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**ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, KOREA BRANCH REPORT OF THE COUNCIL — 1956**

The last Transactions of the Society were published in Hong Kong in 1951 in the middle of the war which had for the second time in ten years brought our activities to a stop. The communist invasion was launched without warning on the morning of June 25th 1950 and three members of the Council suffered capture and imprisonment in the North. Father Hunt, to whose interest and energy the society owes much, died in captivity, and the other two have not returned to Korea. The Government and the Foreign community retired to Pusan, but Seoul was captured and recaptured twice by each side before the war ended. While the city was less damaged than it might have been, there was considerable looting by the com¬munist side and the society lost practically all its Library and possessions other than a few items rescued by Mr. Kinney who now has them in USA.

The war also caused very many changes in the foreign community, so that when Seoul again became the centre of Government in 1954 it was not easy to get started again. The need for the Society was however increasingly felt. In 1955 there were again three members of the former, and indeed the continuing. Council in Seoul, and an informal gathering took place on January 22nd, 1956 at the British Legation at which the serving members of the Council, Dr. George Paik (Councillor) Mr. Underwood (Vice-President) and Mr. Scherbacher (Recording Secretary) invited the British Minister Mr. Stewart, Mr. Dugald Malcolm of the British Legation and Father Richard Rutt of the Anglican Mission to join them in reactivating the Society. There was a further informal Council meeting the following week, and on February 23rd an open General Meeting listened to a paper by Dr. Paik on the travel diary of an eighth century Buddhist monk, Hei Jo, who made a pilgrimage to India. It is hoped that this interesting piece of work may be available for publication in the next regular volume of transactions.

A second general meeting heard a paper by Mr, W. E. Skillend of the School of Oriental and African Studies of London University on the Study of Korean Literature at [Page 74] the Seoul Union on April 11th, and a third meeting at the same place heard Mr. Bacon's paper on Yi Tombs which is here published.

In subsequent Council meetings it was decided to carry on the existing Constitution of the Society without amendment and to continue the same subscription until or unless it became apparent that the Society could not function on the income produced by the old rates. In particular the Council were anxious to arrange meetings on the first Wednesday of every month so that members could make plans in advance to attend on this day. Colonel Widdowson was invited to join the provisional Council and Mr. Carl Miller was invited to be Treasurer.

General Meetings reopened in January 1957 with a talk by Mr. Malcolm on Ceramics, with particular reference to Korean products, and with a talk in February by Father Rutt on Life in a Korean Village, and survivals of the Korean customs of former days. Both these took place at the British Legation. The Annual General Meeting was held on February 27 at the USIS Theatre at the American Embassy, and was followed by a lecture by Mr. Marc Scherbacher on Buddhist Temples and other sites, illustrated by coloured slides.

A Council was elected to replace the provisional council (of whom two, Mr. Malcolm and Mr. Stewart, had left the country) and dues were collected from most of those present. The main difficulty facing the Council in the past years has been to get into touch with former members and to get its mailing lists in order. We apologise to any with whom we have failed to make contact so far, and ask the help of the others in the work of rebuilding the society, mentioning in particular that we want contributions of material as well as of annual dues!