

## Ŭisang (義湘)

Learned priest of the Shilla Era; lived from 625 to 702 A.D. Established the Flower Garland or Avatamsa Order (華嚴宗 Hwaŏmjong) in Korea. He was from the Kim family and he was the son of Hanshin. At the age of 19 he left Hwangboksa in Kyŏngju and left with the monk Wŏnhyo to travel to China. After arriving in Liaotung they were mistaken for spies and held by Koguryŏ border patrol soldiers for many days before returning to Shilla. When the opportunity came he left for T'ang China at the age of 38 and stayed there until he was 44, studying Hwaom philosophy under the monk Chihyen and discoursing with Master Taohsüan, the monk who established the Nanshan school of the Vinaya sect. Upon returning to Shilla he went to Naksansa's Kwanŭm Grotto and offered prayers to the bodhisattva, Avalokitesvara (*Kwanŭm*, in Korean). His famous work, *Prayers of the White Flower Land* (白花發願文 *Paekhwadoyangpalwŏnmun*), a concise composition of only 261 characters which explains how he came to have faith in Kwanŭm, was written here. Later, in 676 he built Pusŏksa after travelling all over the country searching for a large site for a temple would be built consistent with Hwaŏm ideology. He also put much effort into the development of Hwaŏm thinking and the training of many disciples. At Hwangboksa Ŭisang taught his *Chant of the Dharma Nature* (*Pŏpgyedo*). At Pusŏksa, he convened a dharma meeting and taught discourses for forty days on the *Doctrine of The Single Vehicle and the Ten Stages* (一乘十地 *Ilŭng Shipji*). At Ch'udong on Sobaeksan he lectured for 90 days on the *Flower Garland Sutra* (華嚴經 Hwaŏmgyŏng). His writings include: *Shipmunganbŏpgwan* (十門看法觀), *Summary of the Varga of Entry into Dharmahatu* (入法界品抄記 *Ipbŏpgyep'umch'ogi*), *A Short Treatise on Amitabha* (小阿彌陀義記 *Soamit'aŭigi*), and *Picture of Dharmadhatu* (華嚴一乘法界圖 *Hwaŏmilsŭngbŏpgyedo*), among others. While the number of his writings is small when compared to those of many other learned monks, they are sufficient to explain some deep ideology. These writings clearly bring forth a sea of doctrine from the Flower Garland Sutra and show forth the limitless nature of the Buddha, Vairocana.