

LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION

A *KASA* OF THE APRIL 1960 REVOLUTION

Introduction by DAWN D. KIM and BRUCE FULTON

On March 15, 1960, a protest opposing the electoral corruption of Syngman Rhee (Yi Süngman)'s autocratic administration took place in Masan, South Kyöngsang Province. The demonstrators were met with great violence at the hands of the police. About a month later, on April 11, the body of seventeen-year-old student Kim Chuyöŏl was found in the harbor at Masan, his skull split by a tear gas grenade. This incident ignited the nation and sparked the April 19 protest, led by Korea University students in Seoul, against electoral corruption.

Ünch'on Cho Aeyöng (1911–2000), in a writing career extending from the 1920s to the 1991s, composed *sijo* and *kasa*. In 1963 she memorialized the April 1960 uprising in her *kasa* “Haksaeng üigö hyöngmyöng ka,” translated here. A veteran of the Kwangju Student Movement of 1929, which inspired her 1930 *kasa* “Ulbum ka” (Song of resentment), Cho seems to have drawn renewed creative energy from the upheavals of the early 1960s: Among the 19 of her *kasa* catalogued in Shin Song's 2015 essay on her works, it was only the second to appear after her 1932 *kasa* “Shinhon ka” (Song of a newlywed) but was followed by another dozen works in this genre, the last appearing in 1991.

REFERENCES

- Fulton, Bruce. “Three Early-Modern *Kasa*.” *Acta Koreana* 20, no. 1 (June 2017): 309–10.
Fulton, Bruce and Ju-Chan, trans. “Song of Resentment” and “Song of a Newlywed (Excerpt).” Both by Cho Aeyöng, *Acta Koreana* 20, no. 1 (June 2017): 312–13.
Shin Song, “Ünch'on *kasa* e nat'an-an chakka üisik” (Authorial sensibility in Ünch'on Cho Aeyöng's *kasa*), *Ömun nonch'ong* 27 (2015): 119–45.
Yu Chöngsön, *Kündae kibaeng kasa yön'gu* (A study of early-modern travel *kasa*). Seoul: Pogosa, 2013, pp. 355–62.

SONG OF THE STUDENTS' NOBLE REVOLT

By CHO AEYÖNG
Translated by DAWN D. KIM

Our lives are like
Heartrending like

What follows next
The student protests

One month before
Protest! Protesting

The Masan riots
The rigged election

A bloody day
Student protestors

A band of heroes
Fired upon

Dragging, grabbing
They shot and shot

The injured students,
They shot to kill

The corpse they tossed
Who would have thought

Deep in the sea
It would come ashore

This brutality
Lit fires that blazed

By the police
In everyone

Gather all and
Listen to them

Murmur murmur
Curse the Liberal Party

Democratic state
But strongarm politics

How nice it sounds
Through and through

Hear them call out,
A society of

Twelve hellish years,
Vicious thugs!

Sigh upon sigh
They come together

Patriots all
Spirits falling

Attaboy, attagirl!
Students bonding

Young men and women
See them rising up

And on that day
Kodae students

Eighteenth of April
Raise pulsing fists

Thuggish reapers
Swing and slash

Armed with sickles
Mow down the students

While Tongdaemun
Do not budge

Constabulary
Don't lift a finger

Listen to them,
The so-called police:

The people attacking
You vicious thugs!

DAWN D. KIM (dawnkim@arko.ca) *is a graduate student in the Faculty of Arts, The University of British Columbia, Canada.*