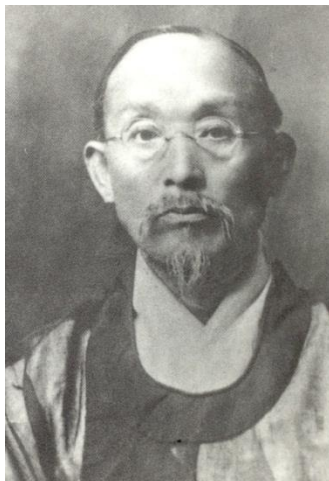


**The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York**

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 8

Finding Aid for

Byung Hun Choi Papers, 1908-2004



Byung Hun Choi.

Credit to: Sagmo Kim, *Taksa, Reverend Byung Hun Choi's Life and Thoughts* (Seoul, Korea: Chung Dong Trilingual Press), 2008.
Located in MRL8: Byung Hun Choi Papers, box 3, folder 7,
The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Jessica Patterson and Brigette C. Kamsler, August 2013
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Byung Hun Choi, 1858 – 1927
Title: Choi Papers
Dates: 1908-2004
Abstract: One of the first Methodist ministers in Korea. Assisted in translating the New Testament and the Book of Genesis to Korean. Considered Korea's first theologian. These papers include primary and secondary source materials that are written in Korean as well as Hanja (Mandarin Chinese characters modified for the Korean dialect) and the materials are bound. The Choi Papers also include leaflets and pamphlets.
Size: 4 boxes, 1.50 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance: The papers were donated in 2012 by Aiyoung Choi, former board member of Union Theological Seminary and great grand-daughter of Byung Hun Choi.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by phone, fax or email burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, as far in advance as possible. [Burke Library staff](#) is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions: The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, MRL 8: Byung Hun Choi Papers, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Byung Hun Choi, also referred to as Taksa, was a Korean philosopher and theologian born in 1858. Choi was originally a Confucian scholar who was educated in Hanja. Hanja is a Korean written language form that adapts Mandarin Chinese characters conveying the spoken language of Korea. Many scholars at this time used Hanja, rather than Hangul which was considered a commoner's written language, even though most of the population of Korea at this time was illiterate. Choi was an advocate for Korean independence, and was also a proponent of stopping the corruption that was taking place in the royal court during this time period.

In 1888, Choi became a language teacher to United States missionary George Heber Jones, who was working in Korea to convert the native population to Protestant Christianity. By teaching Jones Korean, Choi learned how to speak English. In 1893, Choi was baptized and began to assist Henry G. Appenzeller, a missionary from the United States, with his ministerial work in the Chungdong Cheil Church. In 1900, Choi, as well as a panel of other Korean scholars, assisted Jones as well as another United States missionary, Henry G. Appenzeller in translating the New Testament. In 1902, he was ordained a minister by the Northern Methodist Episcopal Church. Choi began editing publications, such as, *The Christian Advocate*, *The Theological World*, and *Biblical and Church Monthly*. Choi retired from his position as pastor of the Chungdong Cheil Church in 1922, and lectured at Union Methodist Theological Seminary. In 1925, Choi published *The Book of Genesis*, thus beginning the Korean-Chinese Bible translation for the Old Testament.

Byung Hun Choi is considered Korea's first theologian and one of Korea's first ordained Methodist ministers. Choi examined and tried to understand the Bible in the way he studied the Confucian sacred texts. He also strived to understand the place that Christianity held in the religious pluralistic environment of Korea. In 1901, an article written by Choi was published, marking the first theological writing that was created by a Korean. Choi followed the Culturopan-religious form of theology, in which the preexisting Korean culture could be accommodated. Some of the characteristics of this form of theology are the ability of the theologian to recognize

the traditional Korean religious cultures, such as the Confucian culture, and correlate them with the imported Western theology. Also, this form of theology could recognize other religious cultures as legitimate religious forms in which one could experience the Christian notion of God. Choi would publish over sixty volumes in Chinese and Korean, as well as numerous articles in theological journals.

Byung Hun Choi died in 1927.

Sources:

Adams, Daniel J., ed. *From East to West: Essays in Honor of Donald G. Bloesch*. Lanham: University Press of America, 1997. Print.

Choi, Myung Keun. *Changes in Korean society between 1884-1910 as a result of the introduction of Christianity*. New York: Peter Lang, 1997. Print.

Foskett, Mary F., and Jeffrey Kah-Jin Kuan, eds. *Ways of Being, Ways of Reading: Asian American Biblical Interpretation*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006. Print.

"Introductions to Korean Theologians: Byung Hyun Choi." *The Center for the Study of Korean Christianity*. Ed. Bo-Myung Seo. N.p., June 2007. Web. 11 July 2013.

<<http://cskcchicago.org/cskc/board.php?board=chrisJournal>>.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Choi Papers include primary and secondary source materials that contain information on the biographical history of Choi, his theological philosophies and writings, as well as detailed descriptions of the Methodist movement in Korea. The Choi papers include numerous photocopies of Byung Hun Choi's original writings, written in Hanja. The subject of his writings are often theological in matter, some examining Protestant Christianity in relation to Catholicism, while other writings display his efforts to integrate Confucian philosophies with Christian theology. His publications reveal an interest in both Buddhism and Christianity. Other materials within the Choi Papers are modern playbills, memorial service pamphlets, and other various leaflets that show Choi's influence on the Methodist culture in Korea today.

Box 1 and box 2 contain copies of original manuscripts written by Choi written in Hanja. Two copies of manuscripts are not written by Choi, but were written by anonymous authors. The first is contained in box 1, folder 9 and is entitled "Biography of Choi Byung Hun Choi-Byung-Hun-Seon-Saeng-Yak-Jun," 1930. The second manuscript copy written by an anonymous author can be found in box 2, folder 1 and is entitled "Dr. Taksa Biography" [19??]. The materials are grouped by chronologically by known date.

Box 3 contains published secondary sources materials that are written in either Korean or English. Box 4 contains personal correspondence and pamphlets.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes.

Further Sources

The Burke Library currently is the only library to have a collection holding these materials. Although many of the items in the collection are copies of original manuscripts by Byung Hun Choi, the originals were destroyed in Korea during the 1950's when Choi's house was destroyed.

Papers of George Heber Jones and Henry Gerhard Appenzeller can be located in The Missionary Research Library Collection. The George Heber Jones Papers can be located in the Burke library archives in the Missionary Research Library Collection in series 8 and the pathfinder can be found at this URL:

http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/locations/burke/fa/mrl/ldpd_6257798.pdf .

The Henry Gerhard Appenzeller papers can be located in the Burke Library archives in the Missionary Research Library Collection in series 8 and the pathfinder can be found at this URL:

http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/locations/burke/fa/mrl/ldpd_6257734.pdf .

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
Primary Source Materials, Copies of Manuscripts		
1	1	Christian Apologetics on Bible, Pope, Communion, 1908
1	2	Official Report to Gvmt about Activity as Royal Commissioner on Chung Cheong Province and Work to Settle the Peasant Revolt, 1908
1	3	Introducing World Religions. Sung-Sahn-Myung-Kyung, 1910
1	4	Speeches, 1910
1	5	Missionary Report, Korean Methodist Church: Ge-Chuk Mission, 1912-1917
1	6	Apologetics on Religion, 1916
1	7	Introducing Philosophies of the World Han-Chul-Jip-Yo, 1922
1	8	The World of Religion, 1922
1	9	Biography, Choi Byung Hun Choi-Byung-Hun-Seon-Saeng-Yak-Jun, 1930
1	10	Published Lectures, Taksa, Choi Byung Hun Collection of Lectures, 1999
2	1	Dr. Taksa Biography, [19??]
2	2	Apologetics for Christianity Shin-Chun-Ohng, [19??]
2	3	Outside of the Gate Chang-eui, [190?]
2	4	Writings for Mission, Articles, [190?]
Secondary Source Materials, Published Books		
3	1	<i>Korean Independence Movement: March 1st Movement the Historical Record</i> , 2001
3	2	<i>Methodist History in Korea</i> , 2001
3	3	<i>Symposium on the Life and Thought of Taksa- Articles</i> , 2002
3	4	<i>Lecture on Taksa's Life and Thought</i> , 2003
3	5	<i>Basic Research for Building the Memorial of Taksa Choi Byung Hun</i> , 2008
3	6	Christian Novel Consisting of an Original Series, Published as One Unit, 2008
3	7	<i>Taksa, Reverend Byung Hun Choi's Life and Thoughts</i> , 2008
Correspondence and Pamphlets		
4	1	Personal Correspondence, Grace Choi and Charles and Dinah Choi, June, 24 1969
4	2	Pamphlet, Historical Legacy and Theological Thought of Taksa Choi Byung Hun, 1995
4	3	Pamphlet, Service Program for the 74 th Memorial Service Worship Ceremony, Chung-Ahng Church, Seoul, 2001
4	4	Pamphlet, Symposium on the Life and Thought of Taksa, 2002
4	5	Pamphlet, Lecture on Taksa's Life and Thought, Seoul Park Hotel, Je-Chun, 2003
4	6	Pamphlet, Memorial Service- Birthday Celebration Appenzeller and Choi Byung Hun, Shinwol Church 2004
4	7	Pamphlet, Taksa, the Echo of the Peninsula, Je-Chun Theater/ City Cultural Center, 2004