enjoy among the "rivers and lakes"²⁶}. The silver-lips that breed here can be caught with nets or hooks. One can also fish for various small ocean fish while sitting on the seashore. This would seem quite pleasant but is actually not much fun, a far cry from the pleasures of clear streams and softly flowing brooks. For there is no agreeable place to sit, and fishing in the sea is hindered by the rushing on of winds and waves; on very few days can one settle peacefully, so that no refined atmosphere can come up. Also, as company I have either rustics or Mr. Pang {named Sunhyŏn, the brother-in-law of the judge {*p'an'gwan*}; he has some knowledge of the scriptures, has heard a lot about our affairs and has sufficiently formed his own views, so that some conversation with him is possible. But he is influenced by vulgar manners and lacks refinement; among the "rivers and lakes", he would get nowhere. Still, to meet somebody like him overseas is very lucky}. How could these companions suffice to arouse my enthusiasm? As there is nobody dear to me here to share with, I have almost no heartfelt pleasure, just as you have said. Also, the state law must be respected; thus I seldom go out, not more than once or twice a month, or sometimes not at all for a whole month. Not even to the pear-tree pavilion do I go very often, and still less frequently to the orange garden. To walk alone just increases my musings. {When the oranges are ripe, I had also better stay away; the officials oversee them very strictly}. I am separated from my bones and flesh, and anxiously think of my dear ones far away. Of the companions of my roamings in old times, many have already withered away. Forlorn I am in secluded lands, having had to taste the world's inconstancy once more. I am searching for equanimity, and always cheerfully follow the course of things, but when I suddenly think of this, I cannot help being sadly moved.

²⁶“Rivers and lakes“, *kangho*, is a notoriously polysemic expression that has been used both for nature as a place of reclusion (i.e., abstaining from court politics) and for a place where people meet (derived from the use of rivers and lakes as waterways), i.e. “the world” (often in the sense of a world apart from the court, with its own rules, yet clearly distinct from the solitude of a recluse). Here, the term seems to point to a place in nature, yet one imbued with an air of sophistication. When the term next occurs a few lines below, the emphasis obviously lies on this latter aspect, to a degree that there it almost turns into an equivalent of “polite society”. – For an extended analysis of the meaning of *kangho* in 16th century Korean usage, see Marion Eggert, “*Kangho (jianghu)* als Raum und als Wassermetapher im koreanischen Langgedicht “Kwandong pyŏlgok” (ca. 1580)”, forthcoming in: Clemens v. Haselberg, ed., *Die vielen Gesichter der Flüsse und Seen: Untersuchungen zum chinesischen Jianghu*, Münster: LIT-Verlag, 2025.