Introduction to Courant’s “Bibliographie Coréene”

Translated from the French by Mrs. W. Massy Royds.

FOREWORD

In May of 1890 a young Frenchman, M. Maurice Courant arrived in Korea as Secretary to the French Legation. It seems probable that his official duties were not onerous, and stimulated and encouraged by his chief, M. Collin de Plancy, he turned his energies to the study of Korean books. For the two years of his stay he devoted himself to this fascinating study. He continued it in Peking, in Paris, and later in Tokyo, and in 1894 he published his monumental work “Bibliographie Coreenne” in three large volumes. These three volumes comprise in all over 2,200 pages, in which the author lists and describes over 3,200 Korean books printed in Korea from the invention of printing, down to M. Courant’s own time. It is probably the largest, most detailed, and most thorough study of any phase of Korean life and culture yet made by an Occidental.

M. Courant realized that to attempt to precipitate the reader into such a work, without any preliminary knowledge of Korean books, would be impossible. He therefore has given us an “Introduction” of some 200 pages in which he describes the stores in which Korean books were sold, the loan libraries of his day, the paper, the binding, and the type.

He gives us the story of the invention and development of printing; discusses the language, and concludes with a lengthy and most interesting review of Korean literature. As already stated, this work was published in French in 1894 in three ponderous and expensive volumes. Parts of the “Introduction” were translated into English and published in the “Korean Repository” in 1897. It has, however, been largely unknown to English readers and the Council of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society deemed its translation and re-circulation through the Transactions of the Society well worth the time and expense involved. Mrs. Massy Royds made the excellent translation here offered, and the writer had the privilege of reading extracts from this work before an open meeting of the Society held in Seoul on December 7th, 1934.

A “Foreword” to an “Introduction” would seem a work of supererogation, but the Council felt that the lapse of time since the publication of the original work made it desirable to re-introduce this valuable work to the members of the Society. The present writer can only hope that the Foreword may encourage the reader to peruse the Introduction, and that the Introduction may really introduce an increasing number of readers to a study of Korean books and literature.

Horace H. Underwood

Introduction to the “Bibliographie Coréenne” by Maurice Courant

Chapter I.

There are many people who, even after a long residence in Korea, are still uncertain about the existence of Korean books. Even those whose duties bring them in constant contact with the natives, and who have studied their language, often hardly know that such a thing as a Korean Literature exists. What is the reason for such a singular state of things?

In Seoul itself, and also in the country towns, both in the winding, narrow, dirty streets and in the dusty squares, you will come across small displays of goods in the open air, sheltered from the sun by a rough roof. Near these displays a young boy will be squatting, dressed in clothes of unbleached hemp, with his long “pig-tail” hanging down his back. He sells hair-pins, horse-hair head-bands, pocket-mirrors, tobacco-pouches, tobacco and the usual pipes. Also all sorts of boxes, Japanese matches, writing brushes, pencils, ink, paper and books. The same odd mixture of wares may also be found in the booths of a more pretentious character which stand with their open frontage facing on to the road. The display of goods in these is placed on slightly inclined boards raised from 1½ to 2 feet above the ground and reaching to the edge of the street The shop-keeper, a full-grown man, wears his hair done up in a knot on the top of his head. A red pin will be stuck through the knot, and he will be wearing a heaa-band of horse-hair. He sits at the back of the shop close to the door which leads through to his humble dwelling. The books sold by these simple merchants are not much to look at Their size usually varies between the octavo and duodecimo’ and they are not thick. The cover is of coarse paper of an [page 1] unyielding type, the colour of a yellow apricot, and adorned with a shiny serrated design in light relief, which is produced by compression by means of an indented board. This cover, without a back, is made of two plain sheets of paper folded all around like the hem of a piece of cloth. As a protection—if the book is not quite a common one—a printed sheet is pasted over the cover inside. The volume is stitched together in five or six places with a red thread. The paper is grayish, very thin and soft, with holes in it filled with bits of straw, or little lumps of dust or earth. Naturally the printing does not show up on these defects and it shows but poorly on the rest The paper inside is folded in double leaves, as in the case of Chinese books, the fold forming the edge, the leaf being printed only on one side. The margins are very narrow. The text of each page is often encircled with a black line, with two finer lines in the middle of the leaf—leaving a space for the fold. On the top will be found the title of the book and at the foot the number of the page . Somewhere on the top quarter will be found a clover-leaf or trefoil-in white on black. This is the almost invariable mark of a Korean book. Nearly all the cheaper books are written in Korean character. The price is very low, rarely as much as ten “Mun.”

Such are the books which catch the eye of the foreigner from the moment of his arrival in Korea, and which he will see again constantly in all the country towns at any street corner. Their wretched appearance may explain the prejudice against them, and in the provinces one sees only such books.

In Seoul one comes across others, but as these are nearly all printed in Chinese characters, people come to the conclusion, too hastily, that they are Chinese books, and that the art of writing and printing books in Korea hardly deserves mention. It is not, however, necessary to make a very thorough examination in order to ascertain that out of every ten of these books which one takes for Chinese, eight or nine have been printed in Korea. Besides the informa-[page 3] tion which is furnished by the text on this point, there are also some external indications—the size of the books and the excellence of the paper, for instance—which forbid one to confuse them with books coming from China. Sometimes in the little shops of which I have spoken, one finds among the common books some of these bigger and better printed: volumes, but they are incomplete and soiled and the pages, are torn and worm-eaten.

As a rule the books in good condition are reserved for special trading, and are not mixed with the tobacco-pouches and head-bands.

The book-sellers’ shops in Seoul are all near the centre of the town, in the broad street which starts from the Pavilion of the Bell, and curves gradually right up to the South Gate, after having crossed the stone bridge, one of those on which the Koreans walk at midnight, on the 15th day of the 1st moon, so as to preserve themselves from rheumatism for the rest of the year. The book-shops are not far from this stone bridge, and are thus established near the two storied houses which are the offices of the big merchant corporations. All round them, too, are the bazaars and the squares with their dark, narrow, curio shops. There, too, is the main square where soldiers in black and red hats and blue clothing are jostling, disputing and quarrelling; where the pack-horse men are loading and unloading sacks of grain. Then there are seen commercial travellers; passers-by with horse-hair hats and flowing white coats ; bond women with their hair confined with head-bands ; women of the people, covering their heads and faces with a green mantle edged with red and lined with white. A little aside from the noise, but near enough to be seen by all who come and go, sits the book-seller enthroned at the end of his shop. His wares, which are displayed on sloping boards that are a little withdrawn from the street so that the clients can have some privacy while selecting their purchases. This shop-keeper will be a man of good appearance, dressed in a garment of silk, with the little head-circlet of horse-hair [page 4] reserved for the higher classes. He smokes his long pipe and converses with some callers who are seated near him, so as not to disturb important customers. He would blush to expose to view common, low-priced volumes written in Korean. If he has any they are relegated to a dark corner. The ones he shews are the books in the Chinese language—new examples of classic works or second-hand copies of a large variety; books differing in date and subject-matter; some printed, others in manuscript; some fairly ordinary editions, others royal editions of large size written in careful script and on flexible, strong paper of a slightly ivory tint, which recalls the special imperial paper of Japan. Otherwise the binding is the same as in common books, except that the yellow paper is of better quality, and the fly-leaf is not printed on. The red thread is the usual thing, though occasionally manuscripts will be found with whitish paper and sewn with yellow or green thread.

It is not only in these shops that one finds books; there are also a great number of Lending Libraries which stock especially popular works, such as novels and songs—the former in print, the latter in manuscript. Often the copies of books in these places will be in better condition and printed on better paper than those sold in the shops. The proprietor lets out these volumes for a trifling sum—10 or 20 “mun” per day per volume. Sometimes he exacts a deposit as guarantee either in money or in kind; for instance a string of cash, or occasionally a portable stove or a sauce-pan. Koreans tell me that this kind of commerce, formerly so common in Seoul, has now become rare. I have never heard that it exists in the country, even in the big towns, such as Songdo, Taiku and Pyengyang. This profession is not lucrative, but it is held in great esteem, as one which can be suitably adopted by members of the lesser nobility who have fallen on bad times. Korean borrowers are by no means punctual in returning hired books, therefore the stock of Lending Libraries diminishes rapidly and corresponds but very imperfectly with the long list which passes [page 5] for a catalogue. Every time that I have enquired for some book selected from one of these lists, I have been told that it was mislaid; but at least they have furnished me with a certain number of titles which have found a place in this Bibliography. I have had the good fortune subsequently to come across many of the books which thus had been known to me by name only.

During my stay of two years in Seoul, my curiosity haying been aroused by all these books, about which neither European writers nor foreigners resident in the place could give me any but the most meagre information, I commenced an examination of all those possessed by Monsieur Collin de Planey, Commissary of the French Government These books have since been given by him to the Library of the School of Oriental Languages. These initial researches gave me a taste for the subject and, encouraged by the friendly councils of my Chief, I pursued my investigations.

I ransacked most of the shops in Seoul and investigated the libraries. I purchased the volumes that seemed to me the most interesting and made precise notes about the rest I also enlisted the sympathy of the foreign residents, nearly all of whom shewed great eagerness in inviting me to inspect any works which had come into their possession. The Koreans lent themselves less readily to my quest There are, however, a few to whom I owe the opportunity of examining some very curious books. It was owing to such favourable circumstances that I became acquainted with many rare works, some of which are hardly to be found today. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who have given me such valuable help in my work, especially Archbishop Mutel, who kindly gave me much information and who has continued, since I left Korea, to search for the books which I was unable to find during my stay there.

During a leave spent in Europe I visited several important collections of Korean books: that in the Bibliothèque Nationale, which goes back to the expedition of Admiral [page 6] Roze in 1866; the collection made in 1888 by M. Varat and lodged today in the Musée Guimet, not to mention those in the School of Living Oriental Languages in Seoul, which I studied before they were sent to France. In London I made a detailed study of the important collection in the British Museum. I am particularly indebted to MM. Daprez and Feer, librarians of the Bibliothèque Nationale, and to Mr. M. R. K. Douglas, librarian of the British Museum, for all the facilities which they gave me for studying the books in their care. Mr. G. Von der Gabelentz was eager to send me the catalogue of his collection, and I assured him of my gratitude. Unfortunately, I have not been able to obtain a catalogue of the Korean works which are to be found in St Petersburg, as these books have not yet been catalogued. Finally in Tokyo,—in the book-sellers, shops, in the Buddhist Monastery of Zo-Jo, and in the Library of Ueno, —I found many interesting works which I had been unable to consult in Korea.

I have not confined my work to the volumes which have been given me to see; I have also included the nomenclatures of books mentioned in the works consulted during my researches; for instance, Collections of Statutes and Regulations and various historical and geographical works made me acquainted with a great number of titles; and the Catalogue of the Royal. Library of Seoul, a copy of which was procured for me by M. Collin de Planey, greatly enriched my list Besides this, other works have given me some interesting information about the principal Korean books, the number of editions they have been through, and the lives of the authors ;and have thus completed the information already found in the prefaces and advertisements which I had read. It thus became possible for me to add to the purely bibliographical information and dry nomenclature of titles, analyses of the principal works, the circumstances of their composition and of their publication, and the most important events in the lives of the authors; and thus to indicate the salient characteristics of the history of the Literature and[page 7]  Philosophy of Korea. I have striven thus to reconstruct the intellectual characteristics of this country, and I hope I have succeeded in some measure in indicating the place which it occupies in the history of civilization in the Far East.

It is in the TAI TONG OUN OK (大東韻玉) (16th century) and the THONG MOON KWAN TJI (通文館志) that I found the most information on the history of literature and the biographies of authors. Unfortunately the first of these works is already ancient, and the latter deals only with one class of writers, namely those who belong to the lesser nobility— sometimes called interpreters. As, further, the history of the later centuries is not printed, and the works dealing with it are only sold clandestinely, I have been reduced for the period which begins with the 17th century to the chances of oral information. The MOON HUN PI KO (文獻備考) was the result of extensive enquiries instituted by the king YUNG TJONG (英宗) about everything Korean, and it acquainted me with endless, intensely interesting facts which were useful to me, but among which only very few had to do with the history of literature and philosophy. Moreover, this work ignores everything pertaining to the Korean language and to Buddhism and Taoism. This neglect is easily explained by the disdain felt by men of letters for everything of a popular origin. For information on these points I have had to search elsewhere, and I have found very little.

For Chinese works which have taken root in Korea, and for even some Korean works, the Catalogue of the Imperial Library of Peking proved valuable for its copious notes. For information about Buddhism, I had recourse to a great extent to the Catalogue du Tripitaka by M. Bunio Nanjio— that work of patience and erudition which furnishes such circumstantial details about the Chinese translation of Buddhist books. This work afforded me the opportunity of identifying many Sanscrit titles which I had before only known in Chinese, though it included some I could neither identify nor translate. For Taoism and popular beliefs, the TSI CHOE TSHIUEN of Prof. Hoang furnished me [page 8] with much accurate information drawn from the best Chinese sources.

I have often experienced great difficulty in ascertaining the names of authors and of the places where they lived or where their works were published, and of the dates when the books were written. These difficulties, which are of a unique nature, not understood by the public in Europe, need some explanation. Every Korean has a family name which is followed by a second name that takes the place of a Christian name with us; but it often happens that for some ceremonial reason, or for a mere whim, the man changes his second name. Moreover, anybody with any literary pretensions has also a cognomen which can be changed and also a varying number of pen names and pseudonyms, limited only by the good pleasure of the possessor. And, though sometimes a single name will suffice, it is not uncommon to find people with two or three, and some authors have many more, occasionally seven or eight Often the pseudonyms will be names common in the district, which adds to the confusion. Grand officials, who have rendered distinguished services, receive from the King titles while they are living, and posthumous names after their death. These family names, second names, cognomens, titles, and posthumous names are used concurrently to designate the man to whom they belong. Sometimes, too, an official is spoken of by the name of the office he fills if he is alive, or, if not, that which has been accorded him after his death. And, though it is rare to find two Koreans with the same family name and second name, it is less rare to find them with the same pseudonyms, and it is quite common to find them with the same titles. The same confusion reigns among Chinese names, and frequently the different designations of a Korean might also apply to a Chinese, and vice versa. As no methodical and complete work exists to unravel this chaos, it is only by reading and making notes that one is able to bring together, more or less, the names that belong to the same author[page 9] and to reconstruct his personality- Just as a person can be known by at least five or six names, so, too, in Korea as in China, a neighborhood has several names. A town, besides its official name which changes with nearly every dynasty, and often even during one, has frequently an ordinary name as well as a number of literary names, which it is considered elegant to use instead of an ordinary one. The result is that even a small market-town may have five or six different designations, and the number of names used for a locality will increase with its importance. When one adds that the same name which today is applied to a certain village in the north, may, under another dynasty, be applied to a village in the extreme south, and also that many Korean villages have the same names as Chinese villages, one will get some idea of the confusion which reigns in this matter. In the matter of Chinese geographical names, my researches have been made easy by the excellent work of Mr. Play fair and by the LI CHI TCHONG HO KANG; but for Korea the problem remains obscure, since no methodical work exists on this subject I have had to be content with the information contained in HAN RYEI HOUI TCHAN (韓禮彙纂) and the KO SA TCHOAL YO, (攷事摄要) and some that were given me in manuscript form. The lengthy study of ancient geography which forms part of the MOON-HUN PI KO, (文獻備考) proved only moderately useful, as it is diffuse and occasionally contradictory. To co-ordinate the information which it contains, and whicn is drawn from ancient sources, both Chinese and Korean, a special volume would be necessary. I have no doubt that such a work would be well worth while, and would serve to modify or confirm a number of facts at present accepted about the old geography and ethnography of Korea and Manchuria, but the present work is no place for this.

It has been shewn that the geographical names are as obscure as the names of people; and the difficulty is equally great with the chronology, where one finds the same lack of precision and the same elegance of information given at the [page 10] expense of accuracy. The Koreans have borrowed from the Chinese the use of cyclical characters, arranged in two series—one of ten (the celestial stems) and the other of twelve (the terrestial branches), and used to designate movements in space (the cardinal and intermediate points), such as the hours of the day and the months of the year. From these characters, sixty different combinations are formed, and they follow each other in a definite order, which corresponds to successive days, months, or years, starting from a given beginning If you know, for example, the cyclical character of a certain year you will know by the same token its order in the 60 year cycle of years. It only remains to discover which particular cycle is in question. Often the author will content himself with a very vague indication of this, and if the text thus dated does not contain some element, such as the name of his office, or an allusion to some historical event, or something of that sort which dates the precise epoch, we are reduced to hypothesis. Besides all this, it often happens that in his quest for a lofty style, the Korean will substitute for the ordinary cyclical characters the corresponding terms in use in the ancient classical Chinese. These terms are each composed of 2 or 3 characters, and each year is consequently designated by 4 or 5 characters instead of 2; and I am confident that not a single Korean is able to identify from memory the terms of one series with the terms of the other. But the ancient expressions are more elegant, and that is sufficient reason for using them. In about half the cases, the author will add to the cyclical characters of the year the name of the reigning king or the number of the order of the year since his accession. As it rarely happens that two kings begin their reign with the same cyclical characters, such a notation should be satisfactory, if it were complete and methodical. But, though it is generally agreed that they called the first year of the reign not the year of the accession, but that which began on the 1st day of the 1st moon following it, certain considerations would cause this convention to be abandoned, when the deposed monarch, for in-[page 11] stance, was considered unworthy and had been dethroned by a legitimate revolution. It is difficult for us to know which were legitimate revolutions, and a divergence of a year in date may result from this ignorance of politics. The demands of elegance, moreover, did not permit the authors always to call a monarch by his temple name (Hyo ho), which would be quite clear, but they would sometimes substitute his Tomb name (Reung Ho). Then it also happens that, when they come to the second character of the tomb name, they will substitute for it the word HYO (temple), which is also the equivalent of the words tjo and tjong used as the 2nd characters in the Temple names. Thus we cannot tell whether the expression YUNG MYO (英廟) should be taken for YUNG TJO, (英祖) the name of a king of the 18th century, or for YENG REUNG, (英陵) the name of the tomb of the king SYEI TJONG, (世宗) who reigned three centuries earlier. HYEN MYO can stand either for the king HYEN TJONG or for the king MOON TJONG (文宗) whose tomb is called HYENG REUNG.

But as these two princes reigned as far apart as the 15th and 17th centuries, it is obvious from these two examples what confusion may arise.

It was the custom of Chinese sovereigns, from before the beginning of the Christian era, either at their accession or on the occasion of some important event after it, to choose some expression of 2, 3, or 4 characters conveying a propitious meaning, and to give these as a name to a certain period of years. These expressions are called NYEN HO or reign names, and one describes the year as the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd of such a period. The reign name remains in use till another is chosen by imperial decree. In short, it is the name of an era which may be of long or short duration, according to the will of the sovereign. Since the MING dynasty it has been the custom to let the period last as long as the reign, the 1st year of the period corresponding with the 1st year of the reign; that is to say, the year beginning on the 1st day of the first moon following the accession.

Official Korean works, and a large number of those not[page 12] official, use the names of the Chinese reigns, and this form of notation is very clear. But Korea, although after 1637 she had recognized the overlordship of the Manchus, and should in consequence have used the names of the TSING dynasty, only regretfully and incompletely conformed to this obligation. Moved by sentiments of loyalty and regard towards the MINGS, who had rendered such great services to their country, a great number of Korean writers, even in the case of semi-official works, kept to the TCHHONG TCHENG period (1628-1644), when the last emperor of the Chinese race was on the throne. For instance, they would date a preface the 237th year of TCHHONG TCHENG, meaning 1863. Thus the exalted loyalty of certain men of letters has endowed Korea with a lengthy era, which resembles the western eras much more that the brief Eastern periods corresponding with the reigns of kings.

Finally, since relations have existed between Korea and the Western powers, official documents have been dated by means of an era which begins in 1392, the date of the founding of the present reigning dynasty.

**Chapter II.**

Such were the conditions under which this book saw the light, and they give some idea of the information I was able to collect and the difficulties which I had to face. I propose in this introduction to classify the documents and to tabulate general conclusions about Korean books from three points of view, namely, (1) the book material (if I may use the expression) ; (2) the language used; and (3) the idea expressed.

(1) Korean paper is made from the bark of the TAK, a species of mulberry tree which grows in great quantities both in Korea and Japan. This bark is steeped in water for a certain period, then it is beaten, flattened, dried in the sun and bleached. It is, however, never entirely ground up, so that a number of fibers remain intact in the paper. The most beautiful is made in the autumn and is very difficult to tear—thick, smooth, and of an ivory tint The tearing of it reveals it to be of a pithy substance, with the resistance of a piece of cloth, and almost as flexible. The finest quality is very rarely used, except in the case of certain official documents, or the lists of presents sent by a king, or for some very special editions. The second quality paper has the same texture, but it is not so thick, because it has been beaten longer, which enables more sheets to be made out of the same amount of material. As this paper is very thin, the sticks of wattle on which the sheets are hung to dry, leave transparent marks which give it a streaky look. Good specimens of second quality paper (Tai Ho Tji) are used to write the compositions for examination papers. Subsequently these compositions are bought by manufacturers and treated with oil. The paper thus acquires greater resistance, is rendered completely waterproof, and is then used for making raincoats, covering the floors of houses, recovering baskets, or making fans. Common paper is made out of the coarsest pieces of bark and with the remains of the pieces left over from better quality papers. A little straw and other foreign[page 14] bodies are also added. When beaten it spreads unequally, and holes and thick places will be found side by side.

The covers of books are made with 2nd quality paper glazed over with a dye of gummy substance. The paper of Korean books of all epochs shews the same characteristics of suppleness and a pithy texture. Even in the most ancient books, though it may have become thinner, it has remained uninjured by time, as witness the books of the KORYO dynasty which may be found in some Buddhist monasteries and in some collections in Europe, which have scarcely yellowed with age nor have they been touched by book-worms. I do not know at what epoch the manufacture of paper was first started in Korea. I have found no mention of any other medium employed for writing; and, since books were already fairly wide-spread in the 9th century, when there were regularly organized courses of study, and since libraries were founded in the following century, it is probable that paper was already being made in the Kingdom in those days. The present dynasty since its accession founded an official paper- mill, which existed till 1882 and which made the paper used for congratulatory addresses, prayers, and so on.

In imitation of the Chinese, the Koreans print by means of blocks of engraved wood. They choose a wood of fine close grain—generally cherry-wood—and on to the block, which is usually about two centimetres thick and carefully planed, they stick the page to be engraved — the right side against the board, so that the letters appear reversed. The engraver then hollows out all the white parts, so that the character and frame stand out in relief. One thus obtains an exact imitation of the characters used, which makes it possible to obtain easily facsimiles of autographs ; also of the titles, prefaces, and postscripts which are often written by the authors themselves or by some important personage; and the volume is thus furnished with an exact reproduction of their calligraphy. The block is always engraved for the whole sheet, one side of which only receives the impress, after which it is folded down the middle and[page 16] forms a front and back page . The inside remains blank, for the paper is too thin and too transparent to make it possible to write or print on both sides.

But in the art of printing Korea surpassed China and preceded Europe. In 1403, a decree of THAI TJONG, (太宗) 3rd king of the reigning dynasty, ordained that characters in copper should be cast The royal decree ran thus : “In order to govern it is necessary to spread the knowledge of laws and books in such a way as to fill the minds and render upright the hearts of men. Thus only can order and peace be achieved. Our country is situated in the East beyond the sea, so that books from China are rare. Engraved blocks wear out soon, and moreover it would be difficult to engrave all the books of the universe. It is therefore our wish that out of copper, characters should be formed which will serve for printing. In this way books will become widespread, and this will prove a matter of never-ending advantage. As to the expense of this work, it is not suitable that it be borne by the people, but it will be the responsibility of the Palace treasury.”

In order to execute the king’s commands, they chose the most commonly used characters of the SEE KIUNG, (詩經) the CHO KIUNG, (周經) and the SU CHUN, and they cast a hundred thousand types in copper. All the successors of the king THAI TJONG (太宗) interested themselves in this invention, and up to 1544 as many as eleven royal decrees are mentioned, dealing with the casting of these characters and with the editing of works by means of this movable type. The most skilful calligraphists of the kingdom were commanded to write for the casting- of these elegant characters. They copied also the characters drawn from a Chinese eaition of the KANG MOK (綱 目) and they took the autographs of old Chinese calligraphers as their models. As the necessity for characters not contained in the original font (assortment of characters) made itself felt, new ones were at once made. Up to 1434 there was only one font; but during this epoch, the king caused new characters of double size to be made in[page 16] lead for the printing of the KANG MOK (辆目) It was by the hundred thousand and two hundred thousand that Korean sovereigns caused these movable types to be made, and the royal enthusiasm even went so far, that, when copper failed, they put into the melting-pot bells of ruined monasteries, vases, and instruments belonging to the government and to private individuals.

All the editions printed during this epoch by the new process contained post-scripts inserted by order of the king, explaining the origin and development of this invention of the king THAI TJONG (太宗). From 1544-1700, either because the internal troubles and external wars which marked this period absorbed the whole attention of the sovereigns, or for some other reason, a silence seems to fall on printing and movable characters. In 1770, however, the king YUNG TJONG (英宗) had all the characters necessary for printing the MOON HUN PI KO (文獻備考) cast in 5½ months. He caused a postscript to be placed at the ena, reviewing the art of printing in movable characters and the new application now made of it In a few years three hundred thousand more characters were cast and lodged partly in the Royal Library and partly in the TCHYANG KYENG (昌慶) palace ; they also made 32 thousand stamps in wood, which served for models for making new types in copper From 1770 to 1797 a number of works were printed by this process of king THAI TJONG (太宗) and it has frequently been employed as lately as the present century. I have, however, been unable to get any information as to the present condition of Korean typography, and the little which I have heard makes me think that the stocks of movable type are in very bad condition.

One has to look very carefully in order to distinguish between a book printed in movable type and one engraved from a block. If the similarity of the characters recurring in the text is very great the former alternative is most likely. Sometimes, too, the copper type, insecurely fastened, will have slipped, and the character be slightly out of place. Mr. Salon, in his interesting article on old Japanese [page 17] editions, thinks that there is also one other indication that the book has been printed in movable characters, and that is in the appearance of the vertical lines which divide the columns of characters. If these lines do not go right down to the framing line, that points to the imperfection of the typography,—the threads of copper employed to print them being insufficiently fastened down and often too short, and thus slipping out of position after the type has been set up. Mr. Salon uses this plausible explanation to establish the fact that movable characters existed in Korea as early as 1317. It is impossible for me to agree with this opinion, as I hold that the decree of king THAI TJONG (太宗) fixes quite clearly the date of the invention as 1403, and also because I have seen more than one work engraved on a block with the vertical lines not reaching down to the framing line.

I have seen some works printed by movable type, wnich seem to show a great divergence in the characters and which, far from shewing: the precision usual in editions made with copper type, have untidy characters and uneven edges. The Koreans tell me that these books were printed by means of a type made of baked earth, a process once in use in their country; but I could get no precise information, either written or oral, on this subject But as some traces of this method have been found in Japan, it is not impossible that it was also used in Korea. Korean books may be divided according to their appearance into certain classes, which, though not always absolutely distinct have, nevertheless， each their special characteristics of form and style of characters, which distinguish them from those of another class.

Among the ancient works, some, as for instance, the KONG TJA KA O (孔子家語) the HOUI TJYO SIN SA (熙朝新史) and the KO TCHE YOO PHYEN are printed in slender, angular characters, which one would judge to have been made by an unskilled hand with a brush that was too hard and too pointed. The earliest of these books dates back obviously to the beginning of the 14th century. Without being able to fix the date of the other two with equal precision, [page 18] it is certain that they are equally old, to judge from the archaic look of the volumes and the decayed aspect of the paper. These three works may be taken as typical of one series of books of which the chief characteristics are the awkwardness and slenderness of the characters, and which is linked, though somewhat remotely, with the school of calligraphy called the SONG. Examples of this class were found still in the 15th century, and some have survived till today. The School of Oriental Languages has several examples of books of this style which date from the 16th century. The oldest specimens are often on large paper and carefully edited. When one considers the awkwardness of the writing of this period, one in inclined to think that in the two following centuries the art of the scribe and the engraver made perceptible progress. The truth is, however, that only unskilled writers were entrusted with the common works, printed on coarse paper, octavo or duodecimo—generally handbooks for letter-writing or sorcery.

Buddhist books, from the invention of printing down to the 17th century, form a quite distinct class, distinguished by their large size, large demi-folio, or ordinary quarto-folio, and by the beauty of the characters, which differ entirely from those of the SONG school, and are comparable to ordinary written characters in the roundness of their form and the gradual diminution from full to fine stroke. This style of writing makes up for a touch of heaviness by its fine qualities of fulness, firmness and severe elegance. In some volumes of the 17th century these characteristics have been exaggerated to such an extent that the characters have had more width than height Buddhist books do not have on the fold the four or six-petal leaf, in white on black, which is found in nearly all other Korean books.

The Tripitaka edition, engraved at the beginning of the 11th century and of which a specimen printed in the 15th century may be seen in Tokyo, deserves special mention. It is a large folio and the writing greatly resembles certain Buddhist books, except that it contains some ar-[page 19] chaic forms now fallen into disuse and some others which are peculiarly Korean. It has neither the line framing the page , nor the vertical lines separating the columns of characters. Some specimens of works printed during the KO RYE (高麗), dynasty under the auspices of the Buddhist Council are extant in Europe. In appearance they resemble the Tripitaka, though the printing is of a later date. The lines between the columns have still not appeared, but each page has a line framing the text ; the size is slightly smaller and I have found no archaic symbols. The paper is thin, but well preserved in spite of 500 years of existence. Works of this period are very rare in Korea. In the course of time the size of the Buddhist books diminished to the quarto, but the characteristics remained the same.

In the 18th and 19th centuries many Buddhist books were printed in the forms and styles of other classes. Nearly all the Buddhist volumes of the present dynasty start with one or more leaves engraved with pictures repre- senting the Buddha surrounded by Arhans, or some scene taken from the work itself, and sometimes even a kind of tablet on which are inscribed religious vows or wishes for the kingdom. These engravings are pure Chinese in appearance and the oldest ones are always the best preserved. I know of only one Buddhist book printed in movable characters and that is the WON KAK KYENG (圓覺經). The greater number of the works of this religion are published at the expense of some monastery, or by means of donations from the faithful, or through the generosity of some wealthy benefactor who wishes to assure the repose of the souls of his parents or the success of some vows ; for it is a pious deed to publish and spread the word of Buddha.

Works engraved by royal decree have also certain definite characteristics. For one thing, the name of the royal library or printing house is often found on the title page , and the seal of the former is occasionally engraved at the end of the preface. All the volumes of this class known to me date from the present dynasty. Often the date of en-[page 20] graving will be found on the title page or at the end of the preface, but this is not always the case, and when it is missing, it is very difficult to judge, the exact period of the book. The outside appearance, paper and type of characters on the whole, are always the same from the 15th to the 19th centuries. The paper used is of good quality and large size, varying from folio to large octavo; the margins are wide, and the characters, which are of a beautiful calligraphy, are slightly more massive than those of modern Chinese writing. Differing from those of the SONG class, they are obviously connected with the style employed for the old Buddhist works. Nearly all these books have the title in large characters, either black or blue, and drawn by the brush of a king, or some high officiaL The prefaces are also composed and written by important people and are accompanied by royal decrees, presentation addresses, a list of the men of letters entrusted with composing and reviewing the book, advertisements and lists of references.

Books printed by order of the king deal with a great diversity of subjects, such as literature, administration or history, and are always of great literary and documentary value. It was among these royal editions that I found the great masterpiece of Korean printing, an undated collection of extracts from canonical and classical books. The excellent condition of the plates made me think that they could not date further back than the 18th century. A specimen of this book may be seen in the School of Oriental Languages. The characters far exceed ordinary writing in beauty and are of marvellous elegance, complete and graceful, and as the work is printed on paper of the highest quality, thick and pliant, and ivory tinted, it is one of the most beautiful books you could possibly see.

Leaving the royal editions one comes to numerous works published by the Royal Library, the Court of Interpreters, the Court of Royal Physicians and the headquarters of governors of provinces, especially of Ham Kyeng, Phyeng An, Tjyen Ra and Kyeng Syang. These are mostly editions of the[page 21] classics, dictionaries, and handbooks of various languages, books of medicine, astronomy and historical notes—such as the THONG MOUN KOAN TJI (通文館志). These editions, though very inferior to those considered above, are, nevertheless, very clear ; the characters, though of the same kind, are more slender ; the paper is good, and the size varies from folio to octavo. But the books of this class have a far less uniform appearance than the Royal Editions or the Buddhist works prior to the 18th century and, in their just perceptible inferiority, form a connecting link between the Royal Editions and the common books.

The greater number of the books printed in movable characters are Royal Editions, and have the same character-istics as regards quality of paper, size, titles, prefaces and advertisements as those considered above as having been en-graved by Royal decree. The titles in large characters and the prefaces in facsimile of the author’s writing, are done by means of plates ; and quite often the title-page will mention the fact that movable characters have been used. The style of characters in use in typography of Korean origin is that of the SONG (宋) writing—the angular form and thin strokes which characterize it, making it suitable for work in metal, and this style has been used continually without appreciable difference right down to the present day. For this reason, if there is no date indicating the epoch, it is impossible to tell from the appearance of the characters whether the book is of the 15th or the 19th century. During the first period of Korean typography, works of history and ethics were chiefly printed, and it was not until the 18th and 19th centuries that works dealing with literature and administration were published by this process. The principal examples are the SAM KANG HAING SIL TO (三網行實圖) (1434), the IRYOUN HAING SIL (二倫行實) (1518), the Mahavaipulya Sutra (1465), THE THONG KIEN KANG MOU (1438), the MOUN HEN PI KO (文獻備考) (1770) and the RYOUN TYEN TYO KYEI (1866). Some movable characters, differing from the foregoing and of a flowing and elegant form, were cast and used [page 22] in the reign of TJYENG TJONG, (正宗) principally for the RYOUN EUM (綸音) (1776), the MYENG EUI ROK (明義錄) (1777), the KAING TJYANG ROK (羮壤錄) (1786) and the SAKEUI YENG SYEN (史記英選)(1796).

Printing by this movable process was not confined to the Royal Library, as various government offices made use of it ; also the Court of Interpreters for the TONG MOUN KO RYAK ; but it does not appear to have become very widespread, probably because of the considerable expense involved in making the copper type. The works printed in movable characters by these government offices and by private individuals (for some such works exist) are far from having the elegance of the royal editions printed by the same process.

Besides the different classes which I have discussed above, there are also a number of books in Chinese characters which it is impossible to include in any of the classes just mentioned, and which differ so greatly from each other that it is impossible to class them together. They are works on literature, history, reproductions of Chinese works, the works of celebrated writers published at the expense of the author’s family or of the university which he honoured. A very limited number of books of this type were printed by book-sellers for commercial purposes. Numerically, these works account for about one fourth of those usually found at a book-seller’s store. These, together with the quite common books nearly all in Korean, which account for more than half of the usual stock, constitute the habitual and direct trading of booksellers ; for the works printed by royal decree, books dealing with the government and Buddhist books, are destined for use in the monasteries, official palaces, and as gifts made by the king ; and they only occasionally find their way into book-shops. They do, however, form about one fourth of the total stock, owing to the fact that so few books are published for sale in the open market. The people of Korea are indeed, as a rule, far too poor for it to be possible for them to buy a book costing more than a few [page 23] “mun.” This is the price of the common books which one sees everywhere in great numbers. Better and more expensive editions have a very small sale and the book-seller does not like to take the risk. If he does occasionally take the risk, it is because he has secured some subscriptions towards it in advance. Also only a few examples of a work were issued at one time and as long as the printing-block lasted they continued to issue them in accordance with the demand. But these blocks were liable to be spoilt and destroyed by the damp, by fire or by insects, and did not long remain perfect Usually, by the end of a few decades, the work could no longer be engraved, unless certain important pas-sages were engraved anew, and the books which seemed important enough to warrant this labour were very few.

The same thing applies to books issued by the Royal Library and the different government offices. Only sufficient copies for the king’s gifts and the governmental use were issued, and the blocks were then stored. Fifty years later they were often found to have rotted. With regard to works printed in mobile characters, there exist of course only samples of original editions. A valuable Korean book becomes thus a rarity from the day of its issue. Editions of 19 or 20 specimens are mentioned. Owing to the ravages of time, or to an equally harmful carelessness, the moment soon arrives when it is impossible to reprint;and the book soon becomes unique, or even sometimes is not to be found at all This has been the case with the MOUN HEN PI KO (文獻備考) which dates from 177. There are four copies in the Royal Library, and during a decade only two have circulated in book-shops, these having been bought by Europeans As to the common books, they are printed in great profusion, as, for example, the little Buddhist work of 14 page s, of which 2000 copies were issued. But, in the case of such editions, the blocks and the volumes were even more exposed to decay than the more expensive works. The editions became exhausted and the works were often not engraved again for many years. [page 24]

The editions in native characters may be divided into three groups. Firstly, the ordinary editions of romances and collections of songs, which are coarsely engraved on wooden- blocks and printed on bad paper. One sees them everywhere, and the lower class in general, as well as the women, delight in this form of literature. The Korean characters used in these are nearly square, but have occasionally some flowing lines. All the books of this type belong to the 19th century.

Secondly, the rare works printed in Korean by royal decree are nearly always in Chinese, of which the Korean is simply a translation and explanation. The Korean characters in these are regular, with the full part (plenum) well accentuated but of a heavy appearance. Each group of Korean characters, corresponding to one syllable, occupies the same amount of space as the Chinese character. I may give as examples the SAM RANG HAING SIL TO (三網行實圖) (1434) printed in movable type and the EN KAI THAI SAN TJIP YO engraved in 1506, and the SAM OUN SYENG HOUI (三韻聲費) engraved in 1751. These works are on fine paper, the two first in folio form. Finally, the Catholic Mission in Seoul has recently printed religious works in native characters. These volumes are of small size and good appearance. The oldest are in a somewhat flowing type of character and they were engraved on wood-blocks. During the last decade the Mission has used ordinary movable characters.

In a country where printing has been in use for so long the part played by the manuscript is necessarily quite different from that which it played in Europe. The process of engraving entailed considerably more initial outlay than that required to purchase the ink and brush of the copyist ; but, on the other hand, the engraved book was much easier to reproduce, if not indefinitely, at least for a good number of editions. Moreover, the work of a printer is much simpler and therefore much lower paid than that of the scribe. Thus the art of copying developed only slowly compared with that of printing. In China, for example, where engrav-[page 25] ers worked very cheaply, and where paper sells for a trifling sum, manuscripts hardly exist In Japan, where printing did not spread to any extent until the end of the 16th century, manscripts are much less rare. In Korea, however, in spite of the early use of printing and the perfection to which it attained, one often finds them. This is because, as I have said, the serious printed works always remained at a very high price and were thus unattainable for the majority of even the literary people. A manuscript copy would be more expensive, but then each person could make his own, as time costs nothing;and the nobleman, though custom forbade him to do manual work, could, without lowering his dignity, occupy his leisure by making copies, even for sale. The magistrate would often employ some of the clerks of his court in making copies, without giving them extra pay, while he would have had to employ special workmen to engrave and print the book of which he desired to make a copy, or to make a collection of his own works in order to present them to a friend.

Korean manuscripts vary between folio and small octavo. They are on paper similar to printed books, sometimes quite white, sometimes with framing-lines and vertical lines dividing the columns of characters. These ornaments are subjoined beforehand on each sheet by means of an engraved block. The binding is the same as in other books. The writing varies very much. Sometimes it is careless and full of abbreviations, and sometimes of a remarkable elegance comparable with the very finest editions. Examples of this are the superb volumes of the TCHAM PONG KONG YOU KO which are in the Varat Collection. Among the manuscripts will be found a variety of works by lesser known writers, which were not considered worthy of print ; also works connected with the administration, which are often copies of collections made by officials for their personal use ; geographical treatises in Korean as, for instance, the TONK KOUK TI RI KUI, (東國地理記) romances in Chinese and Korean ; historical works dealing for the most part with [page 26] the reigning dynasty, such as the TJYO YA HOI TONG, (朝野湿通) the TJYO YA TJUP YO , the TONG KOUK KEUISA, (東國記事) the TJYENG TJONG TJYO KEUI SA (正宗朝記事) and the RAN TCHYO (亂草).

I must not fail to mention two manuscripts which are not just well-made copies but works of art One of 1446 is in the Varat Collection, and was found enclosed in the inside of a Buddhist statue. The other is in the British Museum. The former is a volume of the Mahavaipulya purnabuddha sutra prasannartha sutra9 and the latter a volume of the Buddhavatamsaha wahavaipulya sutra. These two manuscripts are in the shape of a folding screen, on very thick paper, covered again uniformly with a dark blue paint. The characters are beautifully formed, and the small ones, exquisitely finished, are executed in gold.

Those manuscripts which have been lodged in the Bibliotheque Nationale since Admiral Roze’s expedition are no less interesting. They are not works intended for publication, but are a detailed account, ornamented with coloured illustrations, of the various ceremonies which took place at the Palace. The calligraphy and execution of the drawings are uneven, but nearly always very careful. The beauty of the paper is superlative ; the form large folio ; the cover stitched in green silk ; the back supported by a flat wooden stick held in place by straps of embossed copper. In short, they are exceedingly interesting specimens.

In the case of a fairly large number of books, the text is accompanied by explanatory drawings, as in the SYENG HAK SIP TO TJAP TJHA (學十圖雄答). In astronomical, mathematical, military and medical books, these plates are drawn in a single stroke, as simply as possible, and are nearly all just in outline, without the slightest artistic pretensions. Works dealing with ceremonies, whether in manuscript or in print, always contain a number of engravings of this type, which represent processions and the garments and instruments used in various ceremonies. Sometimes they are very indistinct, owing to the worn[page 27] condition of the wood-block;sometimes, on the contrary, they are well preserved and of a strong outline. In those representing dances, the movement is fairly well indicated, but perspective is entirely absent, the figures being merely drawn side by side. A few of the works also contain drawings of the celebrated festivals of the Palace, the Temples, and Monumental Gateways. These drawings have a certain hard precision, owing to the absence of light and shade ; but, on the other hand, the perspective is here accurately observed. The point of distance is placed very high, and the effect is similar to many European drawings of the Middle Ages. The scenes from the life of Confucius in the KOUEL RI TJI (闕里志) and the SYENG TJYEK TO (聖蹟圖), the fortifications and the engines of war of the YEN PO TO SYEL TJEUP YO and the TJEUNG PO TJEUK KEUK ROK are reproduced Chinese drawings, and from no point of view do they excel the Korean drawings. The plates are, of course, either done by hand or engraved on wood.

**Chapter III.**

The books of which I have just described the outward appearance, are either in Chinese characters or Korean letters. A few, however, contain a mixture of both. But this mixture is quite different from that which the Japanese make in combining the ideograms with the syllabary, for the Korean is put side by side with the Chinese, either for the purpose of copying or translating. It is used either to explain a passage, or to indicate the pronunciation of some character ; but the Chinese alone is quite sufficient, and the Korean is only added as a help to the unlearned reader. This method is followed in nearly all dictionaries ; in a large number of works on foreign languages, medicine and astrology ; in some editions of the classics, and in some Buddhist and Taoist books. The simultaneous use of two sorts of characters concurrently and forming one phrase, where the Korean letters are reserved for the grammatical particles, only exists to my knowledge in a manuscript collection of songs called the KA KOK WON RYOU (歌曲源流). The Chinese characters are nearly always used in their correct form in Korea. Nevertheless in such volumes as the YOU SYE PHIL TJI (儒胥必知) and the SYE TJYEN TAI MOUN and in certain official documents, an expert

in the Chinese language will sometimes notice characters used in an unaccountable way and others, which, though they have nothing about them of Korean lettering, are yet also not Chinese. A brief examination of Korean books thus leads us to the need for investigating what part is played in Korean literature by these three kinds of characters: the Korean, the pure Chinese, and the semi-Chinese, to discover how they originated.

The documents dealing with the introduction and use of Chinese writing in this country are very numerous. The SAN KOUK SA KEUI (三國史紀), a work of the 11th century, written in Chinese, mentions some interesting facts which show that, from the very beginning, the history of Chinese [page 29] writing differed in the different states into which the Peninsula was divided in those days.

KO KOU RYE (高句魔), situated in the north-west of Korea, seems once to have stretched over a large part of what is now known as Manchuria. Owing to its position, it had relations both in war and commerce with the kingdoms of northern China. It is also in the territory of KO KOU RYE (高句麗) that legend and history agree in placing the states of TAN KOUN (檀君), KEUI TJA, (笑子) and OUI MAN (衛滿). Now the two latter were Chinese places of refuge, so that it must have been there that civilization—at least the Chinese form of it—first made its appearance. Indeed, the SAM KOUK SA KEUI (三國史記) notes that, in the year 600—the eleventh year of the king YENG YANG (嬰陽),一this prince commanded RI MOUN TJIN, Doctor of Literature, to recapitulate the ancient history of the country. RI MOUN TJIN accordingly composed a work in five volumes, and the SAM KOUK added the following words, “Since the beginning of the Kingdom characters had been used, and at that period there existed 100 volumes of memoirs written by various people, and they were called the RYOU KEUI (tnings written to remain). This epoch having been reached, characters then became fixed.’ The antiquity of the use-at least of a limited use-of Chinese characters in the Kingdom is also proved by the fact that from the reign of the king THAI TJO (太祖), who ascended the throne in 53 A. D., the names of the kings are all capable of being interpreted into Chinese. Up to the end of the 4th century the Chinese expression used is, at the same time, both the name of the Sovereign and also that of the place where his tomb is located. Later the designations adopted were more inclined to the Buddhistic.

It was in 372 A. D., the 2nd year of the reign of the king SYO SYOU RIM (小獸林), that the new religion was introduced into KO KOU RYE (高句驪), and it brought with it a revival of the study of Chinese. Buddhist books were brought in and the king established a school called THAI HAK [page 30] (大學), to instruct the young people. With regard to the kingdom of PAIK TJYEI (百濟), situated south of KO KOU RYE on the west side of Korea, the SAM KOUK SA KEUI (三國史記) contents itself with retailing from more ancient sources the fact that in the reign of KEUN TJHO KO (近肖古) .(346-375) they began to use writing in order to note down current events. Have we here the origin of the written Chronicles? Does it not seem incredible that a kingdom possessing the art of writing should have existed for more than 3½ centuries before any body had the Idea of using it to chronicle important current events? For my part, I am tempted to believe that writing was unknown up to this epoch, and that it was introduced at this time by the Buddhist missionaries who penetrated the entire peninsula. It was only about 100 years later that the names of the kings of PAIK TJYEI (百濟) ceased to be simple transcriptions deprived of sense in Chinese, and took on the aspect of names of temples. Moreover, the names of private individuals in PAIK TJYEI as in KO KOU RYE (高句麗), remained nearly all mere transcriptions, until these kingdoms were absorbed by the SIN RA (新羅). It is true that old Japanese books speak of a scholar named WA NI, a native of PAIK TJYEI (百濟), as coming to Japan in 285 and bringing with him the LOEN YO and the TSHIEN TSEU OEN ; and this has generally been accepted as a fact by European scholars. But Mr. Aston has proved how little worthy of belief are the old Japanese chronicles ; especially he has shewn how a whole period of relations between PAIK TJYEI (百濟) and Japan has been interpolated by ancient authors so as to fill in the gaps in the semi-fabulous chronology of their traditions. Agreeing on this point with the Japanese scholar Moto Ori, Mr. Aston puts this event 120 years, or two cycles, later ; in which case the introduction of Chinese characters into Japan would have taken place at the beginning of the 5th century, and this date would coincide exactly with that of the first use of writing in PAIK TJYEI (百濟). As to the mention of the TSHIEN TSEU OEN as belonging to this period, [page 31] that presents no difficulty, as this work appears to have had a previous edition before that of the 6th century which is extant today. SIN RA (新羅), situated in the south east of the Peninsula, was further removed from China than its two neighbors, and it was open to the eastern regions which were still barbarous. It is, then, somewhat astonishing to read in the SAM KOUK SA KEUI (三國史記) that the king YOU RI (儒理) in the 9th year of his reign (32 A. D.) gave Chinese family names to the inhabitants of six cantons of his realm—namely ri (李), choi (崔), son (孫), tjyeng (鄭), pai (襄), and syel (薛)

The three royal families were named PAK (朴) SYEK (昔) and KIM (金). If the accuracy of these assertions were proved one could conclude that Chinese characters were known to the inhabitants of SIN RA (新羅) from this remote epoch, and one would not fail to adduce proof in support of the story of those Chinese who came to the country from TJIN (秦), and TJIN HAN (秦韓), to escape from the tyranny of the Emperor CHI of the TSTIN, and who might thus have given to the country in which they took refuge the very name of the dynasty which had caused them to flee. The Chinese authors did, in fact, combine the two names. One might also mention the refugees who came from the north of Korea, natives of China, who are mentioned in the opening lines of the SAM KOUK SA KEUI (三國史記). But all that lies in the doubtful realm of legend, and, in fact, as one goes through the page s of the SAM KOUK (三國) itself, it is not before the end of the 6th century that one begins to find people with Chinese names. Up until then all the names used have the obvious look of being words transcribed into a foreign language. In the same way all the old Korean names which one finds in Japanese chronicles have nothing Chinese about them. The three royal names PAK (朴), SYEK (昔) and KIM (金), are found, it is true, from the beginning of the 6th century, but the explanation of the SAM KOUK (三國) on this subject indicates precisely the use of a Chinese[page 32] character in place of a Korean word, at least in two cases out of three. Moreover, what is the documentary value of the SAM KOUK , as evidence of this remote period? I shall go into that later.

Finally, even if the family names in question had been in use since the beginning of the Kingdom, it would not follow that Chinese had been employed since then. Once one admits the fact of an ancient immigration, it would not be astonishing if the descendants of the fugitives, though forgetting nearly all the culture of their mother country, together with the art of writing, should yet have preserved certain simple customs of their former civilization, such as the use of family names, and even a tradition of certain mysterious signs by which they were represented. But all this is hypothesis. What stands out from reading the SAM KOUK (三國) is that Chinese names were not used till the second half of the 6th century.

If we now examine the names of the kings of SIN RA (新 羅) we shall ascertain that, up to the reign of king SIL SYENG (實聖), who ascended the throne in 402 A.D., they are transcriptions into a foreign language. If the name SIL SYENG (實聖) itself has a Chinese appearance, that of his successor NOUL TJI (訥祇) has two ways of writing and appears to be a transcription from Korean. The next king, TJA PI (慈悲)，may have taken his name from a Buddhist book, but of the two designations of the next king, one at least, PI TCHYE, has nothing Chinese about it. After that period the expressions used to designate the kings are easily explained and resemble the names of Chinese temples.

It was the king TJI TJEUNG (智證) who in 503 first abandoned his Korean title MA RIP KAN for the Chinese title OANG (王). At the same time, the important officials demanded that the name of the kingdom should be definitely fixed. Up to then it had been called either SA RA, SA RO, or SIN RA, (新羅). They were of the opinion that the last of these appellations should be adopted, observ-[page 33]ing that SIN (新) (new) indicated virtue always renewed, and that RA (羅) signified the reunion of all countries at the four cardinal points. As for the reasons given for the adopting the title of OANG (王), they were drawn from the fact that the words OANG (王) (king) and TYEI (帝) (emperor) were in use in Chinese histories, and that their adoption witnessed to their extensive knowledge of the language of the neighbouring country. It is difficult to take seriously the assertion that for 500 years the kingdom had no fixed name. Probably the words SA RO (斯盧), SA RA, (斯羅) and SIN RA (新羅), very alike phonetically, are simply different transcriptions of the same native word. What had not been decided until then was the character which should be used in writing the name. The need felt for an unchangeable script coincides with the period when the Chinese language had achieved considerable influence and had become the official language. It is about the same epoch (517 A. D.) that the SAM KOUK (三國) begins to give a fair number of official titles which are all explicable in Chinese. Previous to this only a few names of functionaries and officials are cited, and these, one finds, are translated from Korean.

The introduction of Buddhism seems to have begun in the middle of the 5th century, the Buddhist priest MEUK HO TJA 胡子) having come from KO KOU RYE (高句麗) to SIN RA (新羅) in the reign of the king NOUL TJI (訥祇) (417-458), and the priest A TO (阿道), with his disciples, having established himself in the kingdom in the reign of PI TCHYE (毗處) (479-500). But the SAM KOUK (三國) warns us that the accuracy of this information is contested. Preaching did not begin for certain until 528, the 15th year of the king PEP HEUNG (法興).

The spread of the new religion was rapid, and that of the Chinese language kept pace with it Also we find that in 545 the king TJIN HEUNG (眞興) decreed that hereafter a history of the realm should be drawn up. It was only a little later that the College for Men of Letters was founded, in imitation of China. It is about the same period [page 34] that one finds mention of people in SIN RA (新羅) as being well versed in the Chinese language, such as KIM TCHYOUNTCHYOU (金春秋) and his son KIM IN MOUN (金仁問).

Thus, while the development of Chinese studies began in KO KOU RYE (高句麗) at the end of the 4th century, and while, at about the same epoch, characters were introduced into PAIK TYJEI (百濟), the kingdom of SIN RA (新羅) does not appear to have profited by this progress in civilization until after, after Japan, in the course of the 6th century.

Now, up to what point can the facts which I have enumerated, and which are drawn from the SAM KOUK SA KEUI (三國史記), be considered accurate ? It was composed by an important official in the court of the kings of KO RYE, named KIM POU SIK (金富軾). He lived at the end of the 11th century and the beginning of the 12th, 2½ centuries after the disappearance of the last of the three kingdoms about which he wrote, and in an epoch in which the kingdom of KO RYE (高麗) had already borrowed much from the China of the SONGS (宋). The old languages and the old institutions were forgotten or were no longer understood, largely because of the contempt in which the scholars of the Chinese schools held their primitive ancestors, and partly owing to opposition between KO RYE (尚麗), the northern and militarist kingdom, and SIN RA (新羅), the last to survive of the HAN (韓) states. The tribes of KA YA (伽倻), the kingdoms of PAIK TJYEI (百濟) and of KO KOU KYE (高句魔), which had been absorbed by SIN RA (新羅) in the 6th and 7th centuries, were even more completely forgotten. Such circumstances did not favour the composition of an accurate and impartial history. At the same time, one must not lose sight of the fact that the SAM KOUK SA KEUI (三國史記) is the oldest Korean work extant on the history of Korea. Its authenticity has never been contested and its extremely simple style bears all the marks of antiquity and good faith. The plan of the work is clearly modelled on the historical memoirs of SA MA CHIEN (司馬遷). Moreover the book having been composed by royal decree, KIM POO SIK[page 35] (金富軾) must have had at his disposal all the documents then which existed, but which have since disappeared. He indicates a few, though giving nowhere a complete list ; and as, deviating from the Chinese usage, he has not inserted any chapters on literary history, we have only small and frag-mentary information about the ancient literature. At least we know that KIM POO SIK (金富軾) did consult them as well as the archives and other documents, and we can state with certainty that, taken as a whole, his book agrees with the Chinese histories and with the old Korean works of a later date, but sufficiently remote to be drawn from the same sources.

How accurate were the documents to which KIM POU SIK (金富軾) had access? Books or archives of whatever kind, even those dealing with KO KOU RYE (高句麗), which appear to go back to the beginnings of this kingdom, cannot go back further than the 4th century in the case of PAIK TJYEI (百濟), and the beginning of the 6th century in the case of SIN RA (新羅). It was in these epochs respectively that Chinese writing was introduced and developed, as I have shev/n above and as MA TAN RIM(馬臨端) indicates. Nowhere is there any trace or mention of writing having been in use prior to this. Therefore all the oldest history rests on oral tradition, necessarily uncertain. This is the explanation of the doubtful points, the miraculous stories, and the poverty of the information available for the first four or five centuries of Korean history. The cyclical characters of the years, which one finds right from the beginning of the SAM KOUK (三國), may very well have been added later, as in the case of the primitive histories of China and Japan. The astronomical phenomena noted could provide a verification. Mr. Aston tried to work them out, but with no result.

But the event which I am considering at the moment, namely the introduction of writing, marks definitely the limit between oral tradition and written history—all the more noticeable because the Chinese language of ancient formation and capable of expressing all sorts of ideas, [page 36] was introduced by the Chinese writing. Thus very little time elapsed before this art, hitherto unknown to the Koreans, was used to chronicle events. The annals of PAlK TJYEI (百濟) date from the introduction of Buddhism into the Peninsula, and those of SIN RA (新羅) begin seventeen years after the first preaching of the Hindu religion is definitely known to have occurred in that kingdom. The facts related by the SAM KOUK (三國) about the first transplanting of the characters are worthy of belief, as are also all the events subsequent to this, for they are not affected by the doubts which I have enumerated as applying to the ancient history of Korea.

The first things which the Buddhist monks brought were the books of their religion; then came the Chinese classics, various historical works, books on astronomy, astrology, medicine, and some Taoist volumes. The information which I found in the MA TAN RIM (馬端臨), as well as in .Korean authors, on the subject of books brought from China, is included in the present Bibliography in the place naturally appertaining to the works to which it refers. These are the works which have been studied by Koreans, especially in the College for Scholars founded by the various kings of the Peninsula. They were also in the hands of the HOA RANG (花良) the young men chosen by the kings of SIN RA〔新羅) for their intelligence and elegance, brought up in the Palace, instructed in every kind of physical exercise and everything tending to cultivate the mind, and eventually called to the highest positions. These works were also the subjects of the examinations founded in SIN RA (新維) at the end of the 8th century. The sons of the greatest families applied themselves ardently to Chinese studies. From 640 on, the Koreans went to China to study. Men of means, famous in SIN RA (新羅), such as KIM HEUM

OUN, (金欧運) KIM YOU SIN (金庾信) and KIM IN MOUN (金仁問), the last the son of the king—were renowned for the wide extent of their literary knowledge.

Not content with studying these foreign books, the[page 37] Koreans practised writing in the language of their instructors. The MOUN HEN PI KO (文獻備考)quotes a sentence written out in Chinese and drawn from the annals of the kingdom of KA RAK (駕洛), but without any indication as to whether the quotation was borrowed straight from them—which seems unlikely—or whether it had been inserted in them from some other work. However this may be, this kingdom submitted to SIN RA (新羅) in the year 532, and the result was that before this date there were Koreans in the South able to write Chinese. The passages which the SAM KOUK (二國) borrows from the annals of the Three Kingdoms and from certain other ancient documents, the texts of decrees and the petitions to which they refer, are in the same language. A little later, it is still in Chinese that the king SIN RA (新羅) corresponds with the governors sent by the THANGS (唐).

There is no appreciable difference in the style used by the Koreans and that of the Chinese of the same epoch. Perhaps, in the beginning, Chinese were engaged as official secretaries in the Peninsula, in the same way that they appear to have often been engaged by the Tartar tribes in the north of China. Perhaps the Korean writer was content to extract phrases from the Chinese books and to string them together. The Japanese, in olden times, were very expert at this kind of mosaic; and Mr. Salon shews how they ended by writing of purely native subjects without using a single sentence that was not taken from Chinese. It is not impossible that these facts account for the tradition that TCHOI TCHI OUEN (崔致遠) (9th century) was the first Korean to write in Chinese, those preceding him having limited themselves to borrowing whole phrases from Chinese authors.

At the same time, Koreans used Chinese characters to transcribe the sounds in their own language,—proper names and official titles. This phonetic use of characters is quite in accord with Chinese usage; and the Chinese have naturally used no other system for pronouncing foreign words. But, not going so far as their neighbours in the [page 38]east, the Koreans have never had a syllabary nor an alphabet drawn from ideograms—at least no trace of one exists; and up to the end of the 7th century, they wrote nothing in the native tongue except proper names and titles. In 692 SYEL TCHONG (薛聰), man of letters, succeeded in explaining the meaning of the NINE KYUNG (九經) in the native language for the instruction of his pupils,—such as the words used by the MOUN HEN PI KO (文献備考) in book 83. The SAM KOUK SA KEUI (三國史記), in the biography of SYEL TCHONG (薛聰), expresses it differently, and says that SYEL TCHONG took pains to read in a loud voice the NINE KYUNG (九經) in the native tongue in order to instruct his pupils; and up to the present day scholars follow his example.

Finally, the preface of TJYENG KIN TJI (鄭麟趾) for the E TJYEI HOUN MIN TJYENG EUM (御題訓民正音) expresses it thus,—”Formerly SYEL TCHONG (薛聰), of the kingdom of SIN RA (新羅), invented the writing RI TOO (吏讀). which is still in use today in government offices and by the people. But it is composed entirely of characters borrowed from the Chinese, which are hard and as to style narrow in meaning; of which, moreover, the use is inelegant and ill- established ; and they cannot render a ten-millionth part of the language.” The modern Korean tradition agrees entirely with TJYENG RIN TJI (鄭麟祉). Instead of the term HAI EUI (解義),”explain the meaning”, which is quite clearly FOUND IN THE MOUN HEN PI KO (文獻備考), THE SAM KOUK (三國) gives the word TOO (讀) which means ‘‘to study by reading aloud.” Apart from this difference in the verb, the important parts are the same in both phrases. It seems probable that the authors of the more recent work copied the old work and substituted for the word ‘‘read aloud” the words “explain the meaning”, which rounded off the period better. This alteration is not a happy one！ “Explain the meaning seems to indicate a translation or a commentary; but a written translation is not possible, as the Korean language up to this had been simply spoken, and an oral[page 39] explanation would not have gained for SYEL TCHONG (薛聰) such special mention; for Chinese had long been studied in Korea, and also the explanation would have disappeared with the commentator.

The compass of the meaning of the word “read aloud” is quite different, and we shall see what this reading was, and how it agrees with the actual practice of Korean men of letters; and how it is explained by the nature of the characters RI TOO as they are written in the preface of the TJYENG RIN TJI (鄭麟趾), and as they are still used.

Even leaving aside the difference in pronunciation of Chinese characters in Japan and Korea, the reading of the same Chinese text in the three countries is essentially different The Chinese enunciate the sound of each character as they come to it, and do not pronounce any sound which is not in the text The Japanese add to the text numerous terminations which are not written; substitute for the Chinese words those that are purely Japanese, and often change the order of the words so as to make them conform in construction to their own language. The Korean reads the characters as they are put before him, giving them a pronunciation sufficiently close to that of the Chinese to make them recongnizable by any fairly practised ear; but they punc-tuate this reading by syllables either detached, or with two, three or four strung together and not in the text These syllables, which correspond in a measure to the terminations inserted by the Japanese, mark the cases and the verbal particles of the Korean language, and serve as guides to the Korean reader in studying a language the spirit of which differs entirely from that of his own mother tongue.

In the majority of cases, the Chinese text is placed in its purity before the eyes of the Korean, who needs to have a profound knowledge of Chinese syntax in order to judge rightly where to place the native particles. Any mistake in the nature of the termination to be used, or in the position in which it is placed, would constitute a mistake in meaning. The object of the work of SYEL TCHONG (薛聰) was to [page 40] facilitate the reading aloud and, in consequence, the study of Chinese by writing the Korean particles as they are used for reading Chinese texts. You will find, in the accounts I have devoted to the YOU SYE PHIL TJI (儒胥必知) and the SYE TJYEN TAI MOUN (書傳大文), two lists of the most im-portant affixes. Incomplete though they are, they will suffice to show that the RI TOO (吏讀) or RI MOUN (吏文) mark the cases, the post-positions which take the place of our prepositions, and the verbal terminations which play at the same time the role of moods and tenses, conjunctions, punctuation marks and honorifics.

Moreover, a certain number of ordinary adverbs and some terms in common use in the language of the administration can be written in RI TOO (吏讀). The symbols used by SYEL TCHONG ( 薛聰) thus serve as a grammatical skeleton of a phrase, but it is an empty frame which must be filled with Chinese characters. It is no more possible to write a phrase entirely in RI TOO (吏讀) than it would be possible to express an idea in Latin, for instance, if you removed all the roots of the verbs and only kept terminations of the declensions and conjugations. With these symbols one can easily explain the three texts which I have quoted and which are the only ones I know of concerning the invention of SYEL TCHONG 스(薛聰). The RI TOO (吏讀)，though it cannot express a ten-thousandth part of the language, yet for the unlettered Korean it is an indispensable help to reading aloud and understanding the classics. It has certainly contributed to the spread of Chinese culture, and for that reason it justifies the recognition accorded to SYEL TCHONG (薛聰), the titles he received after his death, and the place accorded him in the temple of Confucius.

Most of the signs used in the RI MOUN (吏文) are ordinary Chinese characters ; some are just abbreviations or inventions. The characters are used alone or in groups, sometimes as many as seven together. Often the characters have been chosen to form a Korean termination, because, in their Chinese pronunciation, they approximate[page 41] to this termination. One has here a simple case of phonetic transcription. Sometimes the meaning of the Chinese characters will give approximately that of the particle they are translating. Thus the character OUI (爲) “to do” takes the pronunciation of “ha”, the root of the verb “to do”. SI (是) ‘‘to be”, takes the sound i, root of the verb “to be”. and it keeps it even in the combinations in which the meaning of the verb seems absent Sometimes one can establish no connection, and the characters appear to have been chosen arbitrarily. The character EUN (隱) both in its complete and abbreviated form, is used in an interesting way- it is joined to ha to make han and to na to make nan, taking the value of the final v. Generally the same sound has the same symbol but there are exceptions.

In petitions, deeds of accusation, letters of office clerks, and sentences imposed, the particles in RI TOO (吏讀) are inserted into the Chinese phrases in the position required by Korean syntax-sometimes in smaller characters than those of the main text When these signs are used as guides to the reading of the classics, they are put in the upper margin, but I only know of one work of this kind which has the particles in RiI TOO (吏讀). The terminations used in the classical style differ from those used in government offices;some are found in both, but are nearly always expressed by different characters. The particles used in the classical style are shorter ana simpler, and less use is made of honorifics.

It will be seen that this system differs from that of the Japanese, who have much more frequently resorted to the phonetic value of the characters, and came with their syllabaries to write their language as it is spoken. The invention of SYEL TCHONG (薛聰) was not so successful, ana it has always remained inadequate and inconvenient It has, however, continued in use until today; but is it the original form, or a development from it? Is the edition of CHOU KYENG (周經) with RI TOO (吏讀) the reproduction of the [page 42] reading of the scholar of SIN RA (新羅)? This is a matter which the paucity of our information does not enable us to decide.

A short notice on the first page of TO RI PHYO (道里表), written out in Chinese, gives, besides the main text, some characters which, though occupying the position suitable to the Korean particles, do not for the most part find a place in either of the two lists of RI TOO (吏讀) known to me. The Koreans whom I have consulted about these signs have been able to give me no in formation. I am of the opinion, until more information is available, that they are fragments of characters of the RI TOO (薛讀) used instead of the complete signs, just as the fragments known as “kata kana” often replace in Japan the complete characters taken phonetically. This process is already found in a small way in the indexes of RI MOUN (吏文) which I have transcribed, just as the syllables RA, NA, I, TEUN, TYE,(羅.飛.伊.等.底) and EUN (隱) are found both in a complete and abridged form, the last of these syllables combining with the preceding sign and taking the value of the letter N. In the TO RI PHYO (道里表), this double process of abbreviation and combination has been enlarged, until they have become real alphabetical or syllabic signs. Thus El is written E+I, IKEI is written I+KE+I. I have, unfortunately, no information about this transformation of the characters of SYEL TCHONG (薛聰), and even the text through which its existence became known to me is very insufficient as it only contains 12 of these signs.

The evolution of writing in Korea did not stop there, but developed later into an alphabet, called the PAN TJYEL (反切) by the Koreans, who give the name of the common texts EN MOUN (諺文) to text written alphabetically. Just as the RI MOUN (吏文) was composed to help in reading the Chinese language, and not for writing the native language, so the invention of the alphabet had for its object the accurate rendering of Chinese and the correcting of the ordinary Korean usage of it The alphabet was considered of so little importance by those knowing even a small amount of[page 43] the Chinese language, that it was only used as an accessory to it This is clearly proved by the very title of the work which expounds the principles of this new writing—E TJYEI HOUN MIN TJYENG EUM (御題訓民正音), i. e. “The correct pronunciation taught to the people of the work composed by the KING”. It was for the same reason that SYENG SAM MOUN (成三問) and many other officials were sent at the time of various reconquests in Liao Tong in order to consult a Chinese scholar who was in exile there, on the subject of pronunciation. It is also for use in the transcription of Chinese that one finds in the primitive Korean alphabet the sound h, the sound j, and the liquid initial sound, which are not indigenous, and the signs for which have fallen into dis-use. The identity of the final ng with the initial which one puts before the vowel, is due to similar linguistic reasons. This occurs in places where pronunciation would put a vowel alone. The ease with which the ordinary Korean speech could be written by the help of this alphabet was foreseen and commented on by the king SYEI TJONG (世宗) and his collaborators, but its first and foremost object was to faciliate the study of Chinese.

I need not enlarge here on the circumstances of this invention, as in No. 47 of the Bibliography I give a full translation of the text which explains it, and which fixes the date at 1443. This is, however, the place to note that in the analysis of the syllable which can be pronounced vocally, the Koreans went farther than their neighbors to the East or West The Japanese, helped by the nature of their language, which, formerly at least, only comprised syllables formed at the most of one consonant and one vowel and destitute of final consonants, evolved a syllabary in which each consonant is followed by a vowel and which has, besides, a series which are purely vocalic. When the language became modified by time and the introduction of Chinese words, it was only with the help of artifices foreign to the spirit of the original syllabary that the Japanese were able to write double consonants and the final n. [page 44]

The Chinese, from the moment when the preaching of Buddhism led them to study Sanscrit, sought means to render by use of their ideograms (each corresponding to a complete syllable) the words of an idiom differing entirely from their own usage, and sanctioned the use of characters having more or less the same sound, for transcribing each Sanscrit syllable. For syllables beginning with several consonants they used together several characters which had to be blended in pronouncing. It is thus that Chinese scholars were brought to distinguish, in each sound of their language, an initial sound which is always a simple consonant, and a final sound composed of a vowel or dipthong alone, or followed by one of the consonants k, c,p, ng, n, or m. It is difficult, given the nature of the Chinese language, to achieve a more simple form of writing. The method, nevertheless, is very inconvenient, since, in order to form a new sound, one has to pass over in thought the end of the first character and the beginning of the second.

King SYEI TJONG (世宗), to whom his compatriots attribute the invention of the alphabet ─ adopting the Chinese system—distinguished between the initial and final sound, but he decompounded these, when the need arose, into a median (either vowel or diphthong) and a final, properly so called ; and the identity of these final sounds with a certain number of initial sounds was recognized. In this way the Koreans came to evolve alphabetical letters, both vowels and consonants, and thus became endowed with an instrument which was much more perfect than the Japanese syllabary, and which lent itself equally well to transcribing the Chinese ideograms and to writing those of the native language, thanks to the combination of vowels into diphthongs and of single consonants into double. The Korean alphabet is remarkably simple, and the classification of the letters resembles that of the Sanscrit letters, so far as the nature of the language permits. The presence of a mute initial letter supporting the vowel is a feature common to both Korean and Sanscrit This is natural, since it was [page 45] the Sanscrit alphabet which the king SYEI TJONG (世宗) took as his model, either directly or, what is more probable, by conforming to the Chinese initial sounds which were derived from it The forms of the written letters in Korean are also very simple and logical. The vowels have as their base a vertical or horizontal stroke, used alone or with the addition of two strokes perpendicular to the first and placed either to right or left above or below. The series of labials p, ph, m, are represented by squares, and the gutturals and dentals by the square deprived of one or two sides. This logical system of classification is the mark of a well-considered production, and confirms the statements made in the HOUN MIN TJYENG EUM (訓民正音). There is, moreover, no resemblance between Korean letters ana the Chinese or Japanese characters. I am not referring, of course, to those letters, practically out of use, known as the “characters of the gods”, which the most serious Japanese writers agree in deriving from the Korean alphabet, and of which the origin is unknown.

The text of the MOUN HEN PI KO (文獻備考), which I have cited, agrees with tradition in fixing the date of the invention of Korean letters as 1443, and as being due to the king SYEI TJONG (世宗). Mr. James Scott, in the interesting introduction to his Anglo-Korean dictionary, relates that the Korean envoys encountered at the court of Peking some Chinese versed in Sanscrit, and that it was as the result of their conversations that the idea of the alphabet was first born. This tale is perhaps only the expression of a possible result of the intercourse between Korean and Sanscrit scholars, and nothing confirming it is found in any of the documents which have come into my hands. As to the legend which attributed to TAN KOUN (檀君) the invention of the common characters, reformed subsequently by SYEI TJONG (世宗), it is not worthy of discussion, as TAN KOUN (檀君), who descended from heaven and reigned 1000 years, is completely mythological. Moorever, if Korea had a writing in such early times, why is there no mention of it[page 46] in any work either Korean, Chinese, or Japanese ?

No value can be attached, either, to the opinion of Klap- roth, who in his “General Sketch of the History of the Three Kingdoms” declares, without giving any source of information, that an alphabet was invented in the kingkom of PAIK TJYEI (百濟) in 374, for, as all the Chinese and Korean texts show, Chinese ideograms had at that date only just been introduced into the Kingdom, and it is very unlikely that the people of PAIK TJYEI (百濟) should in so short a time have passed from ideograms to an alphabet Probably Klaproth misunderstood some statement which referred to the introduction of Chinese characters. Nor do I need now to discuss the theory, somewhat widely held among European scholars, which attributes the invention of the native characters to SYEL TCHOOG (薛聰). What is said above about the RI TOO (吏讀) and the EN MOUN (諺文) is sufficient to show that they were two different writings and opposing systems. Did the Koreans borrow the alphabet from a neighbour- ing people ? I do not think it possible. If any type of Korean writing resembles the Japanese syllabary, it is the RI TOO (吏讀) and not in any way the EN MOUN (諺文). Korean letters, on the coutrary, gave birth to the ‘characters of the gods,’ which, though simple and easy to apply, have never spread. Towards the north, it was with barbarous and barely civilized tribes that the Koreans had relations, — either with the Chinese, or with the Tartars who adopted, together with its civilization, the ideographic method of writing of the Chinese,—namely KHI TAN (契丹), the NIU TCHIN (女眞), and the MONGOLS (蒙古). The pure Mongol writing has no resemblance at all to the Korean letters. Besides, there is nowhere any mention of any intercourse between Korea and those Turks of Altai who had possessed an alphabet since the 6th century. Also, in this remote period the quarrels of the three Korean kingdoms and their wars with the THANG (唐) dynasty hardly left leisure for missions and far journeys. In short, apart from the Japan- ese syllabary and the Mongol alphabet, which represent[page 47] systems of writing quite different from the EN MOUN (諺文), the Koreans have always been surrounded by a zone where only ideograms were employed. I am, therefore, convinced that the alphabet they formed was drawn from the Sanscrit, either directly, or by way of the Chinese TSEU MOU. As to the date, 1443, although fixed by the text of the E TJYEI HOUN MIN THYUNG EUM (御製訓民正音), it is not without some objections. Indeed, though the KOUK TJYO PO KAM (國朝寶鑑) gives 1447, the SAM KANG HAING SIL TO (三綱行實圖), composed of a Chinese text with a Korean translation, was printed in 1434, and the language and writing of this epoch does not differ appreciably from modern writing and language. The native characters existed then nine years before the invention of SYEI TJONG I can find no explanation of this contradiction, which invalidates the assertion of the decree of 1446, and of the preface of the TJYENG RIN TJI (鄭麟趾). Is the honour of having found the medium for writing the language and transcribing the Chinese sounds falsely attributed to the King SYEI TJONG (世宗)? Did contemporaries and posterity combine to give to this prince the glory of an invention belonging to another? It seems impossible. One may point out that only nine years separate the two dates in question, and that in 1434 SYEI TJONG (世宗) had already been 16 years on the throne^ There does not therefore appear to be sufficient reason for denying him the honour which Koreans have always accorded him. However that may be, the difficulty remains, and can only be solved by the discovery of new documents.

On becoming possessed of an alphabet, the first use the Koreans made of it was to note down the Chinese charac- ters. Thus we know the Korean pronunciation of Chinese in the 15th century. For the epoch perceding this, we are in almost absolute ignorance, and it is only by a careful study of the little that remains to us of the ancient idioms of the Peninsula that we can get any information on the subject Mr. James Scott, in the introduction which I have [page 48] quoted, expresses the opinion that the Koreans transmitted, from generation to generation, the Chinese pronunciation as they had learned it from their first masters. I regret that I am unable to agree with him, as such fidelity is not in the nature of things. The pronunciation of a dead language, or a foreign language used by scholars and writers, changes in the course of time less quickly perhaps than one spoken by the people, but much more if it is written in ideograms which do not correspond to a sound. Why should the Chinese sounds have remained unchanged, while the Korean lang-uage underwent such transformation that at the time of KIM POU SIK (金富軾) one no longer understood the dialects used in the Three Kingdoms two or three centuries earlier? If, moreover, one examines the facts, one can see that the vocabulary of native Korean, besides words which are obviously Chinese, includes also a certain number which, in spite of their Korean appearance, seem to be really derived from Chinese. Is it not permissible to connect mal (horse) and ma, especially as this animal has a very similar name in Japanese? Is the word am (female) not connected with eum (word for feminine principle)? If Chinese, in penetrating the Korean spoken language, brought about big changes, why should not these phonetic modifications also affect the literary language? A certain number of these changes have been produced since the invention of EN MOUN (諺文). For proof one need only mention the fact that the TJYEN OUN OK PHYEN (全韻玉篇) frequently notes the pronunciations in common use side by side with correct pronunciations. The frequent substitution of the letter n for the letter r ; the lapse of the r at the beginning of words ; the joining of i to a, o, or u, giving a long u quite alien to the Korean of the 15th century, are facts of the same kind, which all affect the sounds given to Chinese charac- ters. I might also mention the confusion of use—frequent before the diphthongs ya and ye- of the palatine and dental series of sounds, and the disappearance of the Chinese initial letters j, ts, and tsh. Finally, a very curious twist[page 49] given by the Koreans to the Chinese language is the changing into l of the final t, which is still found in the Chinese dialects of the south. But why should one suppose that this final l came from the old pronunciation of Chan-tong? I cannot see any linguistic fact on which to base this assertion.

I also do not see why the Koreans should have taken their knowledge of Chinese from this province, for no dynasty had resided there since the epoch when permanent relations were established between Korea and the Chinese Empire. It seems much more natural to admit that the Koreans were incapable of pronouncing the final t, even as late as the 15th century, since all the native words which have this termination today were written and still are writ- ent with a final s. Also, the absence of certain tones in the Korean pronunciation of Chinese does not prove that these were introduced into Chinese after it had penetrated Korea. It appears, on the contrary, very natural that the Koreans, finding that their native language showed nothing analogous to these intonations, should have left them, and everything to do with them. unheeded. In short, one must, in my opinion, content oneself with saying that the pronunciation of Chinese in Korea enables us to recognize certain facts concerning the phonetic changes of the Chinese language; but it is dangerous to contend that the Koreans used the Chinese pronunciation of any particular epoch or pro-vince.

The Chinese element, which penetrated Korea by means of the ideograms, extended to the spoken language, which it very largely transformed. It is strange that two languages with such entirely opposite idioms should have become so intimately united. It would have seemed more likely that one would replace the other, as was the case with the literary language.

The distinctive feature of the Korean language is the verb. In order to understand its nature, a European must put aside all preconceived ideas of the meaning of the word verb, except one, namely, that a verb is a word which ex- [page 50] presses a state or an action. There is no question of person or number, and the moods are formed by adding suffixes. The mission of the verbal root and the suffixes is to express everything that in European languages is expressed by means of the verb itself together with coordinate and subordinate conjunctions. It also serves to make known the mood of the thought, such as negation, affirmation, doubt, possibility, causality, opposition, interrogation, or exclamation ; also, to indicate the social rank of the speaker, his interrogator, and the person of whom they are speaking. The adjective is a verb─that is to say that it always has the quality of one and is conjugated in the same way, and plays the same part in a sentence. Conversely, the verb proper often takes the place of an adjective. For construction, in Korean as in Japanese, the subject comes first, then the words indicating the tense, the words indicating place, the words indicating ways or means, and then all the various objects Only then the verb appears─or qualifying adjective — followed by the suffixes which correspond to our conjunctions and to our punctuation. The Korean language is also distinguished by a fairly large number of phonetic rules, which lead to changes of letters, and also by a mixing of the roots of certain suffixes. This is more than a mere uniting, for by means of it it approaches the flexible languages. The genius of this idiom is thus absolutely opposite to that of the Chinese, the construction of which is very similar to French, and which ignores all conjugation and all phonetic modification. Nevertheless, the Koreans have borrowed enormously from the Chinese language, and the fact can be explained by the difference of culture, which existed in the 15th century, between the material and pastoral tribes of Korea and their powerful neighbours in the East With the former, the social life, the arts, and general knowledge, and, in consequence, the language, too, were all in their infancy. But the latter had attained a perfected military organization;the administration rested on traditions more than a thousand years old;the[page 51] constitution of family life was of even older origin ; the beginnings of art and science were lost far back in the dim ages;and the written word had become a delicate instrument capable of setting forth any subject and expressing any thought

The uncivilized Koreans, dazzled by the lustre of this civilization, tried to acclimatize it in their country. Improved accommodation, the needs of the Government which was beginning to take shape, aspirations towards a new religion—all drove them towards China. For new ideas new words were needed, and the Korean dialects would have had to undergo an elaborate evolution in order to furnish them. It was simpler to use the medium which the Chinese brought with them. This intellectual deference cost this young nation less than did the official deference which the Chinese Empire exacted from that time onwards in all its dealing with the Peninsula. Chinese, then, was studied with enthusiasm, and was soon being used even to write Korean things. The same thing happened in Annam among the various Tartar tribes, and to a certain extent in Japan. If we want to find an analogy to this situation in Europe we must remember the long reign of the Latin tongue which lasted from the Roman Conquest up to the 13th century, and is lasting even till today.

By this intrusion of Chinese the literary development of Korea was arrested for centuries and permanently altered. In short, it is only the most common form of speech which is not full of Chinese expressions. One hears them from the lips of the lowest class of people ; one finds them in novels and in popular songs; and they form about half of the vocabulary of the usual mode of speech, though often they are much distorted in form, meaning, and pronun- ciation. These Chinese words play in Korean the part of indeclinable roots able to take case affixes, and to furnish adjectives and verbs, with the help of the auxiliary hata—do. The number of Chinese expressions used in the spoken language varies, of course, with the speaker and with the [page 52] matters under discussion. It is always the correct thing to include as many as possible. If it is a matter of felicitations or condolences, or of performing some ritual, the phrase will only include certain Korean terminations joined together with Chinese words, which would be incomprehensible to any uninformed listener. In romances and songs written in the common speech, Chinese words are almost as common, and are used in the same way. Quotations abound in them, generally in the form of allusions to deeds and personages which every one is supposed to know about It is the same with the songs which are not even written down, such as the OUEN TAL KO KA, for instance, and the LIPAIK (李白), the HAN SIN (韓信), and the MOUN WANG (文王), of which we have spoken.

The style which resembles spoken conversation and romances most closely is that used by office clerks,—the RI MOUN (吏文), of which I have already spoken in connection with the characters of SYEL TCHONG (薛聰). The native language plays a large part in the construction of it, and for one thing and another the particles written in RI TOO (吏讀) are purely Korean. But apart from some adverbs and some administrative terms in common use, all the rest is Chinese. The nouns and verbs are written by means of ideograms used in a sense akin to their original meaning and pronounced according to the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese language. The Court Gazette, although entirely in Chinese ideograms, is in reality written in a mixed language, of which the vocabulary and phraseology are akin to those of the government offices. Thus the idea of “inspecting” is expressed by the two characters TCHEK KAN (摘놂奸) ; that of is rendered by MA RYEN (磨鍊);beans are called THAI (太);cotton cloth PAIK MOK (白木), ORI which means a duck is written OUEL OI ( 月 外). These expressions either have no meaning in Chinese, or quite a different one. The very general of use OUI (爲), to do, and TJYA (者), concerning, evidently comes from the frequent use in Korean of the auxiliary hata, and the particle nan. SA (事) (affair, [page 53] business) put at the end of a sentence ; the imperative rendered simply by the verb without an auxiliary character ; the brevity of certain phrases deprived of the verb, and in which affirmation is expressed by means of the particles hako, haya and hane added by the reader ; the frequent omission of the verb at the end of the phrase—all these peculiarities go to make the style of the Court Gazette a curious mixture between the RI MOUN (吏文) and the literary language.

The literary language is no other than Chinese, but it presents many varieties, all fairly similar, yet forming a scarcely perceptible gradation between a style which the Chinese would declare incomprehensible and one which would satisfy their taste. The differences are chiefly a matter of construction and expression. The Koreans sought out ancient expressions and employed them without any great discernment, and the finest imitation would be marred by some unskilfulness. But, above all, the Korean style, even when closely resembling the model, lacks that cadence which only a Chinese scholar knows how to put into a phrase; which only he can completely appreciate, and which consists in a mingling of different tones, not according to any precise rule, but appreciated by the ear. In the 15th century, SYE KE JYENG (徐居正) announced that the Koreans had a style of their own, differing from that in use in China under the various dynasties, but since then the meal seems to have changed and the strict imitation of Chinese to have become the rule. Just as the Latin authors of the Decadence copied the masters of the beginning of the Roman Empire, and as the Ciceronians of the Renaissance refused to express themselves except in Latin prose and verse bearing the stamp of a better epoch, so the Koreans tried to express their Korean ideas in Chinese prose and verse.

In order to reclothe them in this foreign language, they began to cast them in a foreign mould. And from that to adopting outside ideas, liking them for themselves, and [page 54] wanting to see them carried out in Korea, was an easy step. For many years the Koreans did not try to be original ; novelty displeased them;invention was unpopular. The secret, they said, of good work is to copy the ancient writers who knew better than we da But the practical minds of the Chinese kept them from wishing to make facts and reality correspond to the ancient style and ideas, and, apart from one or two costly experiences, one felt that life in China changed as elsewhere. The Korean, more idealistic than the Chinese, remained always the slave of his idea. He retained with jealous care the old style and the old customs, and always remained faithful to the big Chinese dynasties of SONG and MING (宋, 明). This system of imitation wore out his native vigour ; thus it happened that, for reasons necessitated by treaties with foreigners, instead of using, as appropriate to this new function, the national style of the official correspondence between nobles, they insisted, with varying success, on copying the language written in Peking by the TSONG LI government

**CHAPTER IV.**

Imitation of China is as apparent in the literature as in the writing and language of Korea. I use the word litera- ture here in its widest sense, to include all the activities of the mind which have been expressed in print It is of literature in this wide sense that I will now treat, having indicated in the foregoing chapters in what type of characters and in what language these books are written. Moreover, I will not limit myself to speaking of works composed by Koreans, for they have read, copied, and reprinted a number of Chinese books which have guided and upheld their spirits right up to the present day. To pass over in silence these faithful tutors of the Korean people would be to neglect an important aspect of the subject and lay oneself open to misunderstanding it entirely. The earliest books in the Chinese tongue which the monks brought to Korea were naturally works dealing with their religion. I do not know whether such editions had been in existence ever since the SIN RA (新羅) era, and I have but little information about books copied or printed in this remote period. But there is nothing impossible about such editions of Buddhist oooks having been in existence before the KO RYE (高麗) era since the foreign religion had developed rapidly during that time. The kings were cremated according to Buddhist rites, mon- asteries were built, and the enthusiasm for religious orders was so great that it became necessary to severely limit the number of people who were allowed to become monks.

In KO RYE (高麗) the vogue of Buddhism was no less striking. The king always retained the services of a famous Buddhist monk who had the title of “Tutor to the King.” They caused the sacred writings to be carried at the head of processions and a special adviser was charged with the duty of editing the lives of the Saints. A few works of this second period are still extant The most important is the big edition of the Tripitaka engraved at the end of the 10th century and of which a specimen, printed in the 15th[page 56] century, may be seen in Tokyo Under the present dynasty, on the other hand, Buddhism has suffered an eclipse. I have only seen two Buddhist editions published by royal de- cree, that of the “Mahavaipulya purna buddha sutra prasa- nartha sutra” of 1465, and that of the POUL SYEL TAI PO POU MOU EUN TJYOUNG KYENG (佛說大報父母恩重經) of 1796, though other Buddhist works printed at the expense of the monasteries, or of the faithful, have been fairly numerous^

Buddhistic ideas which once had such a great influence in Korea have left few traces, except in the existence of monasteries, some of which are richly endowed, and others that have fallen into decay. As for the priests, they play no part in the affairs of the state, and are of a low social class. The Buddhist divinities, here as elsewhere, were either mingled or confused with the spirits formerly worshipped, the same observances being used with equally little enthu- siasm. It has become merely a matter of contributing so many sticks of incense, or bowls of rice, and so many genuflexions, in order to obtain protection, riches, and posterity— in a word, happiness in this life and the next, and for such a contract deep sentiments are unnecessary. It is sufficient to put the spirits as much as possible in your debt The idea of reward for the righteous and hell for the wicked seems in Korea to have had an entirely Buddhist origin, but one cannot get away from it in stories and novels where its use occasionally results in amusing incidents.

The influence of Taoism was much smaller than that of Buddhism and no trace is left of it today. At the beginning of the 7th century the king of KO KOU RYE (高句麗) obtained Taoist literature from China. MA TOAN LIM (馬端臨) states that a Taoist monastery was built in the capital in the 12th century, but if this religion took any hold on people s minds it was rather in its capacity as a cult of the stars, which existed officially till the end of 16th century, and of doctrines concerning astrology and geoscopy. It remains to be proved whether this cult and these theories were really the result of Taoism, or whether they were not rather con-[page 57] nected with local superstitions and old beliefs from China on the subject of cosmology, of which Taoism is after all only a systemised expression. This religion has made so little impression on people’s minds, that even educated Koreans are ignorant of the fact that it once existed in their country. They look upon it merely as a doctrine of mystical hygiene, which promises, among other blessings, immortality to those who practise it

Recently, following the prolonged residence of several Chinese functionaries in Korea in 1882 and 1884, there has been a sort of revival of Taoism. Possibly this movement had begun earlier, but I cannot discover how it originated. It seems to have soon died out, and Taoism has scarcely more adherents than in the past However that may be, a number of works were printed at that time on the subject of this belief especially concerning the cults of the God of War, the God of Literature and the God LIU TONG PIN (呂洞賓). Popular editions were made, also some translations into Korean, and it is these books which figure most largely in the section which I have devoted to Taoism. The others I have found mentioned particularly in the documents dealing with Taoist studies before the 16th century. Finally, the NAM HOA KYENG (南華經) and the KAM YEUNG PHIEN (感應篇) owe their popularity, the former to its intrinsic literary value and the latter to its moral value. Koreans have written nothing original on the subject of Taoism.

When we come to Confucianism we touch the very heart of Korean thought Social and administrative constitution, philo ophy, conceptions of history and literature — all, for the Korean, spring from Confucianism, and specula-tion, observation and criticism, enthusiasm ana common sense and curiosity all lead back to it It is impossible to get any true conception of this corner of the world unless one takes into account both the intrinsic qualities of Con-fucianism and what it has developed into in the Peninsula.

It would be a grave mistake (though one that is often made) to judge Confucianism as a religion by the same [page 58] standards as either Taoism or Buddhism, just because it shares with these two competitors the inspiration of Chinese thought. If religion is a doctrine一more or less worked out and self-contained—which recognizes expressly or tacitly the existence of forces superior to man or outside him, and which regulates the attitude he must take towards these forces, either to master or conciliate them, then Confucianism may undoubtedly be said to contain a religion. But it has a wider compass than any other religion. It is quite true that the great religions, both ancient ana modern, do not confine themselves to laying down dogma and prescribing ritual, but include also moral teaching. But with these, the moral teaching is the result of the theology, and is just a part of the greater thing called religion. Confucius reversed this order. He put the moral and social precept at the base and made religion simply the application of these precepts. The sage, in fact, concerns himself very little with souls, he rarely speaks of them, and when questioned one day on the subject he refused to discuss it His thoughts were set in an entirely different direction. He accepted men and the society of his time as he found them; he accepted also the traditions handed down by the ancestors, and out of all this he drew up the rules of conduct founded on the authority of the ancients. He did not wish to change society; he only sought to regulate its progress along the path outlined by the ancestors. Moral reflections are present, but morality as understood by Confucius embraces a singularly wide field. It includes all living society, and, through worship, extends to the dead who are associated with their descendants, and even includes heaven─a vague term which indicates any sort of higher power. Moreover, in worship, as in all else, Confucius only wished to preserve that which was rooted in antiquity. All this teaching was summed up in the word Hiao which we translate (very inadequately) as filial piety. It is indeed, primarily, the respect of the son for his father and all his ancestors, but these ancestors, after their death, continue to live in their[page 59] tombs, or near the tablets which represent them. They have all sorts of needs which piety commands shall be satisfied, and they acknowledge this form of worship by affording their descendants protection.

 The social system, which is not wanting in grandeur, was not the work of Confucius. He found all the elements already in Chinese society, and he merely gave them a logical connection, and, by weeding out all foreign admixtures, especially those relating to forces of nature and occult powers, brought them together under the motive of filial piety and gave them a more adequate expression. This selection was made with fine logic and breadth of vision, and the system evolved rested on purely human instincts and could be stretched to suit different circumstances of time and place. The ideas of Confucius were equally suitable to feudal China before the Christian era, and to the extremely democratic China which we now know. They have held sway in Japan and have taken root in Korea and in Annam. For the rest, when I speak of Confucius, I do not pretend to be capable of deciding how much was the personal work of this sage of the kingdom of RO,(魯) and how much his immediate disciples and his editors in the HAN (漢) dynasty contributed to the making of this body of doctrine. An examination of this question would be out of place here, and if I use the name of Confucius and Confucianism, it is because it is convenient to use these words to designate the precise deeds and ideas which I have tried to describe.

It was probably in the HAN (澳) era, and as a reaction to the persecutions of SHI HOANG TJEI (始皇帝) that scholars, that is to say, those who dedicated themselves to the study and observance of the precepts of Confucianism, began to form themselves into a distinct body. Worshipping Confucius, “the teacher of 10,000 generations”, proud of their intellectual familiarity with the Master, and guardians of his word, they were full of scorn for all those who adhered to heterodox doctrines or did not dedicate themselves to[page 60] moral research. These picked men did not constitute a caste, but were a kind of secret society, a sect, who were the trustees, not of a religious dogma, but of a social theory. Although based entirely on authority, the authority belonged only to the Books. The constitution remained too fluctuating and the internal strength too variable for the sect ever to have become a Church. Though enjoying the respect of the people, and often receiving imperial favours, it had always to share its influence with the Taoists and Buddhists, whose ideas had taken greater hold of the public imagination. Continuers and propagators of the doctrines of Confucius—the scholars —taught, with a high moral ideal, the unconditional admiration for, and imitation of, antiquity. They scorned all those who had not the good fortune to be related to them or to share their ideas In consideration of the fact that the barbarians appreciated the venerable superiority of the Chinese sages, their contempt was in their case tempered by indulgence, but they had nothing but hatred for any who would not bow down to them. Thus they preserved the integrity of the old Chinese spirit and raised around China a moral barrier which neither Buddhism nor defeat could break through, and which, more than differences of race and politics, has prevented modern civilization from penetrating the whole of the Far East

But, though in the case of the majority of scholars Con-fucianism appeared so intolerant, the case was different with the people, and even with the Government. There the practical character of the race asserted itself, and moral formulas became a veneer thinly covering fundamental human instincts. The innate superstition of mankind cropped up beneath it, and every one. thinking it advisable to be on good terms with as many divinities as possible, practised Buddhism, Taoism and the worship of ancestors impartially.

Very little information has come down to us concerning the beginning of Confucianism in Korea. In the first years of the 5th century PAIK TJYEI (百濟) already possessed the[page 61] LON O (論語), which a scholar of the country took across to Japan. In 650, the sou KYENG (書經) had apparently already been known for a long time in SIN RA (新羅). It was at the end of the 7th century that SYEL TCHONG (薛 聰) fixed the style of reading classical books, so that these works must have been studied at this period, and it was from them that part of the teaching, given in the upper schools of the Three Kingdoms, was taken. At the beginning of the 8th century a picture of Confucius was placed in the College of Men of Letters. In the 8th and 9th centuries a comparatively large number of Koreans, about fifty in number, went to China to pass the examinations, and some became officials. It seems certain, therefore, that the basis of instruction given in the kingdom of SIN RA (新 羅) during this period must have been Confucianism. This fact is indeed definitely confirmed by the MOUN HEN PI KO (文獻 備考) which gives a list of the works which were to be studied in 864 and 880. The dynasty of KO RYE (高麗) followed the same policy, founding Confucian schools in the capital, in the principal towns of the kingdom, and in the country towns. Libraries were established and Confucian books were printed and distributed among these libraries. All these establishments received endowments in rice-fields and slaves. Examinations in the Chinese style were instituted in 958 and were necessary in order to gain admittance to Government offices.

But at this period the development of Confucianism was purely administrative, and did not affect the habits of the people. They kept their old customs, and their only attachment was to Buddhism. Even the kings, in spite of the spasmodic protection they afforded the Chinese religion, really followed the Hindu one; for they had the Buddhist books magnificently printed, kept their favours for the monasteries, and gave the monks influential places on their councils. The rigid principles of Confucianism, which could not be reconciled to the customs of the country, alienated the common people and chilled their devotion. During the whole of the[page 62] first period of the KO RYE (高麗) monarchy only one name is mentioned, that TCHOI TCHUNG (崔冲), 10th century, as having interested himself actively in this doctrine, for he founded schools to teach its principles. The celebrated AN YOU (安裕), living three centuries later, bitterly deplored this state of affairs, and grieved to see the incense smoking in the monasteries and the priests living on the fat of the land, while the temples of Confucius were falling in ruins. I can find no mention of the works of this scholar, but at least we know that he strove to uphold the creed of Confucius by offering 100 slaves to the temple of the sage. His action had its effect on his disciples PAIK I TJYENG (白頣正), OU THAK (禹掉), and RI TJYEI HYEN (李齊賢), the latter being one of the most prolific writers of the KO RYE (高麗) period. After them TCHOI HAI (崔瀣), KWON HAN KONG(權漢功), RI KOK (李穀), RI TAL TCHYOUNG (李達衷), RI TJIP (李集) and KIM KOU YONG (金九容 ) carried on the tra-dition of AN YOU (安裕) and were the forerunners of the great scholars of the middle of the 14th century.

At the beginning of that century, in 1313, an important event took place for the future of Confucianism in Korea. The Koreans made a purchase in Nanking of a considerable number of books, which had originally come from the Royal Library of the SONG (宋) dynasty, that had been scattered some time before, and among which were found the works of TCHOU HI (朱瀣) (1130-1200). Native authors have not failed to notice that this fact coincided with the sudden renascence of Confucianism which took place at this time. It is difficult to prove that the purchase at Nanking directly affected Korean philosophy; but what cannot be denied is the tremendous influence on the country of the great philosopher and historian TCHOU HI (朱熹). He was the last comer of the school which had flourished during the SONG (宋) period. This successor of the TCHANG JAI (張載), the TCHEOU TOEN YI (周敦頣) and the brothers TCHENG, revised, deepened, and co-ordinated, in a vast system, the work of his predecessors. It was the first time that an[page 63] author, though examining so profoundly the theories of Confucius and Mencius, had yet managed to remain ortho-dox, studying always with an eye to antiquity, and interpreting the ideas of ancient sages in the light of actual facts— historian and critic, moralist and metaphysician all in one seeking the motives underlying events, and the principles of existence and human knowledge underlying motives.

The study of Taoism and Buddhism, to which TCHOU HI devoted so much of his youth had trained his intellect to abstract speculation, and the high moral standards and imposing social organization of Confucianism agreed well with his orderly mind. He strove to find a metaphysical and psychological basis for the creed, which up till then had been almost lacking, or at least had never been made clear. The success of his teachings, which completed and enlarged those of antiquity while preserving the appearance of having been drawn from it, was immense. His writ-ings have become, after the old classics, the recognized monuments of orthodoxy, and it was not till a century and a half ago, that a School of Modern Criticism grew up in China, which questioned whether this vast system had really been contained in the ancient writers. This revived Confucianism一broader and more humane than the first─was extraordinarily well suited to the Koreans, who are less practical and more addicted to abstract speculation than the Chinese. Buddhism in spite of being suited to the common people, and perhaps because of it, stayed too entirely popularized, and always contented itself with a teaching which applied purely to everyday life一compromising always with the superstitions of the poor and the vices of the great. Monasteries became famous for their rapaciousness, often meddled in state affairs, and gave the most reprehensible counsels and examples.

The Buddhistic doctrine, even on a slight examination, appears to be destructive of family life and civil society. More than once since the SIN RA (新羅) era the kings were forced to forbid or limit the transforming of houses into [page 64] monasteries, and the rush to adopt the profession of monk, which threatened to depopulate the State. In sharp contrast to all this, Confucianism, with its rigid moral code, presented an ideal of family life which was greatly superior to that found in Korea. It acknowledged the aristocratic heir- archy which was already in existence, strengthened the government, and depicted a far higher social state, which agreed with the aspirations of all the noblest and most intelligent minds that Korea contained. But, up to the time of TCHOU HI (朱熹), the Koreans had found nothing in Confucianism to satisfy their metaphysical and idealistic tendencies. Neither had the efforts of AN YOU (安裕) met with any success, and it was only after the introduction of some books of the SONG (宋) school by ou TCAHK, and above all, after the purchase made in Nanking, that the Confucian movement began to spread rapidly.

It was this period that saw the rise of TJYENG MONG TJYOU (鄭夢周), better known under his surname PHO EUN (圃隱), and his friend RI SAIK (李穡), surnamed MOK EUN

These were zealous partisans of Confucianism, who profited by their official positions to serve its cause by all means in their power. The former remained faithful, even to death, to his convictions and to the loyalty which the Chinese sages enjoined. He was killed in 1392, striving to defend his master, the king KONG YANG (恭讓), against the sedition out of which the present dynasty rose to power. Still today, near Song Do, they shew the bridge where TCHENG MONG TJYOU (鄭夢周) was killed, the stones of which, on certain days, still become red with the blood of the victim. From that time on, the existence of Con-fucianism was assured, and it went on developing, thanks to the official instruction given in the temple of Confucius and in the provincial schools, and thanks also to the Korean custom of gathering together groups of young people and grown men round a famous sage. In this way they could profit by the teaching of the master, as formerly the young Athenians went to listen to the words of wisdom which fell[page 65] from the lips of Socrates or Plata Those who had the good fortune to sit at the feet of the sages remembered their precepts and repeated their teaching. Often the master would choose one among them to be, after his death, the appointed heir of his thoughts. Thus the pupils of PHO EUN (圃隱) were numerous. One must mention, for instance, TJYENG TO TJYEN (鄭道傅), HA RYOUN (河崙 ), PYEN KYEI RYANG (卞季良), and KOUEN KEUN (權近), an ancestor of whom, KOUEN POU, was already renowned as a moralist, and whose brother and several descendants have also been famous scholars. These men that I have mentioned, with some others such as SIN SYOUK JYOU ( 申叔舟), SYENG SAM MOUN (成三問), and SYE KO TJYENG (徐居正), who were indirectly connected with the School of PHO EUN (圃隱), became famous in the 15th century as writers, scholars and high officials.

For Confucianism became hereafter a proper power among high officials, nobles and kings. Undoubtedly, the nobles adopted it, in the first place, because it distinguished them from the common people, but they became so saturated with the Chinese teaching, that they grew to regard scholarship as the most brilliant appendage and hall-mark of their caste. The kings of the new dynasty are the elect of the nobility, they share their sentiments, and recognize in the Confucian teaching about sovereigns and subjects a precious instrument for upholding their power. As a result of its long repression, Confucianism was instinct with the desire to expand and to retaliate. When, therefore, it found itself up against nothing which could counterbalance it, and felt itself all the stronger for the country being now consolidated, whereby news spread more rapidly from one end to another and swept and penetrated the whole country, its precepts acquired the imperious authority of dogma. The moral and social system took on the guise of a state religion, which persecuted the dissenting and unfaithful Scholars were forbidden to read Buddhist or Taoist books, or to use expressions drawn from RO JA (老子) or TCHANG JA[page 66] (莊子) In the examinations, compositions containing some of these terms on the index were at once dismissed. The pupils in the Confucian temples were forbidden to watch the dances which took place towards the end of each year in the streets and which were connected with old popular beliefs. Royal decrees reproved the negligent The monasteries in Seoul were destroyed and the monks no longer allowed to enter the city where the king resided.

The traditional distinctions of the different Buddhist sects were suppressed, and all sorts of obstacles were put in the way of becoming a Buddhist monk. A priest callea PO OU (普雨) had had great popular success through performing miracles. The scholars of the Confucian temple at once demanded that the king should forbid these activities. In a virtuous moment, the king, with justice, shewed himself recalcitrant The scholars promptly abandoned the temple and retired to their homes. As a result, the king gave in, and PO OU (普雨) was exiled to Quelpart, where he soon died. At Song Do, there was a chapel where the people met together to celebrate the ancient rites mingled with supersti- tion. The scholars burnt it and destroyed this old form of worship. But it was the customs of the people that drew down their strongest reprimands. They, therefore, reformed family life, which was indefinite and had kept up the old barbarous customs, and remodelled it on Chinese lines. Marriages between people of the same name were officially forbidden.

In the 18th century they went still further and forbade marriages between people of the same name even though they came from different districts and were, therefore, of different origin and had no relationship. One may mention that in China itself the law is less severe, and marriages are permitted if the families are not of the same origin. Remarriage of widows was forbidden. Three years of mourning was prescribed following the death of parents, and each family was commanded to hold sacrifices for ancestors, which were limited to two or three generations back, according to [page 67] the social standing of the family in question. For burials Chinese rules were established, and cremation was only all-owed in the case of Buddhist monks. Rules for rites on at-taining manhood were laid down in imitation of the Chinese. In everything Korea was forced to model herself on her west- ern neighbour, and her people to become a nation after the heart of Confucius.

At the same time that the scholars attacked popular superstitions and imposed Chinese customs, they united with each other, and formed a party which gradually became more and more powerful The temple of Confucius, in which we saw the scholars imposing their will on the king, became the natural centre of this organization. The heads of this temple, though nominally officials appointed by the king, were really assigned to the king by the votes of the scholars, and were more frequently leaders of Confucian opposition than representatives of authority. Every district had an official school for teaching the doctrine. At first, special officials or directors were at the head of these schools; but these officials soon disappeared, and for over two centuries the scholars have chosen their own head, either directly or by nominating him to the local magistrate, and they have thus become independent Chapels dedicated to the worship of various celebrated personages, Korean or Chinese, and colleges where the scholars of the same school assembled to discuss the works of their Master, were all well endowed by private individuals and exempted from taxation ; and they multiplied, from 1550 onward, to such an extent that they became a danger to the state revenues. A certain number were suppressed and severe restrictions were imposed on others.

But nothing availed. There was no district which aia not have one of these schools and many had five or six. Official schools that had become independent—chapels and colleges—all became centres of groups that examined into everything concerning the doctrine, where one discussed af-fairs of state, and where opinions were formed and opposi- [page 68]tion to the government was consolidated. All these local associations were linked up with the temple of Confucius in Seoul. People did not fail to address remonstrances to the king and to resist such orders as displeased them. But the scholars had an infallible remedy for this. They stopped their sacrifices, ceased their interpretations, and returned to their homes. Almost always the king gave in. Two kings only shewed themselves favourable to Buddhism, violating the precepts of Confucius, and ignoring the reproofs of the priests. Naturally, members of their families who were backed by the scholars were found quite ready to depose them in the interests of “pure doctrine.’’ The princes were voted unworthy and deprived for ever of their royal titles, which passed to a usurper who was a fervent Confucianist— at least under such circumstances.

However, this ever-increasing influence did not grow uniformly or without difficulties. The pupils of PHO EUN (圃隱) were much less philosophic than their master, and nearly all became statesmen, and it was only at the end of the 15th century that a new school arose which could be compared with that of the 15th century. KIM TJONG TJIK (金宗直), surnamed TCHYEM PHIL (佔畢), collected a large number of pupils, but he had a dispute with the prince of YEN SAN (燕山), who accused him of being the author of the TYO EUI TJEI POU (吊義帝賦) and put him to death in 1498. At the same time his 14 partisans were bastinado-ed, exiled or killed. Later, in 1504, they resumed the persecution of some of the adherents of TCHYEM PHIL (佔畢). Partisans of KIM TJONG TJIK (金宗直), surnamed RCHYEM PHIL (佔舉), were HONG KOUI TAL (洪貴達); SIM WON (深源), Prince of TJYOU KYEI ; (朱溪) KIM IL SON(金馹孫); KOUEN O POK (權五福); KANG KYENG SYE (姜景叙); TCHOI POU (崔浦) RI TJYOU (李胃); TJO OUI (曺偉) ; TJYO OUEN KEUI(趙元紀 ); TJYENG HEUI RYANG (鄭希良); NAM HYO ON (南孝温); HONG EUN TCHYOUNG (洪彥忠) ; PAK EUN (朴誾), and KIM HONG PHIL (金宏弼). NAM HYO ON (南孝温), already dead, was condemned as the author of a writing injurious[page 69] to the memory of the king SYEI TJO (世祖). His coffin was opened and his body destroyed.

In 1519 TJYO KOANG TJO (趙光祖), Chief Censor, who importuned the king with his counsels on the subject of repudiating his first wife, was exiled and killed, and his disciple and friend KIM AN KOUK (金安國) was exiled and only recalled in 1537. At this time also KIM TJYENG (金淨), Minister of Justice, was bastinadoed and exiled to QUELPART (濟州) where he committed suicide. RI TJA (李耔), member of the Grand Council, was also exiled, then pardoned, and then again exiled. By a just working of the law of compensation RI HAING the enemy of TJYO KOANG TJO (趙光祖), and his partisans had to retire into the country to escape their vengeance. In 1547 one again finds exiles. The history of these persecutions has been written several times. One cannot be surprised that in such troublous times many famous scholars, such as NAM MYENG (南冥), MAI OUEL TANG (梅月堂) and others, preferred to live in peace, and either withdrew from public affairs or refused to mix in them.

With the middle of the 16th century there began a period of peace and expansion for Confucianism. It is dominated by the names of two or three great men- RI HOANG (李滉) surnamed THOI KYEI (退溪), SYENG HON (成渾), surnamed OU KYEI (牛溪), and RI I (李珥), surnamed RYOUL KOK (栗谷), whose reputations as philosophers, moralists, and heads of schools reach, and even surpass, those of TJYENG MONG TJYOU (鄭夢周) himself. Their writings have been frequently published and are still eagerly studied today by Korean scholars. Their biographies and the history of their schools have been written more than once. Stories abound concerning their love for Confucianism and their respect for its rites, their understanding of the human heart and their integrity. All three were dead before the Japanese invasion, but their pupils, RYOU SYENG RYONG (柳成龍) particularly, distinguished themselves by their courage, kim tjyang saing (金長生), pupil of ri i (李珥), [page 70] has left some profound studies on ritual. The Koreans have great memories of this school of philosophers, and of KIM SYANG HEN KIM YOUK (金堉) and TJYANG YOU (張維) whom it produced. It is also connected with the famous SONG SI RYEL (宋時烈). This man was the most prolific of all the Korean philosophers, and his principal works in the Royal Library number no less than 120. I saw one edition in 103 volumes large quarto.

The admiration which he inspired is shown by the title TJA (子) (sage), which was bestowed on him, and which was the same as that given to TCHOU HI (朱熹), and even to Mencius and Confucius. As Grand Councellor of the king HYEN TJONG (顯宗), he upheld, in connection with the funeral rites of a predecessor of this prince, an opinion which the king had adopted. However, for fifty years past the Korean nobility had been divided into two rival parties. The party opposed to that of Song adopted with ardour a contrary opinion. It came into power with the accession of the king SYOUK TJONG (肅宗), and SONG SI RYEL (宋時烈) and his partisans, the NO RON (老論), were banished. In the struggle which ensued, HU MOK, (許穆) chief of the NAM IN, (南人) enemies of SONG SI RYEL (宋時烈), died in exile in Quelpart. Song himself was put to death at the age of 85. From that time on the two parties regarded each other with irreconcilable hatred and thoughts of vengeance. The end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries, form one long story of bloody reprisals, exiles, bastinadoeings, executions, chapels built and destroyed, coffins opened and the ashes scattered to the winds. All the energy of the king YENG JYONG (英宗) was needed to pacify the violence of these hatreds, which have endured, though slightly softened, until the present day.

It will be seen from this account, what a large part Confucianism has played in Korea, and how impossible it is to understand the history of this country if one leaves this teaching out of account

Besides numerous Korean editions of the Chinese [page 71] classics and of the works of TCHOU HI (朱熹), especially his so HAK (小學), the Confucian theories gave rise to a very considerable amount of literature. Though commentators on the classics are rare, original works intended to explain anew and develop the Chinese ideas are certainly not wanting. They deal especially with morals, metaphysics, and rites. Among the first, one must mention SAM KANG HAING SIL TO (三綱行實圖), and the I RYOUN HAING SIL TO (二倫行實圖). They set forth the five relationships resulting from filial piety and give examples. The HYO HAING ROK (孝行錄), and the TON HYO ROK (欽孝錄) deal with similar subjects; also two or three works or RI EUN CHYEK (李彥廸) and of TJUENG YE TCHYANG (鄭汝昌), which are elaborations of the TAI HAK (大學) and the TCHUNG YONG (中庸). KIM TJYEUNG KOOK (金正國) has also written several moral trea-tises. In metaphysics the Koreans have been concerned chiefly with explaining the theories of the SONG school about the supreme principle and the two primordial principles, and the origin of the world and the nature of man and of the spirits. TJYENG TO TJYEN (鄭道傳), KOUEN KEUN (權近), KOUEN TCHAI (權探), NAM HYO ON, and THOI KYEI (退溪) have left famous works on these questions. As to the Rites,—this tissue of minute prescriptions regulating the most trivial actions of life and settling what attitude should be taken in all circumstances—the Korean writers supported the very sound theory that all action taken by the body reacts on the spirit, and they hoped that by harmony of movement they would produce harmony of thought Not only were Chinese works, notably those of TCHOU HI (朱熹) reprinted, anotated, expounded and discussed right up to the present century, but also a fairly large number of new works were written.

The study of Korean philosophy is not without interest. One will not find in the thought of this particular race of Asiatics either the depth of the Hindu, or the clearness of the Greek ; but perhaps one will not find it lacking in ismilarity to the academic philosophy, which is submitted[page 72] like that of the Koreans, to authorities, and imprisoned in a net-work of formulas. Certainly one does not find in it the continuous progress which is the mark of western philosophy. It would be fairly difficult, for instance, to show any appreciable difference between the ideas of the 15th and those of the 17th centuries. One might, perhaps, say that the writers of the 14th and early 15th centuries studied chiefly moral philosophy, while metaphysics was the work of the school of THOI KYEI (退溪) and some isolated writers of the 15th and 16th centuries, and the Rites aroused a special interest in the 16th and 17th centuries. But these divisions must not be accepted as exact, and one must remember that there are many exceptions.

**CHAPTER V.**

It is not only in the works devoted to morals, metaphysics and rites that Confucian ideas are set forth. One finds them developed and paraphrased in a multitude of treatises, letters, reports, articles on ritual, prayers, and other things such as after-addresses, prefaces and dedications. And these various kinds of writings form about three quarters of all the collections of articles attributed to famous men of letters, which are one of the most important branches of Korean literature. Under a less dogmatic and more disguised form the Chinese moral precepts, such as filial piety, loyalty to the sovereign, justice, modesty, and courage to uphold the opinions which one had adopted, reappear in nearly every sentence of all works of this type. Often they are just indicated by a word—recalled, rather than express-ed But they are fundamental everywhere, and to ignore them is to destroy the deepest and most intimate part of these writings of Korean thinkers, just as it would be with our literature, if, when writing of the Middle Ages and the 17th century, we were to ignore the inspiration of Christian thought For the Korean these moral ideas are the foun- tain head of the art of writing. Style and literary values are subordinated to orthodoxy of thought A literary sage is always ranked above an eminent writer. A man of letters worthy of the name will ignore or condemn any ideas which do not come from the ancients, just as a western scholar might repudiate ideas which had not been found first in the Bible or in Aristotle.

These ancient thoughts have to be expressed in archaic language, and the writer must endeavour to model himself on the classical writers, without however hoping ever to equal them. Originality both of form and substance is condemned, and neither new ideas nor choice expressions are desired. Many are the Royal Decrees which point out these “dangers’’ to men of letters and candidates for examinations. The result is that when a writer finds a pas- [page 74] sage or a phrase in a classical work which corresponds to his own independent thought on the subject, he makes no effort to put it in an original way of his own; he just copies the passage as it stands, rejoiced to find that he can cover himself with the cloak of authority of the ancients. Side by side with the direct, acknowledged quotation one finds also that a phrase or expression has been borrowed without any attempt to indicate its origin, and it is left to the reader to discover the source of the terms used. The use of allusion is common, and often just two words are quoted in order to indicate a whole page from a classical author or some anecdote known from antiquity. In that way they will often change the meaning, giving it one quite remote from the original, but which it will be impossible to understand unless the original is known to one. These quotations, borrowings and allusions bring back to the reader’s mind familiar passages of works often perused, presenting familiar ideas which he recognizes with pleasure and which he is proud of knowing. The modern writer thus benefits in part by the favour in which the ancient writers are held, by recalling their words in actions. The reader, priding himself on possessing the education and sagacity necessary to understand these difficult passages, feels all the more well disposed towards the author. In this way the style becomes a kind of mosaic, and he whose memory is the best furnished, and who shews the most ingenuity in joining together these fragments of phrases, is recognized as the greatest writer. This system is very far from producing the natural and simple style which we look for, and it leads to the compilation of those encyclopedic collections, arranged according to subject, where one is sure to find everything that is known on a given matter, and which are so numerous in the Far East. It is more often as catalogues and lists of quotations, than as models of literature, that many Chinese works by celebrated authors have been reprinted in Korea. In prose writing the Korean enjoys comparative liberty, for he does not study the MOON CHANG (文章), that book of [page 75] Chinese rhetoric which is stricter and more full of subdivisions than our classical rhetoric. But in poetry, though the system is the same, the difficulty is increased by the claims of scansion to such an extent that original inspiration is debarred. Koreans have copied the Chinese forms. The ode, for shortness and strictness of form, might be compared to the sonnet, but to a sonnet bristling with the joy of minute limitations. It is the method most usually employed, and the wide use to which it is put shews up clearly the artificial and subtle side of Chinese and Korean literature. In the ode (詩) the number of lines in the poem is definitely fixed The lines are all composed of either 5 or 7 charac- ters. Each line is complete in itself. Beginning a clause in one line and completing it in another is a thing unknown. Lines rhyme together in couplets by the last character only. The rhymes are fixed by rhyme-tables in which all the characters of the tongue are divided into a certain number of classes. All the characters of one class rhyme with each other, but it is not permissible to rhyme a character with itself. Besides the characters which rhyme, the tone of nearly all the others is fixed by strict rules. One can thus project all the forms of which the ode is capable, and the compositition of an ode consists simply in filling in this ready-made frame work with ready-made expressions ingeniously arranged. It will be seen that there is no scope for originality in these officially-provided rhyme-endings Irregular verses (Poo) (賦) have less strict rules. The length of the Poo is not limited; it is divided into couplets ending with the same rhyme,—the rhyme being confined always to verses of couplets. In each couplet the lines are almost always of equal length, but the length of the lines in each couplet is left to the choice of the poet. It is forbidden to begin a phrase in one couplet and end it in another. This style of poetry is always descriptive.

The epigram (MYENG) (銘) is composed of lines of four characters, but the length of the poem is not fixed. The rules for rhymes are the same as in the ode, but the accent-[page 76] uation of the other characters is much less fixed. This style, copied from the old Chinese poetry, allows of much more liberty than the others. It is used especially for the eulogies which are put at the end of inscriptions. It would take too long, and would not be sufficiently interesting, to consider in detail all forms of Korean poetry. All through one will find the rules for parallelism, which demand that two symmetrical phrases shall contain the same number of characters, and that each shall be used in the same way, one word playing the part of noun, verb, and particle, having to correspond with another word playing exactly the same part in the opposite phrase, and having either an analogous or contrasting meaning. This parallelism is strictly observed, even in some forms of prose, which become thus a link between true prose and poetry. The freedom left to writers in any of the poetic forms has always been small. The Chinese, through the centuries, have imposed more and more rules on the writing of poetry and have, greatly to the detriment of inspiration, suppressed the liberties which the classical authors, even those of the TANG (唐) dynasty, enjoyed. The Koreans, however, though imitating it, did not slavishly copy this severity, but took more kindly to the more liberal rules of the ancient classical period.

The esteem in which poetry, particularly the strictest forms of it, is held is shown today in the frequent use to which it is put A piece of poetry is one of the items of composition set in the examinations for public offices. No festival takes place at the Palace without felicitations in rhymed prose, or odes, or compositions of various sorts being presented to the King. They also sing hymns in verse. When a building is nearing completion, the laying of the main beam is the occasion for the composition of pieces in rhymed prose and verse. Often they are engraved on a wooden tablet which is hung in full view inside a tomb. In the case of the funeral of a king, or of a member of his family, each high official will compose a verse which is written on a white silk banner and carried in the funeral proces-[page 77] sion. An epitaph or any kind of commemorative inscription cannot be terminated without an epigram. In private life no banquet takes place without the scholars present reciting or composing verses, or diverting themselves by making poems with certain given rhymes; or finishing a poem which has been begun, or composing some with some given characters. A kind of fame, to which neither Chinese nor the Koreans are indifferent, attaches to those who are successful in these games. These pastimes even penetrate into the solemnity of officialdom. The King meets with the high officials after the sacrifice in the temple of Confucius, and the poems composed for the festival are collected and printed. There are collections in 25 and 30 volumes, which contain nothing but poems exchanged in this way between the Chinese envoys and Korean officials charged with the duty of accepting them. There exist similar collections of poems composed by the Chinese mandarins in Peking and by the Korean and Annamite envoys.

A great number of Chinese anthologies have been printed in Korea. The collections of Korean poetry are less numerous, because almost always the poetry ascribed to Korean authors is printed with his other writings, and forms often a large part of his complete works. Poetry is seldom published in a separate edition. In a great number of treatises, letters, recitations and accounts of journeys, poetry is mixed with prose. The Korean officials sent to China wrote a series of odes and other poems about the places they travelled through. Another author has expressed in verse the feelings which were aroused in him by reading old Korean history. Finally some poetry has played an historical role, such as the RYO EUI TYEI POU (吊義帝賦) of KIM TJONG CHIK (金宗直), containing allusions which stirred up the persecution of 1498.

If poetry is intimately interwoven with the official and private lives of the Koreans, it is the Rites which form the warp and woof of their existence. What I have said above concerning Confucian and Korean philosophy will have pre- [page 78] pared the reader for the number and importance of the works to be found on this subject. Not content with having reprinted, commented on, explained the chief Chinese works on Ritual, notably those of TCHOU HI (朱熹), and possessing thus an important literature on the subject, the Koreans have composed a great number of original works for regu- lating its practice,—original, at least, as any books can be, which are limited to reproducing fixed texts and prescriptions, and can only determine the way in which they shall be applied to everyday life. A large number of these Korean works, mostly of the 17th and 19th centuries, treat in minute detail of private rites, the adoption of adult coiffure, marriages, funerals and sacrifices They are necessary guides for the zealous Confucianist in carrying out his duties. Abridged editions, some in Korean, were made for the benefit of the common people. Other books, less numerous, the HYANG RYEI HAP HPYEN (鄕禮合編) for example, were intended to establish or promote the ancient Chinese customs in Korea. Official Korean rites, those of good auguries, thanksgivings, of hospitality, for the army and for funerals, are, on the whole, the same in China and Korea, but they differ in detail. There exists, however, to my knowledge, only one Chinese work dealing with this subject, namely, the TA MING TSI LI which has been reprinted in Seoul, though many important works, with illustrations, have been published by royal decree, dealing with the precise use of these ceremonies. Moreover, the solemn celebrations at the Palace gave rise to the composition of many volumes in which were collected the detailed reports of the festivities, the text of the decrees and edicts issued for the occasion; also the official communications exchanged between the various functionaries, the addresses and poems presented, and the hymns which had been sung. An account of the expenditure was added. These works, which were almost always illustrated with engravings, were not intended for publication, but were simply compiled to place among the archives. [page 79]

A few, however, were engraved, and copies distributed among the officials. The government of the country was intimately bound up with these rites, since it administered old traditions which had their roots in the same moral and social principles. The rites penetrated perhaps deeper into the life of the people, but the administration surpassed the rites in the extent of the matters to which it applied them. However that may be, rites and administration are intimately connected, and the works dealing with the former greatly resemble those dealing with the latter or official rituals. The works dealing with China show a considerable difference in detail from those dealing with Korea. This difference is sufficiently marked to prevent the application of rules made for one of the countries to the other. Although the Korean government took as its model the administration of the TANGS (唐), the SONGS (宋), and the MINGS (明), it separated itselt from these, owing to geographical and economic differences. No Chinese administrative work was reprinted in Korea, but a large number of Korean works were inspired by Chinese models. The most important are successive reprints of a work on the statutes of the present dynasty. This book, divided into six parts, corresponding to the six sections of government service, — Administration, Census, Rites, Army, Law, and Public Works,─gives the list of officials and their duties, and an exhaustive review, historical and practical, of the various questions which arise from them. The first edition of this work goes back to the last years of the 15th century, and the most recent is dated 1865. An important addition was made to the work in 1866 under the title “Regulations concerning the Six Statutes.” Several government departments have been made the subjects of very detailed histories. That of the Court of Interpreters, which is the only one I have personally examined, includes the rules of the present Court, the biographies of all the celebrated people who have been connected with it, the rules governing relations with the Chinese ana Japanese, and the annals of these relations since the 17th century. [page 80]

The last edition was in 1882, and a supplement was added in 1889. If one adds to these the works prepared by com-missions, or by the government offices themselves, the collections of poems, and the regulations concerning prece-dence—some printed, some in manuscript, others the work of private individuals—one will have a fairly complete idea of the administrative literature of Korea.

As to Jurisprudence, which occupies such an important place in Europe, it is hardly to be distinguished, either in China or Korea, from Administration and Rites, and the works dealing with it are very rare; the only two important ones being the code of the MINGS, still used today in Korea, and a survey work in Chinese and Korean on medico-legal post-mortems. This latter is also of Chinese origin.

In the works dealing with Ritual and Administration, as well as in those dealing with History, Science, and Languages, of which I have still to speak, the practical object which the author has in view obliges him to use a simpler and more precise style than is used in purely literary works. It is not possible, when announcing a fact or formulating a precept, to borrow from classical works terms which run the risk of not being understood. The nature of the subject demands that things should be called by their right names, so that no doubt as to the meaning should exist in the mind of the reader. The Korean writers were firmly resolved about this, and nearly all the works of this type are clear and well- arranged. Studied refinement and elegance come into their own again in prefaces and after-addresses, and in dissertations in which the author sometimes omits all statements of fact

History, to which I now come, played, in the Confucianist society, a most important government role—the complement to that attributed to the officials called Censors. These took no direct part in government, but they had the right to enquire into all the acts of those in power, and to make known to the Sovereign the faults of his officials, and even to remonsrate with him on his own conduct Their[page 81] duties, analogous to those of inspectors in European coun-tries, but more exalted, since their censure could even touch the Emperor himself, assured them of an outstanding position and universal respect It was this body of Censors, who, together with certain other institutions — such as the clique formed by the Scholars—as well as the existence of all sorts of Corporations and Institutions, that served to counteract the Sovereign, and left him with an amount of power which was much less than is generally supposed. When the

Censor delivered judgment against the act of a Sovereign and made it known to him, the Historian was obliged to weigh conscientiously these same acts, and form his own opinion, which he set down in the Annals and put away for the benefit of Posterity. These Annals were kept secret, and those who wrote them only knew the parts which they themselves had written down. The result of all this work was preserved in several copies, put in a safe place, ana served as material for writing the history of the dynasty after it had ceased to exist For it would not be right that the judgment of the Historian should be warped by a desire to please his Sovereign, or to win popular favour. Also it would not do for a Sovereign to see his faults—or those of his ancestors—pass before the eyes of his subjects, and that they should cease in this way to feel the respect due to the trustee of the mandate from Heaven. This idea was so firmly rooted in the Korean mind that more than one historian preferred exile, and even faced death, rather than shew the king the account he had written concerning certain of his deeds. It is with the same idea that the Annals written by private individuals about the present dynasty are not allowed to be published, though as a rule their circula tion in manuscript form is tolerated. The Historian works for the future alone. He piles up documents which will enable posterity to judge their sovereigns, and either bless or curse their memories, and the sovereign in reading about the deeds of his remote ancestors learns to distinguish [page 82] between the good and the bad, and to regulate his own actions accordingly.

Of all the various kinds of histories, that which corresponds most exactly to this conception, and which agrees best with Korean taste, is modelled on the THONG KAM KANG MOK (通接綱目) of TCHOU HI (朱熹). Among the works of this kind, one of the best is the TONG KOUK THONG KAM TYEI KANG of HONG YE HA (洪汝河), a writer of the 17th century. He tells the history of Korea from mythical times down to the fall of the kingdom of SIN RA (新羅). The events are dealt with year by yean The recital of events is interrupted in places by moral dissertations, in which the author decries crime and exalts virtue, and strives to discover and uphold the right It is in pursuance of these moral reflections, that HONG YE HA adds an appendix to his history of SIN RA(新羅) concerning PAIK TSYEI and KO KOU RYE (高句麗). In his eyes, the kingdom SIN RA (新羅), which was the first to be founded, is the only legitimate one, and the other two, without being exactly rebel states, have, nevertheless, only an existence in fact and not by right For these reasons, historians deprived SIN OU (辛禑) and SIN CHANG (辛昌) (the successors of king KONG MIN (恭愍) of their royal titles, and looked upon them as usurpers. Carried to these lengths, the anxiety for legitimacy may falsify history. For my part, in spite of the reasons given by historians, I cannot see why SIN RA (新羅) should be regarded as the only legitimate state since the fall of the semi-legendary kingdom of MA HAN (馬韓), nor why SIN OU (辛禑), who was adopted as a son and appointed as his successor by the king KONG MIN (恭愍), should be treated as a usurper. The moral purpose is still more strongly marked in the KOUK TJYO PO KAM (國朝寶鑑), the KAING TJYANG ROK (羮牆錄) and similar works. These writings, modelled on the Chinese, have for their avowed aim the glorification of the virtues of the kings of the reigning dynasties, and they also aim at setting an example for[page 83] their descendants. Perhaps a certain amount of historical truth may be found in these works, but one must remember that they only show the beautiful side of the medal. The account is not continuous; it is just a collection of virtuous deeds and memorable words, interspersed with moral comments. The deeds are classified, not according to their chronological order, but according to the importance of the virtue manifested. I do not think that these works can be of much interest to the serious historian.

Another class of writing which is, on the other hand, of immense value to the historical critic, is that which is modelled on the SA KI (史記) of SA MA TSHIEN (司馬遷) and other Chinese dynastic histories. This form of historical narrative reflects the greatest credit on its inventor, for it is remarkable for its fulness and precision. A work of this sort will always deal with an entire dynasty over a long period, and will give the history of each reign year by year. It includes also chronological tables, special accounts of contemporary rites, customs, science, administration, geography and literature. Biographies of celebrated people are included and, finally, frequent accounts of the foreign races with whom the dynasty in question had dealings. This group is enormous, and I doubt if the West can show anything equally comprehensive and well-balanced to compare with it If an author is of sufficient ability to conform to this scheme, and if he is conscientious and discerning, the work will achieve very considerable value. Among the Chinese dynastic histories some monumental works of this sort may be found worthy of the highest admiration In Korea the oldest work of this type is the SAM KOUK SA KEUI (三國史記) which starts its narrative just before the Christian era, and continues it until 935 A.D. It owed its origin to a Commission of high officials of KO RYE, (高麗) who worked under the direction of KIM POU SIK (金 富軾) at the beginning of the 11th century. The large quantity of ancient documents which are quoted, the simple style, and the atmosphere of veracity which pervades it, [page 84] permit one to regard it as a work of the first importance.

The history of the dynasty of KO RYE (高麗) has been written several times in this form, first at the beginning of the 15th century by TYJENG TO TYJEN (鄭道傳), whose work has long since been lost, and a little later by TCHENG RIN TJI (鄭麟趾). This work in 139 books is extremeiy rare, and I know of no edition in Korea, though I have been able to examine a copy in the library in Tokyo. Finally HONG YE HA (洪汝河) has written the HOUI TCHAN RYE SA (彙撰麗史) in this same form. This work is less weighty than the work of TCHENG RIN TJI (鄭麟趾).It is conscientious, but rests only on second-hand documents. The Koreans have also written a great number of books about the history of their country, some of which were the work of private individuals and others were written by the order of various kings. These include genealogies, biographies, and histories of schools of philosophy, accounts of the persecution of scholars, of conspiracies, wars; and, above all, the history of the Japanese invasion of the 16th century. Also accounts of customs, government, dealings with barbarian tribes, memoirs, and the travels of various people of importance. These documents naturally vary in historical value, but they all serve as sources from which to gather material for the history of Korea during the last thousand years.

These documents, together with the official archives have already been used by the Koreans themselves for rewriting their history. Last century the king YENG TJONG (英宗) caused a large Encyclopedia of a hundred volumes to be prepared. This was called the MOUN HEN PI KO (文献 備考) and was copied from the MOUN HEN THONG KO (文献 通考호 of MA TAN LIM (馬端臨), but it only deals with things Korean. It reviews the subjects of astronomy, geography, rites, the army, law, the condition of the world, taxes, commerce, education, and administration from earliest times down to 1770. The documents are drawn from Chinese histories, works specializing on various subjects, and from the archives. Critical discussions, often well thought [page 85] out, and the suggestion of interesting comparisons, complete the book, which is the work of a Commission nominated by the King. It constitutes a monumental work of the first rank for the purpose oi studying Korea. The TAI TONG OUN OK (大東韻玉) is a work of the same type, and deals with more or less the same points, but it emphasizes more the biographical and literary side. The arrangement adopted is that of a dictionary of rhymes. It is the work of a president of the Privy Council who lived in the 16th century. There are also some other Encyclopedias of lesser importance.

Besides their own national history, the Koreans only studied Chinese history, and they gave themselves up to it with a zeal which wronged other historical works. They re- printed nearly all the important dynastic histories, the THONG KAM KANG MOK (通鑑綱目), the collection of biographies, and many other less known works. They even wrote some original works; for example, a sequel to the THONG KAM KANG MOK (通鑑綱目) which covered the period between 960 and 1368, and dates from the end of the 12th century; also three or four books entitled ‘‘Mirrors”, which give an account of the lives of some of the most celebrated Chinese sovereigns, and suggest that the Korean king should either imitate or avoid following these examples. The authors of the Korean Peninsula show in these works, as in those dealing with their own country, clearness in the arrangement of their material, intellectual honesty, and often even a fine critical spirit. So much so, that in the parts which touch on the origin of Korea, it is easy to distinguish between the actual and the mythological, the result being the true or probable history goes relatively further back in Korea than in any other country of the Far East

For the Koreans, as for the Chinese, geography forms an integral part of history, of which it is merely a branch, in exactly the same way as in biography. This point of view explains the fact that there are no books dealing with geo-graphy alone. Geographical literature consists almost en- [page 86]tirely of accounts of journeys in which the descriptions of events take at least as important a place as the descriptions of localties and of, the TJI, that is to say of Reviews, documents and memoirs. These Reviews deal with a region of varying extent, or a province, prefecture, or just a village, and are not confined to details of physical geogra- phy and administration, but study also the history, archaeology, customs, population, celebrated men and famous pro- ductions of the region. These local monographs are very detailed and full of valuable information. Very common in China, they are rather rare in Japan. The Royal Library has some monographs dealing with each of the eight Provinces, the important towns and the Royal Palaces. I have only seen one, the TONG KYENG TJAP KEUI (東京雜記) which has for its subject the town of KYENG JU (慶州), the old Capital of SIN RA (新維) This account, written in three volumes, is closely modelled on the Chinese. The YE CHI SENG RAM (舆地勝覽) in 25 volumes, is a similar work dealing with Korea. It was composed by order of the King in 1478, and reprinted in 1530. I have not been able to find a single copy in Korea—though some probably exist A fairly large number of extracts from it will he found in the MUN HEN Pi KO (文獻備考), and the library in Tokyo has 20 volumes of a copy of the edition of 1530. The Koreans have some accounts of journeys to China and Japan, and detailed and exact itineraries for their own country. They also made a large number of maps of Korea, one of which is dated 1861, and is composed of 23 sheets forming, a total surface of 2.7 meters by 6.3 meters. It is a work of wonderful accuracy, and all the more remarkable in that it was made entirely by local processes. In short, geographical works are rare in Korea, even though both common people and nobles easily get lost in the interior of the country. But the Korean is not interested in physical phenomena. He lacks curiosity about these things; the importance of observation escapes him. Vegetation and animal life and the ordinary physical phenomena are known in daily life, and it occurs to[page 87] nobody to look for any connection between them. “Things are so,” is the answer which always suffices. And if it is a question of a flood, or an epidemic, or of one of those plagues which occasionally devastate a whole region, no other cause is sought than the malevolence of evil spirits, and recourse is had to the sorcerer to appease them. The scientific spirit exists—even less than in China. For even if Chinese logic is at times a trifle fantastic, at least it shows some power of observation and even mathematical sense. The Korean did not worry himself over metaphysics or explaining physical phenomena; mankind was his only study. The Koreans studiea metaphysics according to the example of TCHOU HI (朱熹), and for all else they kept to the strict letter of Con- fucianism. Also in the matter of bibliography, epigraphs, the science of coinage, agriculture, silk-culture, natural history, industrial and decorative art, they have nothing to compare with the richness of China. Just a short list of books, perhaps a collection of epigrams, two reprints of a Chinese natural history, four or five works on agriculture, about the same on silk-culture, and that is all It is interesting to note that the treatises on agriculture and music are nearly all of the 15th century, and were composed at the suggestion of SYEI TJONG (世宗), the inventor of the alphabet and the most remarkable ruler which the present dynasty has produced; whose name one finds frequently in all branches of study. Agriculture and silk-culture are bound by traditional practices. Music is taught by mechanical imitation, and the sounds are written today by means of Korean letters which form an imitation of harmony. Drawing, though practised with great success, has given rise to no literature either of theory or instruction.

Mathematics and astronomy are somewhat better divid- ed. Chinese books were reprinted in the 17th and 18th centuries, but one can mention various works composed in Korea in the 15th century by order of the king SYEI TJONG (世宗), and others, since 1850, by two high officials NAM FYENG KIL (南秉吉) and NAM PYENG TCHEL (南秉哲), who [page 88] seem to haye had an especial aptitude for the exact sciences. Divination, which is closely connected with astronomy, provides a large number of books一more in manuscript than in print—some in Korean, many in Chinese, more or Jess learned, according to the class of readers to which they are addressed. The occult sciences play a large part in Korean life. The situation of a tomb, the site of a house and its position relative to the points of the compass, the choice of a day for funerals or for a marriage, are all in the department of the diviner ; and, if a man is timorous and superstitious, there is not the smallest event in his life down to making a garment or taking a bath, which he will not submit to the rules of astrology. The court sets the example. The official Calendar is three-quarters full of information on the deeds and achievements of the spirits, and a special department—the Office of Astrology, filled by special examinations—prepares the Calendar and decides the directions to be given for observing fast days and festivals in all possible circumstances. And yet, in spite of the importance of the occult sciences in Korea, nearly all the works concerning them come from China

There remain three branches of study, Military Science, Medicine, and Languages, in which the Koreans, driven by the practical necessity of defending themselves, of caring for sick, and of conferring with their neighbours, have shown themselves more original. They have brought to bear on these subjects the qualities of order and clearness which come naturally to them. Since the SIN RA (新羅) era, one finds the titles of two military treatises, and one written during the KO RYE (高麗) dynasty. During the present dynasty syei tjong (世宗), moun tjong (文宗) and syei TJO (世祖) have themselves composed, and have caused to be composed, a fairly large number of works illustrated with engravings, and have had the seven Chinese classical books on military science printed. The Japanese invasion of 1592 restored interest in these studies, which had been neglected for more than a century, and several Chinese[page 89] works were printed. In the 18th century SYOUK TJONG (肅宗), YENG TJONG (英宗) and TJYENG TJONG (正宗) published editions of ancient works, and had new ones made, which were printed with great care. Lastly, quite recently, several new books have seen the light of day, and a Chinese work of the first half of this century, dealing with modern armaments, cannon, steamships, etc, has been reprinted. This is illustrated with finely executed engravings. As far as we know at present, the Koreans can legitimately claim the honour of having invented some new military tactics, and also some war-junks with two decks, where the archers could draw their bows under cover, and which were armed with sharp stakes concealed under straw. These ‘‘tortoise- boats’’ did great harm to the Japanese in 1592^ Military studies are organized on the same plan as literary studies and carry the same rank.

For Medicine Korea has gone to school to China since the 7th century. She borrowed her books and instituted examinations. It is during the KO RYE (高麗) dynasty that one finds for the first time indications of works composed by the royal physicians. In the 15th century, at the time of the reforms instituted by the new dynasty, the re-organized examinations still bore on the Chinese works ; but since this epoch some of these books have been translated into the common speech, which indicates a greater spread of the knowledge of therapeutics. In the reign of SYEN JO (宣 祖) medicine developed independently of the other sciences^ This prince appears to have been specially interested in this subject. He had several important Chinese works engraved and encouraged the works of EU TJYOUN (許滚), the author of TONG EUI PO KAM (東醫寶鑑), a work in 25 volumes, treating the subject generally, and of SAN TJIP THAI YO dealing with gestation and obstetrics. The first of these has been much appreciated in China and has been reprinted. Since this epoch many less important works have been written by Korean doctors. One finds especially a large number of editions of various form- [page 90] ulas. The principles of medical science are the same in Korea as in China. Anatomy is very rudimentary. Illnesses, classified according to the principles of physics to which they are attributed, are studied and recognized entirely by outward symptoms. Medicine for internal consumption consists of an extremely complicated diet of drinks and pills, and for external application great use is made of acupuncture and moxa.

Medicine and astrology, as well as astronomy (which has scarcely any other use than for making the Calendar), con-stitute a class of ideas alien to the spirit of Confucianism, which is as unfavorable to speculation in occult powers as to the observation of reality. While the scholars devoted themselves to the study of morals, rites, history, and even the military art, the sciences became the monopoly of a different class of Korean society—a class only recently formed and consisting of more humble people, to whom high offices were inaccessible, and who added to the practice of medicine and astrology the study of languages. These people were thus in a position to act as intermediary agents in all dealings with the outside world. While the learned nobility during the last centuries were losing themselves in barren discussions on philosophy, this middle class, often called the Class of Interpreters, made for itself an increasingly important place in the community by its wealth. It remained in contact with China and Japan, in spite of the laws closing the kingdom, and was the means of enabling some scientific ideas to penetrate into the Kingdom from outside.

The knowledge of foreign languages was the principal adjunct and justification for the existence of this class. Instruction was given by Interpreters to young people belonging to the families of Interpreters. A special admin- istration charged with this instruction had also various privileges connected with the mission sent annually to Pek- ing. During the KO RYE (高麗) epoch this Court of Interpreters appears to have dealt only with Chinese officials and Chinese speech, but the present dynasty divided the Court [page 91] into four sections, for the study of Chinese, Mongolian, Japanese, and Niu Tchen—which was later called Manchu. I have not been able to find the exact date of this re- organization. The four sections were in existence and complete in 1469, and the Statutes of the Government, which was published at that date, gives a complete list of books studied by each of them. At this time, the power of the Mongols had been overthrown for a century, and that of the Manchus was not destined to rise until a century later. If, nevertheless, the section for the study of Mongolian was maintained, and that for Manchurian was already in existence, it follows that the intercourse which the Koreans had with these people must have had a certain importance. What was its nature? It is a question which it would be interesting to elucidate. A large number of the books referred to by the Statutes of 1469 have been lost, but some were still in existence in the editions revised in the 18th century. The history of these works is unknown, and the Korean documents do not give any information about them before the end of 18th century. One wishes that the experts in the Mongolian and Manchu languages would examine the facsimiles which are to be found in the School of Oriental Languages, for they would perhaps come across some curious linguistic points. The teaching of the Japanese language was at first based on Japanese works, such as the DOU ZI KIYAU (童子敎), the I RO HA (伊路波), and the TEI KUN WAU RAI (庭訓往來). But all the books were debarred in 1678 and were replaced by an important collection of dialogues in 12 volumes, of which the first edition was prepared at the end of the 16th century by a Korean prisoner in Japan. The origin of the oldest works destined to instruct the Interpreters of the Chinese language is equally obscure with the origin of the Manchu and Mongol books. All these volumes were revised and modifined at the end of the 17th and during the 18th centuries. They are, like the Manchu and Mongol books, collections of dialogues.

Besides the works destined for official instruction, there[page 92] were some others which are not mentioned in the Statutes of the Government in connection with examinations ; such as an important Manchu-Korean vocabulary, without any date, and several collections of dialogues in spoken Chinese, nearly all modern. One must also mention the Chinese dictionaries with Korean pronunciation, which are nearly all of the 18th century, a few only dating back to the 15th. Among the works used for education a few are vocabularies, giving beside each character the Korean meaning and pronunciation. The works of elementary moral teaching for the use of children sometimes add a translation in the native tongue to the Chinese text.

Finally, the Sanscrit language has also been studied in Korea, but only by the monks, and some Buddhist texts exist in Sanscrit, Chinese and Korean. A method for learning the sacred language, dated 1777, and seemingly very intelligible, was found in a monastery near Seoul in 1891, but unfortunately I had not the leisure to examine it in detail, and the monks refused to give it up to me.

**CHAPTER VI.**

The class of works which I have been trying to describe up till now are all held by scholars in more or less high es-teem. They are all serious and worthy of attention. There remains only the popular literature, which is ignored by scholars, interpreters, nobles, and the lesser nobility by those who have studied, and who are either officials, or able to become such. First of all, there are the Romances. A man, even of the middle class, would blush to be seen with a romance in his hands. But the Chinese style is difficult for any one who has not studied it for a long time, and the serious works have little attraction for those not interested in rites, the example of the ancients, and questions of administrations. But what will the women do during the long periods of idleness spent inside their rooms after they have had their fill of gossipping with the neighbours? What will the merchant do while waiting for customers, or the workman during the frequent days of rest which he allows himself? Very few people of this sort understand Chinese characters, and in them, therefore, the romances have the most assiduous readers. Also Romances in the Chinese language are rare, as they are not understood by some, and are despised by others- Their only public, doubtless, were the young people of the upper classes. An illustrated edition by SAN KOUK TCHI (三國誌) is extant, and one also finds certain other Chinese romances. An official of the 17th century, KIM TCHYOUN THAIK wrote two romances in Chinese, one of which is an obvious allegory intended to lead the king towards better intentions regarding the queen whom he wished to repudiate.

Most of the novels are in the language of the common people. They are always anonymous and rarely dated. Some are translations or imitations of the Chinese and some are original ; some deal with facts of Chinese or Korean history, and others are works of pure imagination without any historical foundation. Even among this latter class[page 94] the plot of a great many is laid in China, which shows the great ascendency which that country has over the Korean spirit Also this China of the novels is not very true to life. Anachronisms abound and the characters express undisguisedly Korean thoughts. But whatever the scene of the plot, the characteristic features which all these books have in common are numerous and obvious. There are no character studies. The heroes are always the same, young students who become doctors, or young warriors who defeat the enemy. There are young girls endowed with every moral and physical perfection ; fathers who thwart the happiness of young couples ; wicked mandarins who covet young girls and whose slanders are exposed ; benevolent officials and Buddhist priests versed in the arts of war and the occult sciences. The same types always reappear, and one soon comes to regard them as old friends. The plots are monotonous, always ending in the marriage of the young couple, or the discovery of a long-lost son. The events are piled up ; wars, abductions, shipwrecks, dreams, miracles, and exile succeed each other without intermission, and the only interest is that one’s curiosity is aroused as to how such a tangled skein can possibly be unravelled, a curiosity which is often frustrated by the clumsiness of the final solution. When one has read two or three of these productions, one has read them all. One finds scenery or some characteristics cleverly brought out and not wanting in satire. But the descriptions are always the same and quickly become tedious, and characteristics are piled up in an exaggerated fashion which soon becomes ludicrous. Occasionally, the plot takes a fantastic turn and has unforeseen catastrophies. But, as a rule; the improbabilities are so great, and the thread which links the characters together is so thin, that the story becomes less interesting than the simplest of our tales written for the use of children.

Besides novels, popular literature includes a fairly large number of songs, some printed, but the greater number in manuscript volumes, and some not written down at all. [page 95]

There is no question of either date or author. The poems are notable for a strong feeling for nature, a real descriptive talent and a slightly sentimental tinge, which is occasionally rather ironic. Love and its joys, the pleasures of intoxication, the flight of time, and the shortness of life, are the most common themes. In all these poems, even the commonest, allusions to Chinese things, and reminders of Chinese poetical formulas, are constantly met with. I often tried to get some one to explain to me the rules of Korean prosody, but all those whom I asked had only the vaguest ideas on the subject They told me that Korean songs are of three kinds. Some are short, and are divided into lines of equal length, often describing some poetical painting and adding a moral reflection. Others, much longer, and without rhythmical divisions, include a succession of scenes linked together by some idea which is common to each. Both are always sung with musical accompaniment The third class consists of laments, and allows of an accompaniment of gestures. They are sung with action by two or three ballad-mongers- As to the form of Korean verse, it is very vague, as it recognizes neither quantities, rhyme, assonance, nor a fixed number of syllables. The only things which distinguish it from pure prose, are a certain refinement of poetic expression and imagery, and the fact that each line forms a sentence, necessarily short, not exceeding about 20 syllables, whereas in prose, a sentence will often extend over several page s.

All the rest of the native literature in the common tongue consists of translations. The three canonical works recognized in Korea, namely YUK KYUNG, SEU KYUNG, and SI KYUNG (易經, 書經, 詩經), are extant and are used by students with a Korean translation. Popular manuals for letter-writing, funeral rites, divination, medicine, and more important works, medical, Taoist, Buddhist, and concerning languages, agriculture, morals, and education, also contain sections in Korean. Sometimes the pronunciation of difficult characters is the only thing given in Korean; sometimes the [page 96] whole text is translated in EN MOUN (諺文); sometimes a complete translation is added to the transcription, either at the conclusion of each phrase, or put beside the Chinese. Finally, a few of these volumes are entirely in the native tongue. The date of these various translations is seldom given. Those which are dated are nearly always of the 15th, 16th, or 17th centuries.

The introduction of Catholicism gave rise to. a new branch of native literature. Religion appealing to all, it follows that religious works must be addressed to all, and the native language was the only one which could fulnl this need. Some works are earlier than the persecution of 1839. A manuscript is extant in the mission in Seoul, dated 1837. Another is the work of the noble Christian PAUL TYENG (鄭), who perished in the persecution at this time. The work of PAUL TYENG (鄭), after circulating in manuscript for some time, was printed about 1864 by the industry of Mgr. Daveluy. It was during this later period that Christian works became numerous. Mgr. Daveluy prepared translations of Chinese Catholic books and had them printed. This work was interrupted by the persecution of 1866, and the engraving blocks and a great number of the books printed from them were lost. After 1884 Mgr. Blank was able to take up again the work of his predecessor, and a little later the mission set up a printing press with movable type which has functioned without intermission till today. Some works were also printed by the House of Foreign Missions in Hongkong. All Catholic books, with one or two exceptions, are translations or abridgements of Chinese works; the language used is ordinary Korean, but the technical terms used are Chinese expressions, simply transcribed by means of Korean letters.

American Protestant missionaries who arrived in Korea after the country had been opened by treaty, have published a book of hymns, some religious tracts, and some translations of the epistles and gospels. The English missionaries only came in 1890, and I do not know whether, since my [page 97] departure from Seoul, they have been responsible for the priating of any books.

In this long review of Korean literature, we have found works that showed little originality, imbued with the Chinese spirit, and often pure imitation. We have seen that the Koreans made their choice from among the distracting riches of Chinese literature. Philosophy, which conquered them slowly at first, was finally able to win them over entirely. With this, together with the Confucian theories, came automatically all the type of things which belong to this particular moral and social conception, such as rites, administration, history, and poetry, both learned and re- fined Besides Confucianism, the Koreans cultivated such sciences as were of direct use to them, such as medicine, astrology, the art of war, and the language of the neighbouring peoples. If Chinese works other than those I have enumerated were reproduced, it was books with some practical aim. Even the religious literaure of both Taoism and Buddhism, had no other justification than the quite practical motive of putting those people who found Confucianism cold and insufficient, into touch with the spirit world. Imaginative works have little importance as to number or value and still less as to the estimation in which they are held by scholars. The part played by this type of literature was chiefly social and moral, and conformed to the Confucian idea, which gradually came to dominate all the rest

Then all outside influence was gradually eliminated, especially during the last centuries when Korea shut itself up in her shell. All ideas about things outside their frontiers were almost entirely lost, and for the Korean the whole world was confined to the things contained in his narrow Peninsula. Chinese classics became a wonderful memory, touched with a tender gratitude; but he forgot, and his perceptions disdained, the actual living China. The narrow territory of Korea became for the Korean scholar the centre of the world, and he held himself to be the unique [page 98] trustee of the doctrine. The ignorance and vanity which resulted exceeds anything that can be imagined. In listening to a Korean speaking it seems sometimes as if one must be hearing one of those ancient Greeks—the only Civilized race in the midst of barbarians, and for whom the world commenced with the Egean Sea and went hardly as far as the Ionian Sea. But Greece played a far different part in the history of the world.

Although very inferior to Chinese literature and also to Japanese literature, which has been able to retain some originality in spite of borrowings from foreigners, Korean literature is very superior to that which the Mongols, or the Manchus and the other pupils of China, were able to produce. Korea assimilated the teaching she received better than any of them, and made the ideas her own; put them energetically into practice and drew conclusions from them with a logic unknown to China. The devotion of Korean sages to their theories and their faith merits for them a place of honour beside the Chinese sages. They have in short created a Confucian faith which did not exist in China, and for which many of them died. And in the writing of history the authors have shown a simple honesty and a power of impartial criticism, which gives them the right to a high place among historians, The intelligence of the Korean mind is shewn in their beautiful editions of books, in the perfection of their alphabet—the simplest in existence, —in the conception of movable type, which they were the first to invent Moreover, I have not space to mention here all the arts and sciences which they received from China, developed and transmitted to Japan.

The part played by Korea in the civilization of the Far East has been considerable. If the situation there had been analogous to the state of affairs in Europe, Korean ideas ana inventions would have made a stir in all the surrounding countries. But the barriers raised by pride of race and by their conception of the dignity of a state were too great, and their respect for the past resulted[page 99] in stagnation. Crushed between two powerful neighbours, both remarkably endowed, the one for art, war, and organization, and the other for all branches of literature and the work of practical life, Korea, a poor country with difficult communications, has especially since the last centuries had no relations with foreigners except to be pillaged and enslaved. She has lived for herself, her powers of invention have not crossed her frontiers, and her high ideals, narrowly enclosed in the kingdom, changed to ferment and discord. She was torn by disputes, and these divisions arrested social progress.

It is thus that the present deplorable situation must be explained. The gifts which this people have received. have thus turned against them and, fettered by the misfortunes of their fate, they have developed neither their merits nor their genius.