

# Korean Traditional Literature

By Mark Peterson

hyangga, Chinese poetry, sijo

# Hyangga – Silla period

Song of Desire for Eternal Life  
by Kwangdôk, eighth century.

Oh moon!

As you go to the West this night,

I pray thee, go before the Eternal Buddha,  
And tell him that there is one here  
Who adores Him and looks up to Him,  
Who keeps the vows,  
Who longs for Nirvana,  
And who with hands clasped prays daily:

Oh, grant me eternal life.

Oh, grant me eternal life.

But alas, can any of the 48 vows be kept,  
While still entrapped in this mortal frame.

# Ulchi Mundeok's poem

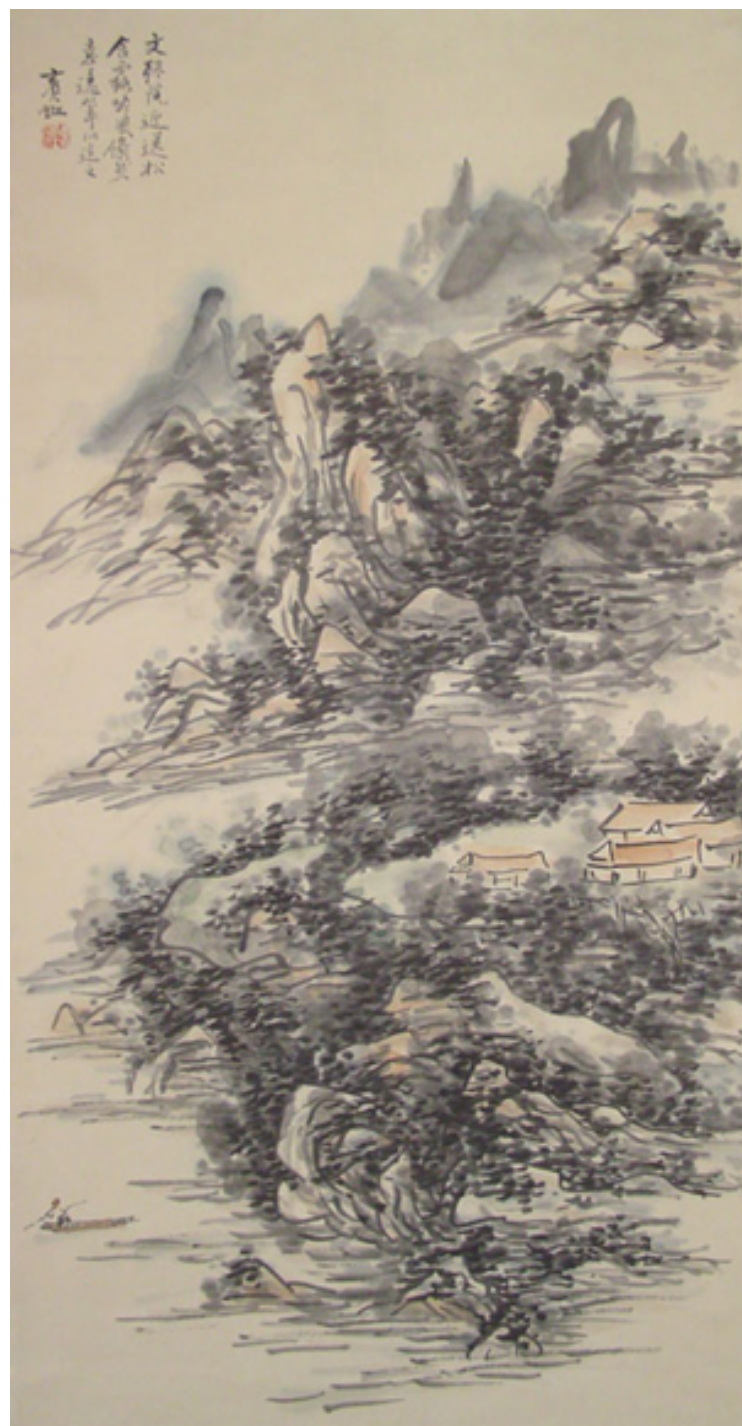
神策究天文  
妙算窮地理  
戰勝功既高  
知足願云止

By looking at your strategy,  
it bears the patterns of Heaven.  
Your calculations are comprehensive  
and take in all the terrain.  
You have already lifted your victory  
to the heights.  
I hope you will be satisfied at that  
and cease your plans to attack.

One Chinese poem,  
by Yi Yulgok (sixteenth century)  
with several translations

## In the Mountains

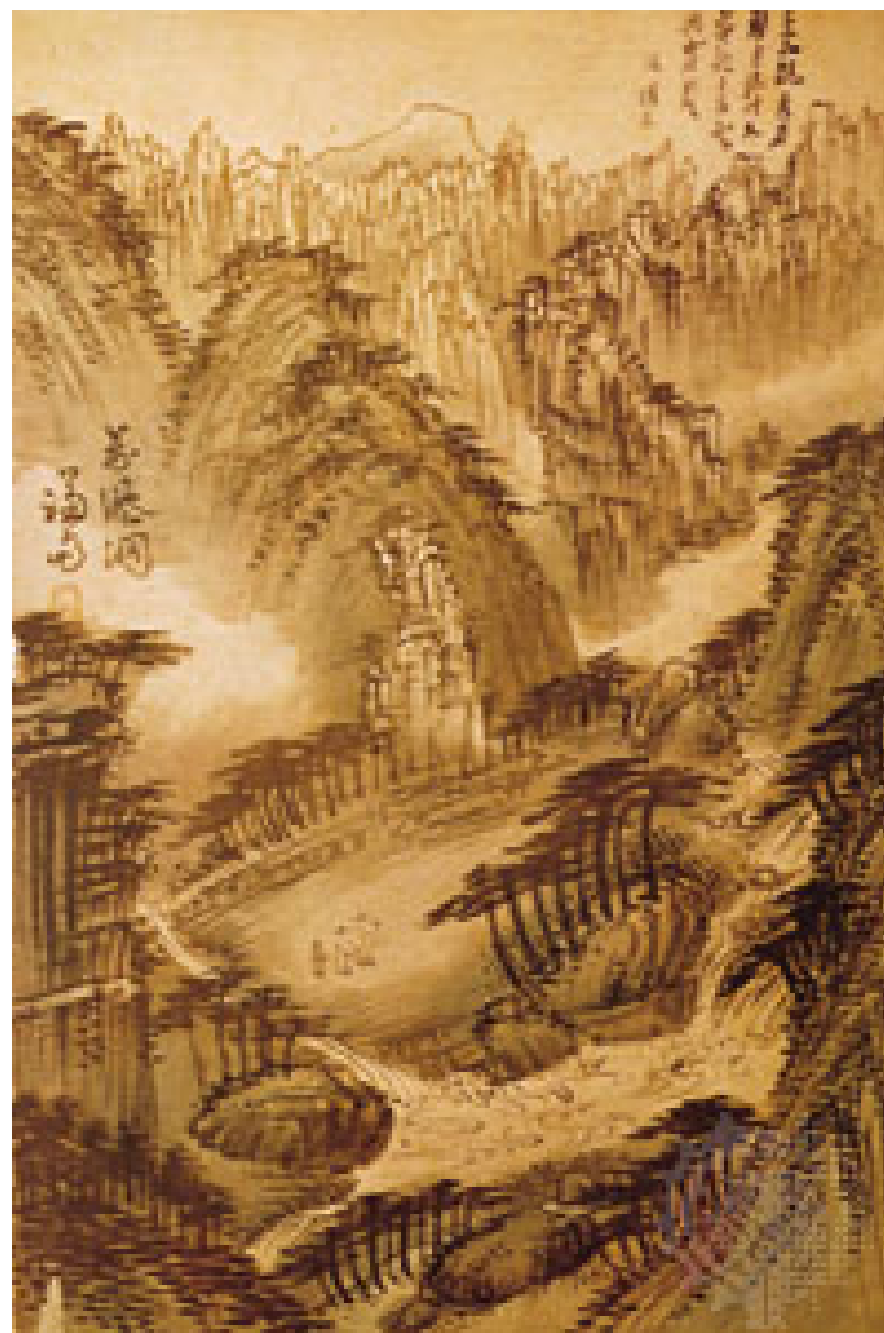
While picking herbs, I suddenly lost my way,  
Midst the myriad peaks covered by autumn leaves.  
There a monk, returning from fetching water.  
At forest's edge, smoke for tea rises.



文粹院迎送松  
余去秋訪吳松  
喜見流雲寺山  
唐松

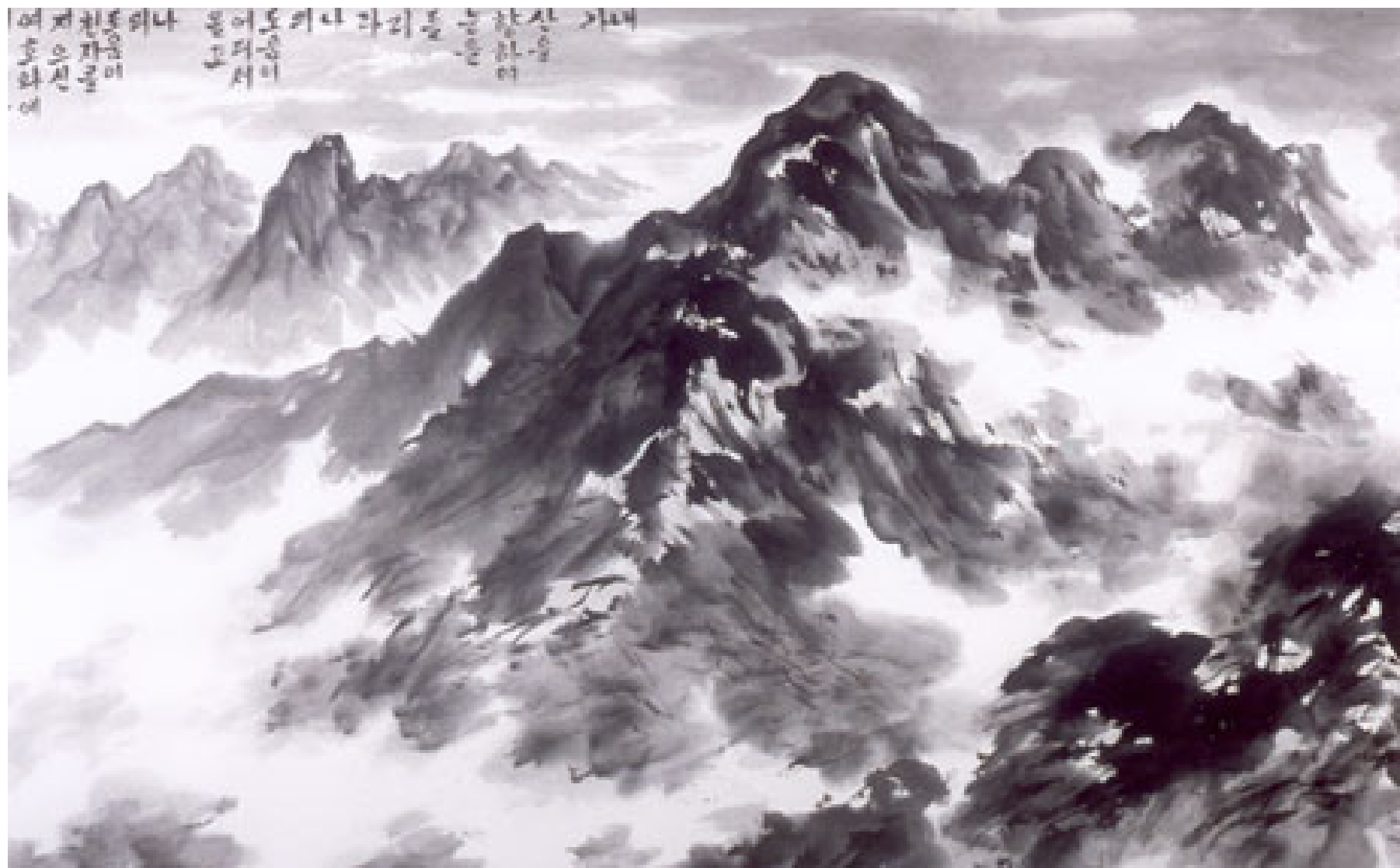








대개 산을 향하여  
돌아오는 길에  
나리다  
도움의  
어려서  
물고  
의나  
복을  
원자  
제오  
여호









Pick medicine, suddenly lost path.  
Thousand peaks, autumn leaves midst.  
Mountain monk, carrying water returning  
Forest's edge, tea smoke ascends.

Picking herbs, oh!, lost way.  
Thousand peaks, surrounded by autumn leaves.  
Behold!, a hermit monk returned bearing water.  
Ah!, at the edge of the forest, the fire is lit for  
boiling tea.

# 山中

採藥忽迷路  
千峯秋葉裏  
山僧汲水歸  
林末茶烟起



산중(山中)

이이(李珣;1536-1584)

採藥忽迷路(채약홀미로)

千峯秋葉裏(천봉추엽리)

山僧汲水歸(산승급수귀)

林末茶烟起(임말차연기)



採藥忽迷路 (채약홀미로) Ch'ae yak, hol mi ro

千峯秋葉裏 (천봉추엽리) Ch'øŋ bong, ch'u yøp ni

山僧汲水歸 (산승급수귀) San süng, gup su gwi

林末茶烟起 (임말차연기) Im mal, cha yøŋ gi

# In the Mountains

採藥忽迷路 (채약홀미로) Ch'ae yak, hol mi ro

fetching herbs, suddenly lost way

千峯秋葉裏 (천봉추엽리) Ch'øŋ bong, ch'u yøp ni

thousand peaks, autumn leaves midst

山僧汲水歸 (산승급수귀) San jung, gup su gwi

mountain monk, carrying water returns

林末茶烟起 (임말차연기) Im mal, cha yøn gi

end forest, tea smoke rises

採藥忽迷路 (채약홀미로) Ch'ae yak, hol mi ro

千峯秋葉裏 (천봉추엽리) Ch'øŋ bong, ch'u yøp ni

山僧汲水歸 (산승급수귀) San jung, gup su gwi

林末茶烟起 (임말차연기) Im mal, cha yøŋ gi

- Rhyme structure

ABCB, ro, ni, gwi, gi

While picking herbs, I suddenly realized I was lost  
Thousands of peaks looked all the same in the surrounding autumn leaves.  
But behold, a monk appears carrying water pails on a backframe.  
We drink tea by the fire safely returned to the hermitage at the edge of the forest.

Off picking medicinal herbs I lost my way,  
Lost amid the thousand peaks covered in autumn leaves.  
A mountain monk, carrying water, comes this way.  
At the edge of the woods, see the smoke of the fire for boiling teas.

Picking herbs, I lost the path.

Bewildered in the many peaks and autumn leaves everywhere.

A monk appears, it is water he hath.

Saved, at the edge of the woods, smoke for tea climbs into the air.

I once was hiking in the woods  
Finding herbs, I lost the way.

Bewildered by the surrounding peaks,  
The autumn leaves colored the day.

Then all at once, a monk appeared,  
Bearing water, he drew nigh.

Drinking tea at the edge of the woods,  
We watched the smoke climb into the sky.

While hiking alone in the woods  
Looking for herbs, I lost my way.

Bewildered by surrounding peaks,  
The autumn leaves shaded the day.

When all at once, a monk appeared,  
And bearing water, he drew nigh.

Drinking tea at the edge of the woods,  
We watched the smoke climb into the sky.



While trying to find success and happiness in this material world,  
One sometimes realizes that he has lost that which matters most.  
Midst the skyscrapers and forests of glass and brick,  
We are surrounded by distractions and illusion.  
But then we see one who seems to know what it is all about,  
As he goes about the simple duties of a pure life.  
And we withdraw from the hustle and bustle that has once trapped us,  
And partake again of the simple truths that will give us peace.

# Lost

While seeking glory and honor in this material world,  
I suddenly realized I had lost track of that which  
matters most.

I was lost in the urban forest of skyscrapers of glass  
and steel,  
Completely distracted and preoccupied with  
meaningless things.

But then I saw him, one so honest and centered  
Who by his example showed me what really mattered.  
As I withdrew from the unquenchable chase,  
We sat and talked of the simple, the true and the  
good.

# A Gallows Poem

by Sòng Sammun (fifteenth century)

The beating of the drum calls for a life.

I turn to see the sun is about to set.

Is there a tavern on the road to hell?

At whose home will I rest my head tonight?

A Sijo

by Chông Mongju

Though I die, and die again;  
    though I die one hundred deaths,  
Long after my bones have turned to dust;  
    whether my soul exists or not,  
My red heart, ever loyal to my Lord,  
    will never fade away.

Sijo

By Hwang Chini

Jade Green Stream, midst the Blue Mountains  
Don't be so proud of your easy going.  
Once you reach the vast sea,  
To return again will be most difficult!  
While the Bright Moon fills the empty hills,  
Why not rest a bit before you rush on.

靑山裏(청산리) 碧溪水(벽계수) | 야 수이 감을 자랑마라.  
一到滄海(일도창해) 하면 도라오기 어려오니,  
明月(명월)이 滿空山(만공산) 하니 수여 간들 엇더리.

靑山裏(청산리) 碧溪水(벽계수) | 야 수이 감을 자랑마라,  
一到滄海(일도창해) 하면 도라오기 어려오니,  
明月(명월)이 滿空山(만공산) 하니 수여 간들 엇더리.

Jade Green Stream, midst the Blue Mountains  
Don't be so proud of your easy going.  
Once you reach the vast sea,  
To return again will be most difficult!  
While the Bright Moon fills the empty hills,  
Why not rest a bit before you rush on.

also Hwang Jini

I will take this long mid-winter night,  
and fold it in half at the waist

I will roll it and roll it  
and tuck in under my summer quilt

That I may unfold it to lengthen out the short mid summer night  
when my love returns.



# motivation

Taishan is the tallest of mountains,  
yet it is lower than the heavens.

If one climbs and climbs, and tries and tries,  
there's no reason one cannot reach the top.

Yet some people don't even try;  
they just say it's too high.

# Azaleas by Kim Sowol

When you grow tired of me,  
And leave,  
Without a word I shall quietly let you go.

From Herb Mount in Yongbyon,  
Azaleas  
I'll gather by the armful and scatter on your way.

Step by step as you leave,  
On those flowers,  
Please tread lightly, softly as you go.

When you grow tired of me,  
And leave,  
Though I die, tears I will not shed.

# Arirang

Arirang, arirang, arariyo.

Arirang kogaerul nomo kanda.

Narul borigo kasinun nimun

Simni-do motkaso

palbyông nanda.

Arirang, arirang, arariyo.

He's crossing over Arirang pass.

He has discarded me, my love

But he won't go ten miles

before he'll become lame.