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A Study of Miluk-Sunwha

by Kim Yung-tai

I have found out several problems from a story of Miluk-Sunhwa, in Part 4, Tower Image, Volume 3 of Samkuk Yusa. To summarize the contents of the story, in the King Jinji Period, the 25th of Silla, Jinja, a monk of Heungryunsa, prayed for Maitreya to let him meet an excellent Wharang. Thus he had his prayer heard and met Misirang, and Misirang was introduced to the King by him. The King made him a Kuksun. It is said that Jinja, śramana, had attended upon Misirang at all times. Why did Jinja, śramana, try to meet an excellent Wharang, wait upon him all the times and pray for Maitreya to grant him to meet Wharang of all figures?

I have to examine closely the relationships between the monk and Wharang, Kuksun, and also Maitreya and Kuksun, Wharang, respectively. As you see examples given by in Samkuk Yusa and Samkuk Saki, there were some monks who belonged to the members of Wharang themselves. Because Jinja, a monk, was a member of Wharang. he wanted to meet an excellent Wharang and waited upon him with his whole heart.

And Maitreya was not only a central idea of Wharang Spirit, it was also a symbol of Kuksun. Kuksun was a senior Wharang and King himself would nominate and endow him with national dignity. Kuksun has a meaning of Maitreya of a country and Maitreya is respected by the nation. To study "sun" letter of Kuksun, you will see that it is an example of a term for Maitreya in the Silla Period. Because Kuksun was symbolic of Maitreya and respected as national Maitreya by the nation, the Wharang, monk, waited upon Kuksun all the times.

Now we have to examine into its problems of term and thought what Wharang means concurrently. As Wharang was resulted from Maitreya thought, we regard it reflected and realized Maitreya thought which was supposed to supplement incompleteness of the present day and pointing to a better future to come.

Wharang has a meaning for young coolies with a view to realize a better Silla and Utopia, and at the same time for dear children who are eager to bear fresh fruits.

We can find out these problems in the story of Miluk-sunwaha. In order to examine closely a history and thought that this story contains, I tried to study according to the following items.

1. The contents of the story and its meaning
2. The relationship between the monk and Wharang
3. The relationships among Maitreya, Wharang, and Kuksun, and its thought