

## Preface

Each family rich in tradition has a gem passed down as a family treasure through generations, and each nation with a long history has great figures among its ancestors that are more precious than gems.

Korean stands on many millennia of history, looking back on a vast past studded with great figures sparkling like diamonds and venerated by the entire nation for generations.

Deplorably, however, we do not know that we have our own treasures at home and envy our neighbors because of their own treasures. We do not know that great personalities exist among our own ancestors, and we look up to those of foreign countries.

We must first keep our own family treasure and let the light shine on it. We must venerate our own ancestors and feel pride in them. In the past, even under the Japanese occupation, we tried not to lose our own national studies and bring them to the fore as far as we could. Now, we are free to cherish our own academic heritage.

Nevertheless, we have lukewarm affection for and interest in our traditional knowledge and science. There is also a lack of publica-

tions to satisfy the need of those who seek knowledge.

Accordingly, books about our history and geography or biographies of national heroes and heroines are appreciated deeply in the writing and publishing milieu.

Even more valuable are the publications presenting research results in these areas. More still, we feel the need for a public educational version to provide people with an easy-to-read source of common knowledge. The rationale behind this is simple. Knowledge and science of one's own country must not be the subject of research of a small number of researchers; rather, they must spread like wildfire as a common knowledge shared by all people.

In my intention to pursue this end, I decided to write an academic paper on Saimdang and Yulgok. It is written in a narrative style so that people learn their lives through an easily digestible reading while at the same time enjoy their stories.

Despite the use of a narrative style as a form of writing, to make the book fun, easy-to-understand, and accessible to everyone, no compromise has been made in staying on a strictly academic

path, based on a thorough literature research.

Unfortunately, there are books that spread inaccurate descriptions of facts, although they were written with good intentions of providing common knowledge of our history, geography, and great figures. Great care must be taken to convey accurate facts, especially in a book presenting historical figures in a narrative style.

With this in mind, I kept the easy and simple writing style but completely refrained from adding or omitting events that may give an artificial flavor to the book. I wrote this book within the self-imposed boundary of presenting accurate facts based on literature and records. It would be my joy to see this book contribute to enhancing our common knowledge.

December 1966

Nosan Lee Eun-sang

## Preface to the Second Revised Edition of *Saimdang and Yulgok*

As is well-known, many scholars have conducted research on Shin Saimdang and Yulgok Yi I from various perspectives.

Notable among such works is a book titled *Saimdang and Yulgok* written by Nosan Lee Eun-Sang (1903~1982) in 1966. This book records the lives and achievements of Shin Saimdang and Yulgok, compiling the stories less known to the public that have been passed down orally or presented in the writings of the contemporaries of Shin Saimdang and Yulgok, after carefully selecting and thoroughly investigating them. Six decades has passed since then and the book has long been out of print with no prospect of a reprint.

Driven by the desire to have this valuable record authored by Nosan widely read by people living in the present era and to present afresh *Saimdang and Yulgok* as guiding stars for many generations to come, we have decided to reprint this book, adding new materials that have been unearthed since its first edition. We would like to ask researchers and interested readers to afford understanding for some inevitably overlapping parts. Certain expressions have been simplified by editorial decisions.

It is our sincere hope that this book will serve as a good resource for understanding still another aspect of Shin Saimdang and Yulgok, the most famous mother and son in our history. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the Governor of Gangwon-do and the Mayor of Gangneung-si for their support for this publication.

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