THE KOREA REVIEW, Volume 1

No. 5 (May, 1901)

A Vagary of Fortune Narro 193

The Tidal Wave in The Yellow Sea.

F. H. Morsel. 202

Odds And Ends.

Native Gold Mining 206

Pearls. . 207

A Korean Heroine . 208

Nemesis . 208

Consanguineous Marriage 209

Cure For Leprosy 209

Snakes 209

Oppert 210

Question and Answer. 211

Editorial Comment 212

News Calendar 213

History of Korea 221

[page 193] A Vagary of Fortune.

(CONCLUDED.)

Ah! how swiftly flew the months as in a dream drawing them nearer to the brink and yet ever the consciousness of certain doom could not blight the happiness of those fleeting months. By tacit consent they never mentioned the time when this must end but the knowledge that the end must soon come drew them closer to each other as if they would concentrate in months the happiness of years. They roamed the mountains together gathering wood, or tilled their little field oblivious of the great struggling, groaning world.

But the end came an apace, Summer faded into autumn, autumn into winter and when the mountain-side awoke to life again beneath the touch of spring a whisper from the world penetrated even to their retreat. An heir had been born to the King and all the land was rejoicing. The twentieth day of the fourth moon was set apart as a universal holiday and the capital was to behold a fete the like of which had never been so much as imagined.

When Yi Wha heard the news her heart stood still, the current of her life was frozen at its fountain-head for she knew that at that fete she must avenge her father’s blood upon the son of the Prime Minister. No, she would not swerve. Sweet as her life had been she would for falter. She had counted the cost and put filial duty before all else.

But what a struggle it cost her! Time and again she fled alone into the forest and cast herself upon the ground writhing as if in physical agony and crying out in her despair “I never thought it would be so hard to do, so hard to do.” [page 194]

Meanwhile the time drew near for the fulfillment of the prophesy in regard to Sun-chang-i. The nearer it came the closer he clung to the only being that made life worth living for him. He saw that some strong feeling was sway in his beloved Yi Wha but he forbore to speak for he would know full soon enough. Sometimes his soul rebelled against its fate. Black, bitter thoughts arose within him that there should be a Power that could cut him off from life and love. And yet not that alone; a Power so cruel as to let him anticipate his doom and live it over a thousand times before it came.

And still the inevitable day drew near. The woman, fighting against herself to the very last, put off the day of departure as long as she possibly could, hoping against hope that Providence would grant her some door of escape, but no help came. At last it became necessary for her to start or else she must forego the revenge of which she had dreamed for years, and her dead father’s spirit must go unavenged. One night as they sat beside their log fire overwhelmed by the approach of the great crisis in their lives, the wife came near to her beloved and kneeling at his side laid her head upon his knee and gave way to ail the pent-up forces of her love and sorrow. When the paroxysm of weeping had past and left her calm again she looked up into his face and whispered:

“I must go tomorrow.”

He started and looked from her eyes into the fire as if half dazed and not comprehending the import of her words. But another thought had flashed like lightening though his brain. It was this. “A few days more will witness my death. Better that she should go and leave me to meet it alone. It will save her one pang” He looked her in the face again.

“I will not by a word hold you back from accomplishing your task. You had my promise when we married. We have had our little span of happiness. Now it must end. Would God it might have lasted longer but it was not to be. Even if you stayed it could not last, for the time draws on when the dread prophecy must be fulfilled and I shall be taken, I have only one more request to make before our parting comes. Will you go with me to the lofty ledge, where we have so often sat, and watch the rising of that last sun that we shall see together? There we can take our last fare-well.” [page 195]

So they sat there by the fire through the long watches of that night, hand clasped in hand, heart beating to heart, until the crowing of the cock told them they must be on their way, Then she silently slipped from her place beside him and entered the hut. She soon returned prepared as for a journey and beneath her ample skirt hung the sword which was to give her father’s troubled spirit rest. She found Sun-chang-i still sitting by the fire, his head bowed upon his breast, insensible to all but the bitter thoughts which filled him. She gently took his hand and brought back his thoughts to the realities. Before they took the path which led to their favorite retreat they turned a moment and let their eyes linger on those dear familiar objects. That humble hut which had sheltered them from many a storm, that little plot of ground which had brought forth enough to satisfy their few wants, those simple implements of their daily toil. A mother hen came cluttering forth with her downy brood and scratched in the moist loam for worms. The sparrows twittered forth from beneath the thatch. Nothing of this escaped that last fond look of theirs. It well-nigh unnerved them, but the wife was the first to recover and drawing Sun-chang-i after her she hastened along the mountain path.

The brisk walk, the bracing mountain air and the cold dew that shook in diamond drops upon them from the bushes that half hid their path in the grey light of dawn, calmed and soothed their fevered minds as nothing else could have done, and when, panting from the climb, they stepped out upon the lip of the great precipice which faced the rising sun it was with a subdued and chastened exultation. The eastern horizon unfurled its blood-red banner in honor of the advancing sun. The morning star melted before the orb she heralded. The sullen eagle shook out his plumage and with sagacious eye scanned the mountain side for prey.

Long they stood there gazing out upon that grand expanse of mountain and valley. At last the beautiful woman drew him back to a rustic seat where they had often sat and seating herself by his side began to speak of the happy years that they had spent together and from that she came on to the occasion of their sad parting.

“I never have told you yet what my mission is and you [page 196] never have told me about yours. Let us now before we part clear up every secret that has been between its. It is not right that we should keep anything from each other in this last hour. It was best to keep silence until now lest the mutual knowledge should mar the happiness of those sweet years which we have passed, but now the time has come to tell all. Let me hear your sad story and then you shall hear mine.”

“As for me,” answered Sun-chang-i, “there is little enough to tell, but what there is you shall hear. Years ago my father consulted a soothsayer in regard to me and the answer was ‘Your son will die on his eighteenth birthday exactly at noon.’ My father did not believe it and sent me to China to consult the most renowned soothsayers but they all made the same answer. When I returned, home and told my story my father sent me away to save himself from the constant pain of seeing me who was doomed to die so young. I went back to him and asked for money to travel with. He gave it and I wandered north and south until your kindly fire lighted me to you side.”

When he finished Yi Wha remained a long time buried in profound thought and then drawing a deep breath as if to throw off some dead weight that clung about her heart she said:

“You are happy for you have only to wait for death while I ― but let me tell my story from the beginning and you shall judge. My father was a slave, but only in body. He was the son of the daughter of a high official who, having committed some offence against the Government, was executed, his wife and daughters, according to the custom of the land, being degraded to the position of slaves. It was my father’s misfortune that his parents transmitted to him all their pride. His was not a spirit that could brook the cruelty and contempt that are the bondman’s daily portion. Had it not been that his first master was far more considerate than most, his proud spirit would have revolted years before it did. At last a change came. His old master died and he fell into the hands of the heir, an overbearing, consciousless brute, despite his noble birth, more fit to be my father’s slave than master. No one can describe the conflicts which my [page 197] father had with his own pride, for he was determined if possible to keep himself in check if only for the sake of his wife and children. He was ambitious for us and he secretly taught my brother and myself the Chinese character hoping some day to be able to purchase our freedom. But the fatal day came. His boorish master in a fit of drunken anger wantonly smote him in the face. Every drop of my father’s noble blood leaped to resent the unprovoked and cowardly assault. He sprang upon the coward and hurled him the ground stunned and bleeding but not dangerously hurt. Of course there could be but one result. My father, mother and brother were seized and cast into prison while I, too terrified to realize my cowardice, fled to a friend’s house and, being overlooked in the uproar that ensued，I unfortunately escaped. Heavily veiled I hovered about the tribunal where my father was on trial. Oh! it was short enough. It was only a slave that was being tried for assaulting his master. Small grace would such a man find in the judge’s eyes. Never mind the provocation. The fact alone condemned the prisoner. Nor that alone, his only son was condemned to die with him, and his wife. Oh! how was it that I ever consented to outlive that day? How but to avenge upon that wicked judge the crime—yes crime that he had committed by cutting off our house in the person of my blameless brother! That night I crept out beyond the black shadow of the city wall to the place of execution and there beside the headless bodies of my loved ones I knelt and lifting my hands toward Heaven, which alone witnessed my oath, I swore to cut off the issue of that cruel judge even as he had cut off the hope of our house.”

The woman, worked up to a pitch of frenzy by the recital of her wrongs, sprang to her feet, her face and form on fire with the thought of her anticipated revenge. She drew the sword from its scabbard and flashed it toward the zenith.

“And I will do it. Yea, by that glorious sun, by that blue sky and by the Power that rules beyond them, I will cut off that man’s line, Prime Minister though he be.”

She paused; Sun-chang-i moved not a muscle though his face grew grey as the granite behind him and his fingers clenched the oaken bench on which he sat until they seemed to sink into its dense fiber. The girl noticed his extreme palor. [page 198]

“Do you know him—that fiend in human shape?” With a mighty effort the stricken man controlled him self. He looked off across the forest top toward the distant capital and answered hoarsely:

“Of course, who does not know the Prime Minister? You forget that I have lived all my life in Seoul. Go and fulfill the oath that you have sworn. Leave me here; I cannot follow you. Leave me to the fate that has been meted out of me and which will fall before many days have passed.”

She returned the sword to its scabbard and throwing her-self on her husband’s breast she sobbed “Good-bye, good-bye. This is the end, for you promised that you would put no obstacle in my way, and go I must.”

And so she went away upon her useless quest and left her victim behind her on the mountain side.

Sun-chang-i sank upon the seat and covered his face with his hands. An hour passed by.

“Am I a coward?” he groaned. “Is there not enough manhood left in me to face my destiny, that I must let her go back to that hated capital and become the jest and plaything of that lecherous court—she my wife—and all for naught? Why did I not tell her and let her do the deed here with only God and the eagles to witness it? The sacrifice would have been holy— but now! And I promised not to hinder her. But am I not hindering her by being thus basely passive?

He leaped to his feet and rushed down the steep pathway calling to her wildly, but she was now far on her way and only the echoes answered him. He longed now to taste the bitterness of that sword; he thirsted for it.

A new thought flashed above the horizon of his mind. What was the day that was to witness the fete in Seoul? It was the fourth day from that. It was his eighteenth birthday.

He stooped and bathed his hot forehead in a brook that crossed his path, and threw himself down upon its bank to think. Ah! that was it. He saw it all now. She should have her revenge; and what better place than in the presence of his father. Nay, how would it be complete in any other place?

He rose from that bed a sane and determined man. He made his way back to the cottage, let loose his cattle from [page 199] the stall, drove them to the neighboring town and sold them. He would have need of money. By a round-about way he hastened up to the capital where he arrived the day before the fete. He did not go to his father’s house but stopped at an obscure inn outside the city wall. With the money in his purse he purchased a splendid court costume and engaged a sedan-chair befitting his proper station.

The fatal day dawned on a city decked out in all the barbaric trappings of the East. Beneath blood-red banners flowed a happy, laughing stream of color. Sky blue, willow-catkin green, saffron yellow, iris purple, azalea pink, flame red—nature’s colors clothing nature’s children.

The royal procession had just swept down the broad street, by the great slumbering bell which only wakes at dawn and dusk, the royal escort clad in all the mystic emblems of the forgotten past, the sacred person of the King borne high aloft in a silken canopied pavilion on the shoulders of half a hundred men. As the last ranks of the procession pass the multicolored crowd pours in behind, like water in the wake of a fast driven ship. They follow right up to the great three-arched palace gate and stop there agape, catching glimpses within of an acre of awning bellying in the breeze and straining at the strong but pliant pillars of bamboo poles, lashed together, which holds it high above the ground.

And now the King has taken his seat on the tapestried dais and the weird scream of the pipes and viols announce that the cares of royalty are laid aside and that song and dance are toward.

The court is arranged in a semicircle, the King seated in the middle and on each side the courtiers kneeling in order of their rank each with his winged hat and with the embroidered stork or tiger on his breast. None dares to lift his eyes higher than the border of the King’s crimson robe.

A band of dancing girls move slowly into the open space before the King. Their hair is piled high upon then heads and held in curious shape by jewelled and enameled pins. Their silken robes sweep the ground for a yard all about them. They wear a curious air of solemnity as if the dance were a [page 200] stately ceremonial. They poise and wheel with slow measured unison, their arms rising, bending and falling like soft draperies stirred by a summer breeze.

But another event is to follow which all await impatiently. A new dancer has appeared in the capital and she is to give the martial sword dance. The space is cleared of other dancers, the music breaks into a shrill chant which might mean the clash of arms or the clank of captives’ chains.

At that moment there entered at the back a young man splendidly clad who held one sleeve across his face and made his way even to the side of the Prime Minister where he knelt proudly. All were so intent upon the coming event that this action was hardly noticed.

A moment later the ranks opened and new dancer with, sword in hand moved slowly to the center of the open space before the King. Her flowing robe of gauzy texture swept the floor about her. The pallor of her face was concealed beneath the meretricious rouge. She glanced to right and left and noted where the young man knelt beside his father the Prime Minister. This must be he, but he sat a little behind his father and the lower part of his face was concealed by his sleeve. For an instant her practiced eye studied the ground over which she was to dance, and then throwing back the draped sleeves with a graceful gesture and confining the amplitude of skirts beneath her jewelled girdle she took firm hold of the sword and began the first slow movements of the dance. A murmur of admiration passed around the circle, for though they had seen the dance a hundred times before they had never seen it in perfection.

If the dance is the poetry of motion the western dance is lyric, the eastern epic. There is no mere nimbleness, no pirouetting no gymnastics about the eastern dance. It is physical without being sensual. It is corporeal yet not acrobatic. It is, withal, modest.

The hand that held that sword had swung the woodman’s axe. That form had bent beneath the heavy load. Yi Wha’s dance was no mere gracefulness; it was trained power. And it held them spell-bound. But there was more than power, there was purpose in it, and desperate purpose too. Though they knew not what she intended they felt vaguely the coming tragedy. [page 201]

The dance went on, the viols and the drums beat up a quicker measure, the dancer’s feet moved faster, the sword flashed back and forth more purposefully. The dance swept on to its climax. Backward and forward she leaned, the sword making a diamond halo about her head; to right and left she turned; with a swift gliding motion she retreated as if before a too powerful adversary and anon she swept forward as if driving him to the walk Then as if surrounded on all sides by murderous foes the sword seemed to scintillate all about her body at once, until, as if she would burst through the thick ranks of her foes, she sprang straight toward the spot where sat the son of the Prime Minister.

At that instant the young man rose to his feet and let fall the sleeve from before his face. She stood before her husband. Another instant and the blow would have fallen, but when she saw that face she faltered for an instant, with upraised swords The King had risen. Every man bent forward to see. Was this part of the dance? No, that face, those horror-stricken eyes were not those of a dancer. During that brief instant the chatter of servants in the outer court and the scream of vicious stallions eyeing each other across the shoulders of their grooms only accentuated the deadly stillness of that inner circle.

“Strike, Yi Wha, strike. I am the Prime Minister’s only son.” The young man’s cry was passionate as if he longed for death. The sword point fell a little as she looked from side to side as it searching for some way of escape.

“O, I cannot do it. Father forgive me; it is my husband.”

“No, Yi Wha, wife, strike. It is decreed. This is my eighteenth birthday and see, the sun hangs on the meridian to witness the fulfillment of your oath. It must be.”

She tries to nerve herself to it. She lifts the swords She moves a hairs breadth forward. She falters again. No, she will do it now. Another instant. Again her arm falls nerveless.

“Oh husband, husband, tell me, is there no other way? Must my hand do it?”

“Hold” he cries “why had I forgotten? Here is a single sentence the soothsayer gave me. Read it.”

She reads with trembling voice. [page 202]

“It is a great evil for a man to kill his slave without good cause but it is a greater evil for a wife to kill her husband.”

“Ah, thank God, that is it” and with a sweep of the arm she sends the sword whirlings up, up until its point slashes the silken awning and then it falls clanging at the feet of the King.

That King himself has risen and is pressing toward the two who stand locked in each others embrace.

Then the young man takes her hand and leads her out into their midst again.

“This, my wife,” he cried in ringing tones “took oath that she would kill the Prime-Minister’s son to avenge her brother’s blood. The soothsayers said that I should die today at noon. We met and married not knowing what we did. But though she kills me not and though I, her husband, die not, both her oath and the fate of the Prime Minister’s son are this day fulfilled, for here I stand to tell to all the world that from this day forth I cast off my father’s name, who cast me off, and I adopt myself into the family of this my wife and become not her husband only but her brother, to perpetuate her father’s name. And here I call upon the King; my sovereign, to confirm and ratify by royal edict this just decree of Providence.”

And it was done.

NARRO.

**The Tidal Wave in the Yellow Sea.**

Before entering upon the subject of the tidal wave in the Yellow Sea it will be necessary to notice the great equatorial current which flows northward under the name of the “Black Stream.” This stream flows along the east side of Formosa in the vicinity of the Lu Chu Islands and divides into two parts one flowing east of Japan and the other west. It is the western branch only that is called the “Black Stream.” After rounding Cape Goto it takes a northerly course and washes the south-eastern coast of Korea. Navigators easily distinguish it by the higher temperature of the water. Some navigators speak of this, stream running into the Gulf of Pechili [page 203] but this I shall have to dispute. The name of the “Black Stream” is derived from the dark blue-green color of the water which is due partly to the depth and partly to the bottom which is a dark sandy loam.

The tidal current comes from the north-east and flows in a south-west and westerly direction to the shores of China. It will well for us to start from some point and follow around the shore of the Yellow Sea. Let us begin with the northern entrance to the Yang-tse River and the island of Shanwishan. The figures here given are for spring tides (phases of the new and full moon) and the height of the tide is from low water. The times and the heights here given are approximate only.

It must be remembered that the tidal stream is affected by various things such as islands, headlands and promontories but most of all by shoals and deep bays. Wind and weather also affect the tidal wave but lass at spring tide than at neap tide.

Shanwishan Island off the entrance to the Yang-tse-River: high water at 11:45 with a rise of fifteen feet. Going north to the entrance of the river, high water at 1:50 with a rise of ten feet.

Kiautchau has high water at 4:50 with a rise of about twelve feet.

Shantung, North East Promontory, high water at 1:30 with a rise of from six to seven feet. The lateness of the tide at Kiautchau is due to the fact that it lies in a deep bay, but there are other reasons also. At the North-east promontory there is no obstruction to the “stowage” of water and so it has only seven feet of tide while in the bay there are twelve feet.

Wei-hai-wei, harbor mouth; high water at 9:20 with a rise of eight and a half feet.

Chefoo; high water at 10:30 with a rise of eight feet.

From the Shantung Promontory the tidal stream sets in a North-westerly direction but splits into several divisions, the principal one going through the Miau-tau Straits but another considerable branch takes a North-easterly course. We will follow the western branch.

The Pei-ho River, Ta-ku bar; high tide at 3:30 with a se of nine or ten feet. This is with a south or south-east [page 204] wind. With a northerly wind the rise is much less. At the mouth of the Pei-ho the tide is an hour later owing to the extensive bar.

Shan-hai-kwan: high water at 4:50 with a rise of twelve feet.

Newchwang; off the bar; high water at 4:00 with a rise of twelve feet.

Port Arthur: high water at 10:30 with a rise of ten feet.

Ta-lien-wan: high water 10:50 with a rise of twelve feet.

Mouth of the Yalu River: high water at 3:50 with a rise or twenty feet.

We now come to the west coast of Korea and the first place we reach is the mouth of the Ta-dong River with the recently opened port of Chinnampo. Cho-do Island and Outside Island guard the approach to the inlet and there is a large shoal near Outside Island and shallow spits run out to the south-west from the Sisters, two small islands.

The Sisters; high tide at 7: 40 with a rise of twenty-one feet.

Sir James Hall Group, Peng-yang-do Harbor: high water at 4:00 with a rise of eighteen feet.

The Han River, northern entrance: high water at 4:30 with a rise of twenty-five feet. The height of the tide here is due in part at least to the deep indentation in the shore which tends to pile the water up.

Shopaiul, the principal island and landmark for the approaches to Chemulpo harbor; high water at 3: 30 with a rise of twenty two feet.

Chemulpo Harbor: high tide at 5:15 with a rise of twenty eight feet. At this point the tidal wave is much affected by wind and weather, more so than at any other place on the coast. Here also is the point of concentration of the tidal wave. It is a sort of cul-de-sac where the tidal wave attains its highest range.

Shoal Gulf, called also Sumido Bay although not an open port has always been a trading center for Chinese junks from the Shantung promontory. Early in the last century it was visited by junks from the south of China, especially from Canton. It seems that many of these junks were chartered [page 205] by Parsees. I may also remark that in the 16th and 18th centuries this port was visited by Parsee traders. In my opinion this would have been a far better port to open to foreign trade than Kun-san for not only is sericulture extensively carried on in the vicinity but many other articles that are valuable for export. But to return to our subject.

Shoal gulf: high water at 4:15 with a rise of twenty-four feet.

Kun-san, the newly opened port at the mouth of the Keum-gang: high water 3:48 with a rise of twenty-one feet.

Mokpo, at Pinnacle Rock, the western approach to the harbor: high water at 1:30 with a rise of twenty feet.

Mok-po harbor: high tide at 2:40 with a rise of eighteen feet. This harbor is also at the mouth of a large stream which is deep enough to float steamers of considerable draught for a distance of twenty miles or more from its mouth.

From Mokpo to Fusan is a long coast line guarded by numerous islands and there are many large indentations. But from the sea it looks like a continuous coast line. The harbor of Fusan is formed by several islands the largest of which is Deer Island.

Channel Rock, Fusan harbor: high water is 7:40 with a rise of seven feet. At this point the Yellow Sea terminates but it may be of interest to continue up the eastern coast.

Wun-san Harbor: high tide at 5:25 with a rise of two or three feet.

Song-jin, the newly opened port between Wun-san and the Tu-man River: high water at 5:50 with a rise of two feet. This is an open bay and is probably the poorest harbor of any of the open ports in Korea.

Tuman River, entrance: high water about 2:45 with a rise of three feet.

PLACE TIME OF HIGH TIDE HEIGHT OF RANGE

H. M. Ft. In.

Shanwishan 11 40\* 10 0

Yellow River 1 50 10 0

Kiautchau 4 50 12 0

Shantung Promontory 1 30 7 0

Wei-hai-wei 9 20\* 8 6

Chefoo 10 30\* 8 0 [page 206]

Ta-Ku Bar 3 30 9-10 0

Shan-hai-kwan 4 50 12 0

Newchwang Bar 4 00 12 0

Port Arthur 10 30\* 10 0

Ta-lien-wan 10 50 12 0

Yalu River 3 50 20 0

Ta-dong River, “Sisters” 7 40\* 21 0

Sir James Hall Group 4 00 18 0

Kuro-do Island 4 30 22 0

Shopaiul Island 3 30 22 0

Chemulpo Harbor 5 15 28 0

Shoal Gulf 4 15 28 0

Kunsan 3 48 21 0

Mokpo Approach 1 40 18 0

Mokpo Harbor 2 30 18 0

Fusan 7 40 7 0

Wun-san Harbor 5 25\*\* 2-3 0

Sung-jin Harbor 5 50\*\* 2 0

Tuman, River 2 45\*\* 3 0

In the foregoing table the single asterisk marks the places first visited, by the tidal wave and are A. M. Those on the eastern coast marked with a double asterisk are also A. M. and are the very first affected by the tidal wave on its approach from the East, At all other points the time is P. M.

We see that the tidal wave moving westward first strikes the eastern coast of Korea and then moves westward to the China coast, varying in time of course at those points where it is obstructed by shoals or belated by deep indentations or narrow channels.

On the west coast of Korea the tide is high earlier at points which extend well to the westward.

F. H. MORSEL.

**Odds and Ends.**

**Native Gold Mining.**

The impression generally prevails that the Koreans are unacquainted with any other method of gold-mining than that which is called “placer mining” which consists in washing out the sand in the bed of streams. It is true that a great deal of this is done, the method being to scoop up a portion of sand in a [page 207] wooden bowl which has ridges cut around on its inner surface to catch the particles of gold; but it is also true that they mine in other ways as well. At certain points in the country we find shafts that have been sunk to a depth of three hundred feet following a vein of gold in its original matrix. The method of work is very primitive and reminds one of the way in which Hannibal is said to have broken the rocks in making across the Alps into Italy. They simply build a fire on the rock and when it is quite hot they draw off the fire and throw on water, which breaks up the rock and makes it possible to dig out a few inches of ore with the ordinary picks of the Korean coolie.

This ore is then hoisted from the shaft and laid on a broad flat rock and is crushed by rolling over it a huge rounded boulder with handles roughly fitted to the sides. After this the particles of gold are secured by “panning” them out according to the ordinary placer process. One great difficulty that they have to contend with is the necessity of having a perpendicular shaft for otherwise they would be choked by the smoke of the fire. For this reason they are not able to follow the vein closely if it branches off laterally.

**Pearls**.

A perfect Korean pearl is a jewel of fairly good quality though it never can hold its own with the product of the fisheries of the Persian Gulf. It lacks the extreme delicacy of tint which is indispensible in a pearl of the highest grade. But the Korean pearl would be much more perfect in color if it were properly taken from the shell. The Korean in his eagerness to find the pearl opens the oyster while still alive, fresh from the water. The experienced pearl-fisher does nothing of the kind. He lets the oyster lie unopened under a hot sun until the animal putrifies and the shell opens of itself. He then examines the contents of the shell, holding his nose meanwhile perhaps. The result is that the pearl will have a much more delicate color than if taken immediately from the shell. Most of the pearls which foreigners see in Korea have been for a long time in the hands of Koreans who do not know that the pearl requires careful treatment or it will be ruined. The wonder is that we see any good pearls here, however good they may have been when taken from the shell. It is said that the Korean pearl fisheries [page 208] have fallen into the hands of the Japanese. They probably know as little about the business as the Koreans. If the time should ever come when the Korean fisheries could be put under competent management it is probable that the product would be highly creditable.

**Nemesis.**

About a hundred years ago a man named Yi Teuk-ja was made governor of Che-ju (Quelpart) and while there, a boat from the Lu Chu Islands was wrecked on the coast of Quelpart. One of the men saved from the wreck was the Crown Prince of Lu Chu. A considerable amount of treasure was saved from the ship, and the Crown Prince offered all this to the governor and begged for his life, but the governor put him and his companions all to death. From that time to the present none of the descendants of that governor have had a son. He himself adopted a son. That son in turn was forced to adopt a son and so on down through four generations to the present time and the great grandson, by adoption, of governor Yi Teuk-ju is today a prominent official in Seoul. He is about fifty years old and he has no son. The Koreans say that Heaven punished that governor by decreeing that his descendants should all be by adoption and not by natural generation.

**A Korean Heroine.**

At the end of the Manchu invasion of Korea in the middle of the seventeenth century a very large number of Koreans were carried away captive to China. At that time a man of gigantic frame and corresponding power was governor of the border town of Eui-ju. He took upon himself the duty of going to China and leading back as many as possible of those miserable captives. His great power and unassailable rectitude had secured him a large number of bitter enemies and in some way his death was accomplished while in the act of bringing a band of Koreans back to their native land. When his wife, who was also of gigantic proportions, learned of his death she forthwith set out to find his body and bring it back to Korea for burial. She arrived at the town where the body lay and the Chinese people, in their profound admiration of her faithfulness, offered her roll upon roll of silk to wrap the body in and a suitable conveyance to take it back to Korea, but she refused them all and said “Bring me only three bundles of straw rope and a [page 209] rice bag from Eui-ju.” She would not even use Chinese rope. They sent and fetched the things which she required. She bestowed the body in the rice bag, tied it up with the straw rope and, placing the load on top of her head, trudged back to the Yalu river and buried her lord in Korean soil; and when all was done she took a knife and plunged it into her throat and followed him to the grave.

**Consanguineous Marriage.**

Like the Pharaoes of Egypt, each King of the Ko-ryu dynasty, whose capital was at Song-do, married his own sister. It is easy to prove the truth of this statement but it is not easy to show any valid reason for such a custom. The Koreans say that the Kings of Ko-ryu were of dragon birth and that each of them, and of their immediate family, had a dragon’s scale on the body near the arm-pit and that it was necessary to marry in the family to preserve this distinctive mark of royalty.

**Cure for Leprosy.**

Yi Chi-ham was a very wise man who had the power to look into the future. He was made the magistrate of A-san some three hundred years ago. He had a desire to see what it was like to be a leper. So he cut a hole through the side of his room and sat in such a position that the draught through this hole struck him on his side. He sat there many hours each day and finally succeeded in contracting the disease. He then went to work to cure himself. Everyone knows, of course, that if a leper eats a centipede’s nest it will cure leprosy but also that immediately after eating the centipede’s nest he must eat a chestnut or he will die. He ate the nest and then called for a chestnut; but the ajun or official servant of the magistrate had been stealing the peoples’ money and was in danger of being found out; so instead of giving his master a chestnut he gave him a piece of white willow wood cut in the shape of a peeled chestnut. The Magistrate tried to eat it but found out too late that his ajun had cheated him; and he expired on the spot. This act has given to the district a bad name which has clung to it till the present time and the ajuns of A-san are considered of lower grade than any others in the land.

Snakes. According to native belief there were no snakes in Korea a few hundred years ago, but they were introduced by that very eccentric ruler called Yun-san-gun [page 210] 1495-1506. He had heard that if one keeps snakes under his bed he will be vigorous and strong, so he sent a boat to India and secured a cargo of selected ophidians and had them brought to Korea. The cargo was unloaded at a point near the town of A-san called Sa-jun (snake field) in commemoration of this very event. But it appears that the stevedores had not been accustomed to handle this kind of freight and so many of the snakes got away and escaped to the woods. From that time snakes have existed here as elsewhere.

**Oppert.**

Oppert’s expedition to Korea in the spring of 1867 is interpreted by the Koreans as follows.

They say he and his party penetrated from Ku-man Harbor inland to Tuk-san prefecture and the village of Ka-ya-gol where the father of the late Ta-wun-gun was buried. For three days there was a continual and heavy fog. The people fled in all directions and the marauding party dug open the grave and carried away the remains. When the Ta-wun-gun heard of it he ordered that no examination be made to find out whether the body had been actually taken away but to fill in the opening with earth and cover the grave entirely with cut stone leaving only a small opening at the top. It is very commonly believed by Koreans that these were not foreigners at all but the relatives of Roman Catholic converts who had been killed in the great persecution of 1866 and that they masqueraded in foreign costume and stole away the body of the Ta-wun-gun’s father in retaliation for the injury he had inflicted on them. As we know, however, these were foreigners: but they did not find the body. The expedition was entirely mercenary and not at all retaliatory. We can corroborate the statement in regard to the fog from a conversation we had in 1887 with one of the members of that expedition, who was living then in Japan. Some reports say that the expedition went to Ta-bong Mountain, but this is an error.

The country people have made up a song about this fog which hindered the accomplishment of the marauders’ purpose. It runs as follows.

Yang-guk-eui Cha-jin An-ga

Whe-an pong tora-deunda.

“The thick fog of the westerners

Broods over Whe-an Peak.” [page 211]

**Question and Answer.**

(11) Question. Is there anything to show that the Koreans have ever been believers in the doctrine of transmigration of souls.

Answer. We know of no such belief, of a purely native character, but it was brought in by Buddhism to some extent. A remarkable instance of this can be seen in the Yong-dosa, a monastery a couple of miles outside the East Gate. In the building where the Buddhist representation of Hell is given there are eleven pictures, one of which shows a great pile of skins, tiger skins, bear skins, wolf skins, fox skins and a dozen other kinds. The condemned criminals are being forcibly stuffed into these skins by the imps who do not seem to be at all careful of the feelings or tastes of their victims. This is evidence enough that Buddhism taught Koreans the doctrine of transmigration, but the question remains whether there is a native and indigenous belief in transmigration. Probably not, in the sense in which it is understood in India—namely a succession of incarnations whereby a final perfection can be reached. But Korean folk-lore is full of stories of people changing into animals and animals into people; more often the latter than the former. This metamorphosis, however, has not the spiritual significance of transmigration.

(12) Question. How are the different grades of Korean society distinguished in the matter of dress?

Answer. This supposes the previous question as to what the Korean grades of society are. We nave (a) the official class (b) the Yang-ban or gentleman class (3) the Chung-in or middle, class (4) the common class (5) the slave class (6) the Ch’il-ban or pariah class.

The official class is supposed to be drawn exclusively from the Yang-ban class, though there are not a few exceptions. The officials only can wear the court costume or the button behind the ear and in ordinary dress they alone can wear the silk waist cord with tassels and the colored, silk outer coat without sleeves. The Yang-ban class and the common class were formerly distinguished by the use of the long sleev- [page 212] ed coat by the former and not by the latter, but this is now abolished. Today there is no marked distinction in dress among the men, but among the women those of the upper class always fold the skirt to the left in placing it under the girdle while those of the lower class always fold it to the right. The Chung-in or “half and half class,” midway between the two just mentioned, are generally the result of mixed marriages or of concubinage and they are not specially distinguished from the upper class, although theoretically ineligible to official position. The slave class comes next below the common class but they can wear the Korean hat and head-band and leather shoes which are denied to the lowest or Ch’il-ban class. These latter include convicts, gymnasts, exorcists, sorcerers, fortune tellers and dancing-girls. The butchers have lately been raised from this to the common class. Corpse-bearers are also considered as belonging to the Chil-ban. These people may not wear the Korean hat and head-band which are the distinctive marks of citizenship, nor the leather shoes. They wear a cloth about the head and straw shoes on their feet.

[This opens up an interesting field of study and we should be glad to receive further light on it, Ed. K. R.]

**Editorial Comment.**

Now that such an overwhelming majority of the papers of the Far East have been prophesying war between Japan and Russia and guessing at what the result would be, it is interesting to note that the matter is definitely settled by something which has occurred in Korea. It is curious that the matter should have been taken out of the hands of the two most interested powers and decided within the limits of the comparatively passive peninsula; and yet how often it happens that the most important events are decided by apparently extraneous circumstances. It is slightly ironical that Korea, the country that might be supposed to deprecate war between her two neighbors, should be the place where such a war is determined upon and that, too, without the cognizance of either of the interested powers.

It is also noteworthy that this should have happened three [page 213] months ago, and yet that it has remained for the Review to bring the fact first to the notice of the public. It is, we may even say, something of a journalistic triumph. We should not allow ourselves to be thus drawn into the political arena were it not that the newspapers have entirely failed to acquaint the public with an event fraught with such tremendous consequences.

The event to which we refer is as follows. From the tenth day of the first moon of this year until the middle of the second moon all the toads in the prefecture of Chun-ju were at war with each other and several pitched battles were fought. This is vouched for by competent witnesses. Of course it may be questioned by some whether this definitely settles the matter and makes war inevitable but we have only to refer to the pages of history to show that such is the case. Do we not learn that during the reign of Tong-man, the first female ruler of Sil-la, a battle of toads occurred in the capital of Sil-la and within forty-eight hours news arrived that the soldiers of Pak-che had invaded Sil-la? Also in the days of old in China the celebrated man Ku-chun, a subject of Wui Kingdom, who had a grudge against the O Kingdom, pointed out to his followers the fact that the toads were wrestling, to show that the fight was inevitable. With such precedents from history, he would be a hardy man who would deny that we have stirring times before us! We would not be pessimistic, nor would we play the role the alarmist, but we insist that it is the part of wisdom to look facts squarely in the face.

**News Calendar.**

The road between Seoul and Wun-san must be in good shape, for Dr. W. B. McGill has added to his already good reputation for Yankee pluck by accomplishing the journey in a ricksha drawn by a horse, in the short space of four days. The distance is approximately a hundred and fifty miles. With the good roads that we now have is it not about time for some of our enterprising citizens to think of bringing in carriages? Seoul has beaten the Far East in the Electric Railway line and she ought not to remain so far behind in this other and even more delightful form of locomotion. [page 214]

It was the intention of the Government to unite the two prefectures of Sung-jin and Kil-ju, but the people of each prefecture are violently opposed to the project. Neither is willing to become a part of the other, with the result that many people are leaving their homes and moving away to some other district. It will be remembered that Sung-jin is the newly opened port north of Wun-san.

About the first of May the Government detectives raided the house of Yun T’a-sung in Kye-dong, Seoul, and found a number of counterfeiting machines together with $30,000 worth of nickel money and $30,000 worth of nickel blanks. Mr. Yun had already made good his escape and only three servants were arrested.

Three hundred rifles for use by Korean cavalry and 16,000 rounds of ammunition arrived at Chemulpo early in May. The cost of these was $10,200, They must be very fine rifles at that price!

The Japanese merchants who have heretofore imported from Japan, yearly, something like 250,000 cases of oil are somewhat exercised over the fact that this large and lucrative business will be entirely curtailed by the direct importation of oil into Fusan by the Standard Oil Company, whose new go-downs at that point will be completed next Fall.

Yi Yong-sun, Min Yung-ch’an, Min Yung-sun and Yu Ki-whan were appointed early in May to the position of “Special Minister Plenipotentiary” but without being ordered to any foreign post.

On the first day of May there lay in Chemulpo Harbor ten men-of war of which three were English, one Russian, four Austrian and two Japanese.

As the Government contemplates establishing a foreign paper mill in conjunction with the mint at Yong-san negotiations were opened with a large paper manufacturing company in Osaka. Accordingly the Chief Engineer of that company came to Korea early in May to inspect the plant and make the necessary arrangements for starting the new project.

A new site for the Queen’s Tomb has been selected in Keum-gok. It is near the site which was recently rejected. The time for moving the remains of the late Queen to this new tomb is set for the 25th of the first moon of next year. [page 215]

On May 4th the German Consul introduced to His Imperial Majesty the Admiral of the Austro-Hungarian fleet and his staff.

Dr. H. A. Allen, the United States Minister, has published an interesting and valuable Chronological Index giving the date of “Some of the Chief events in the Foreign Intercourse of Korea from the Beginning of the Christian era to the Twentieth Century.” The Korea Review acknowledges the receipt of a copy of this Chronological Index, with thanks.

The Magistrate of Musan has sent some particulars about the fight with the Chinese bandits and gives some further items of news. He says that the leader of the bandits was one Wang-gwe. He and thirty of his followers were killed in the late fight. After this the magistrate, for fear of further trouble, set a sharp watch along the river. This was a wise precaution, for a few days later over a hundred bandits were seen crossing the river a few miles above the Magistracy where they went into camp under Sa-mang Hill and kept up a continual firing. The Korean soldiers were too few to attack them, so the magistrate sent and called in all the soldiers who formed the cordon along the river. Then they attacked the Chinese camp and put its occupants to flight, killing thirteen of them. The rest made their escape across the river. Then another party of Chinese 300 strong made its appearance. The Korean Captain Ma Yung-hu attacked them with a mere handful of men and drove the Chinese to the river bank. Now a letter has come from the Chinese side from Chang So-yu saying that he had heard that Wang-gwe had been defeated and he was coming with 3500 soldiers to avenge his death. When this became known it threw the whole district, into confusion and many Korean robbers began plundering right and left. The Magistrate hopes that the Government will allow him to call in the tiger hunters to help the regular troops to put things to rights.

On May 5rd a mad dog entered the grounds of the Government Normal School and sprang into the face of Kim Hak-hyun one of the students, inflicting a severe wound on his chin. The matter was referred to the Educational Office and we learn with great satisfaction that the Government has granted the necessary funds to send him to Japan to be treat- [page 216] ed at the Pasteur Institute in Tokyo. Such an enlightened policy as this gives evidence of the genuine interest which the government takes in its subjects. It is pleasant to point to this at a time when the darker side of the picture is being so prominently mentioned. If, as seems not wholly improbable, there should be an epidemic of rabies, it is to be hoped that a temporary Pasteur Institute would be established in Seoul with the help of the Japanese authorities. In the case mentioned above, the dog made his escape and it is hard to estimate how much damage even one dog may do.

A serious fracas occurred at Wunsan late in April. The Commissioner of Customs saw a Japanese walking about his private compound with a gun is his hands. He promptly relieved the man of his weapon and sent it to the Japanese Consulate by the hand of one of the Customs coolies. As the coolie issued from the Customs property he was surrounded by a curious group of Koreans and the gun was accidentally discharged. The charge took effect in the throat of one of the bystanders and instant death resulted. The crowd went wild and the unfortunate but innocent coolie beat a hasty retreat into the Customs yard, but the crowd armed with their ji-gi sticks followed him closely. Most of the Customs Staff were away to tiffin but the Commissioner was there and he made every effort to protect his man; but the crowd got the coolie away and beat him to death on the spot. It is easy to imagine that the Commissioner himself was for a few moments in a dangerous position, for a Korean crowd when thoroughly aroused are not likely to count the cost of any hasty action into which their temper may lead them. They probably knew that the discharge of the gun was accidental but they considered that the carelessness of the act was culpable enough to warrant summary punishment.

On the 6th inst. Prof. St Vraz, a citizen of Venezuela but a Hungarian by birth, arrived in Seoul. He has traveled not only widely but thoroughly, having spent seven years in Africa and other long periods in India, China and the various republics of South America, His written works, which are all published in Hungarian, comprise books on over a dozen different lands and are all beautifully illustrated by his own photographs. [page 217]

The Korean steamship Kyeng Chae which runs along the western coast was found to be on fire when she cast anchor in Chinnampo on the 17th ult. The fire had been smouldering for a long time in the cargo but was not discovered until the hatches were taken off. From the first there was little hope of saving her. She was beached and then burned to the waters edge. It is fortunate that she did not burn while at sea. Many of the foreigners in Pyeng-yang lost goods which were on her, and it is impossible to effect insurance on goods beyond Chemulpo.

There has been no little complaint of late in regard to the delays in the forwarding of freight from Japan which is billed through to Korea from America. An effort is being made to have the Osaka Shosen Kaisha S. S. Co. arrange with the trans-pacific lines to bring freight through to Korea on a single bill of lading. These Osaka boats run twice a week and are comparatively fast boats. The time, between Kobe and Chemulpo is four days. We ought to get freight from San Francisco or Vancouver in twenty-five days, but a month and a half would be nearer the present figure.

It would not do for a Korean periodical to pass over in silence the interesting fact that the largest, and we presume the fastest merchant steamship ever built in the United States was launched a few weeks ago on Chesapeake Bay and when the fair lady broke the bottle of Champagne on the ship’s bows and christened her, the name that passed her lips was Korea. She is to run on the San Francisco-Hongkong line and we would venture a bit of prophecy in connection with her,—namely that when the Seoul-Fusan Raiload is completed, one of her ports of call will be Fusan.

The Korean ambassadors to Europe on their arrival at Shanghai put up at the Hotel des Colonies. The ministers and their suites aggregated eighteen men.

The Prefect of Ch’ul-san on the coast of Whang-ha Province reports that 011 April 26th three Chinese boats approached the shore and upwards of thirty Chinese pirates landed and commenced burning and plundering, one Korean was killed and hundreds fled from their homes into the hills. He sent some police to look into the matter but they are not able to [page 218] oppose the pirates successfully, because they come in with the tide and rob a village and then retire on the ebb tide so that it is impossible to guess where they will strike next.

A part of the Pyeng-yang garrison is to be despatched to the northern border to oppose the Chinese bandits who are plying their nefarious business along the Yalu River.

On April 20th P. G. von Mollendorf Esq. the Commissioner of Customs at Ningpo died suddenly of heart disease. The name of this gentleman is closely connected with the early days of Korea’s intercourse with foreign nations. The next number of the Review will contain an account of his relations with Korea during those interesting years.

The annual meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Mission began on Thursday May 9th with Bishop Moore presiding. Every member of the mission on the field excepting Mrs. McGill was present. We hope to give an account of this meeting in the next number of the Review.

The matter of the Korean loan from France is still far from a settlement. Strenuous opposition has been made and it does not yet appear just how the matter can be amicably settled. Pressure has been brought to bear upon the government to render a withdrawal impossible. There is very little use in going into the matter here until something definite is arranged. At the present moment things are in a state of stable equilibrium but the tension is considerable and gives us a little excitement to vary the monotony of life in this far corner of the worlds

On May 10th Cho Pyung-sik resigned from the privy council but his resignation has not been accepted. His attitude is not favorable to the securing of a loan from the French.

The native papers report that the French Minister called on Cho Pyung-sik and urged him not resign but the latter stated that if things were being done that he deemed injurious to the country he would not stop protesting even though he had to present his resignation a hundred times.

It is said that if Korea retires from the loan contract the French will ask for one year’s interest amounting to $275,000. [page 219]

The Koreans are making quite a stir over the news that a boy thirteen years old in Yung-yang prefecture in Kyung-sang-do after being three days dead came to life again and said that this year an epidemic called Hak-kwi = “swan-spirit” will spread over the country. He gave a formula which, repeated 300 times, will ward off the disease.

It is reported that the Seoul Electric Car Company has been ordered by the government to hand over the plant to the Household Department. This very radical action will probably meet with considerable opposition on the part of those who have expended so much time and energy in the building and equipment of the line.

Serious trouble has broken out in Quelpart in which it is claimed that the natives have attacked the Roman Catholic converts, and inflicted severe injuries upon their persons and property. The two French priests who went to Quelpart on the Hye-nik remained in the island and did not return by that boat, so it would seem that there is no very great danger to them personally. The matter has been brought to the attention of the Foreign Office by the French Minister.

We regret to be compelled to record the death of Hon. J. M. B. Sill United States Minister to Korea during the second term of the presidency of Grover Cleveland. Mr. Sill’s death occurred in Michigan last March.

We are also notified of the death of Dr. J. B. Busteed who for two years was a missionary to Korea under the American Methodist Episcopal Church. His many friends will learn of his death with deep regrets and with lively sympathy for Mrs. Busteed and her children.

On the 17th inst a hundred criminals were condemned to be strangled and a soldier who entered the palace without authority was condemned to be decapitated and three counterfeiters were also condemned to be hanged.

Cho Pyung-sik has resigned his position as Councillor and has become Minister of Law, and So Chung-sun has become Councillor in his place. Kwun Cha-hyung has been appointed Councillor. Kim Kyu-hong has been transferred from the Ministry of Education to that of Agriculture. Commerce and [page 220] public works, Min Yung-so has been appointed Minister of Education. These changes were made on or about the 17th inst.

Kang Myun-heui has been in prison for some time because of his connection with the sale of Wul-mi (or Roze) Island at Chemulpo. He was the director of the Su-ryun-gica or “Water-wheel Bureau.” This bureau has charge of the matter of irrigation and the reclaiming of waste land. This man has now requested the Foreign Office to send a despatch to the Japanese Legation asking that the Japanese in Chemulpo who claimed to have bought the island be called up and put on the witness stand. Kang Myun-heui claims that as Director of the “Water-wheel Bureau” he simply gave the Japanese permission to cultivate a certain part of the island, but that there was no sale and that no deed was given. It would seem only equitable that the Japanese who claims possession should be made to show irrefragable proof of the purchase from persons clothed with power to sell such a valuable portion of the public domain.

The 20th, 21st and 22ud inst. beheld a very imposing ceremony in memory of the Mother of Lady Om, at the Sa-jul or “New Monastery” not far from A-o-ga outside the West Gate. There were thousands of spectators among whom the Military were conspicuous. It was a strictly Buddhist ceremony.

A memorial service was held at the Chang-chung-dan (Exalted Loyalty Altar) near the Su-gu Gate on the 9th inst. The arrangements, which were in the hands of Gen. Yi Hak-kyun, were most elaborate. The service was in commemoration of the officers who have lost their lives during the last eight years. Lack of space prevents our giving an adequate account of the ceremony in this issue of the Review. It was the most imposing that we have ever witnessed in Korea, with the exception of the funerals of the late Queen and of the Queen Dowager Cho. [page 221]

**KOREAN HISTORY.**

As this was without result, she sent and asked openly that the Wei Emperor send an army and chastise Ko-gu-ryu. The Emperor replied that until Ko-gu-ryu omitted some overt act of more hostile import than the mere cementing of peaceful alliances no notice could be taken of her. In other words the Wei power refused to be the aggressor, much to Pak-je’s chagrin. The Wei Emperor sent this answer by way of Ko-gu-ryu and the king of that country was ordered to grant the messenger a safe conduct through his territory. But Ko-gu-ryu, as though bent on self-destruction, refused to let him pass, and so the great northern kingdom approached one step nearer the precipice which was to prove her destruction. Upon learning the news of this affront the Emperor was highly incensed and tried to send the messenger by way of a southern port; but stress of weather rendered this impossible and Pak-je, receiving no answer to her missive, took offense and would have nothing more to do with China, for a time.

At this point Ko-gu-ryu decided upon a bold attempt to swallow Pak-je bodily. It was to be done partly by strategem and partly by force. A monk of Ko-gu-ryu named To-rim, a fellow of excellent craft, arrived at the Pak-je capital as if seeking refuge. The king received him with open arms and, finding him an excellent chess player, made him his trusty councilor. This monk told the king that the palaces, walls, tombs and public buildings ought to be thoroughly repaired, and so induced him to drain the public treasury in this work, and also in bringing a huge monolith from Uk-nyi to the capital. This done the monk fled back to Ko-gu-ryu and announced that the treasury of Pak-je was empty and it was a good time to attack her. A large army was put in the field, guided by one Kul-lu, a Pak-je fugitive from justice. Almost before Pak-je was aware, her capital was surrounded. She had applied to Sil-la for help, but too late. First the suburbs were laid in ashes, and then access being gained, the palace was fired. The king fled with ten attendants out the west gate, but Kul-lu the renegade followed and overtook him. [page 222]

The king begged for mercy upon his knees but Kul-lu spit thrice in his face, bound him and sent him to the fortress of A-han where he was killed. Then the Ko-gu-ryu army went back north carrying with them 8,000 captives, men and women.

Meanwhile Prince Mun-ju had obtained help from Sil-la and with 10,000 troops was hastening homewards. He found the city in ashes, his father dead, the people mourning their lost, who had been dragged away captive. He promptly assumed control of affairs, moved the capital southward to Ung-ju, the present Kong-ju, took all the Pak-je people away from Han-yang (Seoul) and moved them back across the Han River and abandoned all the territory beyond that natural barrier to Ko-gu-ryu to whom it had originally belonged. The following year he tried to send a message to the Sung Emperor by way of Ko-gu-ryu but the messenger was intercepted and the message stopped.

**Chapter X.**

Quelpart .... origin of T’am-na .... new alliances .... advances in Sil-la ... but not in Pak-je nor Ko-gu-ryu... temporary peace .... Buddhism in Sil-la .... remnants of barbarism .... influence of Chinese literature... .important reforms ....Ko-gu-ryu’s foreign relations.... conquest of Dagelet Island .... posthumous titles .... colors in official grades ....Wei displeased .... the “miracle” of Yi Cha-don .... end of Ka-rak .... Sil-la rejects Chinese calendar .... confusion in China .... Pak-je attempts reform .... history of Sil-la .... two alliances .... Pak-je and Ko-gu-ryu envoys to China .... advance of Buddhism in Sil-la .... music in Sil-la .... war between Pak-je and Sil-la .... retrogression in Sil-la because of Buddhism.... Ko-gu-ryu and the Sui Emperor.... the Ondal.

Tradition says that in the dawn of history when the island of Che-ju (Quelpart) was covered only with a tangled forest three sages arose from a crevice in the ground. This spot is shown to this day by the people of Che-ju. These three men were Ko-ulla, Yang-ulla and Pu-ulla. As they stood upon the shore they saw three stout chests floating in from the south-east. Drawing them to land, and opening them the three wise men discovered that each chest contain- [page 223] ed a calf, a colt, a dog, a pig, and a woman, together with sundry seeds, such as beans, wheat, barley, millet and rice. By the three families thus organised the island was populated. During the early days of Sil-la a certain court astrologer announced that the “Friend Star” was visible in the south and that a distinguished visitor would soon arrive. Soon after this three men came by boat from Quelpart, landing at the harbor of Tam-jin, now Kang-jin. They came straight to the court of Sil-la where they were hospitably entertained. One of the visitors was Ko-hu one was Ko-ch’ung but the name of the third is lost. The king called the first Sung-ju or “Lord of the Star,” the second Wang-ja or “King’s Son” and the third To-na or “The One who has Come.” He named their country Tam from the name of the port where they landed, and na, which seems to have meant “Kingdom”, for we find that the last syllable of Sil-la is this same na changed by euphonic laws to la. It is the root of the present Korean word na-ra or “kingdom” So the kingdom was called T’am-na. The authorities are at a loss to tell the date or even the reign during which these events transpired. In the year 477 the little kingdom of T’am-na sent an envoy to the court of Pak-je with gifts. This is the first really authentic mention of the place. If tradition is of any value it must be confessed that the story of the peopling of Quelpart points toward a southern origin.

In 479 the aged king of Ko-gu-ryu, Ko-ryun, now in the sixty-eighth year of his reign, sought and obtained recognition from Emperor Ko-je (Kao-ti) the founder of the Ch’i dynasty in China. That this occurred in the very first year after the founding of that dynasty shows how sedulously Ko-gu-ryu was cultivating the good-will of the Chinese. Pak-je was not far behind, for she swore allegiance to the same Emperor only two years later.

During all these years it is to Sil-la that we must look for any signs of internal improvement. any of those innovations which are the mile-stones of progress. We saw above how she introduced the use of the cart and so raised a great burden from the shoulders of the people. The wheel is the great burden bearer of history. And now, we find her introducing further reforms. The first was the horse relay [page 224] system called the Yong-ma. It did not bear so directly upon the condition of the people but it afforded an opportunity for the rapid transmission of official information and thus indirectly had an important bearing upon the welfare of the masses. In the next place, she organised a general market where at stated intervals merchants from the various districts could meet and exchange commodities. These are things that we look upon as matters of course and we do not realise their importance till we imagine ourselves deprived of the comforts that spring from the possibility of rapid communication and exchange of commodities. That Ko-gu-ryu had not made similar advances in the line of industrial reform is shown by the fact that when the Emperor of the Wei dynasty sent to grant investiture to Na-un the twenty-first king of Ko-gu-ryu in 499 he presented him with suits of clothes, flags，a crown and a cart. This shows that carts were not as yet in common use in Ko-gu-ryu. As for Pak-je, disaster was following upon disaster. At one time a thousand people were swept away in a flood. Then famine carried away three thousand. A few years later ten thousand people passed over into Sil-la to save themselves from starvation.

The sixth century dawned upon a comparatively peaceful Korea; for the time being the dogs of war were held in leash and feuds seem to have been laid on the shelf. The three kingdoms employed their time in different but characteristic ways. The king of Pak-je built an enormous pleasure-house and adorned it with all manner of curious flowers and animals. To the expostulations of his ministers he turned a deaf ear.

A few years later he was murdered by one of his courtiers. In truth, peace was nearly as bad for Pak-je as war. In Sil-la Buddhism had been introduced during the reign of Nul-ji, 417-458. A monk named Muk Hoja had been well received and was lodged in the palace. But, at the first, Buddhism did not find congenial soil in Sil-la. Tradition gives the following account of the first set-back which it suffered there. In 502 while the king was idling an hour away in a favorite summer-house outside the city, a raven appeared bearing in its beak a letter. It laid the missive at the king’s feet and flew away. The superscription said “If the king opens and reads this note two people will die; it he [page 225] does not open it one will die”. He determined not to open it, but one of his attendants said “The one referred to is Your Majesty and therefore you should open it even though two lives are sacrificed” He broke the seal and read the strange words “Let the king take his trustiest bow, hasten to the palace and shoot an arrow through the zither case.” The king obeyed the mandate, hastened back to the palace by a private gate, entered the queen’s apartments unannounced and shot an arrow through a zither case that stood against the wall. The arrow pierced the zither case and the High Priest who was hidden behind it. The latter had taken advantage of the king’s absence to attack his honor. He was strangled together with the guilty queen.

With all her attempts at progress some evidences of the grossest barbarity still lingered in Sil-la. It was not, so the records tell us, until the year 503 that Sil-la discontinued the horrible custom of burying people alive when a king’s body was interred. It had been customary to bury five boys and five girls alive on such occasions, but in 503 the king published a decree forbidding the continuance of the custom. The very barbarity of the custom renders its abolition the more striking and places the name of king Chi-jeung, the twenty-second of his line, among the names of Korea’s benefactors. At the same time the custom of plowing with oxen was introduced, an innovation that had a most far-reaching effect upon society. It was in the beginning of the sixth century that Sil-la began to show evidences of the influence of Chinese literature and thought. In 504 she adopted the Chinese word Wang as the title of her kings in place of the pure Korean words I-sa-geum or Ma-rip-kan. She also changed the name of the kingdom from Kye-rim to Sil-la. We have been speaking of this kingdom under the name Sil-la but as a matter of fact it was not so designated until the year 504 A.D. Before that time it had been variously styled Su-ya-bul, Sa-ro, and Kye-rim. The word Sil-la is said to have been composed of the Chinese words Sin and ra, which when united become Sil-la according to Korean laws of euphony. It is more than probable that it was merely an adaptation of Chinese characters to pure Korean words, for the last syllable la or na is the same as that used in other words，centuries before that time [page 226] in southern Korea. The na of T’am-na is the same character. To the word Sil-la was added the word Kuk or “kingdom” which put her in line with the other vassals of China. The Confucian code must have been making headway too, for in the following year the custom was adopted of assuming a mourning garb for three years upon the death of a parent. It was at this time that the influence of China upon Korea began to bear its legitimate fruit. Chinese religion, literature, government and art were beginning to mould the thought and life of the Korean people. Many Chinese words had been introduced into Korea before this time but the use of the Chinese character had not been general.

In the meantime Ko-gu-ryu had been paying attention not so much to internal reforms as to external alliances. She sent to the Wei Emperor begging him to remit the revenue in gold and jade, as they were obtained, the one in Pu-yu, which she claimed the Mal-gal savages had seized, and the other in Sup-na which she averred the wicked Pak-je had feloniously taken. But she added “Of course all that Ko-gu-ryu has is yours”. The Emperor good-naturedly remitted the revenue but urged his vassal to continue the good work of subduing the wild tribes of the peninsula. It is said that in a single year Ko-gu-ryu sent three separate embassies to the Wei court. At the same time she was coquetting, *sub rosa*, with the new Liang power which had arisen in 502. In this Pak-je of course followed suite. We thus see that the three kingdoms spent their time in different ways; Sil-la in internal improvement, Pak-je in self-gratification and Ko-gu-ryu in strengthening her foreign relations.

In the year 512 the kingdom of U-san was added to the crown of Sil-la. This was the little island of Dagelet, off the eastern coast of Korea, about opposite the prefecture of Kang-neung. How Sil-la happened to branch out in a policy of conquest we are not told, but having decided to do so she did it very neatly. The expedition was led by Gen. Yi Sa- bu. He ordered the construction of several lions with gaping mouths and enormous fangs. They were carved from wood. He placed one of these in the prow of each of the boats and when the little flotilla approached the shores of the island [page 227] the natives were called upon to lay down their arms and surrender, or the lions would be set loose among them and would tear them to pieces. This, it is averred, brought the trembling islanders to their knees at once and Sil-la won a bloodless victory. This is among the most cherished traditions of the Korean people.

With the accession of Wun-jong to the throne of Sil-la in 514 the Chinese custom of conferring a posthumous title upon a deceased king was introduced for the first time into Korea. Long before this the custom had prevailed in Ko-gu-ryu of naming a dead king after the place in which he was buried but to the very last the Ko-gu-ryu kings did not receive posthumous honorific titles. Pak-je however followed Sil-la’s example ten years later.

King Pup-heung of Sil-la in 520 reorganised the official list and indicated the different grades of rank by different colors. The grades called t’a-do, Rak-Ran and ta-a-son wore lavender. Those called a-son and Reup-son, wore red, and carried the ivory memo tablets that are common today The ta-na-ma and the na-ma wore blue. The ta-sa and sun-jo-ji wore hats of silk, shaped like the broad-brimmed, round crowned hats of the chair-coolie of the present day. The pa-jin-son and the ta-a-son wore red silk hats. The sang-dong, chuk-wi and ta-sa wore red hat strings. The kaleidoscopic colors of a royal Korean procession of today indicate what a prominent role the love of color plays in the oriental temperament.

The Wei power in China was not pleased with the friendship that was springing up between Ko-gu-ryu and the Liang courts. This came to a climax when she stopped a Liang envoy who was on his way to Ko-gu-ryu to confer investiture upon the king. It may be that Ko-gu-ryu realised that the Wei dynasty was waning to its close and that it was well to cultivate the good-will of the young and rising Liang power; but if so the forecast was false for the Liang power outlived the Wei only twenty-four years.

The year 524 gave Sil-la Buddhism a new lease of life. Its most celebrated, representative was a monk named Muk Ho-ja who lived about the middle of the fifth century. Com- [page 228] ing from Ko-gu-ryu he had settled at the town of Il-sung-gun where a Sil-la citizen had made him a cave dwelling. The king of Sil-la received a gift of incense from China, but did not know how to use it till this monk Muk Ho-ja showed him how. He told the king to burn it and ask anything of the spirits, and they would grant it. The king’s daughter was very ill at the time and the king burned the incense and asked that his daughter be healed. The story says that she immediately arose from her bed a well woman. This of course gave Buddhism a long start. Since that time, as we have seen, Buddhism had suffered a severe drawback in the person of the wicked monk who was discovered in the act of abusing his sacerdotal function. It had recovered from that shock however and had again assumed large proportions in the state of Sil-la. The king had come so completely under the influence of the monks that now in 524 the courtiers feared that their power would be seriously threatened. They therefore used every means to induce the king to moderate his views. The king gave his reluctant assent to the execution of the high priest, Yi Cha-don. Tradition says that when he was brought to execution he exclaimed “When you slay me, my blood will flow not red like blood but white as milk and then you will know that Buddhism is true.” And so it proved, for when his head was severed from the trunk his blood flowed white like milk. None could gainsay this evidence and from that day Buddhism advanced with rapid steps. The following year the king made a law against the killing of animals.

The kingdom of Ka-rak had existed side by side with Sil-la on terms of mutual friendship for four hundred and eighty-two years, but in 527 her king, Kim Ku-hyung, gave up his sovereign power and merged his kingdom into that of Sil-la. He was however retained at the head of the Ka-rak state under appointment by the king of Sil-la. It does not appear from the scanty records that this was other than a peaceful change. Ka-rak had long seen the growing power of Sil-la and doubtless recognised that more was to be gained by becoming part of that kingdom than by standing aloof and running the chance of becoming disputed territory between the rival powers of the peninsula. She had been founded in [page 229] 41 A. D. and now she came to an end in 527 so her lease of life seems to have been four hundred and eight-six years rather than four hundred and eighty-two as the records state. As the dates of her beginning and end are both taken from the records the discrepancy must be laid at the door of the recorder.

About this time Sil-la discovered that it was useless to cultivate the friendship of the Chinese powers. The Chinese territory was divided into a number of petty kingdoms and more were on the eve of being founded. None of them had strength enough to hold her own against the others, much less to be of any avail in case of trouble in the peninsula. Perhaps it was for this reason that in 535 Sil-la rejected the Chinese calendar and named the year according to a plan of her own. In China the Liang dynasty, the Northern Wei and the Eastern Wei were all in the field，while the Ch’en, the Northern Chi, the Northern Chu and the Sui dynasties were just about to make their appearance and all to pass away like summer clouds before the power of the mighty T’ang.

About the year 540 Pak-je moved her capital again; this time it was to Sa-ja the site of the present prefecture of Pu-yu in the province of Ch’ung-ch’ung. She seems to have had some aspirations after better things, for in 541 she sent to the Liang court asking that books of poetry, teachers of literature, Buddhist books, artisans and picture painters be sent to help in creating a taste for literature and art in that country. The request was granted.

The year 543 marks an important event in the life of Sil-la. The history of that country existed as yet only in the form of notes, but now the king ordered that a congress of the best scholars of the land set to work compiling a proper history under the leadership of the great scholar Kim-gu Ch’il-bu, We will notice that this was about two hundred years before the earliest date that is set for the publication of the Japanese work entitled the Kojiki, And it should be noticed likewise that this history of Sil-la was not a collection of myths and stories only, but a proper history, worked up from government records which a certain degree of knowledge of Chinese had rendered the officials capable of making and transmitting. One needs but to compare the Kojiki with the [page 230] Sam-guk-sa or “History of the Three Kingdoms” founded on these records to see how immeasurably the latter excels the former as a source of accurate historical evidence.

It was about this time that the wild tribes of the Mal-gal and Ye-mak began to realise that the continued progress of Pak-je and Sil-la meant extinction for themselves. So in 547 they joined Ko-gu-ryu in an attack upon Pak-je; but Sil-la and Ka-ya rendered aid to Pak-je and the northern allies were driven back. From this time on, during a period of several years, Ko-gu-ryu, Ye-mak and Mal-gal were allies, and Sil-la. Pak-je and Ka-ya were allies; a sort of dual arrangement, which preserved a nice equilibrium in the peninsula.

In 549 the king of Pak-je sent an envoy to present his compliments to the Liang Emperor. When he arrived at the capital of the Liang power he found the palace in ashes and the reins of government in the hands of the usurper Hu-gyung; so he took his stand before the Tan-mun (gate) and wept aloud from morning till night. The passers-by, hearing his story, stopped and wept with him. This of course did not please the usurper, and the envoy was seized and thrown into prison where he stayed until the rebellion was put down and the Emperor returned. As the Ch’i dynasty arose in 550 we are not surprised to learn that Ko-gu-ryu sent an envoy immediately to do obeisance and get into the good graces of the new power.

It must be confessed that meantime Buddhism had been making rapid strides in Sil-la. Monasteries had been erected and the new cult was winning its way into the hearts of the people. In 551 the public teaching of the eight laws of Buddhism against (1) the slaughter of animals, (2) theft, (3) licentiousness, (4) lying, (5) drunkenness, (6) ambition. (7) the eating of garlic, (8) levity, was decreed.

It is probable that the art of music was not highly developed at this time but in 552 the king of Sil-la sent three men to the Ka-ya country to learn music from a celebrated master named U Reuk; but that learned man had come to realise that Ka-ya was doomed and, taking his twelve-stringed instrument under his arm he went with his disciple Ni Mun to the court of Sil-la. The three men, Pup-ji, Kye-go and Man-dok, whom the king had appointed to study music, entered [page 231] upon their duties under this man’s tutelage. One of them studied singing another the use of the instrument and a third dancing. When they had perfected themselves in these ornamental arts they proposed to alter some of the songs, on the plea that they were too licentious, but old U Reuk violently objected to expurgated editions of his works, and so it was stopped. From that time music became very popular and in many cases students of this great branch of art went among the mountains and spent years in practice. The instrument was called a Ka-ya-geum from Ka-ya where it originated. It is now called the ka-go and is shaped like a Korean zither but is smaller. Among the favorite songs that have come down to the present time are “The Ascent of the Mountain,” “The Descent of the Mountain,” The Rustling Bamboo,” “The Stork Dance,” “The Blowing Wind” and “The Monastery on the Mountain” But music was not the only art that flourished, for we are gravely told that an artist painted a tree on the wall of “Yellow Dragon Monastery” with such skill that birds tried to alight on its branches.

In 555, war broke out between Sil-la and Pak-je. We are not told its cause but Sil-la was victorious and added to her territory a large tract of country along the eastern side of Pak-je, which she erected into a prefecture under the name of Wan-san-ju (now Chun-ju). One authority says that in this war Pak-je lost one half of her territory to Sil-la. It seems that Sil-la had by this time developed the taste for diplomatic intercourse with China. Frequent embassies were sent on the long and costly journey. Each of the three powers sent two and three times a year to one or other of the various Chinese courts. The Emperor of the Ch’i dynasty sent Sil-la great store of Buddhistic books. It is said that as many as 1700 volumes were sent at one time.

When Pak-jong ascended the throne of Sil-la in 576 the Buddhistic tendencies had begun to bear their legitimate fruits. The king was so given over to it that he became a monk and the queen became a nun. All thought of progress seems to have been given up and the revenues were squandered in sending useless embassies to China. The style of Buddhism prevalent in Sil-la is illustrated by the fact that in the second [page 232] year of this reign the minister of war took the king severely to task for spending so much time in the chase, though the killing of animals is the first prohibition of the Buddhist law. Tradition says that this faithful minister, Hu-jik, plead in vain, and finally, when dying, asked to be buried near the road the king usually took when going to hunt It was done and the king when passing the grave heard a noise of warning proceeding from it. When he was told that it was the faithful but neglected Hu-jik, the king determined on the spot that he would reform, and so the faithful minister did more by his death than by his life.

It was in the year 586 that Ko-gu-ryu again moved her capital northward to the old place near the present Eui-ju. Soon after this the Tsin dynasty in China fell before the victorious Sui, and Ko-gu-rye, who had been friendly with the Tsin but had never cultivated the Sui, was left in an extremely delicate position. She immediately began preparations for repelling a Sui invasion. The Emperor however had no such intentions and sent a swift messenger chiding the king for his unjust suspicions and opening the way for a friendly understanding. This seemed a little strained to the king and he feared treachery; so, while he greatly desired to send an envoy, he hardly ventured to do so.

One of the famous traditions of Korea centers about this king. His daughter when of tender years cried so much that on one occasion the king impatiently exclaimed “When you grow up you cannot marry a man of the nobility but we will marry you to an ondali.” Now an ondali is a very ignorant, foolish fellow, a boor. When the girl reached a marriageable age the king who had forgotten all about his threat was for marrying her to a high noble but the girl called to his remembrance the words he had spoken and said she would marry no one but an ondali. The king bound ten golden hairpins to her arm and drove the away from the palace. She fled to the hut of an ondali on the outskirts of the town but he was away in the hills gathering elm bark to eat. His mother, old and blind, said “You smell of perfume and your hands are soft and smooth. My boy is only an ignorant ondali and no match for you.” Without answering, the maiden hastened to the hills and found the boy, but he thought her a spirit and took [page 233] to his heels and ran home as fast as he could go. She followed and slept before his door that night. At last the youth comprehended the situation and accepted the hand of the princess. With the ten golden hairpins she set him up in the horse-raising business. He bought the broken-down palace ponies and by careful treatment made them sound and fleet again. In the chase he always led the rout and when the King asked who he might be the answer was “Only an ondali.” From this the youth advanced until he became a famous general and had the honor of defeating a Chinese army in Liao-tung. He was killed during an invasion of Sil-la but no one was able to lift his dead body till his wife came and knelt beside it saying “The dead and living are separated.” Then it was lifted and carried back to Ko-gu-ryu.

**Chapter XL**

Ko-gu-ryu relations with the Sui court.... Ko-gu-ryu suspected.... takes the offensive.... submits.... the Emperor suspicious.... the great Chinese invasion.... Chinese allies .... Ko-gu-ryu’s allies.... Chinese cross the Liao.... go into camp.... naval expedition.... defeated at P’yung-yang.... routes of the Chinese army.... Ko-gu-ryu spy.... Ko-gu-ryu lures the Chinese on pretense of surrender.... Chinese retreat.... terrible slaughter.... Pak-je neutral.... second invasion.... siege of Liao-tung fortress.... Chinese retire.... and give up the contest.... treaty with the T’ang Emperor.... triangular war renewed.... China neutral.... guerilla warfare.... first woman sovereign.... Pak-je retrogrades.... attacks Sil-la.... Pak-je’s terrible mistake.... Chinese spy.... rise of Hap So-mun.... the tortoise and the rabbit.... Taoism introduced.... China finally sides with Sil-la.... and announces her program.... preparations for war.... the invasion.... siege of Liao-tung Fortress.... siege of An-si Fortress.... Chinese retire.

We have seen that Ko-gu-ryu did not respond freely to the friendly advances of the Sui power in China. Although a Sui envoy came and conferred investiture upon the king in 590, yet the relations were not cordial. Something was lacking. A mutual suspicion existed which kept them both on the watch for signs of treachery. But two years later the king did obeisance to the Emperor and was apparently taken [page 234] into his good graces. And now the net began to be drawn about Ko-gu-ryu. Her position had always been precarious. She was the largest of the peninsular kingdoms and the nearest to China. She was also nearest to the wild tribes who periodically joined in an attempt to overthrow the Chinese ruling dynasty. So Ko-gu-ryu was always more or less suspected of ulterior designs and she seems to have realised it, for she always sedulously cultivated the good-will of the Emperors, She knew very well that with Sil-la and Pak-je, hereditary enemies, at her back, the day when she fell under the serious suspicion of any strong dynasty in China would be her day of doom. And so it proved in the end. She had now thoroughly alienated the good-will and aroused the suspicions of the Sui Emperor; Sil-la and Pak-je were in his good graces, and stirring times were at hand. These two rival powers sent envoys to China urging the Emperor to unite with them in invading Ko-gu-ryu and putting an end to her once for all. To this the Emperor assented. Ko-gu-ryu knew that the fight was on and, being the warlike power that she was, she boldly determined to take the offensive. Drawing on her faithful allies the Mal-gal for 10,000 troops she despatched these, together with her own army to western Liao-tung and across the river Liao, where the town of Yung-ju was attacked and taken. This was her declaration of war. The Emperor in 598 proclaimed the royal title withdrawn from the king of Ko-gu-ryu and an army of 300,000 men was put in motion toward the frontier. At the same time a naval expedition was fitted out. But reverses occurred; storms by sea and bad management of the commissariat by land rendered the expedition a failure. It opened the eyes of the Ko-gu-ryu king however and he saw that the Emperor was fully determined upon his destruction. He saw but one way to make himself safe and that was by abject submission. He therefore hastened to tell the Emperor, “I am a base and worthless subject, vile as ordure,” which vas received by the Emperor with considerable complaisancy, and a show of pardon was made; but it was probably done only to keep Ko-gu-ryu from active preparations until China could equip a much larger army and put it in the field. Pak-je, who did not like to see affairs brought to a halt at this interesting juncture, sent an [page 235] envoy to China offering to act as guide to lead a Chinese army against the foe. When Ko-gu-ryu learned of this her anger knew no bounds and she began to make reprisals upon Pak-je territory.

About this time the Sui Emperor had business in the north. The Tol-gwul tribe needed chastisement. When the Chinese forces entered the chief town of the humbled tribe they found a Ko-gu-ryu emissary there. This fed the Emperor’s suspicions for it looked as if Ko-gu-ryu were preparing a league of the wild tribes for the purpose of conquest. He therefore sent to Ko-gu-ryu saying “The king should not be afraid of me. Let him come himself and do obeisance. If not, I shall send and destroy him.” We may well imagine that this pressing invitation was declined by the king.

The last year of the sixth century witnessed the compilation of the first great history of Ko-gu-ryu, in 100 volumes. It was named the Yu-geui or “Record of Remembrance.”

It took China some years to get ready for the carrying out of her plan, but at last in 612 began one of the mightiest military movements in history, China massed upon the western bank of the Liao River an army of 1,130,000 men. There were forty regiments of cavalry and eighty of infantry. The army was divided into twenty-four battalions, marching with an interval of forty li between each, so that the entire army stretched for 960 li or 320 miles along the road. Eighty li in the rear came the Emperor with his body-guard.

When this enormous army reached the banks of the Liao they beheld on the farther bank the soldiers of Ko-gu-ryu. Nothing can better prove the hardihood of the Ko-gu-ryu soldiery than that, when they saw this well-nigh innumerable host approach, they dared to dispute the crossing of the river.

The Chinese army was composed of Chinese regulars and of allies from twenty-four of their dependencies whose names are given as follows. Nu-bang, Chang-jam, Myung-ha, Ka-ma, Kon-an, Nam-so, Yo-dong, Hyun-dot Pu-yu, Nang-nang, Ok-ju, Chum-sun, Ham-ja, Hon-mi, Im-dun, Hu-sung, Che-ha, Tap-don, Suk-sin, Kal-suk, Tong-i, Ta-bang and Yang-p’yung. One would suppose from this long , list that there could be few left to act as allies to Ko-gu-ryu. but when we remember that the Mal-gal group of tribes was by far the [page 236] most powerful and warlike of all the northern hordes we will see that Ko-gu-ryu was not without allies. In addition to this, Ko-gu-ryu had two important factors in her favor; in summer the rains made the greater part of Liao-tung impassable either for advance or retreat, and in winter the severity of the weather rendered military operations next, to impossible. Only two courses were therefore open to and invading army: either it must make a quick dash into Ko-gu-ryu in the spring or autumn and retire before the summer rains or winter storms, or else it must be prepared to go into camp and spend the inclement season in an enemy’s country, cut off from its base of supplies. It was in the spring that this invasion took place and the Emperor was determined to carry it through to a finish in spite of summer rains or winter storms.

No sooner had the Chinese army reached the Liao River than the engineers set to work bridging the stream. So energetically was the work done that in two days a double span was thrown across. There had been a miscalculation however, for it fell six feet short of reaching the eastern bank, and the Ko-gu-ryu soldiers were there to give them a warm welcome.

The Chinese troops leaped from the unfinished end of the bridge and tried to climb up the steep bank, but were again and again driven back. The eastern bank was not gained until Gen Mak Chul-jang leaped to the shore and mowed a path for his followers with his sword. At this point the Ko-gu-ryu generals Chon Sa-ung and Mang Keum-ch’a were killed.

When the whole army had effected a crossing the Emperor sent 1200 troops to occupy the fortified town of Liao-tung but the Ko-gu-ryu general, Eul-ji Mun-duk, hastened thither and drove back this detachment of Chinese in confusion. The Emperor learned of the retreat and proceeded toward the scene of action. When he came up with the flying detachments of his defeated force he severely reprimanded the generals in charge and chided them for being lazy and afraid of death. But it was now late in June and the rainy season was at hand, so the Emperor with his whole army went into camp at Yuk-hap Fortress a little to the west of the town of Liao-tung, to await the end of the wet season.

He was unwilling however to let all this time pass without any active work; so he sent a fleet of boats by sea to sail [page 237] up the Ta-dong River and attack P’yung-yang. This was under the leadership of Gen. Na Ho-a. Landing his force on the bank of the Ta-dong, sixty li below the city, he enjoyed there a signal victory over a small force which had been sent to head him off. This made the general over-confident and in spite of the protests of his lieutenants he marched on P’yung-yang without an hour’s delay. With twenty thousand troops he went straight into the town, the gates being left wide open for him. This was a ruse on the part of the Ko-gu-ryu forces. A strong body of Ko-gu-ryu troops had hidden in a monastery in Na-gwak Fort on the heights within the city. The Chinese found themselves entrapped and Gen. Na was forced to beat a hasty retreat with what forces he had left, and at last got back to Ha-p’o (harbor) in Liao-tung. What the Emperor said to him is not known but it could not have been flattering.

The rainy season had now come and gone and the main plan of the invasion was ready to be worked out. It was necessary for the Emperor to spread out his force over the country in order to find forage, and so, in approaching the borders of Ko-gu-ryu, it was decided that they should come by several different routes. Gen. U Mun-sul led a detachment by way of Pu-yu, Gen. U Chung-mun by way of Nang-nang, Gen. Hyung Wun-hang by way of Yo-dong, Gen. Sul Se-ung by way of Ok-ju, Gen. Sin Se-ung by way of Hyun-do, Gen. Chang Keun by way of Yang-pyung, Gen. Cho Hyo- ja by way of Kal-suk, Gen. Ch’oe Hong-seung by way of Su-sung, Gen. Wi Mun-seung by way of Cheung-ji. It is said that they all rendezvoused on the western bank of the Yalu River, but if so there must have been great changes in the position of these wild tribes. It is more than probable that like the North American Indians they had moved further and further back from their original lands until they were far beyond the Yalu and Tumen rivers.

In the early autumn of 612 the whole army lay just east of the Yalu River. The king of Ko-gu-ryu sent Gen Eul-ji Mun-duk to the Chinese camp to tender the Emperor a pretense of surrender but in reality to spy out his position and force. When he appeared the Emperor was minded to kill mm on the spot [page 238] but thought better of it and, after listening to what he had to say, let him go. Not an hour after he had gotten beyond the Chinese pickets the Emperor changed his mind again, and sent in pursuit of him; but the general had too good a start and made too good use of his time to allow himself to be retaken.

And now appeared one of the disadvantages of being far from one’s base of supplies, and in an enemy’s country. Some weeks before this each Chinese soldier had been given three bags of rice and told that he must carry them on the march besides his other necessary accoutrements. Death was to be the penalty of throwing any of it away. The result was that most of them buried a large part of the rice in their tents and so escaped detection. Now they were short of provisions, while the generals thought their knapsacks were full of rice. The Ko-gu-ryu Gen. Eul-ji who had been in their camp, however, knew about it. He entered upon a geurilla warfare with the object of luring the enemy far into Ko-gu-ryu territory and then cutting them to pieces at leisure. To this end he made a feigned retreat several times each day, thus giving the enemy confidence and blinding them to his own strength. It was decided that a Chinese force of 305,000 men under Gen. U Chung-mun should proceed straight to P’yung-yang. It seemed wholly unnecessary that the whole army of 1,130,000 men should undergo that long march when only a pusillanimous enemy barred the way.

On they came toward the capital without meeting anything but a few skirmishers, until they reached the Sal-su, a stream only thirty li from P’yung-yang. Crossing this, the Chinese went into camp for a few days to recover from the fatigue of the rapid march before attacking the town.

At this point Gen. Eul-ji began operations. He wrote a very humble letter sueing for mercy. When the Chinese general received this, his course of reasoning must have been something as follows: “My forces are completely exhausted by this long march; the provisions are almost gone; I shall find the capital defended by desperate men; it may be that I shall be handled as roughly as were the forces of Gen. Nil. I will accept this submission and start back in time to reach the Yalu before my provisions are entirely gone. I will thus spare my army and gain the desired end as well.” [page 239]

Whether this was his course of reasoning or not, sure it is that he accepted the submission tendered him and put his army in motion toward the Yalu. But before his forces had gone a mile they found themselves attacked on all sides at once by an unseen foe which seemed to fill the forests on either side the road. When half the army had gotten across the Sal-su the other half was fiercely attacked and cut to pieces or driven like dumb cattle over the face of the country, where they were butchered at leisure. The retreat became a flight, the flight a rout, and still the Ko-gu-ryu soldiers hung on their flanks like wolves and dragged them down by scores and hundreds. It is said that in a single day and night the fugitive Chinese covered four hundred and fifty li, and when the remnant of that noble army of 305,000 men that had swept across the Yalu went back across that historic stream it was just 2700 strong. Over 300,000 men had perished along the hill-sides and among the forests of Ko-gu-ryu. The Emperor in anger imprisoned the over-confident Gen. U Chung-mun.

Meanwhile what of Pak-je? She had promised that she would rise and strike Ko-gu-ryu simultaneously with the Emperor, but when the moment, for action came, like the paltroon that she was, she waited to see which side would be most likely to win in the end. When the Chinese fled back to the border in panic Pak-je quietly stacked her arms and said nothing about attacking her neighbor.

Winter was now at hand, or would be before another plan could be perfected and carried out. The army was without provisions. There was nothing left but to retreat. The Chinese army, still a mighty host, moved slowly back across the Liao River and Ko-gu-ryu was left to her own pleasant musings. All that China gained was that portion of Ko-gu-ryu lying west of-the Liao River, which the Emperor erected into three prefectures.

If Ko-gu-ryu flattered herself that her troubles were all over she was woefully mistaken. With the opening of spring the Emperor’s determination to humble her was as strong as ever. All the courtiers urged him to give over the attempt. They had seen enough of Ko-gu-ryu. The Emperor, however, was firm in his determination, and in the fourth moon another army was launched against the hardy little kingdom [page 240] to the east. It crossed the Liao without opposition but when it arrived at Tong-whang Fortress, near the present Eui-jin, it attempted in vain to take it. The Emperor decided therefore to make a thorough conquest of all the Liao-tung territory and delimit the possessions of Ko-gu-ryu as far as the Yalu River. To this end siege was laid to the Fortress of Liao-tung. After twenty days the town was still intact and the Chinese seemingly as far from victory as ever. Ladders were tried but without effect. A bank of earth was thrown up as high as the wall of the town, but this too railed. Platforms of timber were erected and rolled up to the wall on trucks of eight wheels each. This seemed to promise success but just as the attempt was to be made fortune favored Ko-gu-ryu, for news came to the Chinese that an insurrection had arisen in China, headed by Yang Hyun-gam. The tents were hastily struck and the army by forced marches moved rapidly back towards China. At first the Ko-gu-ryu forces thought this was a mere feint but when the truth was known they rushed in pursuit and succeeded in putting several thousands of the Chinese braves hors de combat.

The following year the Emperor wanted to return to the charge but an envoy came from Ko-gu-ryu offering the king’s humble submission. To this the Emperor replied “Then let him come in person and present it.” This he would not do.

Four years later the king of Ko-gu-ryu died and his brother Kon-mu assumed control. It was in this same year 618 that the great T’ang dynasty was founded on the ruins of the Sui and the fear of vengeance was lifted from Ko-gu-ryu. She immediately sent an envoy to the T’ang court offering her allegiance. Pak-je and Sil-la were only a year behind her in paying their respects to the new Emperor. As a test of Ko-gu-ryu sincerity, Emperor Kao-tsu demanded that she send back the captives taken during the late war. As the price of peace Ko-gu-ryu complied and sent back 10,000 men. The next year the T’ang Emperor conferred the title of royalty upon all the three kings of the peninsula which, instead of settling the deadly feud between them, simply opened a new and final scene of the fratricidal struggle. To Ko-gu-ryu the Emperor sent books on the Shinto faith, of the introduction of which into Korea we here have the first intimation.