JAPANESE HEGEMONY Translated by Jeffrey M. Russell

*Assassination of Hong Ciong U - The Tong-Hak uprising - China's intervention - Japanese claims – Outbreak of Sino-Japanese war - Occupation of Seoul - Start of reforms - Minister Otori and the Legislative Assembly - Count Inouye - Viscount Miura - Assassination of the Queen – Judgment of Hiroshima.*

Everyone knows the events that took place, nine years ago, during the Sino-Japanese war; even the details of the conflict are well known, thanks to the excellent studies which have been published, including in Italy, on the subject. What is not generally known or imperfectly known is the sequence of events that led to the war, and even less is known about the internal struggles that troubled Korea when it found itself for some time at the complete mercy of the Japanese.

Proud of the new culture which they could parade before the neighbouring peoples of Asia, and of the undisputed military successes they had achieved during the campaign, the Japanese also believed the time had come to assert themselves in the eyes of the world not only as a civilized nation, but as a civilizing one. Korea lent itself to the experiment and Japan did not want to miss the opportunity. While the military exploits of Japanese generals and admirals in China had attracted everyone’s attention in the West, the work of its diplomats and statesmen in Korea, which Japan intended to be a work of peace, attracted no one’s attention; at most the occasional laconic telegram, relegated between unimportant news items, announced the assassination of the Queen of Korea or the King's escape to a foreign Legation – dismissed as just the usual intrigues of those Eastern Courts; no comment; the audience smiled and lost interest.

Yet, if it is true that civil institutions, much more than military ones, are a reliable guide to the nature of a people, the experiment of this new young Japan was in itself entirely worthy of greater attention. If nothing else, there would be more material available today to help us make a calm assessment of the conflicting interests. There are many of these, but in daily discussion, they are usually considered quite separately from the interests of Korea – the interests of a nation of over 12 million human beings which has suffered right up to the present day from a corrupt and despotic regime, and still more from the arrogance of its neighbours, and whose future is now looking more than ever troubled and uncertain.

The year 1894 arrived and the political situation in the Far East in the early months of the year was such as to fear that great complications in the international field would soon arise. Korea's internal situation was very bad, intrigues followed one another and a crisis was deemed inevitable. Kim Ok Kyung, the leader of the revolt which broke out in Seoul in 1884 under the auspices of Japan, condemned for political crimes, was suddenly assassinated on 27 March in a Japanese hotel in Shang-hai by Hong Ciong U, and his corpse transported to Korea on a Chinese warship. Once there, in accordance with old-established custom and despite all the protests of the diplomatic corps, the corpse was quartered and the different parts of the mutilated body sent through the eight provinces as a terrible warning to all traitors. The assassin, Hong Ciong U, was showered with honours by the Korean government. The whole business inevitably displeased Japan, which had supported that very same Kim Ok Kyung and protected him for about ten years.

Meanwhile, another revolt had broken out in the south of the peninsula. The Tong-Hak sect had gathered around it all the discontented elements in the southern provinces and led them to revolt. In May the Tong-Haks made an appeal to the nation; fighting, looting, assassinations of unpopular officials followed, and the movement threatened to spread. The situation was very serious. The Queen's party, the powerful Min, urged the King to seek help from China, but the King resisted, while Cieng-ciong, the capital of the province of Ciul-la Do, fell into the hands of the insurgents. It was feared that Seoul itself would end up falling into their power, and at that point the King, yielding to pressure from the Min, agreed to turn to China.

On 7 June China, having decided to comply with the request of the Korean monarch and send a body of troops to the peninsula, in accordance with the Li-Ito convention (Tientsin 1885), notified Japan of its intention. On the same day the Japanese minister in Beijing warned the Chinese government that a similar measure would be taken by Japan; and in fact the following day, two thousand Chinese soldiers under the command of General Yi landed in A-san in Korea, followed very soon after by six hundred soldiers of the Japanese navy who landed on 10 June at Cemulpo and proceeded immediately to Seoul. There, however, they were soon replaced by 800 infantry soldiers who arrived on the 13th together with the Japanese minister Mr. Otori. As soon as the Japanese soldiers appeared in Cemulpo, the King of Korea realized the great mistake he had made when invoking the help of China, and immediately turned to the representatives of the powers asking for their good offices, by virtue of an explicit clause contained in the treaties, to obtain the prompt withdrawal from Korea of ​​both the Chinese and Japanese troops. The representatives of the various powers quickly agreed to do so, and sent a communication to the Chinese and Japanese Legations respectively, proposing the simultaneous withdrawal of the troops of the two nations. The Chinese representative replied that his government agreed to the proposed evacuation, but the Japanese minister declared that he must first consult his government. The result of this consultation was a request addressed by Mr. Otori to the Korean government on 20 June, to allow two days for the immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops, failing which decisive measures would be taken. The King found himself in a very embarrassing position: he had requested the despatch of the Chinese troops and now he did not know how he could justifiably send them back while keeping the Japanese. Meanwhile, on 25 June another 5000 Japanese troops arrived in Seoul, and the following day Mr. Otori presented the King with a memorandum, which demanded the carrying out of important and radical internal reforms. On 18 July, 15,000 Japanese soldiers and 3000 *coolies* arrived in Cemulpo and on the 25th of the same month the decisive retaliatory measures which had been announced were carried out.

At 5 o'clock in the morning the Japanese troops marched towards the Royal Palace. The palace was surrounded, and its walls were breached in two places, at the eastern gate and to the rear of the palace in the so-called Quagga, the "Field of exams." While the Japanese coming from this second breach were heading towards the north gate they came face to face with the braves of Pyeng-yang and for a few minutes firing was fierce on both sides. Then the King himself, realizing that further resistance would be futile, ordered a cease-fire, and the Royal Palace fell into the hands of the Japanese. In a few hours they were masters of the city. The Min party, hostile to the Japanese, was defeated and the Tai Uen Kun, restored to his former power, was placed by the Japanese alongside the King.

The first naval engagement between China and Japan took place on the island of Phung Do on 25 July, followed shortly after by fighting at A-san, on 29 July. The Japanese won both battles. At the same time the King of Korea, forced by Japan, publicly renounced his subservience to China, and on 1 August, the day when war between China and Japan was officially declared, he announced his intention to inaugurate a new government, promising extensive reforms.

It would be beyond the scope of these pages to retrace the events of the Sino-Japanese war in any great detail. I will therefore limit myself to recalling that the great battle of Pyeng-yang took place on 15 September and that once this important fortress fell into the hands of the Japanese and the Chinese subsequently fled to safety north of Yalù, the war on the Korean peninsula came to an end.

With Korea's independence declared, and the ambitions of the Min and their supporters curbed, the promised reforms of the administration began, starting with the suppression of the emoluments paid to over 17,000 people, including palace ladies, eunuchs, dancers, storytellers, fortune tellers, junior government officials, etc., which weighed heavily on the finances of the nation. The Korean liberal party, known as the Independence Party, welcomed the intervention of the Japanese government with open arms, counting on its support to successfully carry out the whole scheme of reforms they had designed. The aims of this party coincided exactly with those of the rulers of the nearby empire, but both lacked suitable means and above all men.

At the request of the Japanese minister Mr. Otori, various royal edicts were subsequently promulgated. These were intended to bring about radical change not only in the administration of the state, but also in the customs and habits of the people. A Legislative Assembly was appointed by the King, again at the request of the Japanese minister, to prepare and decide on the reforms to be introduced. The Assembly was assisted by some 50 or 60 Japanese civil servants, attached to all government departments as “advisers”. It has to be said that this 17-member legislative body took its mission seriously, since from 30 July to 29 October 1894 no less than 208 decrees were issued [for the complete list of all the Assembly’s deliberations and more extensive details of the reforms carried out, see : W. H. Wilkinson, *The Corean Government: Constitutional Changes, July 1894 to October 1895,* *with an Appendix on Subsequent Enactments to 30th June 1896*, a fine publication of the Statistical Office of the Inspectorate General of Chinese Maritime Customs]. By means of these decrees, attempts were made to model the organization of the Korean state on that of neighbouring Japan, although the legislative function, represented in Japan by the national Parliament, was entrusted to the Assembly appointed by the King "for the discussion of all matters of great and small importance, concerning the internal affairs of the Kingdom". This is not to say that the ideas expressed in the provisions contained in all these decrees were not excellent; on the contrary, the original flaw of the whole system was precisely that, for the people to whom they were directed, these laws suffered from an excess of quantity and of quality: there were too many of them and they were too good, in the way we Westerners understand what is meant by the term “good” when applied to a law. The Japanese took no account of the fact that it had taken them no less than forty years of tenacious work to adopt the new culture forced upon them by the Shimonoseki cannonades and which today they seem to have assimilated; nor did they take any account of the advantage they enjoyed in being able to build on the labours of an earlier civilization which was far more complex and complete than the Koreans’ present one. The changes they had made in forty years, they hoped to impose on the Koreans in the space of a few months; it was natural that the attempt failed.

In mid-September Mr. Otori was recalled and was replaced in Seoul as extraordinary envoy and plenipotentiary minister of HM the Emperor of Japan, by Count Inouye, a consummate diplomat who left excellent memories of his time in Korea, although more perhaps for the stark difference between his work and that of his successor, which we will see later, than for his own merits. In fact, it is strange that Count Inouye, whose sound judgement is still being talked about, did not understand from the beginning the absurdity of the policy followed until then with this system of reforms and did not use his authority and great influence to curb the innovating zeal of the Japanese advisers to the Korean government and the small number of officials in whose hands power was then concentrated. Instead, he not only continued to follow the same course as his predecessor, but went further and sanctioned excesses that could only compromise the whole enterprise and, more seriously for Japan, alienate the sympathies of all Koreans.

It seems, moreover, that he did not look very favorably on the aforementioned Legislative Assembly. Count Inouye arrived in Seoul on October 26 and the Assembly met for the last time on the 29th of the same month. Indeed, two days later, Kim Hak U, deputy minister of justice and one of the most hardworking members of the assembly itself, was mysteriously murdered, allegedly by the reactionary party. Another of the early acts of Count Inouye, and he is to be praised for this, was the removal of the Tai Uen Kun from the palace. He then prepared and presented to the King a memorandum setting out, in twenty different clauses, the most urgent reforms to be carried out. Briefly summarizing them, they included: concentration of political power in the person of the King, and the consequent exclusion from state affairs of the Queen, the Tai Uen Kun, etc.; an obligation on the King to attend to state affairs and firstly to observe the laws of the nation; the exclusion of the Royal Household from state affairs; organization of the Royal Household; exact definition of the different duties and powers of the Cabinet and the various departments; regulation of taxes by the Ministry of Finance in accordance with appropriate laws; preparation and publication of financial statements; reorganization of the army; reduction of the ruinous expense and useless pomp of the royal family; codification of criminal laws; unification of police forces; review of the disciplinary rules for officials; limitation of the powers of local authorities and their consequent transfer to central government offices; compilation of the laws governing the status of employees; centralization of the public works department in the Ministry of agriculture; re-establishment of the Council of State; employment of technicians as advisers to the various ministries; and the establishment of overseas study programmes for young Koreans.

Excellent and sensible reforms, all of them, as can be readily seen; but, as I said before, the means and the men to implement them were lacking. Instead of simply insisting on the main thrust of the scheme, they immediately went into the details, revealing once again the inherent inability to master far-reaching concepts which, together with infinite attention to detail, is characteristic of the Japanese race. It became ridiculous: an edict was published on 23 April, requiring all Koreans to stop wearing their national costume, which was white, and instead adopt black clothes "more worthy of a civilized people"; a police order prohibited the use on the streets of the very long Korean pipes, prescribing a shorter length as being "more worthy of a civilized people". In short, these laws were intended to abolish very ancient popular customs, which might well seem ridiculous to a foreigner, but which nevertheless are as firmly rooted in the everyday life of the people as their national language – customs which can only be changed with the passage of time, and certainly not by the mere decree of a foreign legislator. Naturally, discontent with all these innovations began in the provinces, and this discontent was fuelled by the machinations of the reactionary party and even more by the provocative behaviour of Japanese subjects towards the Koreans.

Count Inouye himself complained of this behaviour, and in a report to his government he expressed himself as follows: “The Japanese are not only rude to Koreans, but often insult them. In their dealings with Korean customers, they are rude, and as soon as any dispute arises with them, they do not hesitate to resort to violence and sometimes even go so far as to throw Koreans into the rivers or use offensive weapons against them. Those who are not merchants are even more rude and violent: they say they have given independence to Korea, they have suppressed the Tong-Haks, and those Koreans who dare to disobey them or oppose their will are accused of ingratitude. So how can we expect the Koreans not to be afraid of the Japanese? Fright turns to flight and dislike to hatred." And the hatred grew to such an extent that in the provinces and in the capital itself several Japanese were murdered by Koreans.

Things were at this point when, for reasons unknown, or perhaps because Count Inouye was beginning to understand the absurdity of the system followed until then and had suggested a change of direction, he was suddenly replaced and on the 1st of September Viscount Miura Goro, General of the reserves, arrived in Seoul to take over from him. This was a mortal blow to Japanese influence in Korea. The account of what he undertook during the short period in which he held office from 10 September to 20 October, deserves more widespread discussion. I have in front of me the translation of the official report which the deputy minister of justice Ko Teung Ciai submitted to the Korean Government at the end of the rigorous investigation ordered by the King, at the insistence of the foreign representatives to the Seoul Court, into the events that occurred in the capital during that period. I wish I had the space to reproduce this document – which has been published - in its entirety: the reader would then see very clearly to what extent the work of the Japanese was a civilizing work. However, since I do not have the necessary space, I shall try to summarize the facts which emerged from this investigation, carried out by members of the commission of enquiry with the help, as witnesses, of Europeans and Americans of indubitable integrity residing in Korea [it is enough to mention one of them, Mr. C. R Greathouse, an American citizen, and private adviser to the King of Korea, who by special request of His Majesty was present throughout the proceedings and was required to declare publicly that they were conducted correctly and impartially].

Viscount Miura officially took up office as Head of the Japanese Legation on 3 September, with Mr. Sigimura Fukashi as First Secretary. The Viscount was assisted in his work by about fifty Japanese people in the service and on the payroll of the Korean government, most notably Okamoto Ryunosuke, adviser to the ministries of war and the Royal Household.

To understand more clearly what follows, it should be borne in mind that Seoul is connected with Japan, and was then, by a Japanese telegraph line, so that Viscount Miura cannot logically be held solely responsible for what happened. As Sir Rutherford Alcock aptly said, the telegraph has killed diplomacy nowadays.

Little more than a month had passed since Viscount Miura had taken over the direction of affairs, when one fine morning, on October the 8th, the people of Seoul woke up to find that the Royal Palace had been attacked, several ministers killed, a new cabinet formed, and the Tai Uen Kun restored to power. The strangest rumors then circulated about the fate of the Queen - some said she had fled, others that she had been murdered by the Japanese - but nothing was known for certain. A great mystery surrounded the tragic events.

Mr. Waeber, the Russian chargé d’affaires, and Dr. Allen, the acting American chargé d’affaires, went to the palace immediately, where they found that Viscount Miura had already preceded them. They were received by Yi Chi Miun, the new minister of the Royal Household, appointed the same morning, who told them that His Majesty was too agitated to receive them. However, Mr. Waeber insisted and drew the minister's attention to the fact that the Japanese minister's sedan was standing in front of the audience pavilion. The hearing was finally granted and His Majesty told them that he did not know for certain what had happened to the Queen, and that he understood that an attempt had been made to capture and harm his august consort, but he still held out hope that she had managed to escape to safety. At the same time he asked the two representatives, who were his personal friends, to use their good offices to prevent further violence and outrages.

The people and the foreign representatives were even more astonished when two days later a royal proclamation was published, signed by an entirely new Cabinet, declaring that the Queen, who was said to have fled, had been degraded to the level of a woman of the lowest social class .

Meanwhile, it was rumoured more and more persistently that the attack on the palace, carried out in the early hours of the morning of 8 October, had been the work of the Japanese and that the Queen had perished by their hands. It was said that His Majesty that same morning, about three or four o'clock, having heard of an unusual movement of Japanese troops, had sent a message to Viscount Miura, asking for explanations on the subject. The message, despite the excessively early hour, had found the Viscount, his secretary and an interpreter up and ready to go out, with three sedans waiting for them at the door of the Legation.

In a dispatch to the Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs, on 9 October, Miura, in order to explain to the foreign representatives his early morning visit to the palace and the presence of Japanese soldiers there, stated that as soon as he received the message from His Majesty he set off for the palace, but when he arrived he found that the Japanese garrison in Seoul had already gone there to restore order. When he then inquired what had caused the revolt, he learned that it was due to a conflict between Korean *kunrentai* troops who wished to enter the palace to express some of their complaints, and the palace police who wanted to prevent them doing so.

An attempt was thus made to corroborate the version maintained by the Japanese and the new Korean Cabinet, that the attack on the palace was the exclusive work of the Koreans and that the Japanese had intervened only to restore order. To make this version more credible, an exchange of notes followed between Miura and the Korean Foreign Minister, in which the former alluded to a report, which he said had reached his ears, that a certain number of Japanese citizens had been found mixed in amongst the Korean soldiers and had taken part in the disturbance; Viscount Miura formally requested a prompt and official denial, which the Foreign Minister was quick to send, explaining that what had given rise to the report was the fact that the Korean soldiers, to facilitate their entry into the palace, had disguised themselves as Japanese!

In spite of these official documents, intended no doubt to serve as proof of Viscount Miura’s complete innocence as regards the events of October 8, the Japanese government soon realized that the position was untenable, and that it was madness to continue to deny, for the benefit of the representatives of other nations, the involvement of its own representatives in those events. And so to save face, it resorted to the pretence of immediately recalling Miura, the first secretary of the Legation Sigimura, the adviser Okamoto Ryunosuke and forty-five other Japanese involved in the affair, and upon their arrival in Japan had them arrested and sent to Hiroshima to stand trial in the local court.

It was to be expected that they would be acquitted of all charges, but certainly no one imagined that the Court would come out with such a grotesque document as the one I have before me. I reproduce here the English translation that appeared in the *Korean Repository*. (*The following is the English original, not translated from the Italian*.)

JUDGMENT OF THE COURT OF HIROSHIMA IN THE TRIAL OF VISCOUNT MIURA AND COMPANIONS, ACCUSED OF ASSASSINATING H. M. THE QUEEN OF KOREA

Okamoto Ryunosuke, Adviser to the Korean Departments of War and the Household, etc.

Miura Goro, Vicount, Sho Sammi, First class order, Lieutenant General, etc.

Sugimura Fukashi, Sho Rokui, First Secretary of Legation, and forty-five others.

Having, in compliance with the request of the Public Procurator conducted preliminary examinations in the case of murder and sedition brought against the above-mentioned Okamoto Ryunosuke and forty-seven others and that of wilful homicide brought against Hirayama Iwawo, we find as follows:—

The accused, Miura Goro, assumed his official duties as His Imperial Majesty’s Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Seoul on Sept. 1st, 1895. According to his observations, things in Korea were tending in the wrong direction. The court was daily growing more and more arbitrary, and attempting wanton interferance with the conduct of state affairs. Disorder and confusion were in this way introduced into the system of administration that had just been reorganized under the guidance and advice of the Imperial government. The court went so far in turning its face upon Japan that a project was mooted for disbanding the *Kunrentai* troops, drilled by Japanese officers, and for punishing their officers. Moreover a report came to the knowledge of the said Miura that the court had under contemplation a scheme for usurping all political power by degrading some and killing others of the Cabinet Ministers suspected of devotion to the cause of progress and independence.

Under these circumstances he was greatly perturbed inasmuch as he thought that the attitude assumed by the court not only showed remarkable ingratitude toward this country which had spent labor and money for Korea, but was also calculated to thwart the work of internal reform and jeopardize the independence of the kingdom. The policy pursued by the court was consequently considered to be injurious to 290Korea, as well as prejudicial in no small degree to the interests of this country. The accused felt it to be of urgent importance to apply an effective remedy to this state of affairs, so as on the one hand to secure the independence of the Korean kingdom and on the other to maintain the prestige of this empire in that country. While thoughts like these agitated his mind, he was secretly approached by the Tă-wŭn-gun with a request for assistance, the Prince being indignant at the untoward turn that events were taking and having determined to undertake the reform of the court and thus discharge his duty of advising the king. The accused then held at the legation a conference with Sugimura Fukashi and Okamoto Ryunosuke on the 3rd of October. The decision arrived at was that assistance should be rendered to the Tă-wŭn-gun’s entrance into the palace by making use of the Japanese drilled Korean soldiers who being hated by the court felt themselves in danger, and of the young men who deeply lamented the course of events, and also by causing the Japanese troops stationed in Seoul to offer their support to the enterprise. It was further resolved that this opportunity should be availed of for taking the life of the queen, who exercised overwhelming influence in the court. They at the same time thought it necessary to provide against the possible danger of the Tă-wŭn-gun’s interfering with the conduct of State affairs in future—an interferance that might prove of a more evil character than that which it was now sought to overturn. To this end, a document containing pledges required of the Ta-wun-gun on four points was drawn by Sigimura Fukashi. The document was carried to the country residence of the Ta-wun-gun on the 15th of the month by Okamoto Ryunosuke, the latter being on intimate terms with His Highness. After informing the Ta-wun-gun that the turn of events demanded His Highness’ intervention once more, Okomoto presented the document to the Prince saying that it embodied what Minister Miura expected from him. The Ta-wun-gun, together with his son and grandson gladly consented to the conditions proposed and also wrote a letter guaranteeing his good faith. Miura Goro and others decided to carry out the concerted plan by the middle of the month. Fearing lest Okamoto’s visit to the Ta-wun-gun’s residence 291should excite suspicion and lead to the exposure of their plan, it was given out that he had proceeded thither simply for the purpose of taking leave of the Prince before departing for home, and to impart an appearance of probability to this report, it was decided that Okamoto should leave Seoul for Chemulpo and he took his departure from the capital on the sixth. On the following day An Kyung-su, the Minister of War, visited the Japanese Legation by order of the court. Referring to the projected disbanding of the Japanese drilled Korean soldiers, he asked the Japanese Minister’s views on the subject. It was now evident that the moment had arrived, and that no more delay should be made. Miura Goro and Sugimura Fukashi consequently determined to carry out the plot on the night of that very day. On the one hand, a telegram was sent to Okamoto requesting him to come back to Seoul at once, and on the other, they delivered to Horiguchi Kumaichi a paper containing a detailed program concerning the entry of the Ta-wun-gun into the palace and caused him to meet Okamoto at Yong-san so that they might proceed to enter the palace. Miura Goro further issued instructions to Umayabara Muhon, commander of the Japanese battalion in Seoul, ordering him to facilitate the Ta-wun-gun’s entry into the palace by directing the disposition of the Japanese drilled Korean troops and by calling out the Imperial force for their support. Miura also summoned the accused Adachi Kenzo and Kunitomo Shigeakira, and requested them to collect their friends, meeting Okamoto at Yong-san, and act as the Ta-wun-gun’s body-guard on the occasion of His Highness’ entrance into the palace. Miura told them that on the success of the enterprise depended the eradication of the evils that had done so much mischief to the kingdom for the past twenty years, and instigated them to dispatch the Queen when they entered the palace. Miura ordered the accused Ogiyara Hidejiro to proceed to Yong-san, at the head of the police force under him, and after consultation with Okamoto to take such steps as might be necessary to expedite the Ta-wun-gun’s entry into the palace.

The accused, Sugimura Fukashi, summoned Suzuki Shigemoto and Asayama Kenzo to the Legation and acquainted them with the projected enterprise, directed the former to 292send the accused, Suzuki Junken, to Yong-san to act as interpreter and the latter to carry the news to a Korean named Yi Chu-whe, who was known to be a warm advocate of the Ta-wun-gun’s return to the palace. Sugimura further drew up a manifesto, explaining the reasons of the Ta-wun-gun’s entrance into the palace and charged Ogiwara Hidejiro to deliver to Horiguchi Kumaichi.

The accused Horiguchi Kumaichi at once departed for Yong-san on horse-back. Ogiwara Hidejiro issued orders to the policemen that were off duty to put on civilian dress, provide themselves with swords and proceed to Yong-san. Ogiwara also himself went to the same place.

Thither also, repaired by his order the accused Watanabe Takajiro, Oda Yoshimitsu, Nariai Kishiro, Kiwaki Sukunori and Sakai Masataro.

The accused Yokowo Yutaro joined the party at Yong-san. Asayama Kenzo saw Yi Chu-whe and informed him of the projected enterprise against the palace that night. Having ascertained that Yi had then collected a few other Koreans and proceeded toward the Ta-wun-gun’s place Asama at once left for Yong-san. Suzuki Shigemoto went to Yong-san in company with Suzuki Junken. The accused Adachi Kenzo and Kunitomo Shigeakira, at the instigation of Miura, decided to murder the Queen and took steps to collect accomplices. Twenty-four others (names here inserted) responded to the call, by Miura’s order, to act as body-guard to the Ta-wun-gun on the occasion of his entrance into the palace. Hirayama Iwahiko and more than ten others were directed by Adachi Kenzo and others to do away with the Queen and they decided to follow the advice. The others who were not admitted into the secret but who joined the party from mere curiosity also carried weapons. With the exception of Kunitomo Shigeakira Tsukinori and two others all the accused went to Yong-san in company with Adachi Kenzo.

The accused Okamoto Ryunosuke on receipt of a telegram saying that time was urgent at once left Chemulpo for Seoul. Being informed on his way, at about midnight, that Hoshiguchi Kennaichi was waiting for him at Mapo he proceeded thither and met the persons assembled there. There he received from Miura Goro the draft manifesto already 293alluded to, and other documents. After he had consulted with two or three others about the method of effecting an entrance into the palace the whole party started for the Ta-wun-gun’s place with Okamoto as their leader. At about three o’clock A. M. on the eighth of October they left the Prince’s place escorting him in his palanquin, with Yi Chu-whe and other Koreans. When on the point of departure, Okamoto assembled the whole party outside the gate of the Prince’s residence and declared that on entering the palace the “Fox” should be dealt with according as exigency might require, the obvious purport of this declaration to instigate his followers to murder Her Majesty the Queen. As the result of this declaration, Sakai Marataro and a few others, who had not yet been initiated into the secret, resolved to act in accordance with the suggestion. Then slowly proceeding toward Seoul, the party met the Japanese drilled Korean troops outside the West Gate where they waited some time for the arrival of the Japanese troops. With the Korean troops as vanguard the party then proceeded toward the palace at a more rapid rate. On the way they were joined by Kunitomo Shigeakira and four others. The accused Husamoto, Yasumaru and Oura Shigehiko also joined the party having been requested by Umagabara Muhon to accompany as interpreters the military officers charged with the supervision of the Korean troops. About dawn the whole party entered the palace through the Kwang-wha Gate and at once proceeded to enter the inner chambers.”

Notwithstanding these facts, there is no sufficient evidence to prove that any of the accused actually committed the crime originally meditated by them. Neither is there sufficient evidence to establish the charge that Hirayama Iwahiko killed Li Koshoku, the Korean Minister of the Household, in front of the Kon-Chong palace.

As to the accused, Shiba Shiro, Osaki Masakichi, Yoshida Hanji, Mayeda Shunzo, Hirayama Katsukuma, and Hiraishi Yoshitarom there is not sufficient evidence to show that they were in any way connected with the affair.

For these reasons the accused, each and all, are hereby discharged in accordance with the provisions of article 165 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. The accused, Miura Goro, Sugimura Fukashi, Okamoto Ryunosuke, Adachi Kenzo, Kunimoto Shigeakira, Terasaki Taikichi, Hirayama Iwabiko, Nakamura Takewo, Fuji Masahira, Iyuri Kakichi, Kiwaki Sukenori, and Sokoi Masutaro, are hereby released from confinement. The documents and other articles seized in connection with this case are restored to their respective owners.

Given at Hiroshima Local Court by Yoshida Yoshihide, Judge of Preliminary Enquiry; Tamura Yoshiharu, Clerk of the Court.