A History of the Chŏng Dong Area and the American Embassy Residence Compound

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**A HISTORY OF THE CHŎNGDONG AREA AND THE EMBASSY RESIDENCE COMPOUND**

Even compared to capitals in other countries, the capitals of Korea have played a role specially prominent and specially apart in the life of the Korean land.

The first city to play this role within Korea—though in this case a colonial role—was the city of Lolang, now called Pyŏngyang, from 108 B.C.~A.D. 313 the capital of the Chinese Han colony in the northern part of the peninsula. Archeoiogical remains clearly indicate that its position and development were not only greatly superior to any other place in Korea but were beyond any com-parison with the surrounding counryside.1) Somewhat the same seems to have been true of the capital of Pyŏngyang which Koguryŏ erected on approximately the same site as Lolang, for Kongju and Puyŏ, the later capitals of Paek-che and, above all, for Sorabŏl, the great capital which Silla erected at what is now Kyŏngju and which became in A.D. 668, following Silla’s conquest of Koguryŏ and Paekche, the first capital of the united Korean peninsula. The Koryŏ capital at what is now Kaesŏng followed in the same centralized tradition and its mantle was inherited by Seoul when Yi Sŏng-ge, founder of the Yi Dynasty, built his capital here in 1394.

What gives Korean capitals their peculiar character in the life of the land? So broad a question invites a number of answers. Korea has been predominantly a rural, not an urban country; in its political traditions, it has been, on the whole, a determinedly centralized and united country. Though a peninsula, both its philosophy and its historical development before the twentieth century have traditionally given little encouragement to urbanism and the activities which lead to urban development: mercantilism, trade, commerce or industry. Its strong centralization and lack of great geographical size militated against development of large local political or cultural centers. Hence, of the larger cities of modern Korea, almost all are quite new—essentially creations of the last sixty years, like Pusan, Taejŏn, Inch’ŏn, Mokp’o, Masan and Kunsan and most of the large places of North Korea, [page 2] excepting old former capitals like Pyŏngyang and Kaesŏng and, to some extent, Uiju and Wŏnsan. Even older places like Taegu, Chŏnju, Ch’ongju, Ch’ungju, Wŏnju, Suwŏn, and Kwangju, while they have been well-known rural centers in Korea for hundreds of years, could hardly have been described as more than small towns before this century, not only by comparison with contemporary western cities but by comparison with such pre-twentieth century Oriental cities as Canton or Osaka as well. Thus, with the possible exception of Pyŏngyang, the capital of Pyŏng’an Province and the largest center of the northern provinces, Seoul was the only place in Korea which could be said throughout the Yi period to have maintained an urban character. This fact, in itself, set Seoul, as it did all preceding Korean capitals, apart from the rest of Korea and added to the prestige the city held as the center of government and undisputed arena of the nation’s political, cultural and economic life. While it is easy to think of capitals like Paris, Vienna, Athens, Rome, Madrid, London, Cairo, Moscow and Tokyo which are the largest and most prominent cities of their countries, few countries of comparable size and population can boast a capital of such undivided supremacy in almost every walk of life and activity as the Koreans have in their Seoul. For Americans whose capital is smaller, newer and commercially and culturally less distinguished than several other American cities, an understanding of the position of Seoul in Korean hearts, Korean aspirations and Korean history requires an effort in understanding.

For over five centuries and a half, Seoul has been the spider in the web of Korean history. The names and reputations of most Koreans of distinction since the 14th century are closely associated with the city, most accomplishments and failures centered on it. Its districts and streets are woven deep into the social and political lore of the country, some families, like the Kims of Andong ana the Chongs of Tongnae, living so long in certain districts in Seoul that they became known as the Ch’ang-dong Kims or the Hoedong Chongs from their names. Political parties took their names from the districts of Seoul in which supporters lived. Even class designations may have been taken from the districts of Seoul, one explanation for the Chung’in, literally “middle men”, a [page 3]sort of middle class, being that they lived near the middle of the capital and between the north, south, east and west factions. Not only the city but each of its old streets and districts has its own history cut through the strata of five centuries.

Even before it became the Yi capital, Seoul was a fairly important place. It emerges early into semi-history when we are told by the *Samguk Sagi* that a son of the king of the large Kingdom of Koguryŏ in the northern part of the peninsula came south and founded, traditionally in 18 B.C. but probably a century or more later, a kingdom called Paekche, south of Koguryŏ and in the western part of the peninsula, and built his capital on the northern bank of the Han River, apparently in the Seoul area, calling it Hapuk Uirye-sŏng or Uirye Fortress north of the river. 2) Thirteen years later, after attack from the Chinese colonial capital of Naknang (Lolang), the king is said to have moved his capital across the river and for this we have more concrete evidence for, across the river from Kwangjang-ni, roughly opposite the present country club, we can still see the city walls of this capital running, grass and tree-covered, over the land on the southwestern side of the present Kwangjang-ni Bridge. Later Paekche kings built a Pukhansan fortress in the mountains northeast of Seoul, probably as more defensive for the region than the low-lying capital. Much later, expanded and rebuilt against the Mongols and again in the early Yi period, this fortress would seem to be the lineal ancestor of the Pukhansan fortress which still exists today. Competed for between a strengthening Koguyro and a declining Paekche, the Seoul area fell to Koguryŏ in A.D. 475 and Seoul became for seventy-seven years the southern capital of that kingdom, being also known at the time as South Pyŏngyang, since Pyŏngyang was Koguryŏ’s chief capital. Thus was enacted in the fifth and sixth centuries a drama similar to that which befell Seoul from June to September of 1950. In A.D. 551, a Silla-Paekche alliance recaptured the Seoul area. This time, Silla as the more powerful partner under the great King Chinhŭng annexed the region and made it the northwestern outpost of the realm. Chinhŭng’s conquest is marked by the first of Seoul’s completely historical monuments, the famous monument atop a ridge of Pukhan-san looking down on the city from the north, erected in honor of his inspection [page 4]of the new boundaries of his realm. For 350 years, Silla retained the area and, from 758 on, called it by the still well-known name of Hanyang. With the unification of the peninsula in 668, however, the region lost much of its strategic importance and Seoul was not one of Silla’s rural capitals. As Silla disintegrated after 901, the Seoul area fell into the core area of the new Koryŏ regime at Kaesŏng. Only 35 miles to the south, Seoul had some importance again as an emergency capital during invasions and was usually called Yangju. In 1010, King Hyŏnjong passed through Yangju when the Khitan drove him from Kaesŏng. In 1068, King Munjong built a palace in Seoul and, after 1096, King Sukjong built a new palace here. Thereafter, the Koryŏ kings often visited Yangju and called it Namkyŏng or Southern capital, considering it with P’yŏngyang and Kaesŏng one of the three major cities of Koryŏ. It was, however, a small place compared to the seat of government at Kaesŏng. In the last century of Koryŏ, Namkyŏng was again renamed Hanyangbu and in the uneasy last years of the dynasty in 1362 and again in 1390 the capital was twice temporarily moved here from Kaesŏng. There were two palaces already in Hanyangbu when the capital was moved, one at the site of the present Ch’anggyŏngwŏn Palace adjoining the Ch’angdŏk Palace, the other behind the Kyŏngbok Palace where Kyŏngmudae, residence of President Rhee, is now located. In addition there were temples, residences and pavilions, some of which were to remain into the new dynasty.

In 1392, Yi Sŏng-ge, a general of Koryŏ, rebelled against Koryŏ rule, overthrew it and set up a regime of his own, to be called the Yi (or Lee) Dynasty after his family. (President Rhee and Speaker Lee both trace descent from the third king of this dynasty, Taejong.) Desiring to be free from the allegiances and associations which nearly five hundred years of Koryŏ rule had given to Kaesŏng, he symbolized the newness of his regime by the choice of a new capital, to be founded and built by him and associated only with him and his dynasty’s rule. For a while, Keryongsan, not far south of Taejŏn in Ch’ung- ch’ ŏng Namdo, was considered but was discarded in favor of Hanyangbu. It was, indeed, an ideal site, central within the peninsula, on the main avenues of access to the south and north and with a good river route to the sea and the interior; with sufficiently large agricultural resources [page 5]contiguous; protected by steep hills and peaks which still had stands of timber for building the city; and, with fitting preparation, a site defensible against marauders like the Japanese waegu (wako) or pirates, which, at that time were scourging the Korean coasts. Over, half a millenium later, his choice has still well stood the test of time. He called his new city Hansŏng, a name it was to keep until his dynasty ended more than five hundred years later in 1910.

Oriental capitals are not laid out haphazardly. Indeed, great as was the power of European kings and princelings several centuries ago in laying out their capitals, it is doubtful whether many could start with as clean a slate and such undivided power as Yi Sŏng-ge disposed of in the arrangement of Hansŏng. Hanyangbu had not been extremely populous and it had been largely destroyed only twenty years before by the waegu. All land and buildings were considered government property for the sovereign to dispose of pretty much as he would. His eye—or those of his geomancers—perceived the defensive possibilities of the amphitheatrical terrain ringed on almost all sides by mountains ridges or hills and the naturalness of the axis running from the sheer slope of Pugak-san (behind the present President’s residence) down past the slope of Namsan toward the Han River. They saw it and bedded the capital snugly in this amphitheatre, facing south, toward whose influences the king must face, each palace backed by its own mountains—Pugak-san and Pukhan-san which, in the coming dynasty as in the past, were to protect the morality and fortune of the king’s reign from the northeasterly-lying evil influences.

Unlike a Western city, the walled town (‘cité’) was not brought down to the Han River but was anchored well short of it along the defensible lower slope of Namsan. To the Koreans of that day the river was not so much a defense or a gate for communication and trade as a dangerous route of access for the Japanese pirates who then controlled the seas around Korea. Only two decades before, in 1373, these *waegu* had burned and plundered the Hanyangbu commandery, had slaughtered the inhabitants and ravaged the surrounding countryside, returning several times thereafter. In addition,water activities lacked prestige in the Korean social system and traders, [page 6]boatmen and fishermen belonged to the despised classes; it probably would not have occurred to the royal counselors to taint the prestigious precincts of the city itself with the pursuits of the waterways.

Internally, the city’s main axis was East-West, connecting two of the principal gates—the West and East Gates—along the present Chongno. Around these axes, the city was divided into five districts—north, south, east, west and central—each one of which had its own social and, later, political flavor and, for a while, its own Confucian College. The choicest sites within the whole city were chosen by the King for the royal palace (the Kyŏngbok Palace behind the capitol building), his family shrine (standing then as now opposite the Ch’angdok Palace), the sites for worship of spirits of earth and grain (Sajik-dan), other royal or aristocratic residences, government offices (many of them in front of the capital near where they, by and large, still are), the residences of his supporters and chief officials, and, finally, marketing districts and common residences. Government planning and control extended even to the markets, one block being reserved for textile markets, one for fish products, others for meats, leather, grains etc, the franchises for these businesses being bestowed by the government and continued at its pleasure. Business was not conducted by private initiative but by grace and favor. Private ownership of property as the West knows it was also unknown, temple, prince and pauper simply occupying land and buildings whose highest ownership was vested in the state ana returning to the sovereign tax and loyalty.3) Government regulation likewise extended to the size of residences and, to some extent, to the materials to be used by the different classes in constructing their houses. The principal royal princes received lots some 312 chŏk square (the chŏk was a unit 21.5 cm. long), lesser princes lots 285 chŏk square, officials of the first two ranks lots of 220 chŏk, of the third and fourth ranks 180 chŏk, of the 5th and 6th ranks 161 chŏk, of the 7th rank and under including the sons and grandsons of yangban lots of 140 chŏk and the common people lots of 40 chŏk.4) Thus complete government domination over many matters which the West would hold to be private life, and a strict and formalized system of social distinctions, were assumptions on which planning of the city of Seoul was based. [page 7]The result, however, must have presented considerable harmony and order—far more than the present city possesses—and, though the tiny houses of the common folk in their narrow, twisting alleys must have contrasted considerably with the palaces of princes and the residences of nobles and officials, still the universal use of wood, the lack of great wealth in the country and a certain Confucian sense of asceticism and official propriety probably kept these gulfs narrower than those which divided stone palace from earthen hut in the European cities of the day.

The Chŏngdong area, located on rising ground halfway down the main axis of the city, was a site intrinsically choice, with favorable geomantic qualities, being backed by hills and having rising ground. Whetstones found in the area indicate that it was settled in the stone age, which in central Korea lasted from the third millenium B.C. until the third century B.C.5) From the beginning of the dynasty, a whole area on the left of Chŏngdong street was set aside for the reception and lodging of Chinese ambassadors and their retinues when they came on their periodic trips from Peking bearing the return gifts and messages of the Chinese Emperor to the Korean King whose tribute the Emperor was thus acknowledging. The name designating this district—“Whangwha-pang”—“The District of Imperial Benevolence”—was the original name of the whole area from the great and little West Gates to points as distant as the southwest corner of the Chongno-Taep’yŏng-no intersection; judging by maps of some 120 years ago, such designations lasted even into the last century. Chŏngnŭng and Chŏngdong became designations of a part of this district. Since the visit of the Imperial Ambassador was the high point of the social and ceremonial year and, during the Yi period, one of the few contacts Korea had with the world outside her own borders, one can imagine that the district must for centuries have been the scene of brilliant festivities, in some of which even the Korean King took part.

During the first five years of the dynasty, however, we hear little very specific of the area, although we know that already in Koryŏ times a Buddhist temple had been built there which still existed as the Yi Dynasty opened.6) The King T’aejo (as Yi Sŏng-ge known to [page 8]history during his six-year reign), who retained a healthy respect for Buddhism despite his Confucian counselors, was perhaps inspired by the presence of this temple to reserve the northern part of the Whangwha-pang area for a special purpose.

In order to comprehend what this special purpose was to be, it is necessary to understand the rather complicated family situation of the founding monarch. Yi Sŏng-ge had had a long and distinguished career as a general in the Koryŏ Dynasty and was already fifty-seven years old when he came to the throne. In early life he had married a woman who had borne him many sons who were already grown when he ascended the throne. These sons, particularly the fifth son, Pang’wŏn, who became T’aejong, had been of great assistance to him in overcoming opposition to his revolution against Koryo. Taejo’s first wife died before he became king and he had married a second wife whom he greatly esteemed and who also bore him two sons. T’aejo therefore had a built-in succession problem in a classic oriental form almost before he became king. T’aejo’s second wife and queen pushed constantly to get her second son, Pangsŏk, the youngest of T’aejo’s eight sons, designated by T’aejo as his successor, thus by-passing the six sons of the first wife. The supreme advisory council to the throne, perhaps motivated by a desire to have a younger and more pliant successor whom it could more easily control, finally backed the queen’s choice. Pang’wŏn, however, ambitious and bitter, refused to give way and staged a coup d’état in 1398 in which he killed Chŏng Do-jŏn, one of his father’s main advisors and counselor for the young crown prince; the prince himself left for a distant place and was killed on his way by one of Pang’wŏn’s men. Meanwhile, in 1397, T’aejo’s queen died. Saddened by her loss and by the gathering succession quarrels within his own house, T’aejo broke one of the most time-honored and sacred of Korea’s taboos and decided to symbolize his devotion to his wife by burying her within the city walls. How powerful was the emotion which must have motivated this decision we can judge from the fact that the belief that death should not defile the capital had apparently long dominated Korea’s capital cities; and that, even today, while a few people like the late Shin Ik-hi and the late Yi Ch’ŏng-ch’ŏn are buried within the modern city limits of greater Seoul, only one, the late [page 9]Bishop Trollope of the Anglican Church, long a prominent member of and lecturer in this Society, who lies buried under the altar of the cathedral he built next to the site of the queen’s burying place in Chŏngdong, is known to be buried within the city walls nor can, to this day, any burial take place therein.

The exact site within the Whangwha-pang area selected for the queen’s original tomb is still unknown. Since tombs are almost always located on high ground, and we know that the district chosen was the northern part of Whang-wha-pang, we can presume that the site was either the hill on which the British Embassy is now located, the hill on which the Russian Legation is located, or one of the high spots in between. We also know that such tombs were normally expected to face south, to be backed by a hill or mountain, and to have ridges from the hill coming down on both sides; there were also supposed to be streams meeting in front or, sometimes, a pond. A number of Koreans believe that the location was the British Legation hill. However, we have one added fact. Queen Kang was a devoted Buddhist. In building her tomb. T’aejo followed the custom of the preceding Koryŏ Dynasty and decided to have a temple for the comfort of her soul adjoining her tomb.7) He therefore located the tomb near the site of the Koryŏ temple which had stood here and enlarged, rebuilt and dedicated this temple, which was called Hŭngch’ŏn-sa, for his wife. A famous Zen monk named Sang Ch’ong, disciple of the even greater national teacher Wŏnjŭng Kuksa(圓證國師), also known as T’aego and Pou (太古,普愚), one of the Koryŏ King Kongmin’s chief priests, became abbot of this temple, in particular, T’aejo built a five story wooden hall, the greatest skyscraper of its day in Seoul, and brought a portion of a famous relic of the body of the Shaka from Tongdo-sa and placed it in this hall. Sutras and treasures were also placed therein. The temple hall dominated the city, as we can well imagine, since few buildings in Seoul until seventy years ago were over one story high. We know that this temple was on the eastern corner of the tomb area and there is fair evidence to believe that the temple may have covered at least the area from the present broadcasting station to the Kyŏnggi Girls High School. If this is so, the British Legation hill might have to be eliminated as the tomb site since the temple would then be north and northwest of that hill, and the arrow [page 10]of supposition as to the location would point either to the Russian Legation hill or, since the arrangements of its ridges would be more protective, even more probably to the hillock on which Embassy Residences 5 and 6 are now built. However, Hŭngch’ŏn-sa was a large temple and very likely filled a great area, perhaps from the Chosun Ilbo Offices through the present theatre district to the Kyŏnggi High School, so that it is not impossible that a tomb even on the British Legation Hill would have stood east of some important temple buildings. The evidence is in no case conclusive.

At any rate, the tomb was built in the area and, having been built, was named. Since all royal tombs have their own names (not taken from the name of the dead person), T’aejo called the tomb of his wife Chŏngnŭng or “Chaste Tomb”, that is to say, ‘tomb of a chaste lady’, *chŏng* being the usual tombstone description of an admired woman. From this name, the immediate area became known as Chŏngnŭng-dong (“District of the Chaste Tomb”); in time, the “nŭng” was dropped and the district all around the old street running along the Tŏksu (Duksoo) Palace wall to the old West Gate became known as it is to this day as “Chŏngdong” (“The Chaste District”). It should be remembered that ‘Dong’ does not mean street but fundamentally ‘village’, hence in a city ‘district’ ; the normal street, in Korea as in China and Japan, was not separately named but took its name from the district through which it ran.

The queen was not to rest long in peace within the city wall. Shortly after finishing her tomb and in the month following the murder of the crown prince, T’aejo ‘retired’ in 1398 to his native province of Hamgyŏng in northeastern Korea, leaving his throne to Pangkwa (Chŏng- jong), the second son of his first wife, a man who was completely dominated by his younger brother, T’aejong, and gave his throne over to him after two short years of reign, in 1400. T’aejong had suffered much from his step-mother. To secure the throne against her intrigues he had had to cause internecine strife and murder within his own family which had tarnished his own good name and set his own father irreconcilably against him. Often he sent special emissaries to his father’s place of retirement near Hamhŭng seeking a reconciliation. One after another, the retired T’aejo killed them as they came, an [page 11]expression of anger still made memorable by the term ‘Hamhŭng Ch’asa’, T’aejong could not forswear revenge against his dead step-mother. In 1400 he became king. In 1408, his father died in retirement. Hardly had he died than, in the same year, T’aejong dismantled the queen’s tomb, disinterred her body and moved it well outside the city walls to the present Chŏngnŭng, a much simpler tomb beyond Tonam-dong west of Miari in the outskirts of modern Seoul where, for a long time, her grave is said to have been unrecognized and forgotten. A small section of modern Seoul now takes its name from this tomb. T’aejong ordered all the ceremonies and honors due a queen to cease. Further, he carried his revenge even to the stones of her tomb: these were ignominously made the foundations of the Taegwang-kyo (“The Big Broad Bridge”) which was being built at this time during the development of the capital. All else near this bridge in downtown Seoul has changed but the bridge remains to this day, not far from the Embassy, one block south of the Whashin Department store next to the Choheung Bank. At this point a stream called Ch’ŏnggech’ŏn (“Clear Valley Stream”), now covered by the street running between and parallel to Chongno and Eulchi-ro two blocks behind the Embassy and the Information Center and, since December, 1958, covered for several hundred yards beyond it, flowed out under Namdaemun-ro. Passing by on the street, until December, 1958, one could see on the downstream side a stone balustrade surmounted at each end by a crouching chimaera. If one went down into the stream below the bridge, where the urchins of Seoul hunted by the light of flares for river fish, one could still see the whole framework of the bridge carried by the elaborately-carved stones of the first Yi queen’s tomb. Covered or uncovered, the “Clear Valley Stream” has become a sewer, the children fishing in the darkness seemed to come out of *Les Misérables*, and the fetid waters, once clear from the hills, now wet the feet of the carved courtiers praying for the soul of the dead queen. It was a memorable retribution.9)

The temple had quite a different history. When the tomb was removed, we are specifically told in ancient documents that the temple remained as it was.10) In 1424, when the great monarch Sejong set up regulations governing religious sects in Korea, Hŭngchŏn-sa was, with [page 12]another temple called Hŭngbok-sa in what is now Nakwŏn-dong behind Pagoda Park, made the center of Sŏn (Zen) Buddhism in Seoul. Later in Sejong’s reign, Hŭngbok-sa was itself removed so that Hŭngch’ŏn-sa alone became the chief center of Zen in Seoul, a position it continued to occupy throughout the 15th Century in the increasingly Confucian city. In 1462, King Sejo, a devout Buddhist, deeply conscience-stricken over his murder of his own nephew Tanjong to attain the throne, repaired and built many temples, notably Wŏngak-sa in Pagoda Park with its pagoda; with these repairs he had a great new bell made for Hŭngch’ŏn-sa in the seventh year of his reign. For more than thirty years the temple continued with this embellishment and with its high tower. In 1495, however, there came to the Korean throne one of the most notorious tyrants of Korean history, Yŏnsan-gun, a man dedicated to sybaritic personal habits, malice and impetuousness. In July, 1504, he ordered the temple razed and built in its place an extra office for the care of his royal horses and their accoutrements. The next monarch, Chung-jong, after overthrowing Yŏnsan-gun, abolished this extravagance and built a public office here. Of the temple, only the five-story shari hall remained. But for this an even more interesting fate was in store. There were originally in the city five Confucian universities in the north, south, east, west and central districts of the city, erected to instruct in the official religion and philosophy of the dynasty and prepare students for the state examinations. The western one was itself in the Chŏngnung district, apparently just north of Hŭngch’ŏnsa, probably on former temple land behind the present Taep’yŏng-no theatre district. The main one was the central one, however, and we are told that on the night of March 28, 1510, the students of this central Confucian college, firmly convinced by their instructors that Buddhism was heresy, marched on the shari hall and enthusiastically set fire to it. The records note11) that the flames turned night into day and clouds of fire covered the sky; cinders rained down into dark and distant alleys all over the city. Thus in an apocalyptic chapter in the struggle between Buddhism and Confucianism, the last building of our temple vanished. The bell now alone remained and this, after many perigrinations through Seoul’s palaces, finally came to the grounds of the Tŏksu (Duksoo) Palace where it hangs today, the only remaining reminder of this temple’s [page 13] colorful history.

It is not so easy to trace the history of Chŏngdong in the centuries following its dramatic debut as the theatre of a royal family quarrel. Its favorable location seems, however, to have assured for it more or less continual residence by princely or aristocratic families. Since the large families of Korean kings usually assured the presence of numerous royal princes for whom residences befitting their rank had to be found, it seems not unlikely from what we know that the Chŏngdong area was informally set aside for the residences of some of these. It is said, for example, that Anp’yŏng Taegun, gifted third son of the fourth Yi monarch Sejong (the great sponsor of the Korean alpabet, Hangŭl), lived in the area around the middle of the 15th century. One of the noted calligraphers of his time and a devoted Buddhist, despite the anti-Buddhist tastes of most of his dynasty, his elegant hand-traced pages of Buddhist sutras done in gold on blue paper can still to be seen in various collections, including those of Yonsei University and the author.

Toward the end of the 15th century, Prince Wŏlsan, only brother of the 9th King, Sŏngjong, built a palace for himself where the Tŏksu Palace now stands. It was called the Myŏng’ye or Kyŏng’un Palace. The road between this Palace and the Embassy residence compound is a very recent one; old maps appear to confirm what we might presume from the importance of the palace that the Embassy compound was probably included within its grounds. At the end of the 16th century, this palace achieved much greater prominence. In 1592, the Japanese troops of Hideyoshi invaded Korea and, in the first days of 1593, Japanese troops took Seoul and, before giving it up, burned to the ground the many buildings of the Kyŏngbok Palace which had served since the first years of the dynasty as the seat of government and the royal residence, and also the Ch’angdŏk Palace, of which only the gate, the present Tonwha-mun, survived. The Kyŏngbok palace was not to be repaired until the last half of the nineteenth century. When King Sŏnjo, who had fled to Uiju on the Manchurian border, moved back to Seoul in 1593, he therefore took up residence in Prince Wŏlsan’s old palace which had escaped destruction. He continued to live and conduct the government from there until his death in 1608, after which the next ruler, Kwanghae-gun, [page14]rebuilt the Ch’angdŏk Place as residence and seat of government, moving there in 1611. Even thereafter, Sŏnjo’s widow lived in the Myŏng’ye Palace for some years, during which it was called the western palace (Sŏgung). Thus, for some years, Korea was ruled from Chŏngdong. Even if it had not been included in the previous palace, it is certain that the expansion of the old residence which took place to hold the seat of government would have included the Embassy residence land. We can imagine, therefore, that the grounds of Compound 1 hummed with more activity from 1593 until 1608 than they had ever known before, or were to know again until, perhaps, recent years.

Early in the 17th Century, in the 8th year of Kwanghae-gun (1616), the Dynastic Annals record that the King (apparently oblivious of the privations brought on the people by the destructive Hideyoshi invasion just passed) pulled down several thousand homes of commoners at the foot of Inwang-san, the handsome mountain west-northwest of the city, summoned a corvée army of Buddhist monks, then a convenient source of forced labor, and built three palaces. The westernmost of these palaces (none of which have lasted into the present day) was the Kyŏnghi, Kyŏng-dŏk or ‘Mulberry’ Palace which was located just north of the other side of the traffic circle at the old West Gate into which Shinmun-ro runs. This palace lasted into recent times, some of its stones being used today for the steps of the Seoul Boys High School. Its gate, the Hŭngwha-mun, was removed by the Japanese in 1932 to form the entrance to the shrine erected in honor of Prince Ito Hirobumi and can still be seen where Changch’un-dong starts up the hill, not far from the entrance to the present Foreign Minister’s residence. It is hoped that this colorful landmark will either be moved back to its original location or a reproduction of the original gate built by the West Gate circle, which, in the last decades, has lost all its ancient structures. Hence, at this time, the Embassy residence compound was located between two palaces, if it did not continue to be included in the grounds of one of them. It would thus have been fitting ground for aristocratic residence, though, even as in Seoul today, such residences may have been interspersed with humble dwellings. Much of the area seems to have continued to be considered “state” rather than “private” property. [page15]

While we can infer that the Chŏngdong area continued to be used for royal grounds or aristocratic residence from the 17th Century on, we hear comparatively little further about it until the last decades of the 19th Century, although some *yangban* families like the Yŏju Yi-ssi (c.f. Yi Ka-whan, teacher of Chŏng Tasan) are said to have lived here in the eighteenth century. Following the removal of the seat of government to the rebuilt Ch’angdŏk Palace in 1611, the Myŏng’ye Palace gradually declined and, in the 19th century, until its extensive rebuilding from 1897 on, consisted of only a few small buildings in a bad state of repair.12) The street, likewise, was very narrow—even more so than now. The palace wall along it was not yet built and in its place the ‘alley’ was lined with thatched huts and small Chinese stores. The gate to the palace was not in front on the avenue, but at the side on Chŏngdong, just beyond the Ministry of Justice. After 1897, when the palace was expanding, the palace grounds comprised part of the land on which the Seoul Court is now located and a bridge connecting this land with the present Tŏksu Palace grounds was built over Chŏngdong, street, the foundations of which still can be traced. Where the Taihan-mun, entrance to the present palace, now stands stood a French general store run first by the Rondon family, then by the Plaisants (Mme. Plaisant continued to live in Seoul until 1950.) Behind, along a narrower Chŏngdong street, the palace wall was not yet built (or rebuilt) and a string of thatched huts and stores lined the way like a miniature commercial UN: French, German, several Chinese, even one Russian.

The advent of western influence into Korea was to give the street a new and important role. Apparently sometime during the last two centuries while the Tŏksu Palace was in decline the land must have become partly separated from strictly royal (i.e. state) control and permission given for aristocrats close to the throne to live there. Gradually property rights subject, perhaps, in a general and undefined fashion, to the discretion of the throne, devolved on these yangban families. From the fact that the Embassy residence land was purchased from two members of the Min family who become especially prominent from the 1860s on following the marriage of a Min lady to King Kojong, we can infer that this change may have occurred during or following the 1860s, perhaps [page 16]about the time that the Kyŏngbok Palace (near Compound 2) was being rebuilt under the regent Taewŏn-gun, during which time there was little royal interest in the area. At any rate, however, photographs13) taken before the turn of the century show an area of fine old trees and sparse settlement, thus indicating that it had been for some time reserved for special and restricted use, in contrast to the neighboring land which was generally deforested and thickly inhabited If one looks at Seoul even today from neighboring mountains one can still see that, with the palace compounds and fringe areas alone excepted, the Chŏngdong area is still the greenest and least crowded of the areas of Seoul.

In 1884, a further change affected the district. Until about 1880, foreigners had been forbidden to reside within the city walls. Early foreign missions had been forced to build outside the gates, the Japanese Legation, for example, being then located between the present West Gate Methodist compound and the Independence arch (the Korean-style building said to have been used by them stood until recent years). With the increase of Western pressure and the number of foreign missions desiring contact with Korea, the King relaxed this rule and appears to have set aside the Chŏngdong area for foreign missions. During the period of Korea’s independence, most of the foreign missions were concentrated on or near Chŏngdong: the United States (1884) and the British (1890), both in their present locations; the French, who later, about 1896, built an imposing legation next to the Ewha High School; the Belgian, located in the one-story brick house (later the music department of the Ewha Girls School) which still stands on Chŏngdong just west of the entrance to the Russian Legation (the Belgians later moved to the pillared brick building behind the Dongwha Department Store); the German, in 1889, located on the hill where the Seoul District Court now stands, later built 300-400 yards to the other side of the West Gate circle; the Italian, located some time after 1901 near the ‘small West Gate’; and the Russian, most impressively located on the main hill in the area from 1885 on. Thus, Chŏngdong was for many years known as Legation Street. The exceptions were the Chinese, located then as now in Myŏngdong, and the Japanese, who took advantage of the decline of the old Namin families to buy their land and locate their legation and many other buildings on the lower [page 17] slopes of Namsan in the vicinity of the Headquarters of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, west of Korea House. The exact reason why the King reserved Chŏngdong land for foreigners is not known; perhaps it lay partly in the fact that it had, more than most other land, been traditionally at the Kings disposal; perhaps the noble families which now lived on part of it had suffered reverses and were willing to sell; not improbably, the King, eyeing with understandable apprehension the gathering clouds of international rivalries and internal strife, wished to have proximate diplomatic haven to which he could flee from the Tŏksu Palace in time of need.

At the time that the first American minister, General Lucius Foote, was negotiating the purchase of the legation properties in 1884, the first American missionaries had not yet arrived. Already in June, however, Mr. Robert S. MacClay, Superintendent of the Methodist Mission in Japan, asked the general to procure a piece of property for the Methodist Mission near the legation; in June, 1884, Mr. and Mrs. MacClay had come to Seoul on a reconnoitering expedition, staying with the general. On September 22, 1884, Horace N. Allen, Presbyterian medical missionary and later American Minister to Korea, arrived and, eschewing the general’s somewhat chary hospitality, ate “dogmeat and rice” at a native inn. In the spring of the following year, Dr. H. G. Underwood and Dr. John W. Heron of the Presbyterian Mission and Mr. Henry G. Appenzeller of the Methodist Mission all landed in Korea. It was naturally to the new legation area and the north and south sides of Chŏngdong that they gravitated and started their work. Like the legation itself, much of this work has continued in the same place ever since, unbroken except during the years of World War II. In 1885, the Methodists were able to acquire large tracts of land on the south side of Chŏngdong, purchasing certain of these, as the legation had before them, from aristocratic Korean families whose villas had been located in this area. The Pai Chai property, for example, was purchased from a Mr. An Ki-yong, in whose converted Korean villa the Appenzeller family lived for many years and in which, on November 9, 1885, Alice Appenzeller, the first Western child to be born in Korea, saw the light of day. However, the area was not entirely aristocratic, [page 18] for a contemporary observer (M. F. Scranton) wrote in 1896, that the first purchase of property for the Ewha Girls School in October, 1885, consisted of “19 straw huts and an unsightly strip of unoccupied land”.14) Construction of mission schools was soon begun. In 1886, the Ewha Primary School was built on Chŏngdong, Queen Min giving it its name (‘pear flower’) probably from a Korean villa or pavilion which had been located (near the straw huts) on the spot.15) Pai Chai, also founded by the Methodists in 1885, opened on June 8, 1886, and received royal recognition, the King conferring on it the name Pai Chai Hak Tang or ‘Hall for the Rearing of Useful Men.’ President Rhee was an early student at this school. It continues still in Chŏngdong. Following this, the Ewha Girls High School and the Chŏngdong Methodist Church, the oldest church building still standing in Seoul, were built on the street. Still later, in 1911~12, Ewha College was founded here, moving to its new properties in Shinch’on far outside the walls in March, 1935. Meanwhile, on the other side of Chŏngdong, Dr. Underwood bought a Korean-style house on the site of the present Grey House, fitted it with some western fixtures, and started holding religious services here. This house so attracted the curiosity of the King that he insisted on purchasing it, occupying it on short notice in the spring of 1904 following the Tŏksu Palace fire.16) Later on, after the Japanese came, the Yi household was induced to part with this and other properties in the area, and the present Grey House was built for missionary residence. In the 1890s Dr. Underwood built a Presbyterian Church on the site of the present Pearson Bible Institute around the corner of Chŏngdong on the north side of the Russian Orthodox Compound (the church building no longer exists). Near Grey House the ‘Jolly House’ was built, and advisors to the Korean government long lived here. As the missionaries became still better established, they built western brick residences in place of the converted Korean houses in which they had first settled. There was even a two-story brick semi-western style house just opposite the U.S. Legation grounds where the Chinese tailor who catered to the community once lived and had his shop. It still survives as a Methodist bible class building. Finally, though now gone, there was the famous gathering place and hotel for Westerners run by Mrs. Sontag, sister-in-law of the Russian Minister, Mr. Waeber, across the street from the extensive grounds of the Russian Legation. After its [page 19] removal, a Methodist Training School was built here and its place was taken in the early 1920s by the present Frey Hall built to house Ewha College. Also gone is the old Seoul Union, fomerly the Ladies’ Lawn Tennis Club, which, with clubhouse and several tennis courts, was long the center of social life of the whole community, business as well as missionary. Until the 1920s, the Union stood just opposite the Chŏngdong Church where the milk factory stands now; its lands included the present Embassy tennis court. Yet most of these old buildings and even others of early vintage still line this one short street. Here missionary work was concentrated and the foreign community clustered together in the strange land. Even today, there is no other street in Korea which so vividly recalls the atomsphere of early western building in the last decades of the 19th century.

The State Department officer coming to the Embassy of 1958 would scarcely recognize the conditions faced by earlier predecessors in Korea. The first American Minister not only faced a lack of habitation but an apparent absence of Departmental funds for buying or renting a residence or offices. The Foreign Service Officer of the age evidently operated more independently of Washington than is now possible. When the Department did not give sufficient funds for renting or purchasing a new residence, its new Minister apparently felt it necessary—or more economical—to purchase one himself. To add to his discomforts, there were, at the time, almost no Western-style residences in Seoul and no knowledge with which to build them. In facing the prospect of finding suitable quarters in the Seoul of 1883~84, Minister Lucius H. Foote might well have felt aggrieved.

As it happened, however, General Foote proved more than equal to the occasion. The handsome old Californian politician knew a pioneering chance when he saw one and not only found and lived in the legation property but dabbled in real estate generally. One house he originally bought at a low price for the Methodists he then sold to Presbyterian Horace N. Allen in 1884 when veteran Methodist MacClay offended him by overstaying a welcome in Seoul.17) In this way, he changed the course [page20] of missionary history by getting the Presbyterians started opposite the Methodists in Chŏngdong. The legation property, too, he managed to turn to good account, not only for the U.S. Government, but for himself; one writer observes that it “was to pay the general handsomely years after he had given up diplomacy.”18)

The land which the general found behind the Tŏksu Palace, well-located and generous-sized, must have looked quite differently from now. The plot did not at that time extend beyond where the present driveway enters the compound; below and on the Tŏksu Palace side were small Korean huts, presumably belonging originally to servants of the proprietors, the Min family. The present main guest house bedroom wing had an extension which covered the small hillock in front of it; pierced by a roofed gate, it ran over to the building that is now the servants’ quarters so that a courtyard was formed in front of the present guest house front steps.19)

The street from which the compound is now entered did not then exist nor did the palace wall in its present location, nor, of course, the stone Yi Household Museum building on the palace side of the wall. A small path some feet to the east of the present street later connected the British Legation with Chŏngdong but went no farther. A gate east of the present Embassy compound entrance closed this path. Later still—and certainly from 1901~1906 when Mr. H. W. Davison worked there—a one-story, Korean-roofed structure housing the Head Office of Customs jutted into the land where the entrance to the Embassy compound now is and extended eastward to the Ogung-kŏl gate. The compound was then entered by a gate somewhat west of the present entrance to the Embassy tennis court. Just north of the Head Customs Office, running north-south along the compound wall, was a two-story grey brick building used as a customs warehouse. In the upper story of this warehouse was a printing office which issued customs forms; the English-language newspaper “Seoul Press” was also printed there. Still further north, at about the north-eastern corner of the Embassy compound, stood the residence of the Chief Commissioner of Customs, Sir John McLeavy Brown. This residence was taken down about 1904 when a guest house for the Emperor’s Court was [page 21] erected at this spot; it was shoddily built, however, and was rarely if ever used for this purpose. In 1906, the Customs offices were moved to a building just inside the Little West Gate. When the stonework for the Granite Building in the Tŏksu Palace (now the National Museum) was completed in 1910, the southern part of Ogung-kŏl was moved farther west to its present location and later was carried north along the entire east wall of the Embassy compound at a much lower level than the previous pathway at the north, end. It was later still that it was carried beyond toward Chongno. In the beginning, this area a little to the north opposite the Kyŏnggi Girls High School, had been a sort of informal red-light district. Unlike Japan, and unlike Korea under Japan, there was no licensed prostitution under the Yi monarchy: there were, nevertheless, areas which served the same function. Ironically enough, the Salvation Army Headquarters now stands on part of this property.

Inside the compound, the present main Embassy guest house was from 1884 until 1948 either the American Legation or the Consulate-General. Across from this entrance by the present gate to the courthouse, Dr. Philip Jaisohn published his famous newspaper, *The Independent*. In back, one of the older and historically more significant features of the compound is the gate at the crest of the hill behind the Ambassador’s residence. This gate gave on a path running from the Russian Legation property to the rear walls of the Tŏksu Palace. This path had been built as a private road by Augustine Heard, then American Minister to Korea, in the summer of 1892 and had been enclosed by a wall and gates on the east and west. The path assumed undue importance because of the political events of the day, since it was a natural egress from the Tŏksu Palace to the foreign missions. Following the murder of Queen Min at Japanese instigation in the Kyŏngbok Palace in 1895, the King lived in constant fear. For sometime, he had three foreigners, Mssrs. Ap¬penzeller, Underwood and Bunker, ‘on duty’ living in the palace against any contingency and would eat only food received in a locked chest from an American missionary living nearby. Early in 1896, he and the Crown Prince smuggled themselves in women’s sedan chairs out of the Kyŏngbok Palace and into the Russian Legation, where they lived for about a year. (The King and some of his advisors [page 22] felt, not without some reason at the time, that Russia was the only great Western power which could be counted on to be anti-Japanese.) In a document of September,1897,20) the Emperor Kwangmu (the King became an Emperor in this year as a result of Korean independence from China after the Sino-Japanese War) gave the right of way on this path to the American Legation saying that ‘my subjects, bearing my messages, shall be allowed to pass this way on showing a ticket or permit by my order.’ On February 1, 1898, however, American Minister Allen penned a note to the bottom of the record of this permission saying that “the acceptance of this proposition was withdrawn by the Department of State”.21) In this as in other matters, the Department kept a wary watch on Allen—who was close to the Emperor, deeply interested in Korea and far more likely to embroil the United States in Korea’s complicated rivalries than the Department wished the United States to become.

During his sojourn from 1896~7 in the Russian Legation, the King decided to move his permanent residence from the Kyŏngbok to the Tŏksu Palace, then known as Kyŏng’un-kung.22) His motive for this decision was probably his desire to be as close as possible to the foreign legations which he considered his main witnesses and chief potential refuge against Japanese plots. In his move in 1898, the Emperor not only rebuilt but greatly expanded the palace grounds. On the other side of this ridge gate, where Embassy residences are now located and below which the Kyŏnggi Girls High School now is, were modest Korean houses which also occupied the other side of the street around, behind and below the Salvation Army Headquarters. The Emperor bought out these smaller properties, tore them down, built Korean-style buildings in many of which the palace women were lodged, and included these premises in the palace. All this property was enclosed by a wall and the Emperor placed a gate at the point where Ogung-kŏl broadens just before it debouches into Chongno, thus closing the road to all public traffic. Later, these palace buildings fell into disrepair and, after the Japanese came, the Yi Household was induced to part with all this property, mostly to various Japanese interests. Where the flowers of the Court once dwelt currently live the American Embassy Counselor, Public Affairs Officer, Chief of the Economic Section and [page 23] Press Attache.

Just to the west of the Embassy stands another interesting building, the Seoul Club. This building still belongs to the Yi Household and was apparently built by the King as a palace library, originally named the Chungmyŏng-(jŏn) (‘Hall of Heavy Radiance’). To this building, the Emperor moved in April, 1904, following a large fire in the Tŏksu Palace. During the following months, when Japan was steadily winning the Russo-Japanese War and, with it, undisputed hegemony in Korea, the Emperor was glad to be “quite surrounded by American property”. “Each day His Majesty walked on United States legation property (a path behind his library); and the timid ruler did his best to create the general impression that he was under Allen’s care. American marines contributed to the illusion by standing guard at the legation and before the missionary houses, giving the “unfortunate” appearance of furnishing protection to the emperor.23) Here, on November 18th 1905, at 1:00 a.m. Prince Ito forced the signing of the Japanese Protectorate Treaty over Korea. Here again, on July 24, 1907, Prime Minister Yi Wan-yong had audience with the old Emperor, whose abdication the Japanese were forcing, and with the new Emperor, and received their ‘assent’ (they then had to accept Japanese ‘advice’) to the signing of an Agreement giving still further sweeping domestic powers to the Japanese.24) Legation officials could and did, on such occasions, look over the wall to see what was going on. Willard Straight, American Vice-Consul in Seoul, says of the 1905 signing of the Protectorate Treaty:25) “At half past one (a.m.), I went out for a stroll around the compound. There was a rattling of rickshaws and I went below and, looking over the wall, saw that the Japanese were going away. Hasegawa’s carriage had already gone... It seemed impossible, as I stood there in the moonlight behind the hedge, that the fate of a nation had been sealed within fifty yards of where I stood, that an independent Empire of 12,000,000 people had subjected themselves to bullying and exploitation without a struggle. Yet the Ministers had signed.”

The background of the legation land itself which Lucius Foote found and of the buildings upon it also had an interesting history. Rumor has it that the main building [page 24] —now the Ambassador’s residence—originally belonged to the palace itself and had housed one or more of the royal concubines. At the time, however, house and land belonged to members of the Min clan of Yŏhŭng, long a yangban family but one which had become especially prominent after the 1860s with the marriage of one of its members to the reigning King, Kojong. It was a time-honored tradition all over the Far East that the family of the queen exercised unusual power, privilege and wealth. Strangely, of all the dozens of members of this numerous family who are well-known to society and history, this particular property belonged to two unusually obscure Mins.26) Of the elder one, Min Ke-ho, we know at least something. He was the son of Min Ch’i-san who had been a Home Minister years before and was descended from a long line of distinguished Mins. Min Ke-ho himself had been a Hallim; that is to say, he had, formerly, passed the official examinations, was thus eligible for appointment, had a certain official status and even a small emolument, but was not appointed to any official duties. The deed of sale states that he was a “former Hallim”—i.e., he was, apparently, no longer eligible for appointment. Of the other Min owning a house here, Min Yŏng-gyo, we know virtually nothing although records concerning him are reportedly being compiled by the Min family. From his given name, we know that he was of the generation younger than Min Ke-ho; whether a son or a nephew is uncertain. The Min family records have so far contained no mention of descendants of either of these men, no older Mins now living remember hearing of them, nor is there record of whether their houses were built by them, bought or inherited, At any rate, on August 14, 1884, Embassy documents27) record that a building of 125 kan and an empty lot of 300 kan (presumably the old legation and its office building, now the Ambassador’s larger guest house), was sold to Minister Pokt’ŭk’ (the closest that suitable Chinese ideographs could come to the name ‘Foote’) for 10,000 ryang by Min Ke-ho. (One kan is six feet square today but was formerly irregular and closer to eight feet square.) On the same date, a lot of 150 kan and a tiled house of 140 kan was sold to Foote by Min Yŏng-gyo. Presumably this latter was the present Embassy residence. Due in part to the fiscal policies of the regent Taiwŏn-kun who had flooded the country with discarded Chinese cash and [page 25] a spurious Korean coinage, there was great monetary confusion at the time and two kinds of ryang, one worth far more than the other, and neither with a constant value so that it is not easy to calculate the exact value of 10,000 ryang;28) it is apparent that it must have been under $2,000. Foote paid for it with his own funds. Four year later, a more formal deed was issued at the Seoul City Office and the land was recorded as sold ‘forever’ on January 26 in the ‘Year of Our Lord’ (sic), 1888.29) Even before this confirming deed, however, on September 22, 1887, Lucius H. Foote of San Francisco, (he had already resigned and returned to the United States late in 1885), sold to the U.S. Government for $4,400 the land “known as U.S. legation property and all buildings and improvements thereon.”30)

The property thus sold was not the entire land of the present residence in Compound 1. An Embassy document of September 10, 1884,31) records that a Kim Kamjok (Kamjok is a minor position title) sold the legation nine kan of thatched and six kan of tiled houses and 20 kan of land, all for 140 ryang. In view of the small size it seems likely that this was one small house, partly thatched and partly tiled. Another Embassy document tells that, in June, 1890, or the 16th Year of Kuang Hsu (the document dates the year in accordance with the reign of the contemporary Chinese Emperor since Korea was then still a tribute state), Kim Yŏng-bo, ‘land-owner’, sold a vegetable garden of four p’an to the American Legation for 3,500 ryang. As evidence of his ownership of this land and his deed, Mr. Kim produced the oldest and most interesting document still in the possession of the American Embassy. It is a single sheet of handmade white paper written swiftly and informally in Chinese ink which reveals that on the 20th of September, 1881, Min sold the vegetable garden to his slave Kim. The word ‘slave’ is not used but it is implicit; for at the end of the document stands, in eloquent simplicity, the appellation ‘Sangjon Min’ (‘Master Min’). The yangban not only used an appellation which clearly implied his mastership over the other man, but was too dignified to use either his own or the slave’s personal name on a document recording a transaction with his household slave. ‘You paid the regular price for that vegetable land so I am selling it to you,’ he says, using Korean condescending terms. Not even the price is mentioned. [page 26] Yet we can feel in this interesting vignette from Korea’s social history some stirrings of change. The slave did, after all, as he could not have earlier, come to own the land of his master. Some years later, he could sell it at a profit. Though we cannot locate his descendants today, somehow we feel that they were on the way up. While of the descendants of his once noble owners no record has yet come to light.

At any rate, the property was bought and in it, in 1884, America’s Legation in Korea started operations in the property of Mr. Foote. Though the Pai Chai School, at which President Rhee was an early student, started across the street only shortly thereafter, the legation property must have been about the first in the area, or in Korea, for that matter, to have been sold to Western—or at least to American—owners. It was also one of the very few properties at that time or since which was sold to Westerners but retained its essentially Korean character; all other legation and missionary properties in this and most other areas were rebuilt afresh as Western structures. Finally, this residence has been in the possession of the United States Government a longer time than any other ambassador’s residence owned by the United States anywhere in the world. While in earlier years not always well repaired nor overly large (the Department had to inform six foot tall Minister Allen that he should not wear his hat in the house) and often the despair of its occupants,32) it has generally served the Department well. At least one former Consul General who lived here chose his house of retirement in the United States because of the resemblance of its living room to that of this residence. Above all, Korean visitors feel at home here. Well they should: from Queen’s grave and Buddhist temple ground through palace precinct, noble villa and the vegetable garden of a slave, the residence and its grounds cut a deep swath through the history of Seoul and of Korea.

**FOOTNOTES**

1) Umehara Sueji and Fujita Ryosaku, *Chosen Kobunka Sokan*, Nara and Kyoto, 1948,Vol II, “Lolang”, p. 15. The illustrations and their explanations both in this volume and in Vol. III, 1958, also on Lolang, exemplify the contrast in number and quality between the objects discovered in the Lolang capital area and those discovered elsewhere in the peninsula. [page 27]

2) The material for this brief survey comes generally from *Hyangt’o Seoul*, published by the Seoul City Compilation Committee, Kim Yŏng-sang, Editor, Seoul, 1957, Vol. 1, pp. 11 and following. Thanks are also due Mr. Kim for generously answering many questions.

3) For interpretation, here, I am grateful to Professor Yi Pyeng Do, Seoul National University.

4) *Keijo-Fu-shi (History of Seoul City),* City Government of Seoul, 1934, Vol 1. p. 146. The chŏk is a modern equivalent of the ancient measurement used.

5) Kim Wŏn-yong, “Sokki Sidae ui Seoul”, in *Hyangt’o Seoul,* pp. 34~49.

6) *Seoul Saryŏ Ch’ongsŏ Tongguk Yŏji Pigo,* Seoul City Compilation Committee Publication No. 1, Seoul, 1955, p. 72; a famous Yi dynasty geographical work, here republished, describing Seoul, devotes a paragraph to Hŭngch’ŏn-sa and its predecessor temple from which all following information on the temple comes.

7) Ibid.

8) Keijo Fu-shi, Vol I, p. 222 states that the tomb was in the neighborhood of the broadcasting station and the Girls High School.

9) We understand that there were plans to remove this bridge and reconstruct it in the grounds of the Ch’angdŏk Palace but that these plans are still uncertain.

10) *Seoul Saryo Ch’ongso* p. 72.

11) Ibid.

12) For this and the following information, I am indebted to the late Dr. Hugh Cynn (Shin Hŭng-wu), who grew up in this region in this period.

13) E.g. *Keijo Fu-shi*, Vol. II, p.310.

14) Rosetta Sherwood Hall (ed.) The Life of Rev. William JamesHall, M.D., New York, 1897, pp. 228~30, who also gives a picture of “Ewa Hak Tang” and notes, appreciatively, that “barren sands have become a grassy lawn and the stony lane and foul gutters have been hidden away under green terraces.”

15) Mr. Shin Bong-jo, Principal, Ewha High School, states that it is certain that Queen Min bestowed the name on the school, but whether it was from the name of the villa or from the spotless character attributed to the pear blossom and, by analogy, to the character of girls in many Chinese poems, is uncertain. Perhaps it was a little of both.

16) Fred Harvey Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese*, The University of Wisconsin Press, 1944, pp. 110~111 gives a fuller version, with a different motive: “In 1903 His Majesty’s eye fell on the Underwood establishment. The timid monarch was in search of a safe palace site; he could not have failed to note that the land...was surrounded on three sides by the protected American legation. Underwood...rejected the Emperor’s offer. Thereupon His Majesty called on Allen and asked the minister to order Underwood to sell. Allen refused, on the ground that he had no power to coerce Americans...Having thus defended principle...the diplomat managed to persuade his missionary friend to yield.” However, having purchased the property, the king delayed moving while Dr. Underwood looked for new quarters. This delay was brought abruptly to an end by the great Tŏksu palace fire early in 1904.

17) L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea* 1832~1910, [page 28]Pyeng Yang, 1929, pp. 89~90, gives insight into both the general and his real estate dealings: “The property which Allen acquired for his mission was originally occupied by a man who was murdered during the mutiny of 1882. This had been left unoccupied, for it was believed to be haunted.” (cited from *The Foreign Missionary*, Vol 42, No. 8, January, 1886, p. 324.) (Although not noted, it is highly probable that the house was a tempting bargain because of its uncomfortable spiritual situation; later, after the suicide of Min Yŏng Whan following the signing of the Protectorate Treaty of 1905, the French Legation was tempted by a similar lowness of price to buy Min’s villa at the West Gate, where the present French Embassy is still located.) To continue with the citation: “When Maclay visited Seoul in June, 1884, he and his wife occupied the house and expressed to the American Minister the desire to purchase it for his mission...Dr. Allen made the following entry in his diary in regard to this purchase, recording the Minister’s conversation with him: “I will frankly tell you the fact in this case. Last summer an old man, Dr. Maclay of Japan, thrust himself upon us and so pestered me that I finally agreed to get this property for him to start a mission upon.”

18) Harrington p. 11.

19) For almost all of the following paragraph, I am indebted to Mr. Henry William Davidson, father of Mrs. Horace Underwood, and long-time resident of the Chŏngdong area during much of this period. He supervised the construction of the present National Museum building, then the Granite Palace of the Yi Emperors in the Tŏksu Palace grounds.

20) Original document in possession of the American Embassy, Seoul.

21) A further informal paper attached to the above.

22) For information in this paragraph, I am again indebted to Dr. Hugh Cynn.

23) Harrington op. cit. pp. 320~21.

24) *Keijo Fu-shi* Vol. II, pp. 21~22.

25) Herbert Croly *Willard Straight*, The MacMillan Co. N.Y. 1925, p. 182 here quotes Straight’s diary for November 18, 1905.

26) In obtaining this information, I have consulted members of the Min family and am indebted to Mr. Yŏ Un-hong for further consultations. Further records which may throw more light on Min Yŏng-gyo are said to be in process of collection and editing by the Min family office.

27) Deeds of sale in possession of the Embassy.

28) The ryang in question seems to have been the Chinese liang, then used widely in Korea. Native Korean ryang was not issued until 1898 and 1899 (H. W. Davidson). The later ryang was worth about 10 cents. Perhaps the price paid by Foote would have been closer to S1,000 than S2,000 if it was, as Harrington put it (note 16 above) “to pay the general handsomely” when he sold this plus the 3,500 ryang property for $4,400 in 1887.

29) Deed of sale in possession of the Embassy.

30) Ibid.

31) Ibid.

32) Harrington p. 258 even says of the residence; “Uncomfortable and unpretentious, it inevitably suggested to the Koreans that the United States could with impunity be ignored.” The residence has, it might be noted, been extensively enlarged and repaired since.

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The names of Seoul or settlements near its site:

Hapuk Uirye-sŏng 河北慰禮城

Hanyang 漢 陽

Yangju 楊 州

Namkyong 南 京

Hanyangbu 漢 陽 府

Hansong 漢 城

Kyongsong 京 城

Seoul 서 울



