

# Characteristics of Formation and Development and Artistic Description of Romantic Tendency in Medieval Korean Literature

**Sin Yong Ho & Kim Chol Min**

Department of Korean Literature of Korean Language and Literature Faculty  
Kim Il Sung University, Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea  
Email: cioc1@ryongnamsan.edu.kp

**Abstract** This essay studies romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature and looked at the characteristics of its formation in comparison of those of European progressive romanticism. It studies romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature and ascertains that it is a tendency with new ideological and aesthetic ideals which are different from the outdated in the past. The formation and development of romantic tendency in Medieval Korea literature turned out to be somewhat different from progressive romantic literature in Europe in the light of socio-historical environment and aesthetic principle. Both of them are common in showing complaints about the reactionary and unpopular reality of the exploiting society and suggesting progressive ideas. But unlike progressive romantic literature in Europe, romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature is characteristic in the fact that their socio and historical basis is different from each other, and realistic and romantic description are organically combined in the method of interpretation, and the characters' personalities, and their lives reflect deep patriotism.

**Keywords** progressive romantic literature; method of interpretation; literary trend

**Authors** **Sin Yong Ho** is Dean of Korean Language and Literature Faculty, Kim Il Sung University, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. His main research area is Korean literature critique and world literature critique contacts. **Kim Chol Min** is a researcher at the Department of Korean Literature of Korean Language and Literature Faculty, Kim Il Sung University, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. His main research area is Korean literature and Asian literary contacts.

## Introduction

The literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature is identified with in comparison with others on the account of formation and development. The

world literary legacies reflect a variety of national life and movements of different countries' people at different times and show creative wits and wisdom, genius and valuable experiences and lessons that have historically been accomplished.

European Romantic literature, which originated and developed with the historical period from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century for its setting, revealed falsity and inhumanity of religion and feudal caste system and, at the same time, criticized the reality of human injustice brought about by the mammon power, which distinguishes it from Humanism and Enlightenment literature.

Romanticism was one of the literary movements that began in the late eighteenth century and ended around the middle of the nineteenth century – although its influence continues to date.” (Jena 555)

The Romantic era or the period of Romanticism was a literary, artistic and intellectual period that originated in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century and was at its peak in most places from 1800 to 1850 . (Argawal 3)

Romanticism could be experienced in most of the western countries between the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. (Argawal 36)

The Romantic Movement in literature was preceded and accompanied by the change from monarchy to democracy in politics, from materialism to idealism in philosophy, from conservatism to radicalism in culture and from orthodoxy to emancipation in religion. (Argawal 2)

Its characteristics were clearly shown in the ideal of how to improve the social situation of the oppressed underclass, which was not seen in former times. “The Romantics wanted to change the social world as this would in their opinion make people happier. This movement resulted in the criminal system with better and safer jails, reduction in the severity of sentencing, lesser capital punishment, and the like. It was also suggested that there should be more charity to decrease the hardships of the poor” (Halder 56).

European Romantic literature didn't originate to oppose the caste system and Christianity at the time of their dominance, but it appeared at a time when the illusion of Enlightenment was shattered in the reality of a bourgeois system which was newly established after the abolition of the feudal caste system by the ideas of Enlightenment. “So the general feature of the works of the romanticists is a dissatisfaction with the bourgeois society, which finds expression in a revolt against

or an escape from the prosaic, sordid daily life, the “prison of the actual” under capitalism” (Liu Bingshan 212).

The European Romantics, therefore, still possessed an Enlightenment ideal, but were disillusioned with Enlightenment reality—the bourgeois reality, and couldn’t help admitting the unreality of Enlightenment. They had no more rational and noble realistic social ideals than Enlightenment thinkers. However, they had no choice but to find a way out now that they were disillusioned with the bourgeois reality.

It was also to some extent a reaction against the Enlightenment and 18<sup>th</sup>-century rationalism and physical materialism in general. (Jena 555)

Romanticism’s aims for humanity thus contrast powerfully with the ancient world in pursuit of naturalness and eudaimonia, with medieval Christianity’s ideals of obedience, continence, and beatitude, and with the Enlightenment’s commitment to scientific understanding, material improvement and satisfaction. (Eldridge)

Romanticism can be seen as a reaction against all the Enlightenment stood for, and for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries this was the dominant interpretation. (Stevens 20)

The way out was finally settled by proposing a fantastic ideal, and when they realized that the fantastic ideal could not come true, they fell into pessimism or compromising with the bourgeois reality. “Throughout the Romantic Age, most of the Romantic poets were in search of the ideal world” (Halder 13). “Romanticism relied on an idealized notion of Reality. Romanticism was more directed towards individualism. It revolved around idealism, emotion, supernatural and passion” (Pattanayak 39).

This pessimism and compromise were expressed in a sermon about moral self-perfection. European Romantics thought that good nature of a man defeats evil, and that the essence and mission of art and literature lies in establishing a society where all people love each other and live happily through the realization of the spirit of freedom, equality and philanthropy. Their outlook on art and literature is based on the idealistic outlook on the world and life and bourgeois humanitarianism, in which the nature of a man consists of good and evil and good nature wins evil. Charles Taylor notes the Romantics’ “Resistance to a one-dimensional picture of the human will and their recovery of the sense that good and evil are in conflict in the human breast” (Taylor).

That’s why, their works show people beautiful ideals but they make people

fall into disillusion and pessimism on the other hand. “Many realistic writers felt that the Romantics did not act responsibly and they only idealized the world around them” (Pattanayak 40). Their fatal weakness is owing to the fact that they did not understand the essence of a man and the law of social development. Romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature has a distinct feature in its formation and development, which distinguishes it from European Progressive Romanticism. It is mainly due to the different specific socio-historical circumstances at that time, and also to the composition of the writers and the literary tradition established in former times. This had also affected the development of literature and society.

### **Romantic Tendency in Medieval Korean Literature and Its Characteristics**

The studies on medieval literature with romantic tendency conducted in the DPRK in the second half of the twentieth century are reflected in many books. The textbook “History of Korean Literature” (1) (Kim Chun Taek), published in 1985, and the textbook “History of Korean Literature” (2) (Jong Hong Kyo) published in 1994 described the typical romantic poems such as “It is painful to live in the world” (Ri In Ro), “To a friend”(Rim Chun) and “A rock”(O Se Jae), which were written by the poets of “Haejachilhyon” (7 writers exiled from the government) such as Ri In Ro (1152-1220), Rim Chun (-1196), O Se Jae (1132-1193) and so on.

And more details were written in the book “The Study on Poetry Written in Chinese Character in Koryo Dynasty” (Ri Song) published in 2009. He analyzed and evaluated more comprehensively and in detail romantic poetic works of “Haejachilhyon.” For example, it described that Ri In Ro had a great yearning for a peaceful and stable ideal society from the hatred of the dark world imposing disasters upon the people and driving their lives to distress in his typical romantic poems, “It is painful to live in the world,” “To a man grafting flowers,” “For an orange tree,” “Looking at women smoothing cloth,” “With a rhythm of ‘An immature peony’ in Janghak Temple” and so on, thus providing preconditions in which a deep research could be made about the tendency of creating romantic poems of Ri In Ro, who was the main writer of “Haejachilhyon.” The book “Theory of Korean Classical Writers” (1) (Ri Song, Kim Jin Guk) (2011) analyzed and evaluated in detail writing activities and poems of the poets Rim Chun, Ri In Ro and others who produced typical romantic poems in the period of Koryo Dynasty.

These studies have done with the successes and experience gained in the literature with romantic tendency in Korea. And the literature with romantic tendency was here approached chiefly in the light of literary forms and genres like poetry, novel and so on. The essay titled “Characteristics of Formation and

Development and Artistic Description of Romantic Tendency in Medieval Korean Literature” proves the existence of the literature with romantic tendency as a literary one in Korea as well as its ideological and aesthetic achievements and stages of development, which intended to excavate more of its successes both in ideas and arts the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea gained to add them to the development of world progressive literature, constituting part of valuable treasure of world literature abreast with other progressive romantic works.

This essay takes a study in which the chief objects of study are a) the formation of romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature and its stages of development, b) characteristics of reflecting the reality, and representative writers with their masterpieces, c) the characteristics of the artistic interpretation.

Romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature was formed in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with a distinct tendency on the basis of the excellent writing experience and tradition of the preceding literature of oral story and prose of *Suijon* (unreal and unusual story) style and other epics, which used various techniques of describing romantic life.

Romantic tendency in Medieval Korea literature laid a clear foundation in prose of *Suijon* style. Examples include stories like “Sok Nam” and “Loonghwagu”(An old man changed into a dog). The story “Sok Nam” is about Choe Hang, who had tragic difficulties in romance owing to restraints of feudal moral and realized her dream and lead a happy life after curious revival. And the story “Loonghwagu” is about an old man who can be transformed into an animal in a moment.

In particular, Choe Chi Won (ninth century) laid the beginning of writing methods of romanticism on the basis of rich creative experience of the literature of oral story that depicted life in a fantastic way. In the novel of *Suijon* style, “A Tomb of Twins” he depicted in a fantastic way the two heroines who were freed from patriarchal feudal Confucian morality and fetters. The novel clearly revealed the romantic character by showing, with the subjective intention and ideal of the writer, but not in a realistic way, that the heroines who died by marriage forced by their parents are returned to life again, meet their favourite lovers and enjoy their lives with joy and happiness to their heart's content.

In this period, however, the romantic writing method was not generalized with one creative tendency. The literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea was actively created with a distinct tendency under a new socio-historical condition in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the period of Koryo feudal state on the basis of rich experience and tradition established in the preceding period.

First of all, the fact that the literature with romantic tendency was created

with a distinct tendency in this period is mainly related to the socio-historical circumstance established at that time. At that time, contradictions and conflicts were acute and the society was in disorder in Koryo feudal society owing to Warriors' Coup d'état by Jong Jung Bu (1106-1179). Hence, the progressive classes showed a strong desire to escape from social chaos, feudal oppression and poverty. In particular, people waged an unyielding struggle to escape from their miserable plight. The intellectual strata tended to seek more ideal realities which were different from unreasonable realities. This provided good conditions for the creation of the literature with romantic tendency in this period.

Secondly, the fact that the literature with romantic tendency was created with a distinct tendency in this period is also related to the advent of the progressive viewpoint of opposing formalism and imitation in the creation of poetry and advocating the writing in conformity with the reality. The reactionary literary sects and venal writers including "Giro Society"(a group of writers patronized by the government) showed strong elements of formalism and imitation in the creation of poetry, but Rim Chun and Ri In Ro and other progressive writers rejected such formalism and imitation views and set forth the progressive idea that people should write in conformity with the reality and their thoughts and feelings.

Rim Chun objected to writing in one schematic pattern with imitating others, saying that people should not lose his nature. Ri In Ro criticized the ostentation without content that imitated others' writings, and put forward the aesthetic idea that the intention should be straightened out on the basis of concrete facts. This progressive view became a factor that made it possible to produce works with romantic tendency that exposed sharply all evils and immorality arising from the reality of the era and confronted them with a stable and ideal life.

"Giro Society" established by Choe Dang in 1230 included literary men aged over 70, who were retired from high government posts. They were government-patronized noblemen such as Choe Dang, Choe Son, Jang Ja Mok, Baek Guang Son, Ko Yon Jung and so on. They were wallowing in luxury under the patronage of military bureaucratic rulers in the middle of Koryo Dynasty. The noblemen in "Giro Society" went on an excursion to mountains and delighted in poetry of praising the feudal dynasty and admiring and rationalizing wealth and honor of bureaucratic rulers, taking advantage of the tendency of the reactionary "Sansu(mountains and rivers) Group" of the early Koryo Dynasty, including Kwak Yo, Ri Ja Yon and so on.

In their works, they embellished the reality at that time as a "peaceful reign", when were characterized by the intensification of feudal oppression and plunder, the upsurge of the people's struggle against it, the aggravation of contradictions

within the ruling class and the increase of social chaos, and they also praised the arbitrariness and tyranny of the military rulers as "benevolent politics" and expressed satisfaction with the king's "benevolence" and "confidence" to them.

Choe Dang's poem "Along with the King to Anhwa Temple" and Choe Son's Poem "After receiving a fan" are typical works showing the reactionary tendency of "Giro Society." The works created by the noblemen belonging to "Giro Society" were rejected by a lot of people at that time because of the reactionary nature of their ideological content and shameless distortion of their real life, so they were of no literary value. They were reactionary bureaucrats who lived in luxury with power before the coup d'état and had lived in wealth and honor under the patronage of the military ruling forces even after the coup d'état. This was the class basis, which made them reactionary in their creative tendency.

Choe Rang's poem "Along with the king to Anhwa Temple," Choe Son's poem "After receiving a fan" and "I feel happy that my cousin Mun Mok won the first place in Smasi exam" and other works reflected the attitude and tendency of the writers of "Giro Society" towards the social reality. They expressed satisfaction and joy over "favor" given from the king or rulers, highly praised the feudal rulers and idealized and embellished the contradictory reality of the feudal ruling society which the people despised and denied.

"Haejachilhyon," which appeared in the second half of twelfth century, included Ri In Ro, Rim Chun, O Se Jae, Ri Dam Ji, Hwang Bo Hwang, Jo Tong and Ham Sun who had been driven away from government posts by the military coup and hid themselves. Because of their commonality, they created poems with romantic tendency reflecting the ideas against the arbitrary and tyrannical politics of the new military rulers. They put forward some social reforming ideas including the issue of appointing talents to government posts and fixing the classical examination system for the government service, based on their own living conditions. They opposed formalism and imitation in the creation of poetry, which had been profoundly expressed in the groups of reactionary writers including "Giro Society," and asserted the progressive aesthetic view in which works should be written in conformity with the specific situation and their own aptitude.

They also attached importance to the thematic and ideological content of a work and aspired to genuine reflection of life in writing. On the basis of such a socio-aesthetic view, they produced quite a few poetic works with romantic tendency which exposed the contradictory and unreasonable social reality at that time. The romantic tendency in their poetry is characterized by its combination with a strong critical tone as it is based on the confrontation between the vicious reality

at that time, in particular the dissatisfaction with the military ruling, the progressive socio-aesthetic ideal and the unreasonable reality.

The poem "It is painful to live in the world" also metaphorically romanticised the feelings of anger in which ideal couldn't be realized with sad singing from a Korean lute and two swords in sheath. Jin Hua and Kim Guk Gi, progressive writers at that time, wrote many poems with romantic tendency in the early days of their writing, making contact with the writers of "Haejachilhyon." Jin Hua unfolded the dream of a peaceful and harmonious ideal life in the poem "Song of Paradise." The writer tried to find his ideal "paradise" in the real world, not in a dream.

This was an expression of the people's ardent desire for the ideal world where everyone lives happily without social evils and inequality. Kim Guk Gi sympathized with the point of view of writers of "Haejachilhyon" in his close relationship with them, but his experience of life was different from theirs, thus his personal features were evident in romantic tendency of his writing. He not only expressed the critical spirit towards the reality in the poem "Song in a drunken state" but also skillfully applied rhetorical exaggeration and metaphor. The poem is free and romantic in unfolding mental anguish, ill feeling, grief, anger, grandiose ambition and unshakable faith of the lyrical hero who was suffering from the bitter and harsh reality at that time through the revealing of his inner thoughts and feelings. The writing activities of progressive writers including "Haejachilhyon" clearly show that the method of depicting life in a fantastic way became a tendency among the writers. The characteristic of the development of the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea is that it had been developed steadily since its formation, exploring and applying principles and methods of reflecting romantic life in more diversified ways on the basis of the development of social history and national literature. It was first created at a high level with romantic orientation towards the emancipation of human individuality, a desire for an ideal society and a discontent with Korean feudal dynasty in the field of novel literature in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In this period, the romantic method of writing was well applied in the works in the collection of short stories "A myth of Kumo" by Kim Si Sub in the fifteenth century. Through his novels, the writer expressed his dissatisfaction with the corrupt and incompetent rulers of Korean Feudal Dynasty and his desire for the emancipation of human individuality in a fantastic and romantic way. The novel "The Tale of Namyombuzu" expressed the writer's stand and ideal for anti-religion and humanitarian politics through the talk between the hero Pak Sang and the king of an island country on the island called "Namyombuzhu" in his dream and the novel "A party in the Palace of Sea God" showed his dissatisfaction with the reality of feudal



society at that time through the strange and fantastic story in the sea palace.

And the novel “Welcoming the full moon at Bubyok Pavilion” is about a couple’s affection and ideal for happiness through the strange meeting between a real man and a girl who went up to the kingdom of heaven and became a fairy after she left the world by the invasion of foreign enemies. This is a typical example of romantic tendency. At that time, it was impossible to achieve their dream under the rule of Korean Feudal Dynasty, so the writer embellished that the love of the two young man and woman had been realized by the help of the Buddha and the strange meeting in heaven.

The romantic orientation towards the emancipation of human individuality was characteristically expressed in the short story “The Love of Ri Sim and Choe Rang.” The love of a young man and woman, which suffered vicissitudes under the patriarchal feudal system, was achieved only by the devoted efforts of the heroine Choe Rang. But their happiness was shattered when Choe Rang was killed by foreign invaders. The writer embroidered that their love which could not be realised in reality, was being carried forward and realized by revival of the dead heroine. With this romantic method, the writer artistically clarified the ardent desire that the free ideal of human individuality could not be obstructed or should not be hindered by any socio-historical circumstances or events. The application of the romantic method can be found in the depiction of the dream world in the 16th-century Rim Je’s novel “Record of Won’s Dream.”

The literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea, which formed a romantic tendency in the poetic literature of Koryo and showed a strong romantic tendency in the novel literature of Korean feudal dynasty, was actively developed, broadening its theme and using various romantic techniques with the new socio-historical environment as the background, in which Imjin Patriotic War and War of Byongja in the period from seventeenth to nineteenth century and the idea of “*Silhak*” (useful knowledge) appeared.

The novellas “The History of Imjin War,” “The Tale of Mrs Pak,” “Mongyudalchonrok” (Record of walking along the River Dalchon in a dream), “A heroine,” “The Tale of Jong Su Gyong,” “The Tale of Paek Hak Son” “The Tale of Wang Jae Hong,” “The Tale of Ri Dae Bong,” “The Tale of Hong Ge Wol” “A Record of Dream” and so on reflected anti-aggression and patriotic desire, ideas and feelings of Korean people and the novel “Gunnmong”(Dream of 9 adolescents) and the novella “Song of Tongson” showed corruptness of the feudal society and the desire for escaping from the class and status inequality. The novella “Kumsukimong”(a strange dream of birds and other animals) and the short story

“Tale of Ho Saeng” expressed social reform idea and desire for an ideal society.

### **Artistic Interpretation in the Literature with Romantic Tendency in Medieval Korea**

The organic combination of realistic description and romantic description is one of the main characteristics of romantic tendency in Medieval Korea. The relation to realism in the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea can be found in the organic harmonization of the realistic description of man and life in the real world with the main emphasis on the romantic description based on the subjective ideal of the writer. The combination of realistic elements to romantic works was more evident in the novel literature of Korean Feudal Dynasty, especially in the novel literature of the post-sixteenth century.

A typical example is Kim Man Jung’s novel “Gyunmong.” The work is about Yang So Yu, a monk of heaven, who was revived as a human being and fell in love with Jin Chae Bong and other 7 fairies, who were also revived as human beings, before returning to Ryonhwa Peak, a world of heaven. It is realistic in that the stage of the expression of the heroes' characters is basically a real world and their love relations are based on the feudal morality and order of a concubine system, and it is romantic that it is based on fantastic material in the end of their life, affection and destiny.

It is said that “Gyunmong” was written by Kim Man Jung to console his mother, saying that wealth and prosperity are just transient while he was in a penal area. It is also said that when Kim Man Jung went to China as an envoy, his mother, who liked a storybook, asked him to buy one from China, but he forgot it and went back, and only when he crossed the Amnok River, he suddenly remembered it and wrote it in the sedan chair.

In the novel, the hero, Yang So Yu and eight fairies were revived as human beings and met each other in the real world and went up to the world of heaven again. It shows the aspiration of the people at that time to escape from the feudal fetters of restraining human individuality. In a previous incarnation, the hero Yang So Yu went to the Palace of Sea God as a servant of a high official for ten years, and after drinking, he flirted with 8 fairies on his way back, and when he returns to the Buddhist sanctum, he forgets Buddhism and admires the human world. As a sin, he is abandoned by the official, exiled to the human world, and eight fairies who met him are also exiled and born into the human world as women of different identities.

The next part of the novel depicts that Yang So Yu enjoys all kinds of pleasure and prosperity in the human world, where he has close relations with eight fairies. He is born as a son of Yang Cho Sa and is promoted to a minister of the country

after passing the exam for the government service. And he meets and falls in love with several women such as Jin Chae Bong, Kye Som Wol and Jong Kyong Pae, who are transformation of eight fairies. The novel ends when Yang So Yu goes up to the world of heaven after he enjoyed all kinds of pleasure and prosperity in the human world, saying that the happiness in the human world is just like a dream for a moment, no matter how good it may be. It criticizes the restraint on the free development of human individuality through portraying the hero Yang So Yu, who breaks the doctrine of Buddhism and Confucianism and behaves as he wishes, while setting the world of heaven and the realistic human world in a fantastic story.

Among the works created by adhering realistic creative methods to the main emphasis on the romantic method are “The tale of Mrs. Pak,” “The Tale of Paekhakson,” “The Heroine,” and “The Tale of Ri Dae Bong,” which are war novels of a patriotic and anti-aggressive theme in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The works portrayed the reality of feudal society, including the invasion of foreign enemies and discord within feudal rulers in a realistic way, and the extraordinary talents of Pak, who does magic in the novel “The tale of Mrs Pak” and the outstanding military exploits of the heroine, Jo Un Ha in the novel “The Tale of Paekhakson,” of the heroine, Jang Sol Bing in “The Heroine” and of Jang Ae Hwang in “The Tale of Ri Dae Bong” were described in a romantic way.

Therefore, they clearly reveal the artistic characteristics of the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea in which the romantic and the realistic are harmoniously combined. The combination of the romantic and the realistic in the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea was also expressed in the fact that the first half of a novel showed the real facts and human beings found in the real world and the second half or the last part showed the fantastic ideal world. For example, in the medieval novel “The Tale of Hong Gil Dong,” the first half revealed and criticized in a realistic way inequality of status such as discrimination of a wife’s child and a concubine’s child in Korean Feudal Dynasty society and the reactionary and unpopular character of the exploiting society which violated the independence of man and the second half created the superhuman character with extraordinary strength and magic, as well as unfolding the romantic scene of building Ryuldo, an ideal society to cope with the unfair feudal ruling society.

The classic novel “The Tale of Sim Chong” shows the realistic portrayal of the miserable and poor life of Sim Chong and her father on the basis of the reality in the eighteenth century in the first half but in the second half, it portrays the romantic life of Sim Chong, who threw herself into the River Rimdang for 300 *soks* of rice offered to Buddha, were welcomed as a guest of honor in the Palace of Sea God,

met her dead mother, turned into a flower after she came out of the Palace, was transformed into a peerless beauty, became a queen and organized a party for the blind to find her father and helped him see again. The novel “The Tale of Ho Saeng” by Pak Yon Am in the eighteenth century emphasized the character of Ho Saeng, an advanced intellectual who actively tried to reform the old feudal society and desired for a new society on the basis of *Silhak* idea. In the first part, it portrayed Ho Saeng’s miserable life and the occasion of the transition to a new life in a realistic way, and in the second part, it romantically described the process of building an ideal “equal society” by exploiting “Islands” and an uninhabited island after he went to an islet, monopolized horse’s manes and earned huge wealth.

One of the typical works of Pak Yon Am(1737-1805), the novel “The Tale of Ho Saeng, is in the 26-volume travel book “A diary of trip to Rehe.” Ho Saeng lives in a very shabby cottage, where rain drops into the room and the inside is very draughty. But he doesn’t care about it and he only reads books and lives on wages of his wife. His wife tells him to become a government official, do business or be an artisan. But he says that he can’t be a government official because he hasn’t finished studying yet and he can’t also do business because he doesn’t have money and he can’t be a artisan because he doesn’t have any skills. But his wife forces him to be a thief. So, he closes his books and goes to the richest man, Byon in his street, borrows 10000 *nyangs* from him, goes to an area, where he does fruit business and earns 100000 *nyangs*. And then he goes to an islet, where he does mane business and becomes a millionaire. Later, he meets 2000 “gangs” hiding in an area and goes to an uninhabited island to establish “an ideal society.” Hearing that an area of Japan is suffering from famine, he sells rice to the place and earns one million *nyangs*. After that, he leaves the island with all literate people and throws half a million *nyangs* into the sea and burns down all the ships. He hands over 400, 000 *nayngs* to the poor people, returns 100, 000 *nayngs* to the richman Byon, and goes back to his old cottage to be a scholar.

The novel “The Tale of Ho Saeng” reflected the serious socio-political crisis at the end of the feudal period and asserted the practical economic idea of *Silhak* scholars to cope with it. The novel showed aspiration for coping with the corrupt feudal ruling order through the process in which Ho Saeng established “an ideal society” on an uninhabited island with rebellion peasants after he embarked on business. And this aspiration was more clearly emphasized in the contradiction with Ri Wan, who was so-called vassal trusted by the government. Although expressing sympathy for the struggle of rebellion peasants, it has some limitations, such as failing to support their struggle or represent their fundamental requirements, but

it reflects vividly the reality of the late feudal period, which was tangled with contradictions and when there was a modern tendency, and it also expresses its simple fantasy of a “good-to-live” society. So it is a novel of literary significance.

As we can see, the literature with romantic tendency in medieval Korea has a distinct feature of combining the romantic with the realistic. However, European progressive romantic novels such as “*Les Misérables*” and “*The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*” by Victor Hugo and “*The Count of Monte Cristo*” by Alexandre Dumas mainly rely on the romantic description including character relations, describing characters and overall composition in the novels, though there are some realistic elements in depicting some circumstances and events.

As a typical example, “*The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*” (1831) by Victor Hugo (1802-1885), a representative of French progressive romantic literature, showed a typical romantic style. “Victor Marie Hugo was a French poet, novelist and dramatist of the Romantic movement” (Maximud 101). “This extraordinary historical novel, set in Medieval Paris under the twin towers of its greatest structure and supreme symbol, the cathedral of Notre-Dame, is the haunting drama of Quasimodo, the hunchback, Esmeralda, the gypsy dancer, and Claude Frollo, the priest tortured by the specter of his own damnation” (Maximud 101).

The novel is set in Paris in the 15th century. In the novel, Quasimodo, who rings bells, Father Claude Frollo and Phoebus de Châteaupiers are competing for winning Esmeralda’s heart, who is a beautiful gypsy girl. But only, Quasimodo, the hunchback could give her true love. In the novel, the writer exposed the unpopular character of the feudal ruling class and the medieval church and showed the spiritual and moral superiority of the people through the portrayal of Esmerald, who kept chastity at the cost of her life, and of self-sacrificing Quasimodo. The philosophical basis of this novel is that the world is the battlefield of good and evil and in this battle evil is doomed to defeat. “This novel is a work against ignorance and injustice” (Maximud 101).

Hugo regarded the process of historical development as that of the human spirit. According to him, in this process, man overcomes errors, evil and crimes and develops “from darkness into brightness” and from evil to good and therefore “the final victory of good is predestined to be achieved” by divine providence. This idealism dominated Hugo’s writing. In the novel, the writer showed a typical romantic style of writing. Quasimodo and Claude are typical romantic characters. Quasimodo has a noble spiritual beauty in his unusually ugly, deformed body. Claude is an animal with a “noble and beautiful” body. The writer, showing their contrasting love for Esmerald, stressed that although the love was deformed and

ignorant, it aroused genuine humanity to the working people, but it seemingly aroused the nature of a beast to Claude, “a good ascetic.”

But the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea has the characteristic of the organic combination of the realistic and the romantic style of writing, unlike European Progressive Romantic literature. It is one of unique characteristics of the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea that the characters and contents of life reflect the idea and emotions of patriotism. Progressive romantic literature of Europe was generally created by writers who were disillusioned with and denied unreasonable exploitative social realities and aspired to a more beautiful future. Therefore, the heroes of romantic literature are portrayed as those who possess idealized character, superhuman power, spirit and talent as rebels against the reality of the era.

Their writings are filled with strong-willed heroes, formidable events, tragic situations, powerful conflicting passions, and exotic picutres. (Liu Bingshan 212)

Hero-figures and heroic deeds were accorded huge significance, expressed dramatically throughout different art forms, and often through chosen lifestyle. (Stevens 17)

Simultaneously and sometimes confusingly, rebellious anti-heroes were also sought out, invented or re-interpreted, for example, Prometheus for Mary Shelley, and Milton’s Satan for William Blake. (Stevens 17)

This is common among progressive romantic literatures of all countries. Jean Valjean in “*Les Misérables*,” who has incomparable physical strength, and Edmond Dantes in “*The Count of Monte Cristo*,” who takes revenge on his enemies with superhuman wisdom and will, are all depicted as idealized characters as rebels against the realities. The novel “*The Count of Monte Cristo*” severly exposes and condemns the corruptness of a capitalist society where it is common to sacrifice others for individual comfort and pleasure and which is based on extreme egoism. It is vividly expressed not only through the ill-fated destiny of the hero, Edmond Dantes, but also through the horrible crimes such as Danglars, who became a banker by means of fraud and deception, Fernand, who was promoted to a lieutenant general and a count, and Monsieur Villefort, the crown prosecutor, who pretended to be a so-called “protector of the law”, and committed vicious acts.

Through portraying such characters, the novel sharply revealed and criticized the corruptness of a capitalist society where social evils prevail, and it also

artistically confirmed the victory of good and justice over evil and injustice through the revenge of Dantes and downfall of his enemies. The novel deals with the events in an extraordinarily acute dramatic situation, unfolding the plot with great interest, and depicts the hero's destiny, his character and his activities as outstanding and ideal things, which cannot be seen in reality, thus sustaining its characteristics as a romantic work. However, with these general characteristics of romantic literature, the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea reflects the warm thoughts and feelings and passion of the writer who loves the country and the nation ardently, so that the idea of patriotism was strongly expressed in the characters and content of life.

First of all, it can be found in the fact that writing activities had a tendency of fantastically and romantically portraying the ardent desire of Korean people for an ideal society in which everyone can live equally well without any exploitation, oppression and social inequality. The poems of Ri In Ro and Jin Hua, who depicted the fairy-tale ideal world of "paradise," and "Gwon Sang finds a real paradise," which unfolded the ideal life world, the fantastic story in which Sim Chong became a queen after throwing herself into the River Rimdang, "A gourd seed" in which the hero became a richman with jewels such as gold and silver pouring out of a gourd, the romantic life image of buiding Ryuldo, the story of establishing "an ideal society" where everyone lives equally together after cultivating an uninhabited island and "Byonsan Islands" are works of unique artistic characteristics of the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea which aspires to people's independent desire and wish.

These romantic images are an expression of boundless sympathy and love for the people who were torn, hungry and maltreated in the exploiting society, and a reflection of the romantic world of progressive writers who were trying to realize the desire of the people by building an "ideal society" where everyone lives on an equal footing. The patriotic characteristics of the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korea can also be found in the fact that in anti-aggressive and patriotic works and other works which aspired to demonstrate wisdom and spirit of the nation and ardently desired for the prosperity of the country, the hero and other positive characters were portrayed as extraordinary, heroic and patriotic ones.

In medieval literature with romantic tendency, many war stories about female generals were produced, which created the anti-aggressive and patriotic characters of Korean People during Imjin Patriotic War and Byongja War. The heroines here are wide figures such as Kang Sol Bing, Jang Ae Hwang and Jo Un Ha, who displayed courage and performed heroic feats in the battles against invaders as

generals, and Mrs Pak, who helped her husband be promoted to a government post with an exquisite ink container and killed the enemy commander in an instant with mysterious magic and made other general surrender, thus defeating enemies.

For example, the novel “The Tale of Paekhakson” in which Jo Un Ha is the hero, reflects in depth the spirit of anti-aggression and patriotism and sharply criticizes injustice, so it is appreciated as a distinguished work of certain literary significance. Ryu Baek Ro in the novel is the only son of Ryu Tae Jong who was sacked from the government by treacherous vassals and came to an outback village. He receives Paekhakson (a fan with a picture of white cranes) which has been handed down as an heirloom when he was separated from his father. Baek Ro who set out for looking for Mr Un Pa met Un Ha, a daughter of Jo Song Ro, a dignitary by chance in an area and gave him Paekhakson as a token to form the ties of love. After being taught by Mr. Un Pa for the next three years, Paek Ro win the first place in the exam for the government service and becomes a head of the government academy. And his father, Ryu Tae Jong, is also appointed to a high post.

Later, Paek Ro, who became a royal inspector, toured the country and managed to look for Un Ha. At that time, when a minister of state, Choe Guk Yang tries to have Un Ha for his daughter-in-law, she abstains from food and becomes ill and her father, Jo Song Ro, who also knows the relation between her and Ryu Baek Ro, also refuses his propose. Choe Kuk Yang tries to execute Jo Song Ro family with malice. But the governor of an area, Jin Hung Ro (Ryu Baek Ro’s uncle) hid them. On their way to an area, Jo Song Ro and his wife dies of illness and Un Ha becomes orphaned. She goes back to their homeland with her maid and suffers all sorts of hardships.

Then, tens of thousands of foreign enemies invade the country. Ryu Baek Ro goes to Choe Guk Yang, a minister of state and asks him to send himself to the battlefield. At last, he is appointed to a marshal and leads 30 000 soldiers to the battlefield. Ryu Baek Ro, who is driven into trouble by harmful acts of Choe Guk Yang, desperately fights against the enemy. But he is captured. At that time, Jo Un Ha drop in a tavern with her maid and hears that Ryu Paek Ro was caught alive by the enemy and is in trouble. When it is reported that Ryu Baek Ro was defeated by the enemies, Choe Guk Yang tells the emperor that Ryu Baek Ro surrendered. And he takes Baek Ro’s parents to jail. At that very moment, Un Ha reaches the capital and writes to the emperor that there is a traitor in the government who is communicating secretly with the enemies and no food and forage was not sent to the battlefielf owing to him and the soldiers are suffering from lack of food, that although Ryu Baek Ro was captured, he hasn’t surrender and are still royal to the emperor, and that she is asking for permission to go to the battlefield to kill the



enemy commander in spite of a female.

The emperor plans to appoint Jo Un Ha as a marshal and give her 30 000 soldiers. She defeats the enemies by means of magic of Paekhakson in the battle and Ryu Paek Ro, who was captured, is rescued by her. Jo Un Ha sends the surrendered enemy commander to the captial and releases all captured enemy soldiers. She, on her way back, organizes a paryt to comfort her soldiers and tells Ryu Baek Ro what she has experienced so far and takes out Paekhakson which she has kept for years. Only then, Baek Ro notices that she is Jo Un Ha. The emperor highly appreciates their merits. The novel concludes with a large wedding of Ryu Paek Ro and Jo Un Ha organized by the country.

The works with romantic tendency on the patriotic theme of anti-aggression created at that time were based on historical facts and showed that patriotic commanders and female generals - the main characters including the hero, were superior to the enemies in mental, moral, military and technical way in their strategy and strength, by employing various fantastic and magical methods, thus inspiring the patriotic idea and national pride.

### **Conclusion**

Romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature has a distinct feature in its formation and development, which distinguishes it from European progressive romantic literature. European Progressive Romantic literature was formed in the late eighteenth century and existed until 1830s. But it could not give a correct answer to the requirements of the era and started to decline due to its own limitations and it was replaced with a new trend, critical realism literature. Unlike it, romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature was formed in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries and existed throughout the whole period of development of medieval literature. The literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature was created in an organic relationship with realism from the overall composition of a work to the depiction of its character. But European Progressive Romantic literature mainly relied on the romantic method.

In European Progressive Romantic literature, heroes are mainly depicted as an idealized character. So they are rebels who fight against the reality. But the literature with romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature is characterized by the strong expression of patriotic ideas in the characters' personalities and contents of life by reflecting warm thoughts and feelings and passions of the writers who ardently loved the country and the nation.

Study on romantic tendency in Medieval Korean literature gives people

over the world not only a wide and rich knowledge about the art and literature in Korea, but also adds to the diversity of world-treasure house of literature. It is also significant for enriching culture and emotion of people as well as researchers of literature and developing neighborly relations among the nations and countries in the world by getting better acquainted with the history, culture and national customs and manners of others despite different cultural and emotional backgrounds.

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