The American Role in the Opening of Korea to the West

By Donald S. Macdonald

[page 51]

**THE AMERICAN ROLE IN THE OPENING OF KOREA TO THE WEST**

**PREFATORY NOTE**

It is the purpose of this brief paper to examine the American role in the opening of Korea to intercourse with the Occidental world; to outline the major elements of early American policy toward the country; and to mention some aspects of American cultural and commercial impacts The period covered —aside from an introductory historical section— is that from the mid-nineteenth century to the Sino-Japanese War.

Because of the shortage of time, reliance has had to be almost wholly on secondary sources, which however are believed to be adequate for a survey of this type. Particularly useful was Dr. Harold J. Noble’s thesis on early Korean-American relations, obtained from the University of California through the courtesy of Widener Library.

All opinions in the paper not otherwise labelled are those of the writer, and are purely personal in character.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to Professor Doo Soo Suh, of the Harvardノビenching Institute, who read the manuscript and offered most useful suggestions.

**1. Introduction**

Only in relatively recent years has Korea’s strategic importance in the Far East been generally perceived in the West. Occupying a peninsula of only 85,000 square miles, the country lies at the crossroads of conflict among the three giants of East Asia —China, Japan, and Russia. Struggles among these powers had left their imprint on Korean soil centuries before the “police action” of 1950. That the Koreans have preserved their cultural unity so long in such a location is a tribute to the people and to [page 52] their nationalism, and to the pre-Communist benevolence of China—the more so because during portions of this period, and particularly in the nineteenth century, the Korean government was weak, corrupt, and rent with factional strife.1)

For many centuries Korea enjoyed the status of a tributary “border-protecting” state in the Chinese imperial system, with virtually complete autonomy. She received during this time a heavy overlay of Chinese culture, and her relations with the Celestial Empire were governed rather by an extrapolated system of Confucian familial relations than by formal treaties.2) Western misunderstanding of this relationship was a major factor in events surrounding the opening of Korea to the West.

**2. The Beginnings of Western Contact**

Aside from the brief presence of a Spanish Jesuit priest in Korea during the Japanese invasion of the late sixteenth century,3) Western contacts with Korea began with occasional ship-wrecks of trading vessels.4) Following the entry of Catholicism through returning tribute missions, French priests began to come into the Hermit Kingdom—illegally and clandestinely—in the early nineteenth century. Although shipwrecked sailors seem to have been fairly well treated—in contrast to the Japanese situation—Korea resembled Japan in maintaining a policy of isolation from the West; and when the activities of the priests reached official attention, persecutions and forcible suppression of the religion, with considerable attendant brutality, resulted in 1839 and again in 1866.5) In 1871, the then Regent of Korea recorded this policy of anti-foreignism on a stone tablet:

1) Hulbert, *History of Korea*, II: 192, 224, 246, and passim.

2) Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders*, P. 86 ff.

3) Gregory de Cespedes, who came briefly to Korea at the invitation of the Japanese Commander in 1594, but who seems to have had little or no contact with the Koreans. Cf. Griffis, *Corea, the Hermit Nation*, P. 121 ff.

4) One of the shipwrecks was that of the Dutch ship *Sparrowhawk* in 1653, whose supercargo, Hendrik Hamel, published an account of his adventures. Griffis, *op. cit*., P. 169. [page53]

5) Hulbert, *op. cit*., PP. 196, 205.

[page 53]

“The barbarians from beyond the seas have violated our borders and invaded our land. If we do not fight we must make treaties with them. Those who favor making a treaty sell their country. Let this be a warning to ten thousand generations.1)”

The killing of French missionary priests in 1866 provoked the first significant attempt by a Western power at official contact with the Korean government.2) The French despatched a punitive expedition, which however abandoned its mission when it found itself too weak, and thus deceived the Koreans into feeling themselves stronger than the West.3)

**3. Early United States Contacts with Korea**

The very lack of specific information about Korea no doubt gave added color to fantastic stories of treasure and mystery;4) perhaps such stories reinforced the impetus of growing maritime commerce in Korean waters, en route to North China, in leading to such early gestures as Zodoc Pratt’s introduction into Congress of a resolution calling for a commercial arrangement with Korea, as Japan.5) The stories about Korea also inspired several expeditions of Western adventurers in Shanghai. Two of these involved Americans. The vessel *Surprise* was wrecked on the Korean west coast in 1866, and the survivors were kindly treated and returned through China.6) Later that year the schooner *General Sherman*, owned and commanded by Americans and apparently bent on plunder as well as trade, went aground in the Taedong River en route to the ancient capital of Pyongyang. In an altercation with Korean bystanders, her crew opened fire; the ship was then burned and the entire crew brutally killed.7)

1) *Korean Repository*,

2) A Russian gunboat made attempts to open trade in 1866; and a French expedition in 1847, attempting to find out what had happened to French missionaries in 1839, ran aground on the Korean west coast. Hulbert, *op. cit*., pp. 197, 205.

3) Nelson, *op. cit*., p. 115 ff.

4) McKenzie, *The Tragedy of Korea*, p. 6.

5) Foster, *American Diplomacy in the Orient*, p. 142.

6) Hulbert, *op. cit,* p. 207.

7) *Ibid*., p. 208.

[page 54]

The following year a German adventurer named Oppert, in partnership with an American ex-consular employeenamed Jenkins, undertook another plunder expedition; to conceal the real purpose, Jenkins made false representations to George Seward, consul general at Shanghai, about Korean willingness to enter into trade relations with the West. The expedition, with a ship of German registry, was unsuccessful.1)

The General Sherman debacle led to the despatch of Commander Robert W. Shufeldt in the U.S.S. *Wachusett* to make an investigation. (Admiral Bell, Commander of the Asiatic Squadron, wanted to send a punitive expedition, but was overruled by Washington.) Shufeldt anchored near Haeju, Korea (mistaking it for the inlet of the Taedong River, further north) in January, 1867; after unsuccess-fully attempting to communicate with the Korean king, he contented himself with gathering information from natives in the area —which corroborated earlier reports— and returned to China.2) A second attempt at investigation the following year received a reply by a court official to Shufeldt’s earlier letter to the king, describing the *General Sherman* incident (apparently with some justice) in terms favorable to the Koreans.3)

**4. The Opening of Korea**

These events —among which Jenkins’ false reports to Seward seem to have been important— led to the decision by Washington to undertake negotiations with the Koreans for a treaty. Since Korea was recognized to have some sort of relation with China, the American Minister to China, P. F. Low, was named to head the negotiations.4) Presumably with Perry’s example in mind, he was accompanied by the Commander of the Asiatic Squadron, Admiral Rodgers, and arrived at the mouth of the Han River aboard the flagship *Colorado,* escorted by four other steamships, on May 3, 1871. Initial contacts were made looking toward commencement of negotiations; but while the expedition was awaiting the results, a surveying party up the Han River was fired on. Minister Low demanded an apology. A letter from the Korean king indicated that he had no wish for a treaty, but no apology was received.

1) Griffis, *op. cit*., p. 396 ff.

2) Paullin, *Diplomatic Negotiations of American Naval Officers*, pp. 284~5

3) *Ibid.*

4) Nelson, *op. cit*., p. 121 ff

[page 55]

Admiral Rodgers therefore carried out a retaliatory expedition, capturing or destroying five forts and inflicting 350 casualties (against 13 suffered, including the death of Lieutenant McKay).1) The retaliation had no effect in terms of facilitating negotiations, and the Minister and his expedition departed on July 3, concluding that further negotiation “either by diplomacy or the cannon” would be fruitless.2)

Aside from the Korean anti-foreign policy, the unfortunate impression left by plunder expeditions, and the Korean illusions of strength based on the unsuccessful French and American expeditions, still another handicap was faced by United States representatives in their attempts to open relations with Korea. This was the misunderstanding of the nature of the relationship between Korea and China. The Koreans had forwarded through Peking their reply to French demands regarding the massacre of French priests in 1839; the reply moreover affirmed Korean subordination to China.3) Yet China never affirmed her position in terms the West could understand as suzerainty; in fact, her attitude was interpreted as amounting to a renunciation of sovereignty, and Korea was therefore thought of as a sovereign nation,4) although some species of connection between the two Oriental countries was recognized.5)

After the American failure, it fell to Japan to attempt an opening of the country. Japan was uniquely qualified. She understood the Confucian tradition, had contacts with Korea both peaceful and hostile for centuries, and had herself been on the receiving end of the opening process. Using as pretext a minor shooting incident off the coast in 1875, she despatched a Perry-type military expedition with 800 men to Korea. Simultaneously she sent an emissary to China, who paved the way through negotiations with Li Hung-chang, the viceroy having charge of Korean affairs.

1) Paullin, *op. cit.,* pp. 287~91.

2) Foster, *op. cit*., p. 316. Foster terms this expedition “the most serious blunder of American diplomacy in the Orient,”

3) Paullin, *op. cit*., p. 286; Nelson, *op. cit*., p. 112.

4) The French Chargé at Peking stated in a note to the Chinese Foreign Office in 1866 that ‘The Chinese Government has declared to me many times that it has no power or authority over Korea.” Nelson, op. cti., p. 116.

5) *Ibid.*, p. 122.

[page 56]

The resulting Treaty of Kanghwa, signed February 26, 1876, opened three Korean ports to Japanese trade, and con¬tained both expressed and implicit assertions of Korean sovereignty.1)

The Japanese success had two consequences. The Chinese realized that their ancient relation with Korea was in danger, and therefore took a more active interest in Korean affairs, simultaneously encouraging Korea to enter into relations with the West, as an offset to Japanese influence.2) At the same time, American interest was rekindled. Commander (later Admiral) Shufeldt, a man of broad experience outside the Navy, including a diplomatic assignment, seems to have had a part in promoting the renewal of negotiations.3) In 1878 he sailed by a circuitous route for the Far East on board the U.S.S. *Ticonderoga*, with orders for this purpose among others. At the same time the Department of State directed overtures through the Minister at Tokyo for Japanese facilitation of contact with Korea, which proved useless despite at least superficial Japanese cooperation.4) Shufeldt, however, established direct contact with the Chinese viceroy, Li Hung-chang, through the Chinese consul general at Nagasaki. A personal meeting between Li and Shufeldt ensued, as a result of which the viceroy agreed to use his influence with Korea.5) After a return to the United States, Shufeldt was assigned nominally as naval attaché in Peking; he then renewed his contacts with Li, which culminated after considerable waiting in the negotiation of a treaty at Tientsin in 1882, with Li representing both Chinese and Korean governments. After dispute over whether the treaty should affirm Korea’s dependent status (rejected by Shufeldt) a compromise was worked out by which the King of Korea would affirm his dependence in a letter to the President of the United States; the treaty itself regarded Korea as a sovereign nation. The treaty was signed on May 22, 1882, in the Korean town of Chemulp’o, by Shufeldt and two Korean officials, with

1) *Ibid*., p. 129 ff.; Hulbert, *op. cit*., II: 220. Hulbert points out that the anti-foreign regent was deposed in 1873 in favor of a more liberal regime, which helps to account for Japanese success where the United States had failed.

2) Nelson, *op. cit*., p. 136 ff.

3) Paullin, *op. cit.*, pp. 293, 302.

4) Nelson, *op. cit*., p, 139.

5) Paullin, *op. cit*., p. 293 ff.

[page 57]

two Chinese officials observing the ceremony; the text, as signed, was virtually identical with that agreed upon at Peking. Although a Korean representative had been in the background at Tientsin, the Koreans had relatively little to do with the negotiations.1)

The Shufeldt treaty, ratified the following year (1883), in general parallelled Western treaties with China except for omission of a guarantee of religious freedom. It admitted the United States to the same three ports opened to the Japanese in 1876; provided for interchange of diplomatic and consular representatives; contained the usual provisions of commercial treaties, including shipwreck clauses; for¬bade opium trade; granted reciprocal rights of residence; and gave extraterritorial jurisdiction to American consuls, though provision was made for termination of this right in the event Korean standards of justice were reformed to meet American standards.2) A clause which later became disproportionately important was that

“….if other powers deal unjustly or oppressively with either government, the other will exert their good offices, on being informed of the case, to bring about an amicable arrangement, thus showing their friendly feelings.”

This was interpreted by the Koreans as parallelling a Confucian relationship, and led to false hopes of American assistance in the later struggle against immolation by the Japanese.3)

This treaty, together with that of Perry in Japan, have been termed “the most notable successes of the Ameri¬can navy in the peaceful field of diplomacy.”4) The Korean American treaty served as a model for subsequent treaties between other Western powers and Korea, although some of the later ones—especially the French— provided broader rights which called for application of the American

1) *Ibid.*, p. 302 ff.

2) Foster, *op. cit*., p. 320. Text of treaty in McKenzie, *op. cit*., p. 276 ff.

3) McKenzie, *op. cit*., pp. 23, 130.

4) Paullin, *op. cit*., p. 328. For biographic data on Shufeldt, see ibid., p. 293, note 10. .

[page 58]

“most-favored-nation” clause.1)

**5. United States Activity in Korea, 1882~1895**

a. *The Korean situation*. The initial Korean position toward the West, as stated already, was one of entire opposition. The King of Korea, in his reply to Minister Low’s overtures in 1871, indicated an awareness of forthcoming conflict, cultural as well as political:

“Our respective dispositions are mutually dissimilar; our guiding principles are not alike….

If you are going to want us to give away land and people, then let me ask how can 3000 li of river, hill, city, and country be lightly thrown away? If you will desire us to agree to negotiate and carry out friendly relations, then let me ask how can 4000 years’ ceremonies, music, literature, all things, be without sufficient reason broken up and cast away? 2)”

After the signing of the Shufeldt treaty, the king of Korea issued a rescript indicative of the subsequent shift in attitude (presumably influenced by Japanese and Chinese contacts) to the possibility of adopting the technology of the West while abjuring its culture.3)

Facing the new impact, the Korean government was divided into two principal factions: one supporting the Regent, and one supporting the Min family, led (until her death in 1890) by the strong-minded Queen. When the anti-foreign Regent was in power, the Mins were progressive and reformist; but upon accession to power themselves they became conservative, and young progressives turned to the Regent (or he to them). Japan tended at first to be the ideal of the progressives; China stood for conservative influence. Thus the rivalries of the two countries became bound up with both ideals and practical politics in Korea.4) The situation was complicated by extreme political corruption and near-

1) Noble, *Korea aed the United States before 1895*, passim.

2) Nelson, *op. cit*., p. 123 ff., quoting *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1871, p. 74 ff.

3) Noble, op. cit., p. 10 ff.

4) *Ibid*, and Nelson, *op. cit., passim* .

[page 59]

anarchy, which, although present before the beginnings of Western contact, had been intensified by the interplay of foreign interests.1) The need for reform was cited by the Japanese in 1894 as a principal reason for Nipponese intervention,2) and later as a reason for annexation.

b. *American diplomacy*. The United States was prompt to recognize Korea, once the Shufeldt treaty had been signed—so much so as to incur quasi-official British criticism.3) The first American Minister, General Foote, took up residence in the then primitive capital in June, 1883, together with his wife4) (which fact attests to no little courage on the part of both). In his first audience with the king, Foote delivered a letter from President Arthur stating a policy of disinterest in Chinese-Korean relationships except as they might injure American interests, and regarding Korea as an independent state.5)

The King apparently “found his previous opinions of American policy and the desirability of diplomatic relations with the United States amply justified” through his contacts with the American Minister, and seems to have worked quietly to encourage the formation of a pro-American group based on tangible commercial interests.6) Recognizing the United States as impartial counselor and friend,7) the king early formed the habit of calling upon Foote and his successors for advice in matters large and small with almost embarrassing frequency. He asked a later American chargé —Navy Lieutenant Foulk— to become his personal adviser.8)

During the entire period before the Sino-Japanese War, the United States was alone in fully recognizing the Korean sovereignty expressed in the Western treaties. Other Western powers concurrently accredited their representatives at Peking to the Korean court, and stationed lesser officials

1) Hulbert, *op. cit*., II ; 265.

2) Nelson, *op. cit*., p. 209, citing *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1894, Appendix I;25~6.

3) Noble, *op. cit*. pp. 117~18.

4) *Ibid* ; p. 122.

5) *Ibid.,* p. 121 ff.

6) *Ibid*., p. 126.

7) Foster, *op. cit.,* p. 326.

8) Nelson, *op. cit*., p. 184. .

[page 60]

in Seoul, carrying on diplomatic relations affecting Korea through their Chinese legations.1) Notwithstanding this recognition, “as repeated despatches show, American policy was one of neutrality between China and Japan”;2) indeed, one of entire non-involvement in the play of interests in Korea:

“…..it is clearly the interest of the United States to hold aloof from all (the international involvements) and do nothing nor be drawn into anything which could look like taking sides with any of the contestants, or entering the lists of intrigue tor our own benefit.3)”

In view of the fact that from 1885 to 1894 China was endeavoring to implement and extend her supremacy over Korea, having sent an able Chinese Resident and two foreigners there for that purpose,4) the American policies of recognition and non-involvement were bound to conflict, as they did in at least two instances: the withdrawal of the very able Lieutenant George C. Foulk, largely at Chinese instance, when Yuan Shi Kai, the Chinese Resident, felt that Foulk had too much personal influence at court; and the establishment of an independent Korean legation in Washington. In both cases, in varying degree, the counsels of non-involvement prevailed, and the Chinese power was on the whole enhanced.5)

Other aspects of United States policy included support of missionary activity and some measure of assistance to American trade. Support of missionaries was a topic of the first minister’s

1) *Ibid*., p. 181. The United States reduced the rank of its representative in Seoul from Minister Plenipotentiary to Minister Resident, and Foote resigned in protest; but this act apparently was never communicated to the Korean government, and was perhaps explainable in internal administrative terms. Cf. Noble, *op. cit., passim*.

2) Noble, *op. cit*.,p. 311.

3) *Ibid*., p. 211, quoting State Departement despatch, Bayard to Foulk, no. 63, August 19, 1885.

4) Nelson, *op. cit*,. p. 179.

5) *Ibid*., pp. 183, 185 ff.; Noble, *op. cit*., p. 394 ff. Both sources also refer to Chinese influence on the Amerscan minister at Peking to have the United States follow the other Western powers in the system of dual accreditation described above.

[page 61]

instructions,1) and continued strong, even before an ex-medical missionary, Dr. Horace M. Allen, became secretary of the American legation in 1890 and Minister in 1897.2) Allen’s work in particular is credited by his biographer as contributing to Korea’s status as “banner mission field of all the world.”3) With respect to trade, President Arthur stated in a message to Congress that Korea “needs the implements and products which the United States are ready to supply”;4) and although Department of State instructions prohibited the seeking of American trade advantages or monopolies, nevertheless American diplomatic representatives gave much aid to businessmen —apparently including concessionnaires.5) These activities, at least in the earner period, seem however to have been much less aggressive than those of other Western representatives.6)

c. *Missionary activity*. Although a Rev. Thomas seems to have visited a Korean port before 1866 and was aboard the ill-fated *General Sherman*,7) significant missionary activity began after the Shufeldt treaty and the Korean mission to the United States in 1883 (see below). First to enter, on his own initiative and nominally not as a missionary, was Dr. Horace Allen in 1884.8) Others soon followed. Despite Korean laws against proselytization, mission work rapidly grew, and except when it exceeded reasonable bounds was tacitly permitted.9) The missions were spectacularly successful, and were always dominated by Americans in the Protestant field. By 1914, the Presbyterians alone claimed 145 paid native pastors, 2247 groups and churches, and over 124,000 adherents.10) George Kennan, in reporting on his visit to Korea in 1905, “declared that missionary schools, Christian education, education and

1) Harrington, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese*, p. 10.

2) *Ibid*., pp. 93 ff., 98.

3) *Ibid*., p. 121.

4) *Ibid.*, p. 126.

5) *Ibid*., p. 128; Noble, *op.cit.,passim*.

6) Noble, *op.cit*., p. 364.

7) Griffis, *op.cit*., p. 391.

8) Harrington, *op.cit*., p. 7 ff. Allens medical skill in saving the life of Prince Min, wounded in the emeute of 1884, was an important contribution to missionary progress in Korea.

9) Noble, *op.cit*., p. 314 ff.; Harrington, *op., cit., passim*.

10) Brown, *The Mastery of the Far East*, pp. 523 and passim.

[page 62]

foreign travel have transformed some of [the aristocracy] into intelligent, trust-worthy, and patriotic men”,1) and the writer through his own contacts and experience has come to have a high regard for the moral influence of Christian work in a country whose only previous moral doctrine was native animism and the somewhat imperfectly transmitted Chinese Confucianism and Buddhism. Although there was much rivalry among missionaries;2) although Dr. Allen considered some of them lazy and incompetent;3) although some were more zealous than tactful;4) and although missionary involvement in Korean politics was an early diplomatic problem,5) yet on balance the mission work has been (and continues to be) of great value to Korea and to Korean-American relations.

d. *Education and technical assistance*. The first official American move toward cultural relations in Korea was Minister Foote’s suggestion to the king in 1883 for a Korean mission of amity and friendship to the United States, which suggestion was implemented that year and left a deep impression on all who participated in it.6) The following year, Chargé Foulk suggested the establishment of a school for young Koreans in Western language and science; as a result, the Royal English School opened its doors in 1886 with three American teachers selected by the United States Commissioner of Education.7) Subsequent work in the educational and cultural field seems largely to have been done by the missionaries, who speedily founded orphanages and schools in considerable numbers. The most noted among missionary institutions are probably Paejae Academy, founded in 1885; the Ehwa Girls’ School, founded in 1890; and Chosun Christian College, established in 1915.8)

1) *Ibid*., p. 533.

2) Harrington, *op. cit*., pp. 75, 88; Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, p. 278.

3) Harrington, *op .cit*., p. 82.

4) *Ibid*., p. 78. Horace Underwood, one of the first missionaries and a strong personality, went so far as to carry his converts across the Yalu River into Manchuria, so as to comply with a prohibition against conversions on Korean soil (*Dictionary of American Biography*, p. 113).

5) Harrington, *op. cit., passim.*

6) Noble, *op. cit*.,p. 126 ff.

7) Hulbert, *op. cit*., p. 244.

8) Lee Mang Chi, *Chosun Yuksa ( Educational History of Korea*).

[page 63]

One of the members of the Korean mission of 1883 developed an interest in American agricultural methods, and received quantities of seeds from the United States Department of Agriculture. With goverment subsidy, he established an experimental farm, raised crops for seed, and imported American livestock. The experiment ended for all practical purposes with the death of its sponsor in 1886.1)

The Korean king in 1883 asked for American military instructors. For several years the request went unsatisfied tor lack of Congressional action; finally three men with military experience, selected by General Sheridan, and a fourth recruited from Japan, engaged themselves to the Korean government in 1888. Two of the four were worthless. One of the others, General Dye, remained in Korean service until 1899.2)

Indirect or unofficial American aid —aside from unofficial advice by American diplomatic officers and the influence of the missionaries— included the staffing of a Korean government hospital with two missionary doctors in 1885;3) the retention of ex-consul general Charles LeGendre as adviser to the Korean government in 1889, partially to offset European commercial pressures;4) the presence for several years of two Americans assigned by the Chinese viceroy— H.F. Merrill as head of the customs service, and Judge O.N. Denny as legal adviser;5) and an unsuccessful attempt by an American to set up glass and match factories upon the invitation of a German in Korean government serviced.6)

e. *Commerce*. American entry into the Korean market was slow, and to a considerable degree indirect, since many American goods entered the country through Japanese and Chinese middlemen.7) Thus, in 1888, Americans were not very active in the new foreign settlement at Chemulp’o8) because of their small numbers. The first direct American trading enterprise in Korea was

1) Noble, *op. cit*., p. 369.

4) *Ibid.*, p. 431 ff. and *passim*.

3) Harrington, *op. cit*., p. 47.

4) Noble, *op. cit.,* pp. 358, 361 ff.

5) Nelson, *op. cit*., p. 178 ff.

6) Noble, *op. cit*., p. 358.

7) *Korean Review*, VI: 23; Noble, *op. cit*., pp. 352, 361

8) Noble, *op. cit*., p. 355.

[page 64]

the American Trading Company of Yokohama, represented by W. D. Townsend; it supplied munitions, furniture, mining equipment, and railroad stock; contributed capital to the first railroad and the American mines; and received a timber- cutting concession from the Korean Government.1) Townsend later set up in business for his own account.2) Thomas A. Edison asked and obtained opportunity to install electric lights in the royal palace.3) Townsend established the first steam-driven rice cleaning plant in Korea, which monopolized the business in the Chemulp’o district.4) Negotiations by two American firms began in 1889 for construction of the first railroad; the franchise was granted in 1896, but Japanese interests took it over before construction was completed.5) Other —and later— American enterprise included the Seoul street-car and electric light systems begun in 1898,6) gold mining in the North, and other smaller ventures.7) In total imports from the United States were valued at about $400,000, of which kerosene accounted for $232,385; the rest was chiefly made up of machinery, flour, provisions, household goods and personal articles. Imports from England, chiefly cotton goods, amounted to five times as much as the American total. Japanese trade was far greater.8)

**Summary and Conclusions**

The United States, ably represented by its naval diplomats, might be considered indirectly responsible for the opening of Korea to Japan in 1876 through the example set in the opening of Japan herself, 22 years earlier, even though the first American overture in Korea in 1871 was unsuccessful. The United States subsequently negotiated the first Western treaty with Korea in 1882, which was on the whole the antithesis of imperialism, and in so doing set the example for later negotiations with other powers.

1) *Ibid*., p. 356.

2) *Ibid*., p. 360.

3) *Ibid.*

4) *Ibid*.

5) *Ibid*., P. 369; *Korean Repository*, V: 117, 1898; Herrington, *op. cit*., p. 177.

6) *Korean Repository*, V: 357, 1898.

7) *Korea Review*, VI: 24~5, 1906.

8) *Korean Repository*, V: 305, 306,1898. The facts suggest that a good part of the American imports was to supply American missionary households.

[page 65]

The consistent American support of Korean sovereignty was perhaps a factor in maintaining Korean independence in the face of increasing Chinese pressure, until the Japanese altered the power balance in 1895. American abstention from official intervention in internal politics, and abjuration of unjust advantage, gave Korea a faith in her intentions and a high regard for her counsels which undoubtedly deepened the impression made by Western ideas, ideals, and religious endeavor. The high prestige so earned by the United States in Korea, and the “good offices” clause of the treaty, made all the more difficult the unhappy situation following the Russo-Japanese War when international considerations forced the United States to acquiesce in Japanese assertions of increasing hegemony. Even despite this fact, the United States still had a reservoir of good will —much of it traceable to the history of the ‘80 s and ‘90’s— which greatly facilitated the American post-World-War-II role in Korea as military governor and tutor in self-government.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

1. Brown, Arthur Judson, *The Mastery of the Far East*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1919.

2. Foster, John W., *American Diplomacy in the Orient*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1903.

3. Griffis, William Elliot, *Corea, the Hermit Nation*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1882.

4. Harrington, Fred Harvey, *God, Mammon and the Japanese*. Madison (Wis.): University of Wisconsin Press, 1944.

5. Hulbert, Homer B., *The History of Korea*. 2 volumes. Seoul: The Methodist Publishing House, 1905.

6. *Korea Review*. Monthly magazine. Vols. I-VI, 1901〜1906. Published at Seoul, Korea.

7. *Korean Repository*. Monthly magazine. Vols. I-V, 1892—1897. Seoul, Korea: The Trilingual Press.

8. Lee Mang Chi, *Chosun Yuksa* (Educational History of Korea). Korean text published in Seoul.

9. McKenzie, F. A., *The Tragedy of Korea*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908.

10. Nelson, M. Frederick, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia*. Baton Rouge (La.): Louisiana State University press, 1946.

11. Noble, Harold Joyce, *Korea and Her Relations with the United States before* 1895. Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1931. 2 vols. [page66]

12. Paullin, Charles Oscar, *Diplomatic Negotiations of American Naval Officers*, 1778~1883. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1912.

13. Sands, William Franklin, *Undiplomatic Memories*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., 1930.

14. Underwood, Lillias Horton, *Underwood of Korea*. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, c. 1918.