THE KOREA REVIEW, Volume 1

No. 4 (April, 1901)

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[page 145] **A Vagary of Fortune.**

A Korean Romance.

“Your son will die on his eighteenth birthday precisely at noon.”

Three men were standing on a ledge of rock high up on a mountain side in central Korea. Behind them, built into the side of the cliff, half cave and half hut, was the home of a holy recluse. Before them the sun was sinking to rest behind a serrated line of mountain peaks that formed the. western horizon: but the thoughts of these three men were neither on the hut behind nor on the scene before them. The most striking figure of the three was that of the hermit whose long scanty beard exaggerated the thinness of his face and whose eye, lit by the true ascetic fire, showed the power of mind to out-live matter.

The second figure was that of a high-born Korean, somewhat past middle age, dressed in the flowing robes that make the Korean gentleman the most dignified of all the dwellers in the Far East. The imperiousness of his mien and of his eye showed a man born to command. He was, in sooth, the Prime Minister of Korea. Beside him stood his only son, Sun-chang-i, a boy of fifteen years.

“Your son will die on his eighteenth birthday precisely at noon.”

The Prime Minister had not been able to withstand the temptation to look into the future and assure himself of the boy’s success in life and this doom had been pronounced not by an ordinary fortune-teller, or mudang, but by the saintliest hermit in the land. [page 146]

The father’s face bore a look of defiance against fate itself as he seized the boy’s hand and led him rapidly down the steep path to the valley below where his escort awaited him. But the hermit remained standings on the mountain crag looking away into the distance with prophetic eye, careless alike of life or death.

As an embassy was about to be dispatched to the court at Peking; the Prime Minister secured an appointment in it for the boy and when he set out bade him consult the best diviner in that capital and see if the prophecy would be confirmed.

When Sun-chang-i came before that venerable man and told his story the old man shook his head and said:

“It is true. You must die on your eighteenth birthday” but after looking intently at the boy for some time he seized a pen and wrote a single sentence. Handing it to the boy he said:

“If there is anything that can save you it is that.” Sun-chan-i took it with trembling hands and read the peculiar words.

“It is a great wrong for a nobleman to kill a slave without good cause but how much worse is it for a wife to kill her husband!”

 Pondering this in his mind he turned his foot-steps toward his distant home but the harder he thought the more bewildered he became. What possible relation could there he between him and nobleman’s killing a slave or a wife’s killing her husband? Yet he was willing to use every possible means to avert his fate and so he put the piece of paper in his chumoni or pouch and kept it safe.

While he was absent from home on this journey an event occurred in Korea that had an important bearing upon his career and so we must leave him for the time, and go back to his father’s house.

As the Prime Minister sat in his official reception room attending to the business of the office an attendant entered and announced that there was a criminal case to be considered. A slave had attacked his master and beaten him almost to death. The case was clear. The prisoner himself did not deny the charge. The Minister in his indignation ordered the prisoner to be treated as a capital criminal, to have his [page 147] head struck off, to have his wife strangled and to have his son tortured and finally killed It was done and the whole family was destroyed, as the minister thought; but one member of it had been overlooked. A young girl, named Yi Wha, stood by while her father and mother were executed.

As she witnessed the awful spectacle her very soul seemed to be on fire. All purer and better emotions were dried up within her, the spirit of revenge flooded her whole being and took possession of every part. Life lay before her not full of promise and hope but of black despair, valuable only as it offered an opportunity to avenge the unmerited suffering of her mother and brother. This one ambition took possession of her and her first step showed the depth of its hold upon her. She would not seek a hasty revenue. It should be maturely planned and carried out in such a manner that there should be no possibility of failure. She gathered together her few wretched garments and throwing the bundle over her shoulder started for the country begging her way as she went. She entered the mountainous country to the east and pushed on until she was in the midst of a wild and uninhabited district where she left the road and made her way up the side of a thickly wooded mountain. She searched until she found a comparatively level spot and there she made herself a hut of branches and turf. The next day saw her gathering wood and carrying it to the neighboring village and selling it for a pittance. She also made a little garden beside her hut and planted it, but her main work was the gathering and selling of wood.

A year passed by at the end of which she made a journey to the capital and returned with a beautiful sword hidden beneath her skirt. It represented the earnings of a whole year. From this time on she gathered and sold only enough wood to procure the food that was necessary to keep body and soul together. But she spent a greater part of her time in another and more mysterious manner. She had cleared a round open space in front of her hut and made it smooth and hard and there hour after hour and day after day she girded up her skirt with a rope belt and with the flashing weapon in hand practiced the sword dance. During the intervals of rest she seated her sell before a smooth hard stone and sharpened the sword until its edge was as keen as that of a razor. Her in- [page 148] tention was to perfect herself in the great sword dance until she should be able to surpass the best dancers at the capital and then when she should be called to dance before the high dignitaries of the land her good sword would aid her to avenge on the son of the Prime Minister the deep injury that her family had received of his father’s hands. Ah! that would be better than killing the Prime Minister himself for he had but one son and his death would end the line as her brother’s death had ended their’s.

But we must leave the girl Yi Wha as she sits grinding the edge of her avenging sword or throwing her limbs about in the wild ecstasy of the sword dance, and follow the fortunes of her intended victim.

When the boy San-chang-i reached his home after his journey to China he told his father what the soothsayer had predicted but said nothing about the mysterious sentence which he had received. On hearing this report the old gentleman gave up all hope that the prophecy might be false and surrendered to the inevitable, but he could not bear the constant presence of his son. It was a perpetual source of pain. So he decided to send the boy away from him and never set him again. Under pretense of attending to the boy’s education he sent him to study at a school in a distant part of the country and as he bade him good bye he said:

“Stay at the school until I tell you to return. Do not come back until you receive a specific order from me.”

So Sun-chang-i left his father’s house. He was a diligent and careful student and made rapid progress but the thought of his coming fate constantly arose before his mind. “Of what use is my studying if I am to die on my eighteenth birthday? It would be better for me to spend the few years that remain in travelling and enjoying this good world which I must leave so soon.” As he had no money with which to carry out this resolve he decided to break through the injunction of his father and go up to Seoul and ask for some money with which to travel. What was his father’s surprise therefore to see his son before him. “Pardon me, father, for breaking your commands but consider my position. Doomed to die in two years and a half, of what use are the Chinese classics to me? It would be far better for me to enjoy what little of life is left me in travel and observation. I have therefore come up to Seoul [page 149] to ask you as a last request to give me the means to carry out my plan. I will promise never again to appear before you.” The father immediately fell in with this idea and gave his son a considerable sum of money and sent him off.

The boy immediately set out upon his travels. Southward he wandered to the confines of the land and beyond to the island of Che-ju where under the shadow of old Hal-la San he looked into the fathomless hole from which four thousand years ago the fabled founders of Tam-na rose. Then he visited the ancient site of Sil-la’s capital, and fingered the jade flute that emits no sound if taken beyond the confines of its resting place. He visited the monastery where the rice kettle is so large that the cook has to go out in a boat to stir the rice in the middle. He beheld the eight wonders of the eastern coast, witnessed the battle of wild cats and rats on the island of Ul-leung, dreamed away a month among the monasteries of Diamond Mountain, saw the reflection of his face in Ki-ja’s well a jar of whose waters is a pound heavier than that of any other water in the land. But the boy was restless and dissatisfied ever wishing that the terrible secret of his fate had not been made known, to him, ever pondering the enigmatical words upon the piece of paper which he still preserved. Finally his wanderings led him among the rugged mountains of the province of Kang Wun celebrated in Korean story for their grandeur and beauty. Here in the contemplation of nature he found more peace than he had known for many a month. It seemed to reconcile him to his fate.

One afternoon he lingered longer than was his wont among the mountains and when he turned back toward the little hamlet where he lodged, night was already coming on. Before he had accomplished half the distance darkness had settled down upon him. The path grew indistinct and presently he became aware that he had wandered from it. On each side towered high wooded slopes dimly visible against the half clouded heavens. Sun-chang-i sat down on the root of a great pine and tried to decide what it would be best to do in this predicament, but before he reached a conclusion his eye caught the glimmer of a fire far up the opposite height.

“Ah! there is the hut of some hunter or wood gatherer and I must seek its shelter for the night.” [page 150]

Suiting the action to the word he forced his way through underbrush and over fallen trees straight up the side of the mountain until he found himself in a small cleared spot beside the house. But a curious sight arrested his attention and made him stop before announcing himself. At one side of a circular spot of hard trodden earth in front of the house burned the bright fire of pine knots which had attracted his attention from below. But in the center of the open spot and facing the fire stood a young girl, her hair flying loosely over her shoulders, her arms bare and her skirt girded up so as to give free action to the limbs. Poised in her nana she held a glittering sword whose polished surface reflected the blaze of the fire.

Slowly she raised it until it pointed toward the zenith than her other hand rose slowly, to a horizontal position. Slowly her lithe form swayed from side to side. Slowly her body turned to right and left trembling with suppressed emotion. Then her motions became more animated. She turned completely around with a light quick step then sprang to the right and left and presented the sword as if in a contest. Quicker and quicker she turned, faster and faster she struck and parried while the glittering sword seemed in the flashing rays of the fire to make a halo of diamond light about her head. Faster and faster she sped, fast and faster fell the blows, when, at the very climax of her frenzy, she gave a bound like a wounded tigress to the edge of the ring and buried half the blade in a rotten log which lay beside the fire. Leaving the weapon quivering in the log she covered her face with her hands and fell to the ground crying:

“I am avenged! avenged!”

Long she lay there as in a swoon and long the boy stood gazing in wonder not unmixed with fear at the startling spectacle. He had seen the sword dance before but never danced like this, never with such a thrilling ending. The fury of that last thrust and the flash of her eye as the weapon sank-into the wood made his flesh creep with horror for just so might a man pierce his deadliest foe. But at last he felt the necessity of making his presence known. Approaching into the ring he gave a low cough to attract the girl’s attention and he succeeded better than he had expected. She [page 151] sprang to her feet with a scream of terror, snatched the sword from its unnatural sheath and faced the intruder like a tigress at bay.

“Who and what are you?” she panted.

“I am only a belated traveller who has lost his way. I saw the light of your fire from the valley below and I made my way here to beg your hospitality for the night. I meant no harm.” Yi Wha stood a moment gazing at him incredulously but finally let fall the point of her sword and answered:

“But I am a woman and alone; how can I offer you the hospitality of this miserable hut?”

“True, but when I saw your fire from below how was I to know? However, I will not enter you hut. Let me only lie here by the fire until the morning. I ask nothing more.”

“No” replied the girl “You must occupy the hut and I will stay here by the fire. I am accustomed to such a life while I see that you have lived in better circumstances and the exposure would be more difficult for to bear.” So she prevailed upon him to occupy the hut while she seated herself beside the fire and watched out the long hours of the night. But neither of them could sleep. He could not banish from his mind that flashing eye, that splendid from, proud as a queen’s though, clad in rustic garb. She was the first being that had been able to stir him from the deep despondency into which the knowledge of his overhanging fate had plunged him.

“Ah! if I could only rest here forever! If I could only pursuade this wild creature to be my wife how willingly would I share the hardships of her mountain life!”

The girl likewise pondered upon the singular encounter, the young man’s delicacy and his evident nobility of character. Softer feelings for the time drove out the hateful thoughts which she had cherished so long. “Alas, if I had not been chained to the awful destiny in store for me; if it had been my lot to be the happy wife of some honest, generous man like this, how my worthless life might have blossomed into hope.” And so the long hours passed until the morning broke, which brought Sun-chang-i one day nearer to his doom and Yi Wha one day nearer her revenge. \_

When he emerged from the hut he found her busily pre- [page 152] paring the morning meal. They saluted each other with evident embarrassment, the result of their mutual thoughts about each other, but as Sun-chang-i busied himself in helping his hostess their restraint wore off and soon they were conversing as freely and affably as if they had been old acquaintances. They shared the frugal repast, Sun-chang-i drawing it out as long as possible; but when it was done he had no possible excuse for staying longer so he reluctantly said good-bye, after thanking the girl for her kindness, and wended his way down the mountain to the nearest village where he determined to spend a few days in hopes of meeting again his mountain hostess. Every day his eye scanned the road along which she must come, but she did not appear. He felt an inexplicable longing to see her again and when a week had passed it had grown to such proportions that he decided that he would invent some means by which he could communicate with her. He know that in his present guise she would look upon him with great suspicion for his dress and language both betrayed his noble birth. He did not care to conceal his identity but only to allay her suspicion as to his intentions.

So he purchased a common woodman’s dress and swinging an axe over his shoulder struck into the forest and made his way toward Yi Wham’s cabin. But before he reached it the sound of an axe greeted his ears and presently he caught sight of his interesting friend striking lusty blows at the body of a thick pine. On her face there was the same stern look as when she drove the sword point into the rotten log, as if each blow of the axe severed the head of a deadly enemy, and when the great tree came crashing to the ground there was the same fierce look of unholy triumph.

When she caught sight of him she started violently and the tell-tale blood came surging up to her face, while the only words that she could frame were:

“You here!”

“Yes, I am here” he answered “but come, sit down with me on this tree that you have just felled and let me tell you why I am here and in these garments.”

Her eyes fell before his glance and she seemed inclined to turn and fly but by a strong effort she controlled herself and quietly sat down on the mossy trunk. [page 153]

“Now listen,” he said “You and I are two honest people, however strange our present position may be when compared with the usual conventionalities; but there is something in each of our lives that sets us apart from ordinary men, something that frees us from conventional standards, I am born of a noble family, but for no fault of my own I am cast out, ostracized, disowned, I am a wanderer without house or home. What avails my nobility? I should be driven from my father’s door were I to return. I have no means with which to live as becomes my birth and so it happens that I have cast off my nobleman’s clothes and am dressed as becomes my worldly position but I retain my high blood and my intrinsic nobility. These are not incompatible with a life of manual labor. But why do I say this to you? Because I have seen that your real nobility of mind is as much higher than your birth as my birth is higher than my present position, so you are every bit my equal and I ask you to be my wife, to let me share the toil of this rugged life with you, to lean upon you, if need be, until these hands unused to toil shall become hardened to the plow and axe, hoping for the time when you shall lean on me. Answer me. Will you be my wife?”

 Who shall describe the conflict that was raging in her heart. Love beating at the portal where revenge held sway. On the one hand her lover’s ardent gaze and on the other those accusing eyes of her murdered father! Love and duty! One or the other she must choose; both she could not. She scorned herself that this new feeling, this strange warm feeling whose life was just begun and might be counted in hours should dispute the empire of her heart with that despot, Revenge, which had been her only hope and aim for years, No! she could not give it up. She turned to her lover.

“You do not know what you ask. Let me tell you once for all that mine is a devoted life; devoted to one terrible object that before many years have passed must be accomplished and once accomplished must sweep my life with it to a doom I dread to contemplate. I cannot tell you all. Let it suffice that ere two years are passed I shall have surrendered up my life to a noble cause. Yet do not mistake me or deem me insensible of the love you offer me. Were it not for another over- [page 154] mastering passion that holds me in its power I feel that I could love you as few men have ever been loved. Oh that I had never met you.” She covered her face with her hands and wept aloud while her whale frame shook with the intensity of her emotion. While Sun-chang-i waited for this paroxysm to pass he was busily revolving in his mind what he should say. When she could listen he said:

“I have not told you all. I, too, am doomed to die before two years have passed. Here is still another evidence that Heaven has destined us for each other. There are two years of life before us. Let us live them together. Even the knowledge of our impending fate cannot rob us of the happiness of that short interval, for we are not of those who fear death. I promise you that when the time corals for the fulfillment of your mission whatever it may be I will not detain you an instant. Together we will cast off these human bonds and who can tell but we shall meet hereafter, our several missions accomplished, to renew this sweetest of all relationships that I ask you to form. Come. Will you not live the remaining fragment of your life with me?”

Then love renewed the battle against vengeance and won.

“Why should I not yield?” she said to herself, “He absolves me from all obligation after two years are expired. Why should I not in the meantime take just one taste of the happiness of life? If only I perform my dreadful task at last all will be well; besides he too is destined to an early death and so I shall not leave him to mourn my loss.” She turned and put her hand in his while her glorious eyes thrilled him through and through with a nameless delight as she softy answered.

“Yes, I will be your wife to honor and love you. Only this, when my time has come I must go and do my work. If you will let me put that duty first, the duty to a dead father, I will be yours in all else. I would not dare to do it were it not that you will not survive me long to mourn my loss.”

So, beneath the forest trees, these lovers plighted their troth. How little did the maiden think when she made that one condition that the man she was to kill was the very one to whom she had pledged her love and from whom she had exacted the promise that in nothing would he hinder her in the [page 155] performance of her dreadful task whatever it might be. A quiet unpretentious wedding at the house of one of her acquaintances sealed their mutual compact and together they took up their abode in the mountain hut.

 NARRO.

(Concluded in the next number.)

The Introduction of Chinese into Korea,

TRANSLATED FROM THE INTRODUCTION TO COURANT’S BIBLIOGRAPHIE COREENNE.

Documents relating to the introduction and the use of Chinese characters in Korea are few in number. The *Sam-guk Sa-geui*, a work written in Chinese in the eleventh century does however mention several interesting facts which show that the history of Chinese writing differs for the various states then occupying the Peninsula. Ko-gu-ryu, situated to the north-west, appears to have extended at certain periods over a considerable part of what is to-day Manchuria; by its very position it had relationships in the way of commerce and war with the Kingdoms of North China, and so it is in the territory of Ko-gu-ryu that legend and history fix the site of the governments of Tan-gun\*, Keui-ja† and Wi-man‡. The last two of these were Chinese refugees, and so with them should we find the first appearance of civilization, at least the Chinese form of it.

The *Sam-guk Sa-geui* mentions that in 600 A. D., it being the eleventh year of King Yung-yang§, the Prince commanded Yi Mun-jin, a doctor of the College of Literati, to epitomize the ancient histories of the country. Yi Mun-jin wrote a work of five volumes on the subject. The Sam-guk Sa-geui adds the following words: “Since the origin, of the Kingdom, characters have been in use, for at that time there existed one hundred volumes of memoirs, written by different persons, called Yu-geui. At this time the text was revised

T.G.T’.G.―*Tong-guk T’ong-gam*, 東國通鑑 S.G.S.G.―*Sam-guk Sa-geui*, 三國史記 \*檀君 †箕子 ‡衛滿 §嬰陽 [page 156]

and fixed.” The antiquity of at least a limited use of Chinese characters in the country is further supported by the fact that from the time of T’a-ja\*, who ascended the throne in 53 A. D., the names of kings are all explainable in Chinese; till toward the end of the fourth century the Chinese expression made use or is at the same time the name of the sovereign and that of the locality where his tomb is situated; the designations or special names of the kings are, on the other hand, Buddhistic. It was in 372 A. D, the second year of King So Su-rim† that the new religion was introduced into Ko-gu-ryu and it led to a revival of Chinese study. Buddhistic books were introduced and the King established a school called Ta-hak for the teaching of young people (T.G.T’.G.IV, 4; S.G.S. G. XVIII 3)

For the Kingdom of Pak-che, situated at the South of Ko-gu-ryu, on the west side of Korea, the Sam-guk Sa-geui limits itself to noting from some more ancient documents that in the reign of Keum So-jo (346-375 A. D.) they began to use writing to note down events (S.G.S.G.XXIV.) Is this only a question concerning the origin of written annals? Would it not seem unlikely that a Kingdom possessing the art of writing had existed more than three centuries and a half without its even having occurred to anyone to note down important events? I should be inclined to think, for my part, that writing was known nothing of till this time, and that it was brought by Buddhist missionaries who then went everywhere throughout the Peninsula. (T.G.T’.G.IV.7.) It is only a hundred years later that the names of the kings of Pak-che cease to be simple transcriptions without sense in Chinese, and take the form of temple names; particular names in Pak-che as in Ko-gu-ryu remain about all, till the absorption of these states by Sil-la, pure and simple transcriptions.

It is true that ancient Japanese, works on history date the arrival of the scholar Wa-ni (Wang-in) at 285 A, D. He was a native of Pak-che and brought with him the Analects and the Thousand Character Classic. This statement has been accepted by the greater number of European scholars, but Mr. Aston has proven that many of the ancient Japanese an-

\*太祖 †小獸林 [page 157]

nals are not worthy of confidence; in particular he has shown that all the period of relationship between Pak-che and Japan has been interpolated by ancient Japanese authors, in such a way as to fill up the gaps in the half fabulous chronology which they find in the traditions. On this point he is of the same mind as the Japanese scholar Motoori. Mr. Aston brings down the events of this period two cycles or one hundred and twenty years. The introduction of Chinese characters into Japan would then have taken place at the end of the fifth century and this, date coincides very nearly with that of the use of writing in Pak-che, As to the name of the Thousand Character Classic mentioned at this time, there need be no difficulty, since the work seems to have been a first edition, before that of the sixth century which has come down to us.

Sil-la, occupying the south-east of the Peninsula, was more distant from China than its neighbors and extended along eastern regions still barbarian. It is strange indeed to read in the Sam-guk Sa-geui (1. 6) that King Yu-ri, in the ninth year of his reign (32 A. D.,) gave to the inhabitants of the six cantons of his Kingdom, Chinese family names, Yi, Ch’oe, Son, Chong, Pa and Sul, the three royal families being called Pak, Suk and Kim. If the correctness of these assertions is proven, we would conclude from it that there was a knowledge of Chinese characters on the part of the people of Sil-la at this remote period. We must not fail to mention as proof in support of this the history of those Chinese who came to the country of Chin-han, in order to escape the tyranny of the Emperor Chi of Tshin and who gave to the country, on landing, the very name of the dynasty that chased them from their native land. Chinese authorities have in fact made the two names Chin and Tshin to agree. We might also mention the refugees from north Korea, the state of Keui-ja which was Chinese in origin as referred to in the opening lines of the Sam-guk Sa-geui. But all this is the shifting region of legend; in fact as one runs through the Sam-guk Sa-geui, it is not before the end of the sixth century that we commence to find Chinese, names for people. Till that time all the names made use of have the unmistakable appearance of words transcribed from a foreign language. The three royal names of Pak, Suk and Kim are to be found, it is true, dating from the [page 158] sixth century, but the explanation in the Sam-guk on the subject of these names shows clearly that Chinese characters were used to represent the native word which they resembled in sound. This is true, at any rate, in two cases out of the three. Moreover what is the documentary value of the *Sam-guk Sa-geui* for this remote period? This is a question which I shall examine later.

Even though the family names in question had been in use since the founding of the Kingdom, it does not prove that Chinese characters had been employed since that time in the country. If we admit as a fact the statement of an ancient Chinese immigration, it would not be astonishing that the descendants of these fugitives, in forgetting almost all the culture of their mother country and with it the art of writing, had preserved the simplest customs of their civilization and before everything else the family names, and even a tradition of the mysterious signs representing them. But that is only a supposition, and the fact drawn from the reading of the Sam-guk is that up to the second half of the sixth century the names were not in use.

On examination of the proper names of the kings of Sil-la it appears that before the reign of Sil-sung\* who ascended the throne in 402 A. D. they were transcribed from a foreign language; the very name Sil-sung has a Chinese appearance. That of his successor has two forms of spelling and seems indeed to be a transcription of Korean. Cha-pi† who reigned from 458 to 479 might have taken his name from Buddhistic books; but the two designations of the King following (479-500), the one at last Pi-cho‡, has nothing of Chinese about it. Apart from these the names employed to designate the kings are easily explainable and resemble the names of Chinese temples.

It was King Chi-cheung, in 503, who abandoned for the first time his Korean little Ma-rip-gan for the Chinese title Wang. At the same time the chief officials asked of him that he fix definitely the name of the Kingdom. Till then they had called it Sa-ra§, Sa-ro|| and Sil-la¶, but now they were of the opinion that the last appellation should he held to, for Sin

\*實聖 †慈悲 ‡毗處 §斯羅 ||斯盧 ¶新羅 [page 160]

Kingdom of Sil-la does not seem to have profited by the progress of civilization until later, after Japan, in the course of the sixth century.

Now to what extent are the statements that I have made on the authority of the Sam-guk Sa-geui to be depended on? That is to say, what is the documentary value of this work? It was written by a nigh officer of the court of the Kings of Ko-ryu, Kim Pu-sik\*, who lived at the end of the eleventh century and at the beginning of the twelfth, two centuries and a half after the disappearance of the three kingdoms whose history he wrote, at a time when the monarchy of Ko-ryu had borrowed much from the Songs of China. The ancient language and institutions were forgotten or no longer understood, more because of the contempt felt by the literati of the Chinese school for their barbarian ancestors than in consequence of opposition between Ko-ryu, the northern and military monarchy，and Sil-la the Kingdom of the south which was the last survival of the Hans. The tribes of Ka-ya†, and the Kingdoms of Pak-che and Ko-gu-ryu absorbed by Sil-la in the sixth and seventh centuries were still more than ever forgotten These diverse circumstances were somewhat unfavorable to the compilation of an exact and impartial history; however, we must not lose sight of the fact that the Sam-guk Sa-geui is the most ancient Korean work existing on the history of the country. The authenticity has never been questioned, the style is simple and bears marks of antiquity and good faith, the plan of the work is very clear and throughout imitative of the historical memoirs of Ta Ma-ch’un.

Besides this work having been prepared by royal order Kim Pu-sik must have had at his disposal all documents then existing which have today disappeared. He mentions some of them without giving anywhere a complete list, and as he has not included in his work any chapters on literary history, deviating in this respect from Chinese models, we have on ancient literature only fragmentary notes few in number. We know at least that Kim Pu-sik consulted them as well as the archives and other documents and we stats that his work is in accord throughout with Chinese histories and with some

\*金富軾 †伽倻 [page 161]

ancient Korean works of a later period yet sufficiently remote to be drawn from the same source. What then was the degree of correctness of the documents that Kim Pu-sik had? Among books and archives of whatever kind, if those which relate to Ko-gu-ryu seem to date indirectly from the very origin of the Kingdom, they do not go further back than the end of the fourth century for Pak-che and the commencement of the sixth for Sil-la, for it is at this double epoch that Chinese writing was. introduced and developed in South Korea, as I have shown above and as Ma Toan-lin states, and nowhere does there exist any trace or mention of writing used before this time. Then all the most ancient history rests on simple oral tradition, most uncertain. This will explain the doubtful points, the miraculous doings, the lack of definite information for the first four or five centuries of Korean history. The cyclical characters of the years which are found at the beginning of the Sam-guk could very easily be added after it was done, as has taken place for the early history of China and Japan; the astronomical phenomena noted might furnish a verification. Mr. Aston has made an attempt at this process but without any result.

But the fact that engages my attention at this moment, namely the introduction of writing, marks precisely the limit between oral tradition and written history. Little time passed by till the art unknown till then to Koreans was applied to the recording of events: the annals of Pak-che date from the very introduction of Buddhism into the peninsula, those of Sil-la commence seventeen years after the first definite preaching of the Hindoo religion in the Kingdom. These facts stated of the Sam-guk on the subject of the. first transplanting of characters are worthy of confidence on the same score as all later events and without being subject to the doubt that I have mentioned with regard to the ancient history of Korea.

What was first brought by the Buddhist monks were the books of their religion: then followed the Chinese Classics, various historical works, works 0n astronomy, astrology, medicine and some Taoist books. The indications that I have found from Ma Toan-lin and among Korean authors on the subject of books brought from China are to be found in the Bibliographie in the places assigned by the nature of the [page 162] works to which they relate. These are the works that have been studied by Koreans especially in the College of Literati established by the different Kings of the peninsula. They were also in the hands of the Wha-rang, young people chosen by the Kings of Sil-la for their grace and intelligence, taught physical exercise and all intellectual elegance and called then to the highest offices. These works were made the object of examination, begun in Sil-la at the end of the eighth century. Sons of influential families devoted themselves with earnestness to Chinese study; from 640 Koreans went to study in China. The most celebrated statesmen of Sil-la such as Kim Heum-un, Kim Yu-sin and Kim In-mun, the last a son of the King, were celebrated for the extent of their literary knowledge.

Not content with studying foreign books Koreans endeavored to write in the language of their instructors. The Mun-hun Pi-go quotes a phrase written in Chinese taken from the annals of the Kingdom of Ka-rak, without stating whether the quotation is drawn directly from the annals, which would seem little likely, or whether it was mentioned in another work. However that may be, this Kingdom having submitted to Sil-la in 532 A. D. it follows that before this date there were Koreans of the south able to write in Chinese. The passages that the Sam-guk draws from the annals of the three Kingdoms and from other ancient memoirs, the texts of decrees and petitions that it repeats are in the same language; a little later it is in Chinese that the King of Sil-la corresponds with the governor sent by the Tangs. There is no noticeable difference between the style employed by the Koreans and that of the Chinese of the same period: perhaps originally Chinese were employed as official secretaries in the peninsula as seems to have been frequently the case with the Tartar people of the north of China; perhaps the Korean writer limited himself to copying phrases from Chinese books and inserting them from end of end. The Japanese of antiquity were very expert in this sort of mosaic. Mr. Satow says that they came to treating subjects purely native without using a phrase that had not been taken from Chinese works. It might not be impossible that it was from facts of this kind that the tradition was handed down which makes Ch’oe Ch’i-wun the [page 163] first Korean who wrote Chinese and that until him they had confined themselves to phrases taken entire from authors.

JAS. S. GALE.

(To be continued.)

**Odds and Ends.**

**Exorcising Spirits.**

The Korean practice of driving out evil spirits is well illustrated at the American gold mines at Un-san in the north, whenever a Korean miner is killed in the mine. The Koreans suppose that his death is caused by some spirit of the earth who feels himself aggrieved in some way or for some cause. No sooner does the accident occur than all the miners come flocking from the shaft, and work is at a complete standstill until the matter is adjusted. It ordinarily takes an hour and a half or two hours to get things back to a working basis. The wife of the dead man or his nearest female relative is summoned to the mouth of the mine. Live chickens and pigs are brought in goodly numbers. The miners provide themselves with rude drums or kettle-pans or anything else that will produce a loud sound, while some arm themselves with brooms. When these preparations are complete the chickens are tied fast and thrown one by one down the empty shaft, and the pigs are treated the same way. At the same time the woman kneels at the edge of the shaft and holds her hand as far down in it as she can reach, with the thumb and fore-finger pinched tightly together. It is supposed that she has gotten hold of the evil spirit. Meanwhile they all listen to the sounds that come up the shaft from the immolated animals and when they hear the right sound they all give a loud shout and the woman draws out her hand as if she were drawing out the spirit. The thumb and fore-finger are still tightly held together. At this point the miners begin to beat the woman severely and the tom-toms and drums beat and the sweepers sweep the floor and the air as if sweeping out the evil influence. The woman is beaten till so exhausted that she can no longer hold thumb and finger together and her hand opens. This means that the spirit has been exorcised and soon the miners go back quietly to their work.

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**The Shogun.**

The Shogun of Japan is known among Koreans as the Kwan-bak. The story of the origin of this term Kwan-bak may not be known to many of of our readers and so we venture to give it here. In the reign of Emperor So-je of the Former Han dynasty in China that august ruler was aided in the administration of the government by a celebrated Prime Minister named Kwak Kwang who; singularly enough, was unacquainted with the Chinese characters. This man attained to such an eminence that no business could be brought to the notice of the Emperor without first passing through his hands. This became stereotyped into the phrase Sun kwan bak kwang which means “First make the matter known to Kwang.” The two middle words of this formula, Kwan-bak, were applied to the Shogun, for while the Mikado was the nominal Supreme Ruler of Japan practically the government of that country rested in the Shogun.

**Small Pox.**

The Koreans call the Small-pox fiend Ho-gu Pyul-sang and this means the Fierce Fickle Fiend. He is wont to come and stay thirteen days. Note the unfortunate number. To get rid of him the Koreans make the “counterfeit presentment” of a horse of sali wood and beside it they place a tempting array of bread and other food whereby they try to induce the fiend to eat and then mount the horse and ride away. Out of this custom has arisen the saying Sali-mal-t’a, “give him a sali-wood horse to ride.” This is used of any one whose visits are frequent and inconveniently long―in other words a bore.

**Question and Answer.**

(9) Question. Is there such a thing as a genuine hereditary nobility in Korea?

Answer. Theoretically the line of demarcation between the Yang-ban and the Sang-nom classes is very distinct but practically there has been so much intermixture that the line is a very broad one. This intermixture however has taken place very largely during the last hundred years. It was not so long ago that every Korean of the lower class was a serf [page 165] owing service to some neighborhood gentleman and for whose good conduct that gentleman was, within certain bounds, responsible. But within the ranks of veritable Yang-bans there are widely different degrees of nobility. There are doubtless many who can trace their descent straight back a thousand or fifteen hundred years and who have always been specially eligible for office but so far as we know there is no such thing as a patent of nobility in Korea and the Yang-ban class as a whole forms far too great a proportion of the entire population to be called “the nobility” in any such sense as the titled class hi England, for instance, are so called.

(10) Question. What is the origin and nature of the custom called Po-sam.

Answer. There are two answers to this question neither of which are highly complimentary to the Korean. The less objectionable one is this:―Several hundred years ago this custom “broke out” in Korea for it was a sort of epidemic like witch burnings and Jew baitings in lands far to the west. It was customary to consult soothsayers to find out whether the life of a prospective bride would be a happy one, especially in cases where the young woman came from, a noble and wealthy family. If the fortune-teller announced that she would become a widow an attempt would be made to thwart the fates by having recourse to the Po-sam. The day before the real wedding was to take place a young boy would be inveigled into entering the bride’s house and there he would be seized and compelled to go through a mock marriage ceremony with the prospective bride. After this was done he would be immediately strangled and the body would be smuggled out of the house under cover of the night. The young woman having thus become a widow has supposably fulfilled the prediction of the soothsayer and on the morrow can proceed to her real marriage without fear.

It happened that about the time this grewsome fad was in vogue the Government pierced the wall of Seoul with a gate on the slopes of Nam-san between what is now called the Su-gu-mun and the top of the mountain. It was called the Little South Gate or Nam-so-mun. Someone happened to notice the juxtaposition of the two events and the geomancers after solemn examination of the spot declared that the making of [page 166] this gate had liberated evil spirits from the ground and it was through their influence that this evil custom had arisen. The gate was forthwith closed and “consequently,” according to native belief, the custom soon died out. The word Po-sam is derived from two native words meaning respectively a blanket and to wrap, referring obviously to the manner in which the unfortunate boy was destroyed. An examination of the wall of Seoul in the vicinity indicated will show the place where the gate was walled up.

**Editorial Comment.**

WM. E. GRIFFTS, D. D., the well-known author of “The Hermit Nation,” in a letter to the Review makes some suggestions of great value which are so concisely worded that we cannot do better than quote them verbatim. He asks if information cannot be given about:—

(1)Any relics or remembrances of Hendrik Hamel or his companions.

(2)A historical notice of the Korean Repository.

(3)How P’yung-yang looks today, etc., etc.

(4)The American Expedition of 1871 from the Korean standpoint.

(5)Song-do, its present aspect and its past history.

(6)The railroad route between Seoul and Fusan.

(7)The route between Seoul and Eui-ju.

(8)The Miryuk or stone images.

(9)Fauna and marine life.

(10)Old battle flags, mural pictures, nature worship, etc.

(11)A special article devoted to each of the eight original provinces.

(12)Folklore, etc.

(13)Translation of Korean novels.

(14)Street Songs.

(15)Foreign Legations.

(16)Material progress.

It will be noticed that we have given attention already to one or two of these subjects but we have here a valuable list of questions all of which are of the greatest interest.

[page 167]

The new imperial palace has been steadily growing in size by the purchase and inclusion of surrounding properties. The government, which means practically the Household Department, desired to include the Customs premises in the palace grounds but, without apparently estimating the difficulties involved in the removal and proper bestowal of the accumulated archives of such an institution as the Imperial Customs, and the housing of those in charge of them, it asked Dr. J. McLeavy Brown to vacate the premises on the shortest possible notice. As this was manifestly impossible, he made the very reasonable and necessary request that time be given for the arrangements to be made but without refusing to accede to the demands of the government when kept within the limits of the possible.

Thereupon Dr. Brown was informed that the government had decided to dispense with his services. As everyone knows, the matter assumed an international significance as well it might in view of the very high standing of the parties involved and in view of that which could be read between the lines of the whole transaction. The arguments were conclusive and the government was induced to withdraw its demand.

It hardly needs be said that the Imperial Customs has always been a financial sheet anchor to windward for the Korean ship of state. It has been a great and valuable conservative element among the fluctuations of what we might call experimental finance in the peninsula. By wise forethought and frequently misunderstood economy Dr. Brown was able to pay off several millions of government debt to Japan and thus extricate Korea from a serious situation. It his conservatism has seemed draconic it must be remembered that such conservatism was needed to counterbalance an equal extreme in the opposite direction and effect a healthful equilibrium.

The Customs of Korea have had a steady and healthy growth and very few mistakes have been made. Now that the government has obtained a loan of five million dollars from France the value of the Customs comes to the fore for it forms the only security that is satisfactory to the creditors. At such a time it is necessary that the customs should be administered as they have been and in such a way that the receipts [page 168] can be applied without fail to the liquidation of those debts, whose liquidation forms the basis and proof of Korea’s solvency.

The government claims that much of the blame for the misunderstanding lies with Kim Kyu-heui who acted as interpreter between Dr. Brown and the Palace and in consequence he has been banished for ten years to Ch’ul-do, an island off Whang-ha Province.

The Korean government is to be congratulated on its wise determination to retain in the highest post within its gift a man like J. McLeavy Brown whose nationality and whose known sentiments proclaim him to be unalterably in favor of Korean autonomy.

We may be pardoned for trespassing thus far into the field of politics, for this is a matter that touches Korea’s welfare so nearly that not to mention it would lay us open, to the charge of remissness.

**News Calendar.**

W. H. Emberley has secured a foreign house in close proximity to the terminal station of the Seoul-Fusan Railroad and is opening it as a foreign hotel. It will meet a long felt want and we wish him all success in the venture.

Rev. Arthur Brown D. D., Secretary of the Presbyterian Mission Board arrived in Seoul on the 23rd. He intends to travel in the interior and inspect the work of the mission in Whang-ha and P’yung-an Provinces.

The Japanese Minister, Mr. Hyashi, has approached the Government in regard to permission to establish a system of wireless telegraphy on the coast and also to lay submarine cables between several of the ports.

On the 12th inst, the Military School, at whose head is the energetic Gen. Yi Hak-kyun, enjoyed a very successful field day at the Hong-je-wun in the valley beyond the Peking Pass. A goodly number of foreigners were present and enjoyed the sham-fight which took place in the morning. In the afternoon there was rifle practice in which the foreign guests were invited to participate and from which resulted a good deal of fun in spite of an occasional sore shoulder. [page 169]

March 27th was the birthday of His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince. The Diplomatic and Consular body and the foreign employees of the government were received in audience in the morning and had the pleasure of wishing the Prince long life and happiness.

We note with satisfaction that the Korean Religious Tract Society has decided to issue an occasional Bulletin to serve as an advertising medium and a means of communication be-tween the officers and the members of the Society. This ought to increase the interest of the general membership in the important work of this Society. Several amendments to the constitution have been proposed which will put the Society on a better working basis.

The first of a series of Chinese Readers for use in native Schools has just been published. It is from the pen of Rev. Jas. S. Gale. It is well adapted to the end in view and will much facilitate the study of Chinese. There can be no doubt that the enormous number of Chinese derivatives in Korean renders necessary a study of Chinese words but we hold the opinion as heretofore, that this can be done without the use of the Chinese Character just as an English speaking person can know what a gymnast, a physician, a policy, a machine, a plutocrat or an architect is without knowing the Greek alphabet or the Greek language, from which they are derived. The roots on which these borrowed words are based can be studied as well in English; so the Chinese words can be learned as well, if not better, without the time-wasting toil of learning the ideograms. The Korean language and literature would deserve a written medium of their own even if there were as yet no alphabet; how much more then do they deserve it when Korea possesses an almost perfect alphabet which only hide-bound prejudice and caste feeling have spurned as common. As if the best things in the world were not common! We have nothing but words of praise for the book to which we refer when once we admit the wisdom of the policy of which it is the outcome but here we hesitate.

In preparing the new tomb for the late Queen it was found that the rock came near to the surface at the point where the grave was to have been. This, according to the laws of Korean geomancy, was an unpropitious sign and render- [page 170] ed the place quite unsuitable. A very large sum of money had been expended on it, which of course is lost. It was reported that two of the geomancers who recommended the site committed suicide but this appears to have been an exaggeration. At any rate sixteen geomancers have been arrested in connection with the affair and they are being examined under torture to find out who is responsible. It is reported that another site will be selected not far from the same place.

It is with profound regret that we are obliged to record the death, at Mok-po on the twelfth instant, of Mrs. Eugene Bell after an illness of only three days. Rev. and Mrs. Bell have been for the past seven years members of the American Presbyterian Mission, South, and they both came from Kentucky. Mrs. Bell was the daughter of Rev Dr. Witherspoon, a name well known throughout the Middle West. The body was brought to the foreign cemetery and interred on the afternoon of the 19th inst. She left two little children, one five years old and the other two. Mr. and Mrs. Bell resided for some years in Seoul and have a wide circle of acquaintances and friends who will always remember them with the deepest interest. Mr. Bell is leaving for America immediately but we trust that his absence will be only temporary.

On the 16th inst. the Korean Ministers to England, Italy, Germany and France started for their posts. Kim Man-su was accredited to France, Min Yung-don to England and Italy and Min Ch’ul-hun to Germany. Before their departure arrangements for their support had been provided for only the space of one month after their arrival at their respective posts, just how it is going to be done does not yet appear but we trust the success of the enterprise will not be jeopardized by lack of funds. Cho Min-heui the newly appointed minister to the United States left Seoul on the 19th inst.

Hon. Wm. H. Stevens of New York has been appointed Korean Consul-General in America in place of Everett Frazar Esq. deceased.

A party of mounted Chinese brigands raided the town of Mu-san on the northern border during the latter part of March. The Korean garrison gave them a very lively time of it, for the raiders were driven back with a loss of thirty killed and [page 171] wounded. The Korean loss was twenty in killed and wounded. It appears that the Korean soldier can stand up successfully against an enemy when the two sides are fairly matched.

The three years concession for lumbering on the north-eastern border, which was granted to a Russian firm three years ago has been extended twenty years.

Song Ki-un the Korean Minister to Japan who returned to Seoul on April 3rd was immediately reappointed to the same post.

It is an interesting fact that the newly appointed ministers to Europe and America were obliged to cut off their hair and dress in European style. When this condition was made known to Kim Man-su he averred that he would rather throw up the position than cut off his top-knot. For this he was subjected to a deal of good natured badinage and finally succumbed to the argument that as a great many men had been willing to give their lives for their country he surely ought not to let a mere top-knot stand in the way of such ail important public service.

The Prime Minister, Yun Yong-sun resigned and Sim Sun-t’ak was appointed in his place.

Ten thousand rifles and a million rounds of ammunition were landed at Chemulpo on March 20th for use in the Korean Army.

All the money needed for the Seoul Fusan R. R. has been subscribed twice over and so this important work is removed from the field of possibilities and takes its place among the certainties of the near future. May the time soon come when we shall no longer be at the mercy of the tides, the fogs and the other dangers and inconveniences of the western coast of Korea.

An attempt has been made to rehabilitate the Imperial Mint which burned last month. Sufficient machinery was saved to carry on the minting of nickels at the rate of $6o0o, worth a day. Some of the damaged machinery was sent to Japan to be repaired.

On the ninth inst. the British Minister, J. H. Gubbins, C.M.G. presented to His Imperial Majesty the Order of the [page 172] Grand Commander of the Indian Empire. It is said that the document accompanying this decoration was one of the very last of this kind which the late Queen Victoria signed with her own hand.

Prof Martel of the French School and Prof Bolljahn of the German School have arranged to teach French and German in the Imperial Military School. This is an important departure and one that should be of great value to the School and to the Korean army. English is also taught in the school under the supervision of the principal, Gen. Yi Hak-kyun.

A complaint was lodged with the Minister of Law by the people of Nam-p’o in Ch’ung Ch’ung Province alleging that Yang Kyu-t’a, An Chong-hak, An Pyong-t’a and Chung Kil-dang (a woman) have been claiming to be Russian citizens and to be propagandists of the Greek Church and under cover of this extorting money from the people and committing other excesses in that district. The Law Department referred the matter to the Foreign Office. It was discovered that the four persons referred to are Russian citizens. The woman’s father resided for a time at Petersburg some forty years ago and was a land-owner in Russia. Six years ago she came to Korea with a Russian passport, which she lost. The Russian authorities offer to investigate the matter and punish the woman according to law for traveling in the interior without a passport. We feel sure that the Russian Government will not countenance any abuses on the part of those who claim to be her citizens and to be the heralds of Christianity.

Min Sang-ho and Min Yung-ch’an have been the recipients of handsome gifts from Prince Henry of Prussia through the German Consulate.

Su Pyong-kyu, a graduate of Roanoke College Va. U. S. A. has been appointed professor in the Imperial Middle School, Prof. Su is well known to many foreigners in Korea under his anglicized name of K. B. Surh. There are few Koreans who have so good a command of English as Prof, Su. Seven years, residence in America afforded him an experience that should become of great value to Korea.

The press of the east has been giving very great prominence to the movement of Russian war vessels on the coasts [page 173] of Korea, mostly in connection with the Port of Masam-po and adjacent waters. Various kinds of comments have been made upon these movements but we have nothing to record in the way of actual news as to what these things means. We do not share the uneasiness which so many seem to feel, for as yet these manoeuvres are nothing more than we might expect in view of the fact that Russia has a coaling station at this point. It is only natural that she should be anxious to survey the neighboring waters. If Japanese, English and United States vessels have frequently surveyed other parts of the Korean coast there seems n0 reason why Russia should not do so in the vicinity of a port where she possesses such obvious interests. But we may say, without entering upon the field of politics, that it seems singular that this work should be done at a time when the public feeling in Japan is so sensitive over the Manchurian question and when, in consequence, a wrong interpretation is almost sure to be placed upon it.

We regret to say that on the night of the 20th inst. the entire plant and buildings of the Han-Sung Sin-po were consumed by fire. This is especially to be regretted because Korea has so few newspapers that this one could not well be spared. We trust that the proprietors will be able to resume the publication of that paper at no distant date.

On the 18th inst. the Korean Government secured a loan of $5,000,000 from France. The final papers were signed at a Cabinet Council on that day. The loan is to be in the shape of gold and silver bullion. The Imperial Customs returns are mortgaged for the payment of interest which is set at 5 1/2 per cent. The debt is to be paid up in full within twenty-five years.

Since the above was written further particulars have transpired showing that the loan was floated at 90, or in other words that instead of giving $5,000,000 the French syndicate will give $4,500,000，on the understanding that $5,000,000 be paid back within twenty-five years at per cent, annually. It is stipulated that one third of the amount be in silver bullion and two thirds in gold bullion and that if the quality should be found to be inferior the Government would be allowed to return it. As to the uses to which this money is to [page 174] be put, rumor says it is partly for the establishment of a bank and partly for public improvements, such as broadening the sewers and building roads.

From the fact that the loan is to be in bullion one might reasonably infer that the Government purposes to mint it into money. Now the shrinkage in the value of the nickel money has shown that in the long run there is no actual profit to be made by minting money. The metal used and the labor involved will almost inevitably cover all the value of the finished coin if the purity of the metal is preserved. We are anxious so see a thoroughly good and trustworthy Korean currency, one that will not need to be discounted. If this new departure means the beginning of such a currency and the heightening of the financial credit of this Government and if the money is to be used in such a way as to inure to the benefit of the Korean public at large nothing could be more praiseworthy.

Bishop D. H. Moore, the Resident Bishop in the Far East of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, arrived in Chemulpo on the 23rd inst. and left the next day, in company with Rev. W. B. Scranton the Superintendent of the Korea Mission, to inspect the work in Pyeng-yang. The Annual Meeting of the mission is announced to begin on the ninth of May, in Seoul.

We are sure that many of our readers will be highly pleased to see a translation of the Introduction to Courant’s *Biblographie Coreenne*, by Rev. J. S. Gale, the first part of which appears in this number of the Review. It fairly bristles with points of interest and offers many suggestions that will well repay further study on the part of any who are historically inclined.

Few of us are aware how serious the outlook had become for the Koreans on account of the lack of rain. It meant not only scarcity of food but prevalence of disease, for the rain is the only scavenger in this country and the extreme dryness of the weather invites cholera with all is attendant horrors. For this reason we deem it worthy of record that the welcome rain began to fall on the 25th inst. In the wheat districts of the United States they speak of a “million dollar rain,” and without exaggeration, but to these people rain means not only money but life itself. [page 175]

On the evening of the 26th inst. a reception was tendered Rev. Arthur Brown, D. D., and Mrs. Brown at the residence of Dr. O. R. Avison.

Mr. and Mrs. Blaylock, who were driven out of China by the Boxer movement and who have been spending some mouths in Seoul, returned to Chefoo about the middle of April intending to return to their mission station in central Shantung as soon as conditions permit, which we trust will be soon.

The regular semi-weekly afternoon teas at the Seoul Union, under the auspices of the Ladies’ Lawn Tennis club, began with great eclat on Tuesday the 15th of April. The membership of the Seoul Union has been largely increased during the past year and a large number of new periodicals have been put on the tables of the Reading Room. In fact there are few Reading Rooms in the Far East that are better equipped than this.

A scheme has been evolved whereby the foreigners in Seoul can have an opportunity to read the best fiction that comes from American and English publishers in the shortest possible time after its publication. A competent agent in America will make a selection of the very best novels at the rate of three or four a month and mail them to Seoul. Foreigners by the payment of three yen a year can have the opportunity of reading these books in rotation and at the end of the year the books will be disposed of at auction or in any other way that may be desired by the subscribers. More particular information can be obtained by applying to Dr. C. C. Vinton who at considerable inconvenience has consented to attend to the correspondence and to the proper circulation of the books.

Two of the Geomancers who have been found “guilty” in connection with the matter of the Queen’s tomb have been sentenced to decapitation and two others to imprisonment for life. According to the claims of their profession they should know where rocks lie beneath the surface of the soil.

Later advices state that the death sentence on the two geomancers who were held responsible for the mistake in selecting the new site for the Queen’s tomb has been transmuted to imprisonment for life.

Something of a sensation has been caused by the work of a mad dog at the Russian Legation, in consequence of which [page 176] His Excellency A. Pavloff, the Russian Minister, Prof. N. Birnkoff of the Imperial Russian School, a Cossack and a child have gone to Japan on a Russian man-of-war to be treated at the Pasteur Institute in Tokyo. We join with the whole community in hoping that no evil effects will result from this painful incident.

IMPERIAL KOREAN TELEGRAPH RECEIPTS FOR 1900.

Seoul $19,709.07

Chemulpo.....................................................................................8,011.07

Pyeng-yang ..................................................................................6,463.39

Sam-wha 2,722.74

An-ju .................................................................................. 1,304.06

Un-san .......................................................................................1,455.46

Eui-ju ......................................................................................... 3,754.66

Ka-sung 1,239.21

Ha-ju 1,128.32

Kong-ju 729.94

Chun-ju ............................................................................. 1,807.20

Ok-ka ...........................................................................................1,632.67

Mun-an 3,417.19

Ta-gu 3,105.56

Chang-wun 2,901.92

Fu-san 5,735.23

Keum-sung 77.37

Wun-san ...................................................................................... 4,384.66

Ham-heung 1,065.76

Eun-san\* ....................................................................................1,531.30

Puk-ch’ung† ..............................................................................152.64

Sung-jin† ............................................................................ 81.74

Kyong-sung‡ 32.10

$72,443.26

We would call special attention to this excellent showing which is the result of faithful and energetic work in one of the best regulated departments of the Korean public service. Mr. J. H. Muhlensteth the Director of Telegraphs is one of the oldest foreign residents of Korea and very properly takes a leading place in those material improvements which are slowly but surely lifting Korea in spite of herself.

\*Six months only. †Two months only. ‡One month only. [page 177]

**KOREAN HISTORY.**

The first twenty-five years of the century witnessed unusual activity on the part of the surrounding savages who in view of the constantly increasing power of the three states beheld their territories diminishing. The wild people of Kol-p’o, Chil-p’o and Ko-p’o ravaged the borders of Sil-la but were driven back. On the south she attacked and burned a settlement of Japanese corsairs who had apparently gained a foothold on the mainland. Pak-je was also attacked on the east by the savages and was obliged to build a wall at Sa-do to keep them back. This period saw over a thousand Chinese refugees cross the Yalu and find asylum in Ko-gu-ryu. It also saw U-wi-gu, the fruit of a liaison between the eleventh king of Ko-gu-ryu and a farmer girl whom he met while hunting, ascend the throne of Ko-gu-ryu. It witnessed a remarkable exhibition of democratic feeling in Sil-la when the people rejected Prince Sa-ba-ni and in his place set up Ko-i-ru to be king.

The year 240 was an important one in the history of Ko-gu-ryu. King U-wi-gu was a man of boundless ambition and his temerity was as great as his ambition. Ko-gu-ryu had been at peace with China for eight years when, without warning, this U-wi-gu saw fit to cross the border and invade the territory of his powerful neighbor. The town of An-p’yung-hyun in western Liao-tung fell before the unexpected assault. This unprovoked insult aroused the slumbering giant of the Middle Kingdom and the hereditary feud that had existed for many years between Ko-gu-ryu and China was intensified. At the same time U-wi-gu turned his eyes southward and contemplated the subjugation of Sil-la. To this end he sent an expedition against her in the following year. It was met on the Sil-la border by a defensive force under Gen. Suk U-ro who withstood the invaders bravely but was driven back as far as the “Palisades of Ma-du” [page 178] where he took a firm stand. As he could not be dislodged the invading army found, itself checked. Meanwhile a dark cloud was rapidly overspreading Ko-gu-ryu’s western horizon. The great Chinese general, Mo Gu-genm, with a force of 10,000 men advanced upon the Ko-gu-ryu outposts and penetrated the country as far as the present Sung-ch’un where he met the Ko-gu-ryu army under the direct command of king U-wi-gu. The result was an overwhelming victory for Ko-gu-ryu whose soldiers chased the flying columns of the enemy to Yang-bak-kok where dreadful carnage ensued. “Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad” proved true in this case. U-wi-gu was so elated over the victory that he declared that a handful of Ko-gu-ryu troops could chase an army of Chinese. Taking five hundred picked cavalry he continued the pursuit; but he had boasted too soon. Gen. Mo Gu-geum’s reputation was at stake. Rallying a handful of his braves the latter turned upon his pursuers and handled them so severely that they turned and fled. The Chinese followed up the timely victory and threw themselves upon the army of Ko-gu-ryu so fiercely that the tables were completely turned. It is said that in the engagement that followed Ko-gu-ryu lost 18,000 men. King U-wi-gu, seeing that all was lost, fled back to his capital and awaited developments. But Gen. Wang-geui, Mo Gu-geum’s associate, pursued the king across the Yalu and gave him no rest until he had fled eastward to the territory of Ok-ju on the eastern coast. On his way thither he crossed Chuk-nyung Pass where all his remaining guard forsook him and fled. One of his officials, Mil-u, said “I will go back and hold the enemy at bay while you make good your escape”. So with three or four soldiers he held the narrow pass while the king found a retreat in a deep valley, where be succeeded in getting together a little band of soldiers. He offered a reward to anyone who should go and bring Mil-u safely to him. U Ok-ku volunteered to go. Finding Mil-u wounded and lying on the ground he took, him in his arms and carried him to the king. The latter was so delighted to recover his faithful follower that he nursed him back to life by his own hand. A few days later the pursuit continued and the king was again hard pressed. A counter, Yu-ryu, offered to go to the enemy’s [page 149] camp and in some way stop the pursuit. Taking some food he went and boldly announced that the king desired to surrender and had sent this gift ahead to announce his coming. His words were believed and the general received the gift. But Yu-ryu had concealed a short sword beneath the dishes and when he approached the general he whipped out the weapon and plunged it into the enemy’s breast. The next moment he himself was cut down by the attendants. When the king learned that the pursuers had lost their general he rallied his little force, threw himself upon them and put them to flight. The following year U-wi-gu, recognising that his capital was too near the border, decided to remove the court to P’yung-yang, which had been the capital for so many centuries. Two years later be made a treaty with Sil-la which remained unbroken for a century. He had been cured of some of his over-ambitiousness. Yun-bul was his successor.

It the third year of King Ch’um-ha of Sil-la, 249 A.D., the first envoy ever received from Japan arrived at the shore of Sil-la. He was met by Gen. Suk U-ro who addressed him in the following unaccountable manner. “It would be well if your king and queen should come and be slaves in the kitchen of the king of Sil-la”. Without a word the envoy turned about and posted back to Japan, An invasion of Korea was determined upon and soon a powerful force landed on the coast of that country. Gen. Suk U-ro was filled with dismay and remorse. He confessed to the king that he was the cause of this hostile display and begged to be allowed to go alone and propitiate the advancing enemy. It was granted and he walked straight into the Japanese camp and confessed his crime and asked that he alone be punished. The Japanese took him at his word, burned him alive in their camp and returned to their own land without striking a blow. The following year the same envoy came again and was well received by the king, but the widow of Gen. Suk U-ro desiring to avenge the blood of her husband, obtained permission to work in the kitchen of the envoy’s place of entertainment. There she found opportunity to poison his food and thus accomplish her purpose. This of course put an end to all hope of amity between the two countries and that event marks [page 180] the beginning of the feud which in spite of occasional periods of apparent friendship, existed between the people or Japan and Korea until the year 1868. Hostilities did not however begin at once.

The latter half of the third century beheld few events of special interest in the peninsula. During this period Pak-je seems to have made a spasmodic effort at reform, for we read that she reorganised her official system and set a heavy penalty for bribery, namely imprisonment for life. She also patched up a shallow peace with Sil-la. In Ko-gu-ryu a concubine of King Pong-sang tried to incense him against the queen by showing him a leather bag which she claimed the queen had made to drown her in. The king saw through the trick and to punish the crafty concubine had her killed in the very way she had described. A chief of the Sun-bi tribe invaded Ko-gu-ryu and desecrated the grave of the king’s father. The wild men of Suk-sin attempted to overthrow Sil-la but the king’s brother drove them back and succeeded in attaching their territory to the crown of Sil-la. It is said that when Sil-la was hard pressed by a band of savages strange warriors suddenly appeared and after putting the savages to flight, as suddenly disappeared. Each of these strange warriors had ears like the leaves of the bamboo and when it was discovered next day that the ground around the king’s father’s grave was covered with bamboo leaves it was believed that he had come forth from his grave with spirit warriors to aid his son.

With the opening of the fourth century the fifteenth king of Sil-la, Ki-rim, made an extensive tour of his realm, He passed northward as far as U-du-ju near the present Ch’un-ch’un. He also visited a little independent “kingdom” called Pi-ryul, now An-byun, and made many presents, encouraged agriculture and made himself generally agreeable. Not so with the king of Ko-gu-ryu, He was made of sterner stuff. He issued a proclamation that every man woman and child above fifteen years old should lend their aid in building a palace. Ko-gu-ryu had of late years passed through troublous times and the people were in no mood to undertake such a work. An influential courtier, Ch’ang Cho-ri, attempted to dissuade the king but as he was not successful he settled the question by assassinating the king. Eul-bul, who suc- [page 181] ceeded him, had a chequered career before coming to the throne. Being the king’s cousin he had to flee for his life. He first became a common coolie in the house of one Eun-mo in the town of Sil-la. By day he cut wood on the hill sides and by night he made tiles or kept the frogs from croaking while his master slept. Tiring of this he attached himself to a salt merchant but being wrongfully accused he was dragged before the magistrate and beaten almost to death. The official Ch’ang Cho-ri and a few others knew his whereabouts and, hunting him up, they brought him to the “Pul-yu water” a hundred and ten li from P’yung-yang, and hid him in the house of one O Mak-nam. When all was ripe for the final move, Ch’ang Cho-ri inaugurated a great hunting party. Those who were willing to aid in dethroning the king were to wear a bunch of grass in the hat as a sign. The king was seized and imprisoned, and there hanged himself. His sons also killed themselves and Eul-bul was then elevated to the perilous pinnacle of royalty.

It was about the beginning of this century also that the Japanese, during one of those spasmodic periods of seeming friendship asked the king of Sil-la to send a noble maiden of Sil-la to be their queen. The king complied and sent the daughter of one of his highest officials, A-son-geup-ri.

**Chapter IX.**

Rise of Yun .... rebellion against China .... siege of Keuk Fortress raised .... Ko-gu-ryu surrenders to Yun .... Ko-gu-ryu disarmed .... Japanese attack Sil-la .... Pak-je’s victory over Ko-gu-ryu .... moves her capital across the Han .... Pak-je people in Sil-la .... Yun is punished .... Buddhism introduced into Ko-gu-ryu .... and into Pak-je .... amnesty between Ko-gu-ryu and Pak-je .... but Ko-gu-ryu continues the war .... Pak-je in danger .... envoy to Japan .... Ch’um-nye usurps the throne of Pak-je .... and is killed .... Sil-la princes rescued .... Ko-gu-ryu and Pak-je receive investiture from China .... China’s policy .... Nul-ji’s reign .... Ko-gu-ryu and Pak-je transfer their allegiance .... Yun extinct .... beginning of triangular war .... diplomatic relations .... Ko-gu-ryu falls from grace .... first war vessel .... diplomatic complications .... Pak-je humiliated .... her capital moved.

[page 182]

We have now come to the events which marked the rise of the great Yun power in Liao-tung, They are so intimately connected with the history of Ko-gu-ryu that we must give them in detail. For many years there had been a Yun tribe in the north but up to the year 320 it had not come into prominence. It was a dependency of the Tsin dynasty of China. Its chiefs were known by the general name Mo Yong. In 320 Mo Yong-we was the acting chief of the tribe. He conceived the ambitious design of overcoming China and founding a new dynasty. The Emperor immediately despatched an army under Gen. Ch’oe-bi to put down the incipient rebellion. Ko-gu-ryu and the U-mun and Tan tribes were called upon to render assistance against the rebels. All complied and soon the recalcitrant chieftain found himself besieged in Keuk Fortress and was on the point of surrendering at discretion when an event occurred which, fortunately for him, broke up the combination and raised the siege. It was customary before surrendering to send a present of food to the one who receives the overtures of surrender. Mo Yong-we, in pursuance of this custom, sent out the present, but for some reason it found its way only into the camp at the U-man forces while the others received none. When this became known the forces of Ko-gu-ryu, believing that Mo Yong-we had won over the U-mun people to his side, retired in disgust and the Chinese forces, fearing perhaps a hostile combination, likewise withdrew. The U-mun chiefs resented this suspicion of treachery and vowed they would take Mo Yong-we single-handed. But this they could not do, for the latter poured out upon them with all his force and scattered them right and left. From this point dates the rise of Yun. Gen. Ch’oe-bi fearing the wrath of the Emperor fled to Ko-gu-ryu where he found asylum. Here the affair rested for a time. The kingdom of Yun forebore to attack Ko-gu-ryu and she in turn was busy strengthening her own position in view of future contingencies. Ten years passed during which no events of importance transpired. In 331 Eul-bul the king of Ko-gu-ryu died and his son Soe began his reign by adopting an active policy of defense. He heightened the walls of P’yung-yang and built a strong fortress in the north, called Sin-sung. He followed this up by strengthen- [page 183] ing his friendly relations with the court of China. These facts did not escape the notice of the rising Yun power. Mo Yong-whang, who had succeeded Mo Wong-we, hurled an expedition against the new Sin-sung Fortress and wrested it from Ko-gu-ryu. The king was compelled, much against his will, to go to Liao-tung and swear fealty to the Yun power. Two years later the capital was moved northward to Wan-do, in the vicinity of the Eui-ju of today. This was done probably at the command of Yun who desired to have the capital of Ko-gu-ryu within easy reach in case any complications might arise.

Mo Yong-whang desired to invade China without delay but one of his relatives, Mo Yong-han, advised him to disarm Ko-gu-ryu and the U-mun tribes so that no possible enemy should be left in his rear when he marched into China. It was decided to attack Ko-gu-ryu from the north and west, but the latter route was to be the main one, for Ko-gu-ryu would be expecting the attack from the north. The stratagem worked like a charm. Mo Yong-han and Mo Yong-p’a led a powerful army by way of the sea road while General Wang-u led a decoy force by the northern route. The flower of the Ko-gu-ryu’s army, 5,000 strong, marched northward under the king’s brother Mu to meet an imaginary foe, while the king with a few undisciplined troops held the other approach. As may be supposed, the capital fell speedily into the enemy’s hands but the king escaped. The Ko-gu-ryu forces had been successful in the north and might return any day, so the Yun forces were forbidden to go in pursuit of the king. To insure the good behavior of the king, however, they burned the palace, looted the treasure, exhumed the body of the king’s father and took it, together with the queen and her mother, back to the capital of Yun. With such hostages as these Yun was safe from that quarter. The next year the king offered his humble apologies and made a complete surrender, in view of which his father’s body and his queen were returned to him but his mother-in-law was still held. The same year Ko-gu-ryu moved her capital back to P’yung-yang. A few years later, by sending his son as substitute he got his mother-in-law out of pawn.

In 344 new complications grew up between Sil-la and [page 184] Japan. The Japanese having already obtained one Sil-la maiden for a queen made bold to ask for a royal princess to be sent to wed their king. This was peremptorily refused and of course war was the result. A Japanese force attacked the Sil-la coastguard but being driven back they harried the island of P’ung-do and finally worked around until they were able to approach the capital. Finding the gates fast shut they laid siege to the city. But their provisions were soon exhausted and they were compelled to retire. Then the Sil-la forces swarmed out and attacked them in the rear and put them to an ignominious flight. Some years later the Japanese made a similar attempt but were outwitted by the Sil-la soldiers who made manikins of grass to represent soldiers, and the Japanese, seeing these, supposed that Sil-la had been reinforced and so retired from the contest.

Ko-gu-ryu had been so severely handled by her northern neighbor that she gave up for the time being her plans of conquest in that direction. Instead of this she turned her attention toward her southern neighbor Pak-je whose territory was a morsel not to be despised. About the year 300 she erected a fort at Ch’i-yang not far from the Pak-je capital which was than at Nam-han. Into this she threw a large force consisting of 20,000 infantry and cavalry. They began a systematic plundering of Pak-je. The army of the latter, under the leadership of the Crown Prince, fell suddenly upon this fort and gained a victory, for, when the Ko-gu-ryu forces retired, they left 5,000 dead upon the field. Pak-je followed up this victory by throwing up a line of breastworks along the southern bank of the Han river to insure against a future surprise on the part of her unscrupulous northern neighbor. But Pak- je’s victories had shown her the weakness of Ko-gu-ryu and reprisals were therefore in order. She equipped an army of 30,000 men and penetrated the country of the enemy. She met no resistance until her army stood beneath the walls of P’yung-yang. An attempt was made to storm the town, during which the king of Ko-gu-ryu was mortally wounded by an arrow, but the assault failed and the Pak-je army withdrew in good order. The king of Pak-je, elated over so many evidences of his growing power, promptly moved his capital across the Han River into Ko-gu-ryu territory. Some say he settled [page 185] at Puk-han the great mountain fortress back of Seoul while others say he settled at Nam P’yung-yang or “South P’yung- yang,” by which is meant the present city of Seoul. Others still say it was at a point a short distance outside the east gate of Seoul. But in spite of the apparent successes of Pak-je it appears that the people were not satisfied. It may be that military exactions had alienated their goodwill, or it may be that they saw in these ambitious advances the sure presage of speedy punishment at the hands of Ko-gu-ryu but whatever the cause may have been over a thousand people fled from Pak-je and found asylum in Sil-la. The king set aside six villages as their place of residence, and when Pak-je demanded to have them sent back answer was returned that Sil-la could not drive from her borders those who had sought asylum from the ill-treatment of Pak-je.

Three years before this, in 372, the Chinese had gained a signal victory over the Yun kingdom and its king, Mo Yong p’ung, had fled for safety to Ko-gu-ryu. It must have been his last resource, for he was likely to find little sympathy there. And so it proved for the king immediately seized him and sent him a captive to China.

The year 372 beheld air event of prime-importance in the history of Ko-gu-ryu and of the whole peninsula. It was the introduction of Buddhism. It is probable that before this time some knowledge of Buddhism was current in Korea, but as it is eminently a sacerdotal institution but little more than indefinite reports could have been circulated previous to the corning of the monks. We are not told whether this was done at the request of Ko-gu-ryu or whether it was at the advice of Pu-gyun, one of the petty kings who then divided between them the north of China. Be that as it may, in 372 A.D. images of Buddha were brought by a monk, Sun-do, and also a Buddhist book called Pul-gyung. For this the king of Ko-gu-ryu returned hearty thanks and forthwith set his son and heir to learning the new doctrine. At the same time he gave an impetus to the study of the Confucian code. It is quite probable that to this new departure is due the fact that the next year the laws of the country were overhauled and put in proper shape for use. In 375 two great monasteries were built in the capital of Ko-gu-ryu. They were called Cho-mun [page 186] and I-bul-lan. It should be noticed that the introduction of Buddhism into Korea was a government affair. There had been no propagation of the tenets of this cult through emissaries sent for the purpose, there was no call for it from the people. In all probability the king and his court were pleased at the idea of introducing the stately ceremonial of the new faith. In fact it was a social event rather than a religious one and from that date to this there has not been a time when the people of Korea have entered heartily into the spirit of Buddhism, nor have her most distinguished representatives understood more than the mere forms and trappings of that religion which among all pagan cults is the most mystical.

Pak-je was not long in following the example of her powerful neighbor. In the year 384 a new king ascended the throne of Pak-je. His name was Ch’im-yu. One of his first acts was to send an envoy to China asking that a noted monk named Mararanta be sent to Pak-je to introduce the Buddhist ritual. We notice that this request was sent to the Emperor Hyo-mu (Hsja-wu), the proper head of the Eastern Tsui dynasty, while Ko-gu-ryu had received hers at the hands of one of those petty kings who hung upon the skirts of the weakening dynasty and waited patiently for its dissolution. Each of these petty states, as well as the central government of the Tsui, was on the lookout for promising allies and such a request as this of Pak-je could scarcely be refused. Mararanta, whose name smacks of the south and who certainly cannot have been a Chinaman, was sent to the Pak-je capital. He was received with open arms. His apartments were in the palace where he soon erected a Buddhist shrine. Ten more monks followed him and Buddhism was firmly established in this second of the three Korean states. The greatest deference was paid to these monks and they were addressed by the honorific title To-seung. Sil-la received Buddhism some fifty years later.

All this time fighting was almost continuous along the Ko-gu-ryu-Pak-je border. The latter stood on the defensive and found it necessary in 386 to build a line of breastworks along the border, extending from Ch’ung-mok-yung north-ward to P’al-gon-sung and thence westward to the sea. An amnesty was brought about through a happy accident. A [page 187] groom who had accidentally broken the leg of a Pak-je prince’s horse had fled to Ko-gu-ryu to escape punishment. Returning now to Pak-je, he purchased pardon by informing the king that if, in battle, the Pak-je forces should direct their whole force against that part of the enemy’s line where they should see a red flag flying they would surely be successful. This turned out to be true and Pak-je was once more successful, but followed up her success only to the extent of securing a definite cessation of hostilities and the erection of a boundary stone at Su-gok-sung to witness forever against him who should dispute the point. But when King Ch’im-yu of Kogu-ryu died in 392 and his son Tam-dok came into power all previous obligations were swept away and he proceeded to reopen the wound. He attacked Pak-je fiercely and took ten of her towns. Then he turned northward and chastised the Ku-ran tribe. When this was done he came back to the charge again and seized Kwang-nu Fortress. This was an almost inaccessible position on a high rock surrounded the sea, but the hardy soldiers of Ko-gu-ryu after twenty days of siege found seven paths by which the wall could be reached, and they finally took the place by a simultaneous assault at these various points. When the court of Pak-je heard of this well-nigh impossible feat, all hope of victory in the field was taken away, and they could only tar the gates of the capital and await the turn of events. This king, Tam-dok, was as enthusiastically Buddhistic as his father. He made a decree that all the people of Ko-gu-ryu should adopt the Buddhistic faith and a few years later built nine more monasteries in P’yung-yang.

A year later, King A-sin of Pak-je sent his son, Chun-ji, to Japan as an envoy. It is likely, but not certain, that it was a last resource of Pak-je to secure help against Ko-gu-ryu. This is the more likely from the fact that he went not only as an envoy but also as a hostage, or a guarantee of good faith. If this was the hope of Pak-je it failed, for no Japanese army was forthcoming. As another means of self-preservation King A-sin formed a great school of archery, but the people did not like it; for exercise in it was compulsory, and many of the people ran away.

In 399 Ko-gu-ryu sent an envoy to the Yun capital to pay her respects, but the king of that country charged Ko-gu-ryu [page 188] with ambitious designs and sent an army of 30,000 men to seize the fortresses of Sin-sung and Nam-so, thus delimiting the frontier of Ko-gu-ryu to the extent of 700 They carried back with them 5,000 “houses,” which means approximately 25,000 people, as captives. It is difficult to believe this enumeration unless we conclude that it means that the people living within the limit of the 700 li were taken to be citizens of Yun.

The fifth century of our era dawned upon a troubled Korea. The tension between the three rival powers was severe, and every nerve was strained in the struggle for preeminence. In 402 Na-mul, the king of Sil-la, died and Sil-sung came to the throne. He sent out feelers in two directions, one toward Ko-gu-ryu in the shape of a hostage, called by euphemism an envoy, and another of the same sort to Japan; which would indicate that Sil-la was still suffering from the depredations of the Japanese corsairs. The envoy to Ko-gu-ryu was the king’s brother, Pok-ho, and the one to japan was also his brother, Mi-sa-heun. We remember that Pak-je already had an envoy in Japan in the person of the king’s eldest son Chon-ji. Now in 405 the king of Pak-je died. Chon-ji was the rightful heir but as he was in Japan the second son should have assumed the reins of government. As a fact the third son Chung-nye killed his brother and seized the scepter. Hearing of his father’s death, Chon-ji returned from Japan with an escort of a hundred Japanese, but learning of his brother’s murder he feared treachery against himself and so landed on an island off the coast where he remained until the people, with a fine sense of justice, drove Ch’um-nye from the throne and welcomed back the rightful heir.

Meanwhile interesting events were transpiring in Sil-la. In 403 Sil-sung, King of that land, fearing lest harm overtake his two brothers whom he had sent the year before to Ko-gu-ryu and Japan, was seeking for some means of getting them back. This might not be an easy thing to do, for to ask their return so soon would perhaps arouse the suspicion of these neighbors, and precipitate a war. Ko-gu-ryu had often taken up arms for a less affront than this. An official, Pak Che-san, volunteered to undertake this delicate mission even though it cost him his life. He went first to Ko-gu-ryu [page 189] and there proved so skillful a diplomat that he soon brought Prince Pok-ho back to Sil-la. The mission to Japan was a different matter, but he was equal to the occasion. Before starting out he said to the king: “I will bring the Prince back though it cost my life; only, before I go, I must ask you to imprison my family; otherwise I cannot succeed.” The king acceded to this strange request and Pak Che-san, starting immediately as if in flight, without even changing his garments, fled until he came to the Yul Harbor. Even his wife he repulsed, exclaiming “I have determined to die.” He apparently feared that the sight of her might shake his loyal purpose. He arrived in Japan as a political fugitive, but the king suspected him until news came that his family had been imprisoned. This seemed to prove his statement and he was received graciously. He pretended that he wished to lead a Japanese force against Sil-la. Mi-sa-heun, the Prince whom he had come to rescue, was in the secret and heartily seconded the plan. The king made them joint leaders of an expedition. The fleet arrived at a certain island and there Pak succeeded in spiriting Mi-sa-heun away by night in a little, boat while he himself remained behind, to delay the inevitable pursuit. Mi-sa-heun begged him with tears to accompany him but he refused to jeopardise Mi-sa-heun’s chances of escape by so doing. In the morning he pretended to sleep very late and no one suspected the flight of the Prince until late in the day when concealment was no longer possible. When the Japanese found that they had been duped they were in a terrible rage. They bound Pak and went in pursuit of the run-away. But a heavy fog settled upon the sea and frustrated their plan. Then they tortured their remaining victim and to their inquiries he replied that he was a loyal subject of Kye-rim (the name of Sil-la at that time) and that he would rather be a Kye-rim pig than a subject of Japan; that he would rather be whipped like a school-boy in Kye-rim than receive office in Japan. By these taunts he escaped a lingering death by torture. They burned him alive there on the island of Mok-do. When the king of Sil-la heard of his brave end he mourned for him and heaped upon him posthumous honors, and Mi-sa-heun married his preserver’s daughter. The wife of the devoted Pak ascended the pass of Ap-sul-yung whence [page 190] she could obtain a distant view of the islands of Japan. There she gave herself up to grief until death put an end to her misery.

In 413 a new king came to the throne of Ko-gu-ryu called Ko-ryun. As China and Ko-gu-ryu had been kept apart by the intervening Yun, and had acquired some power of sympathy through mutual fear of that power, we are not surprised that the new king of Ko-gu-ryu condescended to receive investiture from the Emperor, now that the latter condescended in turn to grant it. It was formally done, and the act of Ko-gu-ryu proclaimed her vassalage to China. From that time on excepting when war existed between them, the kings of Ko-gu-ryu were invested by the Emperor with the insignia of royalty. Two years later the Emperor conferred the same honor upon the king of Pak-je. It was always China’s policy to keep the kingdoms at peace with each other so long as they all wore the yoke of vassalage: but so soon as one or the other cast it off it was her policy to keep them at war.

In 417 Nul-ji came to the throne of Sil-la and began a reign that was to last well on toward half a century. He was a regicide. He had been treated very harshly by the king and had more than once narrowly escaped with his lite. It is therefore the less surprising, though none the less reprehensible, that when the opportunity presented of paying off old scores he succumbed to the temptation. He ascended the throne not with the title of I-sa-geum, which had been the royal title for centuries, but with the new title of Ma-rip-kan. However doubtful may have been his title to the crown his reign was a strong one. Among the far-reaching effects of his reign the introduction of carts to be drawn by oxen was the most important.

The friendly relations of Ko-gu-ryu with the Tsin dynasty were cut short by the extinction of that dynasty in 419 but in 435 Ko-gu-ryu made friendly advances toward the Northern Wei dynasty and, finding sufficient encouragement, she transferred her allegience to that power. Meantime Pak-je had transferred hers to the Sung dynasty which arose in 420.

It was in 436 that P’ung-hong, the “Emperor” of Yun, found himself so weak that he could not withstand the pres- [page 191] sure from the Chinese side and asked the king of Ko-gu-ryu to grant him asylum. Consent was given and an escort was sent to conduct him to the Ko-gu-ryu capital. He found that this sort of life had its drawbacks; for, to begin with, the king did not address him as emperor but simply as king. This was a great affront to his dignity and, though he was treated very handsomely, he assumed such a supercillious bearing that the king had to curtail his retinue and his income. He had been given quarters in Puk-p’ung and from there the mendicant emperor applied to the Sung Emperor for asylum. It was granted, and seven thousand soldiers came to escort him; but ere they arrived the king of Ko-gu-ryu sent two generals, Son-su and Ko-gu, who killed the imperial refugee and nine of his attendants. The Sung troops, arriving on the instant, discovered the crime and caught and executed the two generals who had perpetrated it.

In 449 a Ko-gu-ryu general was out on a hunting expedition and the chase brought him into Sil-la territory near the present town of Kang-neung. The prefect of the district, in an excess of patriotic enthusiasm, seized him and put him to death. An envoy came in haste to the Sil-la capital demanding why this outrage had been committed. War would have been declared on the spot had not Sil-la been profuse in apologies. She might have spared herself this humiliation for war was sure to break out soon in any case. When Pa-gyung came to the throne of Pak-je in 455, Ko-gu-ryu took advantage of the confusion, consequent upon the change, to attack her. Sil-la, who, though ordinarily a peaceful power, had been perforce drawn into war-like operations and had acquired some military skill, now sided with Pak-je. Sending a considerable number of troops she reinforced Pak-je to the extent of warding off the threatened invasion. But Pak-je, though glad to find herself extricated from her position of danger, would allow no feelings of gratitude to stand in the way of her ancient feud against Sil-la; so this act of friendship not only did not help toward peace but on the contrary, by showing Sil-la the fickleness of Pak-je, made peace all the more impossible. The middle of the fifth century marks the point when all friendly relations between the three Korean states were broken off and an actual state of war existed between [page 192] them from this time on, though active military operations were not constant. This we may call the Triangular War.

The key to this great struggle, which resulted in the advancement of Sil-la to the control of the whole peninsula, lay not so much in the relative military strength of the three rival kingdoms as in the skill which each developed in diplomacy. Each was trying to gain the active support of China, knowing very well that if China should once become thoroughly interested in favor of any one of the three powers the other two would be doomed.

We will remember that Ko-ku-ryu had cultivated friendly relations with the Sung dynasty while Pak-je had made herself agreeable to the Wei dynasty. In this Pak-je chose the wiser part for the Wei power was nearer and more powerful. In 466 Ko-gu-ryu lost a splendid opportunity to establish herself in the good graces of the Wei Emperor, and so insure her preeminence in the peninsula. The Emperor Hsien-wen made friendly advances and requested the daughter of the king of Ko-gu-ryu for his wife. With a short-sightedness that is quite inexplicable this request was put off by the lame excuse that his daughter was dead. This being easily proved a falsehood, Ko-gu-ryu fell from the good graces of the very power whose friendship she should have cultivated.

The year 467 witnessed an important innovation in Korea. Sil-la took the lead in the construction of war vessels. The one made at that time was doubtless intended for use against the Japanese corsairs. That Sil-la had been gaining along military lines is shown by her successful repulse of a Ko-gu-ryu invasion in this year, in which the wild people of some of the Mal-gal tribes assisted Ko-gu-ryu. After the latter had been driven back, Sil-la built a fortress at Po-eun on her northern border to guard against a repetition of this invasion.

Ko-gu-ryu and Pak-je were now exerting themselves to the utmost to make capital out of their Chinese alliances. Ko-gu-ryu sent rich presents and richer words to the Sung capital and so won the confidence of that power. Pak-je, on the other hand, sent word to the Wei Emperor that Ko-gu-ryu was coquetting with the Sung court and with the wild Mal-gal tribes, insinuating that this was all detrimental to the interests of Pak-je’s patron.