Article

The Agency of *Hoseung* (Foreign Monk 胡僧) in Cotton Dissemination in the Goryeo-Joseon Transition Period: A Korean Case of Medieval Globalism

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Introduction

"Why have cotton when you can have silk"—this well-known phrase captures the essence that silk represents luxury whereas cotton is common. The famous "Silk Roads" highlights the unsurpassed value of silk favored by wealthy people all over the world. Compared to silk, cotton is for commoners. It was the material of uniform-like clothes worn by the people of Communist China in the mid-20th century, which Western journalists referred as "blue ants." It is also the material of blue jeans in the United States, leading the whole world to pragmatic fashion since the Second World War.

Although the social class of cotton consumption is currently unpretentious, the history of cotton and its role in human history is no less important than that of silk. Cotton has been deemed as the crop providing the first step in Pomerantz's (2002) Great Divergence, when the historically overpowering Chinese economic supremacy was pushed back by the West.[1] Most importantly, it was the catalyst for the Industrial Revolution that ensured the economic hegemony of the modern Western countries,[2] and also the root cause of American racial conflict and Civil War (1861-1865), as epitomized in the slogan "Cotton is King." In light of these historical facts, Beckert (2014) argued that cotton is the key to understanding the modern world with its inequality and globalization and the ever-changing political economy of capitalism.

Having originated in the Indian subcontinent,[3] cotton was first circulated to the rest of the Old World as a luxury item (Yates 1843, 334-54). It is well-ventilated and lightweight in summer, while cold- and wind-proof, making

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1. For a critical reading of Pomeranz's approach, see Huang 2002.
2. Hobsbawm (1999, 34) highlighted the role of cotton in his remark, "Whoever says Industrial Revolution, says cotton."
3. Cotton fibers have been found in two different burial sites at Mehrgarh, Pakistan, in the Neolithic period, dated to the 6th millennium BC (Moulherat et al. 2002). For the spread of cotton agriculture in the Old World, refer to Brite and Marston 2013. Archaeological discoveries indicate that cotton was independently cultivated in the New World earlier than or concurrently as in the Indian subcontinent. Ancient cotton fabrics, dated to 7000 BC and 1200 BC, have been found in Peru (Beresford-Jones et al. 2018) and Mexico (Smith and Hirth 1988) respectively. The widespread use of cotton was already noted in the *Diario* of Christopher Columbus (Keegan 2015).

winter more bearable for its wearer. Cotton fabrics from India and Persia spread into the Islamic world with the establishment of the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258) in Iraq, and then they were transmitted to Europe through the border of the Islamic regions (Watson, 1974, 1977, 2009; Serjeant 1942). Although it first appeared gifts or international trade items from the Western Regions 西域 in China from earlier history (Carrington 1943), cotton, unlike silk, was not grown indigenously in inland China until the 11th century. By the early Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), however, the production of cotton fabrics in China rapidly expanded to the extent that they were collected as taxes for the first time in Chinese history (Chao 1977, 4-17; Pelliot 1959, 425-531; Choi 2016). During the period 1350-1850, cotton economy in China provided the foundation of the whole process of commercialization in the Yangzi delta, a historical phenomenon termed "the cotton revolution" (Huang 1990).

It is in the medieval period that cotton gained a strong presence in human history (Wescher 1948; Shamir 2019), and cotton manufacturing reached its maximum historical growth across a large geographical expanse by the late medieval period (Mazzaoui 1981, 7-27). The end phase of this centuries-long evolvement took place in Goryeo Korea at the eastern corner of Eurasia, as we shall see in this paper. Rather unusual for the case of botanical transmissions, Korean historical sources made clear notes of who introduced cottonseeds to the Korean peninsula with the exact time of its transmission, and how it happened. Another exceptional point to note is their rapid adoption of cotton culture within three years since its introduction, and equally rapid spreading of its manufacturing to "the whole country within ten years."[4] The speed of cotton spread in Goryeo would be better appreciated in a wider context. England, for its comparison, is known to have imported cotton wool from the Genoese and Venetians in the early 14th century, earlier than Goryeo, but used it only for candlewicks initially (RSA 1837, 139-58; 150), and not established cotton fabric making until the 16th century. Compared to the English counterpart, the time spent to reach the stage of cotton weaving from the arrival of cottonseeds in the Goryeo society is remarkably short.

Despite such a rare achievement, the Korean story of cotton transmission has remained only as a local event separate from a large international network.

4. The original text is as follows: "不十年, 又遍一國" (*Taejo sillok* [*Annals of King Taejo*], *gwon* 14, 13th day of the 6th lunar month, 1398).

It has given too much focus on the personal achievement of Mun Ik-jeom 文益漸 (1329-1398), who was recorded to have brought cottonseeds from Yuan China to Goryeo Korea during King Gongmin's reign (1351-1374) in 1363. The approach to the cultural turning-point as a personal adventure has a risk of ignoring the complex network of various intertwined agencies at play, by oversimplifying the event to another case of hero worship. Despite Mun's pioneering contribution, cottonseeds alone do not make cotton fabrics. Among several agencies involved in the long process from seed to weaving, this paper will focus on a driving force for technological innovation of making cottonseeds into cotton clothes in late Medieval Korea. For this aim in mind, we will reevaluate the role and contribution of *Hoseung* Hongwon 胡僧弘願, who introduced the new technique that had not been known in Korean textile culture. For all his ground-breaking contribution, his agency of technical transmission has been rather neglected from the existing study.[5] This research will do justice to the situation in which an anonymous foreign monk lived and worked, eventually leading to a richer understanding of the dynamic social situation of the turbulent Goryeo-Joseon dynastic transition period in the context of the globalised medieval world.

Hoseung 胡僧 as a "Foreign Monk"

Before going into the main section, we need to define the word *hoseung* with a more accurate English translation for it, since, although more commonly translated as a "barbarian monk" or a "foreign monk" into Korean, *hoseung* in Mun Ik-jeom's story is translated as a "Chinese monk" or sometimes a "Yuan monk" following the contemporary ruling dynasty of China. It is important to note here that an established practice in Korean historical records was to call any monk of Han Chinese ethnicity as Hanseung 漢僧, Jinseung 晋僧, or Dangseung 唐僧 in accordance to the Chinese dynasty of the period. Likewise, a monk sent from the Song court was stated as Songseung 宋僧 in the *Goryeosa* (*History of Goryeo*).[6] In contrast, a monk from the Northern Yuan dynasty was called *hoseung* if he was not Han Chinese.[7] Therefore, a more proper translation of *hoseung* in the story of cotton transmission should be a "barbarian monk" or, more appropriately, a "foreign monk," as his ethnicity was non-Chinese from a region where cotton growing was indigenous and widespread. I take the translation of "a foreign monk" for *hoseung* throughout this paper, and provide my theory of his origin in the final section of the paper.

Different Views on the Foreign Monk in the Cotton Dissemination Story in Korea

The story of Mun bringing cotton to Goryeo appears once in the *Goryeosa* and many times in the *Joseon wangjo sillok* (*Annals of the Joseon Dynasty*, hereafter *sillok*). As Mun's story was reiterated over the course of time, it inevitably led to various versions with different details and controversial issues. The case of a foreign monk is one of such controversies and variations Mun's story instigated.

Among the official historical records, Mun's obituary in the *Taejo sillok* in 1398 is the only case to mention 胡僧弘願, a foreign monk with a name Hongwon. The obituary confirms the following facts: Mun Ik-jeom was born during King Chungsuk's 16th year in 1331 and died during the seventh year of King Taejo of the Joseon dynasty in 1398, signifying that Mun lived through the historical turning point of Yuan being replaced by Ming in China and Goryeo by Joseon in the Korean peninsula. During the ninth year of King Gongmin's reign in 1360, he passed the state examination to become a government official of Goryeo, which then remained under the sway of Yuan China for more than a century. During King Gongmin's 11th year in 1362, when Duke Deokheung 德興君 threatened the throne of King Gongmin with the support of the Yuan court, Mun was sent to Yuan China as a junior member of diplomatic envoy and stayed there until Duke was defeated in 1363. On his way home from China, Mun had gathered cottonseeds and brought them to Goryeo. It reads as follows:

5. Some scholars completely disregard the foreign monk's involvemen in the cotton manufacturing, as in Moon (2003).
6. *Goryeosa*, *gwon* 11, 19th and 20th day of the 9th lunar month, 1096.
7. *Goryeosa*, *gwon* 44, 19th day of the 9th lunar month, 1374.

> …On his return home, Mun saw a cotton plant by the roadside and picked up about ten seeds and put them in his pocket. When he arrived in Jinju (his hometown) in the year Gapjin (during the 13th year of King Gongmin's reign, 1364), he shared half of them with Jeong Cheon-ik 鄭天益, a fellow countryman who was a retiree from his post of *Jeongaekryeong* 典客令. Both of them planted (their share of seeds) but only one of the planted survived. In the autumn when Cheon-ik harvested seeds, the number was over a hundred. They were planted every year, and in the spring of the year Jeongmi (1367), the seeds were divided and given to villages to encourage planting them. Every seed that Ik-jeom planted did not survive. A foreign monk called Hongwon came to Cheon-ik's house and, weeping with joy when he saw cotton, said "I never thought I could see things from my homeland again until today." Cheon-ik made him stay, and after a few days of hospitality, asked about the technique of making yarn and weaving. Hongwon gave the details and even made the equipment. Cheon-ik taught them to a female servant of the house, who could weave one roll of cotton. It (the information) was delivered to neighbouring villages, which learned from each other, and distributed to the next village and finally to the whole country within ten years.[8] (parentheses mine)

According to this record, Mun brought cottonseeds from Yuan China and helped Jeong Cheon-ik (14th century, exact date unknown) succeed in cotton cultivation, while Hongwon the foreign monk was crucial in making the necessary tools for cotton weaving.

Interestingly enough, we find a statement in the *Goryeosa* that contradicts the above account. It contains a much simpler story of Mun's import of cotton. It reads:

> Mun obtained cottonseeds and returned hometown to his father-in-law (?)[9] Jeong Cheon-ik to plant them. At first, the technique of cultivation was not known, so it all died but only one stem, but after three years, it reproduced greatly. Both cotton gin and carding instrument were made by Jeong Cheon-ik.[10]

8. The original text is as follows: "…將還, 見路傍木緜樹, 取其實十許枚, 盛囊以來. 甲辰, 至晋州, 以其半與鄕人典客令致仕鄭天益, 種而培養, 唯一枚得生. 天益至秋取實至百許枚, 年年加種, 至丁未春, 分其種以給鄕里, 勸令種養. 益漸自種, 皆不榮. 胡僧弘願到天益家, 見木緜感泣曰: '不圖今日, 復見本土之物.' 天益留飯數日, 因問繰織之術, 弘願備說其詳, 且作具與之. 天益教其家婢, 織成一匹. 隣里傳相學得, 以遍一鄕, 不十年, 又遍一國" (*Taejo sillok*, *gwon* 14, 13th day of the 6th lunar month, 7th year of King Taejo's reign 1398). All translations of the Chinese classics in the article are mine.

9. Unlike its present usage, the *Goryeosa* and the *sillok* used the word 舅 to denote an elder of the village, while the word 妻父 for "father-in-law."

The account of the *Goryeosa* agrees to *Taejo sillok* on that Mun had brought cottonseeds before Jeong cultivated it, but no mention was made of a foreign monk or his involvement in the process of cotton manufacturing.

Which of the records is more reliable? To find out exactly what happened, it should be noted that the *Goryeosa* was completed later than the *Taejo sillok*. The compilation of histories of Goryeo had been started in the very early days of the Joseon dynasty, which established itself through the dynastic revolution. And its completion, now known as the *Goryeosa*, was made during the first year of King Munjong's (fifth king of the Joseon dynasty) reign in 1451. This means, although Goryeo preceded Joseon in chronological order, the contents of the *sillok* prior to 1451 are before those of the *Goryeosa*. We can thus safely argue that the account in Mun's obituary of the *Taejo sillok* was the earlier record of cotton dissemination than that of the *Goryeosa*.

Another point to note is that, in the period leading up to the completion of the *Goryeosa*, especially during King Sejong's reign, the new Joseon dynasty was committed to reforming what they believed to be a troublesome society of the late Goryeo period, thereby securing its legitimacy. By establishing state policies of eradicating foreignness in the society, the Joseon Confucian literati asserted to be able to minimize the negative aspects of Goryeo society, apparently having resulted from too much contact with foreign influence. In the process, the disdain and disregard for foreigners were gradually strengthened and ever more heightened than under the reigns of the previous kings. The best example to show their staunch Confucian attitude is the royal edict in 1427 during King Sejong's reign (1418-1450) toward *hoehoe* 回回, Muslims who had lived in the Korean peninsula since the late Goryeo period. The edict prohibited any sign of Islamic cultural and religious expressions within the peninsula, forcing Muslims to be assimilated into Joseon society.[11] And one of the reasons

10. The original text is as follows: "得木緜種, 歸屬其舅鄭天益種之. 初不曉培養之術, 幾槁止一莖在, 比三年, 遂大蕃衍. 其取子車·繅絲車, 皆天益創之" (*Goryeosa*, *gwon* 111).

11. *Sejong sillok* (*Annals of King Sejong*), *gwon* 36, 4th day of the 4th lunar month, 1427. For Muslims in Korea, see Jeong 1992, 2002; Lee 2012.

for the suppression of Buddhism in Joseon was that "Mr Seok" 釋氏, the founder of the religion, had not been from a Confucian culture. Within this social context, the official portrayal of foreign monks could easily be subverted in the writings of Joseon Confucian scholars.[12]

Despite their incompatible accounts of the same event, we can notice one thing in common in both Mun's obituary in the *Taejo sillok* and the account of the *Goryeosa*; both of them tried to identify the inventor of cotton processing instruments. This attempt inadvertently supports that these instruments are worth mentioning in the context of the dissemination of cotton. It also confirms that they were newly created and had never been used in Korea before (Lee 1980, 198). Another point to note here is the statement that a foreign monk was so glad to see the cotton plant, "a local object (from his homeland)," indicating that such tools could be made only by someone, the monk in this case, who came from a region where cotton growing and manufacturing were common, when Koreans had no experience for the process of making fabrics from the plant. Jeong Cheon-ik was a Goryeo Korean, being Mun's "fellow countryman." It was highly unlikely for him to have travelled and experienced a foreign society with a different biosphere. Like Mun, he may have had exceptional agricultural knowledge and experience, but that did not automatically lead to the mechanical invention for processing cotton, as asserted in the *Goryeosa*. We can thus safely argue that the declaration of "Cheon-ik created all" in the *Goryeosa* was more Joseon compilers' wishful statement than a fact.

Apart from the official narrative, more substantial evidence for the monk's contribution, albeit with a different name, is found in the records of Mun's descendant. The *Family Biography* 家傳 (also known as the *Family Genealogy* 家乘) is a text allegedly to have been written in 1464 by Mun Chi-chang 文致昌 (1400-1474), the great-grandson of Mun Ik-jeom. This is the first written record to mention the legendary narrative that Mun took the risk of smuggling cottonseeds, supposedly an item prohibited from exporting out of China, to Goryeo in his calligraphy brush cap.[13] It claims all the necessary

12. For the political inclination of history writing in Joseon, see Baker 2012; Reynolds 2019.
13. Regardless of whether the story is true or not, the narrative motif of smuggling prohibited items by hiding them in the brush lid and other personal belongings is a very old literary trope. In the middle of the 7th century when Princess Wencheng 文成公主 of the Tang dynasty married Songtsen Gampo, she allegedly brought silk weaving skill to Tibet by hiding Chinese silk bugs in her brush lid. There is also an anecdote that in the middle of the 7th century, a Christian monk hid a cocoon in his staff in northern India and brought it to Rome.

advances for the Korean cotton industry were made with the help of the Mun family; Mun Ik-jeom not only brought cottonseeds but also succeeded in its cultivation, while Mun Rae, one of his grandsons, made the spinning wheel, and Mun Young, another grandson of Mun, invented the method of cotton weaving. Any mention of Jeong Cheon-ik or his successful cotton cultivation was conveniently omitted (Lee 2016, 218-22). Even with this biased view, nevertheless, the *Family Biography* cited the episode of "a foreign monk with the surname Chang 胡僧蔣者 from Yuan China," who had stopped by Jeong Cheon-ik's house by chance in his tour across the country and had a view of the cotton plant. The monk then "created an instrument to remove seeds from cotton fiber and made it public," a statement that acknowledges the presence and intervention of a foreign monk in the cotton manufacturing process. Although the text diminished his role by stating that the monk had only made a tool for removing seeds, it revealed that the people at the time "do not know the machine to remove (cottonseeds from) cotton, and everyone removed them by hand," admitting a cotton gin invented by the foreign monk, which served as a momentum for cotton manufacturing.

How the Foreign Monk Contributed to Cotton Manufacturing in Korea

Despite the established legend, neither cotton nor cotton fabrics had been completely unknown to Goryeo society before Mun's endeavour.[14] References to cottons were made in various contemporary literatures including the *Goryeosa jeoryo* (*Essentials of Goryeo History*, 1452), the *Dongguk tonggam* (*Comprehensive Mirror of the Eastern Kingdom*, 1485), and the *Dongsa gangmok*, as well as the *Goryeosa*.[15] These records inform that cotton already flowed into Goryeo

14. Some scholars denounced the earlier introduction of cotton as a distortion of historical fact, as in Jae-ho Lee (1982), while others including Min (1984, 1988) insist that cotton fabrics were already manufactured before Mun's introduction of cotton. Some claim that the cotton may have been introduced to Korea when Queen Suro came from India (Lim and Shin 1996, 172).
15. Refer to *Goryeosa*, *gwon* 311, 7th day of the 12th lunar month, 1296; *gwon* 138, 8th lunar month of the 12th year of King U's reign, 1386.

society through contacts and exchanges with Yuan China. In a situation in the *Nogeoldae* (*Chinese Language Text*, n.d., probably in the late Goryeo period), the text for government interpreters at the time, a merchant had bought cotton wool in China and sold it in the Goryeo society at a nice profit.[16] And the accounts of cotton growing were included in the *Collection of Important Matters of Agriculture and Sericulture* (C. *Nongsang jiyao*; K. *Nongsang jibyo*), the agricultural treatise finished by an official team of compilers in 1273 during the Yuan period and distributed to the whole Empire (Choi 2012; Muhn 1992). The book came to Goryeo through the newly emerging Confucian literati, showing that the knowledge of cotton farming was already shared among the Goryeo officials, who were active in promoting advanced agricultural skills to Korean farmers.[17]

At the same time, however, it is also true that cotton did not widely spread to Goryeo before Mun's introduction. The foremost among various factors of resisting its introduction must have been the lack of policy at the national level to encourage its cultivation. Traditionally, Goryeo, just like China, used cloths—silk and hemp—as the monetary equivalence accepted in payment for the taxes, with special value on silk as markers of social status. There was no point in producing textiles that have little monetary value (Zurndorfer 2011; Michel 1994, 418-21), even less interest in farming or processing them. Apart from such disinterests, there were two main conditions to suppress the spread of cotton to Korea: one was the absence of cotton varieties suitable for Korean soil and climate, while the other is the lack of knowledge of the process required to weave cotton fabrics from the crop. In other words, the former problem is biological or agricultural, while the other is technical. Mun was the first Korean

16. In the text, imaginary scenarios are set up for a Goryeo merchant on his way to China for trade meets and talks with a Chinese merchant from Liaoyang. The Goryeo merchant left Gaegyeong with horses and cloths in January of the previous year, passed through Uiju, and arrived at Dadu (Beijing) before selling them. In May, he went to Dongchang 東昌 and Gaotang 高唐 in Shandong to buy silk, satin, and cotton….He returned to Gaegyeong in October and sold all of his products by the end of the year with a profit of 5 % (利) per year. He bought horses and ramie again and left for trading. For the mentions of cotton in the *Nogeoldae*, see http://waks.aks.ac.kr/rsh/dir/rview.aspx?rshID=AKS-2011-AAA-2101&callType=srch&dataID=AKS-2011-AAA-2101_DES@04_217; http://waks.aks.ac.kr/rsh/dir/rview.aspx?rshID=AKS-2011-AAA-2101&callType=srch&dataID=AKS-2011-AAA-2101_DES@04_251. Accessed May 29, 2020.
17. The agricultural text was introduced to Goryeo by Korean Confucian literati, Yi Am (1297-1364) (Wee 2000).

to meet the first requirement by bringing the proper cotton variety and succeed in its cultivation on Korean soil, while technical difficulty was solved by an anonymous foreign monk.

The variety of cotton Mun brought to Korea was a result of hybridizing the two species of cotton that existed in China, the *Gossypium herbaceum* and the *G. arboretum*. *G. herbaceum*, also known as the African-Asian species or Levant cotton, dispersed to China via the Silk Roads in reverse, which is a northern route overland from central Asia to Gansu and Shaanxi provinces. On the other hand, *G. arboretum*, a cotton species for producing coarse cloth, travelled a southern maritime route from India (east Bengal and Assam) to Burma, Yunnan, Guangxi, to Hainan Island, and into Guangdong province (Chao 1977, 4). Probably since the late Song dynasty, these two species could successfully penetrate into mainland China unto Beijing (Needham and Bray 1984, 70-71; 427), and crossbreed in a long series of local cultivars, producing "the cv. *sinense*, considered the most divergent" form of cotton varieties (Viot 2019, 40). Also known as Chinese Asiatic cotton, this cotton variety was brought by Mun to Korea (Choi 2016, 154-55). This was highly tolerant to lower temperatures and short days, making it arable in the Korean peninsula.[18] The fact that this acclimatised cotton was able to spread to Korea can be a biological symbol of medieval globalism.[19]

Equally, the solution to the technical issue in cotton manufacturing could be provided by someone embodying the interconnected world in the Mongol Empire. However successful it may have been, cotton cultivation did not guarantee producing cotton fabrics. A point to note here is that there are several interrelated but independent steps from cotton farming to final cotton fabric production; the processes of gathering raw cotton, cotton yarn making, cotton spinning, and cotton weaving were all usually done as a completely independent and separate practice in the past (Riello and Parthasarathi 2011,

18. Despite most Korean historians' suggestions, Mun's cotton species from China was not *G. herbaceum* but the varietal diversity in *G. arboretum*. Hutchinson et al. (1947) defined the Chinese Asiatic cotton under the subcategory of *G. arboretum* by analysing the taxonomy for the two Old World cotton species. A more recent research by using genetic diversity analysis confirmed the *G. arboretum* from China's Southern region as the origin for Chinese Asiatic cotton. At the same time, it revealed no significant difference between the species in the Yangtze and the Yellow River Valley regions, the evidence of its spread to whole regions of China (Guo et al. 2006).
19. "Medieval Globalism," the term now widely used, was first systematically explored by Abu-Lughod (1991).

2; 478-80). Due to such separate procedures, each region of the Islamic world, including Iran and Iraq famous for their fine cotton products, was engaged in only one or two differentiated processes for the cotton production (Bulliet 2009, 45-46). Likewise, Shanghai's famous cotton production during the pre-modern period roughly consisted of three different kinds of trade: trade in raw cotton, in cotton yarn, and in cotton cloths (Myers 1965, 616; Bray 1997). Furthermore, although Jingnan area of China was so famous for its cotton manufacturing since the Yuan period that the saying went "Songjiang (now District of Shanghai) cotton clothes the world" 松江棉布 衣被天下 (Lu 1992, 474), best cotton yarn was surprisingly produced in the north and brought down to Jiangnan for weaving.

Among these steps, the most challenging process for East Asian weavers was that of cotton yarn and thread making, and it was the foreign monk who provided Goryeo with the indispensable knowledge to overcome these obstacles. To recognize the monk's role and contribution in Goryeo, the weaving experience of East Asia needs to be compared against the conventional cotton producing process. All the long-established textiles in East Asia, such as silk, linen, and hemp, have long fibers, which are pulled from the cocoon made by silkworms or the fibers of the plant, converged and twisted to form a thread (Kuhn and Needham 1988, 15ff). Contrary to this, cotton, as well as wool, is short fiber, subjected to quite different processes from those familiar textiles in East Asia. To proceed from cotton fibers to cotton yarn, a highly developed technique was required, which involved a number of interrelated processes of cleaning, combing, arranging, and gathering all in one place in order to have the shape of thread. In short, the preparation of cotton yarn is a process much more cumbersome than the one for silk and hemp.

Once the yarn was prepared, the consecutive steps of spinning, weaving, and final decorative touches depending on the type of textile could be almost the same in cotton, silk, and hemp; the spinning wheel and drawlooms traditionally used for silk and linen production were proven to be adequate for also weaving the cotton textile (Chao 1977, 1-4; 57). This can be confirmed by the account that "Jeong's female servant could weave one roll of cotton cloth within just a few days' after Jeong Cheon-ik had told her about his learning of cotton manufacturing instruments from a foreign monk, evidence of the transferability of silk weaving technology to cotton manufacturing. It also supports that Goryeo already possessed a high level of textile technology of

spinning and weaving ready for cotton production.

We can thus rightly surmise that, in manufacturing cotton textiles out of raw cotton, the most convoluted obstacle for the sericulture-centered Goryeo textile industry was the preparation of yarn for spinning, the very first stage of cotton fabric production. The yarn making processes consist of ginning for separating cottonseed from cotton fiber (lint), carding (also known as bucking or batting) for inflating and refining the cotton, and twisting for preparing cotton thread for spinning, all of which required specific mechanical devices for each step (Baber 1996, 55-63). These were the tools that had never been used in Goryeo, whose traditional weaving experience was devoted to other types of textiles based on long fibers. Among the newly required devices, ginning was particularly referred to as being difficult in Mun Chi-chang's *Family Biography*. It was also pointed out in the *Goryeosa* that "a device called as *chijageo* 取子車 and another device called as *sosageo* 繅絲車" were invented.

Chijageo refers to a ginning device to remove cotton fiber (lint) from cottonseed. Cottonseed adheres to the fiber so tenaciously that separating it by hand is a painfully slow and laborious process, making it almost impossible to collect enough fiber to produce proper cotton textile. From the existing evidence, we know that the device consisted of two cylindrical rollers placed on top of each other, with a handle attached to the upper roller (Fig. 1). The cotton was inserted through the rollers revolved by turning the handle, which would let the fibers pass through to the other end while letting the seeds fall to the ground.

Figure 1. Cotton and *Chijageo*, 40 x 41, 43 cm, Samcheok silip bagmulgwan (Samcheok Municipal Museum 217), Gangwon-do, Korea.

The rough fibre collected by ginning now had to be "batted" or "carded" in order to loosen the texture and intermix them into producing a long bundle of fiber, known as sliver. This was accomplished by means of a bow-like instrument. The device comes with a reel or string which would loosen up the knots of cotton and refine it. After ginning and carding, the pile of cotton was twisted manually into a finger-thick artificial cocoon ready to be spun into cotton yarn (Baber 1996, 55-63). *Mongmyeon hwagi* (*Essay on Cotton*, n.d.),[20] an essay of the Joseon period on cotton growing, noted that neither Mun nor Jeong knew "how to remove cottonseed and how to pull the cotton yarn," even with their success in cotton cultivation, and finally learnt them from a foreign monk to make spinnable yarn. The accounts indicate that *sosageo* is a newly invented tool, not an existing one already available in Goryeo.

In this respect, I disagree with the established views referring to *sosageo* as a spinning wheel. As mentioned previously, Goryeo already had a rich tradition in silk, hemp, and linen weaving. These textiles required spinning wheels and expertise in their usage. Against this weaving tradition, it is inconceivable that the new invention named *sosageo* is a spinning wheel when the Goryeo household must have already been familiar with the wheel. Instead, I would propose to translate *sosageo* to "carding tools" including bow and reel, which is a unique process required in cotton weaving and therefore previously unknown in Goryeo society (Fig. 2). Seemingly insubstantial, the carding process and its tools were so essential for cotton making that the Islamic miniature paintings of cotton making included carding as one of four fundamental steps of cotton production (Fig. 3) (Lewis 1976, 53). As in Islamic regions, the bow for the loosening

Figure 2. Wax Figure Using *Sosageo* (Carding Tools Including Bow and Reel 繰絲車), Cotton Museum, Sancheong, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Korea.

20. Discovered in the early 19th century but apparently written earlier, it is a handwritten manuscript on Mun's introduction of cottonseeds to Goryeo and their cultivation, with Cho Sik's (1501-1572) poem at the front.

Figure 3. Illustration of How to Process Cotton (from L to R) (1) Sifting Flowers, (2) Carding the Strands, (3) Combing, and (4) Spinning with One Hand Turning the Handle and the Other Holding the Bobbin of Thread, Early 16th century, British Library (MS.Or.3299), London. After Lewis 1976, 53, fig 31-34.

of cotton wool had been widely spread in medieval Europe, with their shape of different kinds but keeping the main part intact (Schlingloff 1974, 84)

In cotton-cultivating areas, these tools were used for a long time. The earliest evidence of the cotton gin (single-roller gin) is found in the fifth-century mural painting in the Ajanta Caves in western India (Fig. 4).[21] The tools spread throughout the Islamic world during the Abbasid period, when Muslims were able to produce cotton clothing from at least the 11th century (Watson 2009, 31-40). As cotton spread to China and Italy in the 13th and 14th centuries, these tools travelled together. These devices are simple in structure and easy to use. The simplicity and efficiency of the instruments, especially the churka gin (double-roller gin), kept the device almost unchanged over a millennium until Eli Whitney invented the spike-tooth cotton gin in 1794 (Hughs et al. 2020, 34). But their simplicity is deceptive, as the idea behind these instruments must have come from countless years of cotton weaving experience and an outcome of a multitude of spontaneous evolutions. This makes it even more difficult to contrive these tools from scratch in other cultures with no such collective knowledge and experience. The opening up of the Silk Road in the Mongol Empire led the foreign monk to be able to come to the peninsula and convey his cultural knowledge to Goryeo society as an important mediator.

21. The Ajanta cave paintings are the oldest existing examples of painting in India. They date from the first century BC to about AD 480 and depict stories from the previous lives of the Buddha (Jatakas). The painting in Cave 1 depicts women preparing cotton using a single-roller gin within the inner structure (Baber 1996, 57). Victoria and Albert Museum, London, holds some of the copies of the Ajanta murals, oil-painted on canvas by Major Robert Gill in 1844.

Figure 4. Detail of the Copy of Mural Painting in Cave 1 of Ajanta (5th century) by Robert Gill, 1850-1854. Oil on Canvas, India, 235 x 277 cm (original), Victoria and Albert Museum (IS.55-1885), London.

The condition of foreign contribution to the spread of cotton is resonated in the well-known legend in China. China had the same problem as Goryeo, as they did not have "efficient techniques for cleaning the raw cotton, preparing for roving and spinning them into yarn" before the end of the 13th century, delaying the introduction of cotton (Bray 1997, 215). The solution to the problems was found when Huang Daopo 黃道婆 (c.1245-?), a Daoist nun, returned from Yazhou 崖州 in Hainan 海南 to her native village Wunijing 烏泥涇 in Songjiang 松江 Prefecture and introduced the cotton gin along with other textile technology (Wang 2019). It is known that she became familiar with such cotton manufacturing technology through contact with Li ethnicity 黎族 in Hainan, who is not Han Chinese.

Some of Korean historical sources mentioned Huang Daopo and her achievement. In his essay *Somunswaerok* (*Random Records of Trivia Heard*), Cho Shin 曺伸 (1454-1529), the government interpreting officer active in King Seongjong's reign (1469-1495), described the story of Hwang's achievement;

> Cotton…was planted by Songjiang people...At first, with no such tools as cotton gin or bow, people picked the seed and pulled the cotton fiber simply by hand, which was extremely hard to do. In the beginning of the Yuan dynasty, an old woman called Hwang Daopo brought the cotton weaving instruments with bow from Hainan…and even made clothes, blankets, belts, and towels. Once people learned how to make things, they competitively made and sold them to other villages.[22]

22. The original text is as follows: "木綿…松江人始種…初無踏車推弓之製 用手剖去子… 其功甚艱. 元初有媼名黃道婆者 自崖州來 教以捍彈紡績之具….織成被褥帶幌,人旣敎 競相作爲 轉貨他郡" (*Somunswaerok* [circa 16th century] 1971).

Cho's account confirms that, although Hwang was Han Chinese, the technique of weaving cotton was learned from foreigners. The theme of the foreign contribution is repeated in the Korean story of the spread of cotton, which underlines the need for foreigners' involvement to overcome the foreignness of cotton and to make it sustainable to Korean households.

Although some scholars discredit the story of Hwang Daopo as a simple legend, one more remarkable similarity between Korean and Chinese stories is worth mentioning. Hwang was known as a Daoist nun, just as the foreigner in the Korean case was a Buddhist monk. It points to the frame of knowledge propagation of these religious groups. Just as the Western Christian missionaries mastered at least one specialty of language, medicine, science, and technology before being sent on their missions, the Buddhist and the Daoist clergy also had practical skills such as medicine and pharmacy to help and impress the locals (Kim 2014). One specialty of the Buddhist temples in the Goryeo dynasty was handicraft. Textile weaving was their most popular business, as it was originally developed for the supply of clothing for the monks and other members of the temple. Temple slaves or nuns were heavily involved in weaving textiles. The level of fabric woven in the temple was often matchless, as shown in the episode of a nun presenting the exquisitely textured ramie (*baegcheobpo* 白苧布) to Princess Jeguk.[23] Indian temples were also well-known for fine cottons spun and woven by their nuns. Being a member of a close-knit group as well as a native of a cotton cultivation area, the foreign monk may have been familiar with cotton processing technology and capable to transmit it to another country.

Related to the religious bodies built on close connections among their members, we can find another aspect of knowledge transfer in the narrative of Hongwon the foreign monk. They were able to share knowledge and information more systematically and efficiently than individuals. In this regard, the account of Jeong Cheon-ik may be more significant than it appears. He was recorded as a retiree from Jeongaekryeong, the post of caring for official guests who visited government authorities, including Buddhist temples. Considering his background, the "sudden" visit of the foreign monk to Jeong deserves a review; it could be possible that the monk's timely visit to Jeong's house was not accidental as we have taken for granted. It seems too much of a coincidence to

23. *Goryeosa*, *gwon* 89.

have the foreign monk, who had the essential skill to make a breakthrough for cotton weaving, to accidentally stop by Jeong's house, the only place which grew cotton plants on the Korean peninsula at the time.

It is noteworthy, therefore, that there is a slight difference in the mention of *hoseung* between the *Taejo sillok* written at the end of the 14th century and the *Family Biography* known to have been written in the late 15th century. The *sillok* mentioned that "*Hoseung* came to Cheon-ik's house." In the *Family Biography*, however, "*Hoseung* came by chance while traveling across the country." On the purpose of *hoseung*'s visit to Cheon-ik's house, the 14th-century account remained silent, while the chance happening of the visit was emphasized in the late 15th century. Although, together with the theme that Mun Ik-jeom hid cottonseeds in the brush cap, *hoseung*'s chance visit constitutes the main content of the Korean story of cotton dissemination that continues to this day, the question can be raised about the reason behind the *sillok*'s silence on this matter. Would it not have been revealed because it was pure coincidence? Or rather, was it not necessary to disclose the purpose because his visit was so natural and obvious to the people at that time? We cannot completely disregard the possibility that the monk was in fact invited for his particular knowledge. It is more likely that Jeong's past position as an official taking care of the high-ranked religious guests gave him access to a network of knowledge and information that he could exploit.

Hoseung 胡僧: His Identity and Disappearance in the Making of the Legend

Our next legitimate question is where this foreign monk with such technical knowledge came from. Although his identity cannot be established on the basis of the information in the *sillok* or any other Korean historical records, it is possible to make a reasonable guess as to his origin. The usage of the word *hoseung* and their geo-cultural identities described in Korean sources indicate that they were monks from the Western regions in a broad sense, which included India, then known as Cheonchuk 天竺 (Kim 2018); Mukhoja 墨胡子, Ado 阿道, Marananta 摩羅難陀, and other Buddhist missionary monks recorded in the *Samguk yusa* (*Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms*) were all called as *hoseung* and noted for their unusual physical appearance and behavior.

Hoseung Mala 胡僧 袈囉, who served as an intermediary to negotiate between Balhae (698-926) and Goryeo during King Taejo's reign, was known to be from the "Kingdom of Magalta in Western India" 西天竺摩竭陀國 (Lee 1977).[24]

Among many regions in the Western regions, our foreign monk may have not been from India proper. An important reference for my theory is from Zen Master Jigong 指空禪師 (c.1289~1363/4), who inspired the revitalization of Goryeo Buddhism in the almost same period as our foreign monk. Master Jigong, also mentioned as *hoseung*, was known to have been born as a prince from the kingdom of Magalta with Jenapbakta (Dhyanabhadra 提納薄陀) as his real name (Heo 1989, 1997; Kim 1984).[25] He made an extensive tour of south India and Sri Lanka and went through Tibet and Yunnan to Beijing before coming to Goryeo (Heo 1997, 14-45; Dziwenka 2010, 133-56). Albeit a particular emphasis on its locality, however, his Indian lineage has been challenged with convincing arguments[26]; his alleged patrilineal root in the kingdom of Magalta could not be sustained, as the kingdom itself did not exist any longer at the time, only leaving the memory of its grand authority and reputation as a powerful Buddhist state. Likewise, his claim that his mother's ancestral home was Hyanji 香至國 was even more dubious as it is unclear whether the place had even actually existed, except its legendary reputation known as the hometown of Bodhidharma (Yeom 2014). As a matter of fact, the 14th century, when Jigong was supposed to move around in India, saw the area already Islamized with very little trace of Buddhism. It is highly unlikely, then, that the *hoseung* who came to Goryeo at the time of the introduction of cotton wool was an Indian monk.

A more probable origin for this foreign monk, I suggest, may have been Tibet, not India. Tibetan monks were also known as *hoseung* in Korean historical records. Tibet is located at the crossroad of the Silk Road in the region of northwest China, the route where *G. herbaceum* spread to China. More

24. Although not included in the *Goryeosa*, *Hoseung* Mala and his diplomatic role was mentioned in the last chapter of "Later Jin" in *Zizhi Tongjian* (資治通鑒, 1084), *gwon* 285. In the *Dongsa gangmok* (*Compendium of the Eastern History*, 1778), *gwon* 6, the monk was identified as the same person as Master Hongbeom described in the *Goryeosa*, *gwon* 2, third lunar month of the twenty-first year of King Taejo's reign.
25. These monks, known as natives of India and its neighbouring area, were sometimes called *beomseung* (monks from a Sanskrit culture 梵僧).
26. For the importance of having a prominent lineage in the East Asian Buddhist context, see Faure 1997.

important than the botanical dispersal, Tibet played a crucial role to disseminate unique doctrines and rituals of Buddhism throughout East Asia during the late medieval period, as it gradually and firmly gained the religious authority replacing India when monks fleeing India had taken refuge in the wake of the destruction of Buddhist center (Toh 2004, 17-58). It became a religio-economic powerbase to connect Buddhist trade networks across Inner Asia, which can be called the "Tantric Bloc" (Elverskog 2009, 84-116). The Mongol rulers of Yuan China made Tibetan Buddhism as the religion of the royal family and enshrined the Tibetan monk, Phagspa (1235-1280) as their imperial preceptor, and so did the Goryeo royal family receive Tibetan lamas with great hospitality. Although Korean sources disclose a somewhat negative stance towards the precepts and rituals of Tibetan Buddhism and saw Tibetan monks as collaborators or minions of Mongol Yuan,[27] the presence of Tibetan monks and their influence continued to the early days of Ming China,[28] hence to Joseon Korea.

Against general misconceptions of Tibet as a cold and dry country located in the Himalayas, with Tibetans as nomads, it is the case that the south of Tibet, the traditional powerbase of the Tibetan dynasties since the Yarlung dynasty (before the 7th century), has been based on agriculture. There, cotton was woven from an early age and widely used for important artefacts including Buddhist ceremonies. Unlike Chinese and Korean Buddhist paintings, the majority of which were made on silk, Tibetan Buddhist paintings that have survived so far were mostly painted on primed cotton whose weave varied from the very fine to quite coarse (Kossak and Watts 2001, 47). Their long experience in cotton farming and cotton manufacturing even left a deeply religious collective symbolism to Tibetan cultural tradition. One of their massive Buddhist texts, the 8th-century *Manjusrimilakalpa*, allocates its substantial part to associate the process of producing cotton yarn with a Buddhist ritual (Kapstein 1995, 245ff). All the evidence, if circumstantial, seems to point to Tibet as the origin of the foreign monk in question.

A note should be made, however, that it is less of the precise national identity or ethnicity than the regional—Inner Asian—entity when I suggest

27. I am grateful for one of the reviewers to point out this general sentiment.
28. To cite just an example, the Yongle emperor of Ming received the Tibetan lama Deshin Shegpa, known in China as Halima (Helima), with great ceremonial pomp and lavish gifts, against objections by senior officials. See *Mingshi* (*History of the Ming*), *juan* 331, 8589.

Tibet. It is crucial not to confuse the name of a nation in our period with its pre-modern counterpart. "Tibet" may have not necessarily meant only Tibetans, and neither were "Lama" (Toh 2004, 202-09). The Buddhists from Tibet, for example, could well have been the Tangut, who could also have been Kashmiri (Van Der Kuijp 1993). As mentioned above in Master Jigong's case, the Buddhists in India and Inner Asia had frequently migrated with missionary zeal or for personal safety amidst religious persecutions and political confusions, especially during the chaotic periods from Islam's eastward advance to the Mongol's westward movement. The cross-cultural human traffic especially under the *Pax Mongolica* led to many cases of diverse religions and cultures co-existing and mixing (Allsen 2001), where ethnicity and religion did not always match each other.

Whatever his origin, a further question can be asked about how the foreign monk was forgotten. The story of Mun Ik-jeom bringing cotton to the peninsula was reiterated many times throughout the Joseon period. Mun continued to be accredited with various illustrious honors and elevated to the highest posthumous position. He was even mentioned in the last days of the dynasty in 1885, when Joseon Confucian scholars made appeals to King Gojong to place him in *munmyo* (National Shrine to Confucius).[29] Meanwhile, *hoseung*, the foreign monk, disappeared from the official histories of the Joseon dynasty and was completely forgotten. When the private collection of Mun's family member made a passing reference to him, the monk appeared with a different surname, losing his original name "Hongwon." The mess-up with his identity underlines that he was no longer taken seriously. Indeed, the official version of the Korean cotton transmission story had already been established in the very early 15th century. An account of the *Sejong sillok* made a plain statement that Mun Ik-jeom alone had the credit for making cotton manufacturing possible in Korea by having acquired the knowledge of their cultivation and weaving method when he had brought cottonseeds.[30] We cannot sense any doubt or hesitation in this official record.

The process of him being alienated and erased in the story can be traced

29. Formal requests were made on the 6th day of the 5th lunar month, the 29th day of the 9th lunar month, and the 7th day of the 11th lunar month, 1885 by three different Confucian scholars (*Gojong sillok* [*Annals of King Gojong*], *gwon* 22).
30. *Sejong sillok*, *gwon* 150; *Jiriji* (*Geography*), Gyeongsangdo Jinjumok Jinseonghyeon.

through the *sillok*'s attitude towards hoseung in general. Several mentions were made to *hoseung* in the *sillok*. When it was firstly mentioned in Mun's obituary of 1398 in the *Taejo sillok*, the term *hoseung* was a relatively value-neutral word to signify a foreign monk who originally came from an area where cotton was so abundant and routinely encountered. The concept of *hoseung*, however, began losing its neutrality after King Taejong's reign. During King's fifth year in 1405, *Hoseung* Sundo 順道, *Hoseung* Marananta, and other foreign monks were mentioned in enumerating the decadence of Buddhism. Their names were echoed to emphasize the corruptness of Buddhism in such occasions as the ones in the reigns of Sejong,[31] Seongjong,[32] and Jungjong.[33] It is a testament to the ever-increasing criticism of Joseon Confucian scholars towards Buddhism. Eventually, the meaning of *hoseung* was transformed from a monk of a foreign country into a barbarian with no knowledge or observance of Confucian rites.

During the 16th century when Confucian scholars' denigration of Buddhism came to a near climax, the usage of *hoseung* expanded to demean all monks, either native or foreign. A prime example of such use is a case during King Myeongjong's sixth year in 1551, when Confucian literati appealed to defend Cho Eung-gyu 趙應奎, a young Confucian scholar who had attacked the Abbot of Gangseosa Monastery on the street for no reason.[34] They unanimously called the victim monk "*hoseung*," accusing him of "the guilty one having committed the sin of not knowing father nor monarch 無父無君." Here, *hoseung* denotes more than just a Buddhist monk. The term came to connote the ignorant, discourteous, and barbaric man. This represents how ordinary Confucian scholars viewed Buddhism and the Buddhist clergy in the late Joseon period. It also exposes their aversion and rejection of foreigners in general.[35]

31. *Sejong sillok*, *gwon* 27, 25th day of the 1st lunar month, 7th year of King Sejong's reign, 1425; *Sejong sillok*, *gwon* 67, 9th day of the 3rd lunar month, 17th year of King Sejong's reign, 1435.
32. *Seongjong sillok* (*Annals of King Seongjong*), *gwon* 35, 2nd day of the 10th lunar month, 4th year of King Seongjong's reign, 1473.
33. *Jungjong sillok* (*Annals of King Jungjong*), *gwon* 27, 10th day of the 12th lunar month, 11th year of King Jungjong's reign, 1516.
34. *Myeongjong sillok* (*Annal of King Myeongjong*), *gwon* 12, 17th day of the 11th lunar month, 6th year of King Myeongjong's reign, 1551.
35. This attitude of Joseon literati was reflected in the usage of the word "ho" 胡 as "barbaric," which became a sensitive diplomatic issue when Qing came to replace the Han-Chinese Ming dynasty in China. When Joseon royal embassy brought the *Dongmunseon* (*Anthology of Korean Literature* 東文選) to Qing China during King Sukjong's reign, they had to quickly type-cast characters to change the words with "ho" 胡, such as 胡僧 and 胡越, right before crossing the Yalu River (*Sukjong sillok* [*Annals of King Sukjong*], *gwon* 54, 15th day of the 8th lunar month, 1713).

The late Goryeo society Mun brought cottonseeds into was markedly different from that of Joseon. A considerable number of foreigners came to coexist with Koreans under the rule of Yuan China of the Mongol Empire. As a vassal of the Mongol Empire, Goryeo had frequent traffic of foreigners, some of whom were Buddhists from Inner Asia and India, others from Perso-Islamic world in a western end of the Empire. Among them were people who had succeeded in the Yuan court before entering Goryeo and took high-ranking positions in Goryeo court as well. On the downside, it was also a time of human tragedy, as many Goryeo women, for such an instance, were forced to move to Yuan China in the name of *gongnyeo* (tribute women), and settled there in various positions from the empress at the top to the slaves at the bottom. A point to remember here is that although the first mention of *hoseung* was made in early Joseon, all the relevant events and descriptions of him had occurred in a vastly different world of the late Goryeo dynasty, which was a part of the medieval global world.

Conclusion

The legendary story of Mun's introduction of cotton to Korea has enjoyed a firm status among Korean people. As discussed, however, it has many loose parts poorly connected with inaccurate details. Among the controversial issues, this paper investigated the role of *hoseung*, a foreign monk in Goryeo's cotton manufacturing. Although his involvement in the process of cotton manufacturing was generally mentioned, no proper research was done on his cultural, technical contribution in detail. This paper looks to make up for this gap in the following aspects: firstly, to reveal the controversial issues in the historical documents related to this foreign monk and to measure the authenticity of each story; secondly, to identify his role in transferring his knowledge of cotton yarn making technology—ginning and carding (also known as roving, bucking, or batting)—to Goryeo, and to explain its actual significance in the context of the intercultural transfer of knowledge in a globalised medieval world; and lastly to suggest his presumed Tibetan or Inner

Asian origin in connection to its cotton culture tradition and Buddhist trade network on the Silk Road, and finally to analyse the trajectory of how his story was forgotten over time.

Through this research, we come to conclude that, just as Mun's cottonseeds were the consequence of a long series of crossing various cotton species with numerous adaptations in diverse regions, the foreign monk was an embodiment of such connectedness in the medieval period. As discussed, new or foreign items, represented by cotton here, were more readily introduced when a variety of people with different cultural backgrounds could communicate and coexist with each other. In this respect, the monk is reminiscent of another foreigner, a merchant from the Jiangnan 江南 area in Yuan China who taught Choe Museon 崔茂宣 (1325-1395) the secret of gunpowder manufacturing to help Choe succeed in inventing the gunpowder weapon in Goryeo. The connected world of the medieval period provided the historical background for a foreigner to serve as an active, if not fully acknowledged, agent to make a rapid development of cotton manufacturing in the peninsula. Through his participation, Korea was able to claim to be a member of the cotton-producing world in the medieval period.

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Abstract

Cotton manufacturing in Korea is known to have started with Mun Ik-jeom (1329-1398), who brought cottonseeds from China during the last days of the Goryeo dynasty. Despite the great achievement of Mun's introduction of cottonseeds, by focusing exclusively on Mun or a few historic figures, we tend to disregard the more crucial agencies to have made this great social transformation possible. To complement existing scholarship, the paper address the agency of *Hoseung* Hongwon 胡僧弘願 in social transformation of medieval Korea. Starting with the introduction contextualizing the spread of cotton in a wider perspective, it consists of three main sections: firstly, which identifies the presence and role of the foreign monk in the official narratives of Goryeo and Joseon; secondly, which examines the actual significance of his contribution—ginning and carding (also known as bucking or batting)—to the distribution of cotton cloth making; and lastly to suggest his presumed Tibetan or Inner Asian origin in connection to its long cotton culture tradition and to Buddhist trade network on the Silk Road and to scrutinize the trajectory of how his story was treated and forgotten over the course of the time. The research shows that the Korean cotton manufacturing process was not an isolated event made by a heroic effort of a single person, but an outcome of the connected world of the period.

Keywords: *Hoseung* Hongwon 胡僧弘願, cotton, ginning (*chijageo* 取子車), *sosageo* 繅絲車, medieval globalism, Tibet

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