

JANET YOON-SUN LEE

Brief Bio

Janet Yoon-sun Lee is an assistant professor of Korean Literature at Keimyung University in South Korea, specializing in gender, emotion, and medicine in the Chosŏn literary tradition. She received her M.A. degree at Columbia University and Ph.D. degree from University of California, Los Angeles. Her dissertation concerns the development of the literary motif of “love-sickness” (*sangsa pyŏng*) in late Chosŏn narratives, and it contends that love tales reveal the complex negotiations between the body and the mind, gender ideals and sexual desire, and romantic love and Confucian ideology. Her scholarly interests are focused on women’s writing, experience, and labor presented in vernacular works from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. She is the Managing Editor of *Acta Koreana*, a peer-reviewed international journal of Korean studies published in English.

Publications

The English translation of “Tale of Gentleman Zhou” (*Chusaeng chŏn*), in Peter H. Lee, ed. *An Anthology of Traditional Korean Literature*. University of Hawaii Press. 2017. 261-285.

“Dilemma of the Lovesick Hero: Masculine Images and Politics of the Body in Seventeenth-Century Korean Love Tales.” *Journal of Korean Studies* 21, no. 1 (June 2016): 45-70.

“Female Desire, Illness, Metamorphosis in ‘Lovesick Snake’ Narratives in Sixteenth-Century Korea.” *Acta Koreana* 18, no. 2 (December 2015): 521-543.

“Building an Urban Identity in the Literary Sphere of Hanyang,” *Kukhak yŏngu nonch’ong* 13 (June 2014): 9-28.

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The Duality of Text and Translation:

The Domestication of *Ch'unhyang chŏn* (The Tale of Ch'unhyang)

Abstract

This presentation illuminates the thematic structure of *Ch'unhyang chŏn* (The Tale of Ch'unhyang), which contains both universal and local qualities that appeal to a varied audience. The story of a heroine saved by marriage is common across many cultures. It is unsurprising, then, that *The Tale of Ch'unhyang* is similar to Cinderella, the tale of a mistreated young woman presented with an opportunity to marry well and escape her situation. The fantasy that simplifies the relationship between marriage and social standing is also presented in *The Tale of Ch'unhyang*. However, the story contains a defiant message as well. Ch'unhyang's marriage above her social position is a serious challenge to the social norm, and her upward mobility and courageous rebellion demonstrate the popular desire to subvert the prevailing structure of Chosŏn society.

In the translated text, the reader can see the pendulum of interpretation swing between the ubiquitous theme of love and the emancipatory message of social change. To bridge the differences between cultures, the translator domesticates the text, enhancing its readability by playing down the cultural distinctiveness found in traditional Korean society, while allowing the linguistic features of the source language to captivate readers with its exoticness. This study explores the translator's ability to modulate the reader's engagement with the story and reveals how the significance of social class distinction is treated, and the tale's subversive message conveyed, in the translated text. The analysis is focused on the speech styles and rhetoric used in the dialogue, which marks the relationship between characters of different social classes. There are several English translations of *The Tale of Ch'unhyang*, dating from the late nineteenth century to a recent twenty-first century publication. The discussion includes a comparative approach to the translated publications by Allen Horace (1889), James Gale (1917–18), Richard Rutt (1974), and Peter H. Lee (2010).