*Korea Confronts the Outside:*

*Triumphs and Tragedies*

Edward J. Shultz

On August 29, 1910 Sunjong, Korea’s last monarch, issued a proclamation yielding both his throne and country to Japan, and turning this 500 year old kingdom into a colony. This was not the first time Korea confronted a powerful antagonist but this was the first time Korea’s sovereignty had been so completely abridged and the country reduced to colonial status. Mislabeled by some as the “Hermit Kingdom,” a quick look at Korea’s long history reveals the contrary, as Korean kingdoms actively engaged the world around them. When its borders were infringed, Korean kingdoms successfully defended their interest with two notable exceptions: the Mongol invasions of the 13th century, and the above mentioned Japanese annexation in 1910. This paper looks at the history of Korea’s interactions with her powerful neighbors from earliest times to the 20th century, with the intent to understand how Korea successfully stymied outside onslaughts, with the exception of the Mongol interlude, until the 20th century. It will then examine the differing conditions in the 20th century that forced Korea to cede its sovereignty.

**Early Korea**

The early history of Korea begins to emerge sometime after the start of the first millennium. The early polities of Chinhan, Pyŏnhan and Mahan in the south and Koguryŏ in the north contended with the powerful Chinese states in various manners. The Han commanderies in the northern Korean peninsula, centered particularly around P’yŏngyang, were the most direct assertion of Chinese influence into the area. The southern polities benefited from random interactions with the commanderies, but by 313 Koguryŏ (37 B.C.E.- 668) ultimately took an aggressive stance and pushed direct Han influence off the peninsula. In the subsequent centuries, as China became embroiled in numerous internal political struggles, Chinese influence further waned. However, the slowly emerging states of Koguryŏ, Paekche (18 B.C.E-660), and Silla (57 B.C.E.- 935) started to forge diplomatic ties with new Chinese kingdoms. During the fourth and fifth centuries, ties between the peninsular states and China were amicable as the peninsular states sought to enjoy the privileges and contacts China offered; however, this situation changed dramatically with the rise of the Sui dynasty (581-618).[[1]](#footnote-1)

Sui unified China, bringing strong central rule that had been missing since the collapse of Han several centuries earlier. With a powerful emperor on the throne and an invigorated state, China began to press its influence into peripheral areas where it quickly came into conflict with Koguryŏ on it northeastern frontier. Koguryo by the mid sixth century had developed a strong central state with its capital relocated to P’yŏngyang. It had long pursued a defensive policy as it had been forced to defend its borders against the Xiongnu to the west and the Malgal and other tribal groups to the north and east. Koguryŏ also struggled with her neighbors Paekche and Silla to the south, sometimes enjoying amity and sometime reverting to outright warfare. But the greatest peril to Koguryŏ’s existence came in 598 when Sui embarked on an invasion with the goal of taking over the kingdom.

Although Sui enfeofed the Koguryŏ king with special titles in 591 and then exchanged tribute missions in 592 and 597, the *Samguk sagi* reports:

Year nine [598] [spring, second month]. [The King of Koguryŏ] led an army of over ten thousand Malgal troops and invaded Western Liao, but was driven back by the Commander-in-chief of the Ying Region Wei Chong. On hearing this the Sui [Emperor] Wendi was greatly enraged and ordered Wang Shiji and Liang, the Prince of Han, to be joint marshals, and with combined land and sea forces of three-hundred thousand men, they then attacked Koguryŏ. Summer sixth month. An imperial rescript [of Emperor Wendi] rescinded all the official ranks and titles of the Koguryŏ king.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The record here indicates that Koguryŏ provoked the Sui attack, but it ended in failure because of heavy rains, high waves and strong winds that stymied Sui both on land and sea.[[3]](#footnote-3) The remorseful Koguryŏ king relied on diplomacy to end the invasion, again the *Samguk sagi* states:

“Yet the [Koguryŏ] King was still apprehensive and dispatched an envoy [to Sui] to relay an apology in a memorial calling himself “your subject of the filthy land of Liaodong.” As a result, the Emperor [Sui Wendi] stopped the war, treating him as before.” [[4]](#footnote-4)

In this first Sui invasion Koguryŏ staved off occupation through the help of weather and a diplomatic apology. Although Paekche sought to provoke Sui to attack again, the Sui emperor refused to be enticed.

Relations resumed between the two states but tensions rose in 607 when Sui demanded that the Koguryŏ king visit. When nothing resulted, Sui once again planned an invasion in 612 and declared,

“Puny Koguryŏ is foolish and disrespectful. Gathering between Bohai and Jieshi they again encroach upon the regions of the Liao and Hui Rivers. As Han and Wei repeatedly carried out action, their dens gradually declined. Because they [Han and Wei] have been distracted with various problems, the [Koguryŏ] tribes have again mustered and flourished as before.” [[5]](#footnote-5)

Sui then according to the histories dispatched over a million troops.[[6]](#footnote-6) Koguryŏ led by the famed general Ǔlchi Mundŏk resisted and, in part because of poor Sui strategy, successfully blocked Sui. The Sui emperor again launched a new attack in 613 and in 614 planned yet another invasion, but by this time Sui was in turmoil and when Koguryŏ returned a captured Sui general, a truce followed. The Sui emperor died before any further action could be taken. Koguryŏ emerged victorious in these battles by relying on a stalwart defense, the brilliant strategy of its generals, and timely diplomatic moves. It was costly but Koguryŏ triumphed.

Tang (618-907) succeeded Sui and Koguryŏ resumed tribute ties with this new Chinese dynasty. But the Tang emperor, confronted by what he believed was the treachery of the then defacto ruler of Koguryŏ, stated in spring 644,

“Kaesomun murdered his king, terrorizes the ministers of state, cruelly abuses the people, and now disobeys my commands. We are left no choice but to subdue him.” … Some cautioned, “Liaodong is far away, the transfer of provisions is difficult, and the eastern tribes [i.e., Koguryŏ] are good at defending their fortresses. You cannot make them fall quickly.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

But the emperor would not be dissuaded. Throughout much of 645 Tang troops spread over Liaodong and Koguryŏ territory, forcing again Koguryŏ to defend its territory. But once the cold of winter set in, Tang found itself overstretched and so withdrew.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The Tang emperor lamented his losses, but finding Yŏn Kaesomun far too arrogant, once again plotted an attack on Koguryŏ. Skirmishes between Tang and Koguryŏ troops reoccurred in 647 and 648, but when the Tang emperor Taizong died in 649, warfare ended. After a decade of relative peace, relations between Tang and Koguryŏ became tense as battles erupted between Paekche and Silla. It was inevitable that Tang would be drawn into these peninsular divisions and in 660 Tang aided Silla in its attacks on Paekche. Once Paekche was subdued, Tang’s ties with Koguryŏ became more strained, leading to another invasion there in the autumn of 660 which was stopped momentarily by objections from the Tang leadership in the summer of 661.[[9]](#footnote-9) After a brief pause Tang continued its invasion, hopeful that success would follow.[[10]](#footnote-10) This Tang invasion also failed to subdue Koguryŏ and once again cold temperatures and harsh climate rescued Koguryŏ. Silla joined the expedition against Koguryŏ and by 666 the battle reached a stalemate. Ultimately Silla and Tang emerged victorious over Koguryŏ, but the lessons of Koguryŏ’s resistance to Tang are similar to those with Sui. Climate certainly aided Koguryŏ defenses, but equally significant was Koguryŏ’s willingness to take to arms to defend its territory. Koguryŏ also relied on diplomacy as an added weapon in its arsenal. Silla’s active role in the conquest of Koguryŏ and the fact that Koguryŏ’s leadership was not united contributed to Koguryŏ’s defeat.

Silla had carefully nurtured ties with Tang, yet Silla, like Koguryŏ, had to assert its own prerogatives to thwart Tang designs. In the suppression of Paekche in 660, because the famed Silla general Kim Yusin came late to a meeting with a Tang general, Tang was going to execute one of the Silla leaders. Enraged Kim Yusin addressed his troops and rallied them saying, “Being guiltless I cannot accept this indignity. We must first fight a decisive battle with Tang and then crush Paekche.” The *Samguk sagi* goes on to report, “He grabbed his battle axe and stood at the entrance to the camp, with his hair raised up in anger.” A Tang commander, sensing Silla was about to revolt, backed down, restoring amicable relations. [[11]](#footnote-11) Silla was learning that a strong defense of one’s position will bring a Tang retreat.

As the suppression of Koguryŏ continued, ties between the two allies were tested. For example in the spring of 662, Silla made the trek at Tang’s request to P’yŏngyang and presented abundant supplies. But no sooner was this accomplished than the Tang troops returned to China leaving Silla to defend itself.[[12]](#footnote-12) At the same time Tang tried to force Silla and the defeated Paekche into a treaty of amity. By 668 the suppression of Koguryŏ was nearly complete as Silla and Tang forces surrounded P’yŏngyang.[[13]](#footnote-13) But even with this task accomplished, tensions between Silla and Tang spilled over when Tang occupied Paekche territory. In the spring of 670 warfare returned to the peninsula with clashes between Tang and Silla.[[14]](#footnote-14) Silla turned to an enfeofed, former Koguryŏ noble naming him King of Koguryŏ as a way to thwart Tang.

Tang tried to bolster Paekche restorationists as a way to check Silla, but this only further provoked Silla.[[15]](#footnote-15) Confronting Silla’s willingness to go to battle, Tang sent a long memorial outlining what it believed were Silla’s offenses and threatened Silla with the full might of Tang’s naval and field forces. Silla responded with an equally strong statement outlining its grievances with Tang. To the Tang charge of being a traitor, Silla replied,

Since this is not our true position, we are anxiously alarmed and fearful. If we enumerate ourselves how much we have contributed, we fear this will bring criticism. Yet by accepting censure with sealed lips, we fear we may fall into an unfortunate fate. Therefore we now briefly enumerate these false accusations to record that we have not been traitorous.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Despite this protest in 672 and Silla’s willingness to back down, battles did ensue with Silla waging war in Paekche as well as allying with Koguryŏ to end Tang’s presence in P’yŏngyang. But Silla realizing that it was only weakening itself, finally invoked diplomacy and asked to be pardoned for its alleged crimes. The *Samguk sagi* quotes the Silla king,

If you were to pardon us because we obey and grace us permitting our bodies to be intact, even if I died, it would not be different from being alive. Although it is not my wish, I dare to reveal what I hold in my heart. Unable to win over the thought of throwing myself on my sword, I humbly dispatch Wǒnch’ǒn and others to offer this report in acknowledgement of my crime. Prostrate, I await the Imperial edict. I bow before you. I bow before you. My crime is deserving of death. My crime is deserving of death.

And then notes:

Along with this they presented 33,500 *pun* of silver, 33,000 *pun* of copper, 400 needles, 120 *pun* of oxbile, 20 *pun* of gold, 6 *p’il* of 40 *sǔng* cloth and 60 *p’il* of 30 *sǔng* cloth. [[17]](#footnote-17)

In short, Silla had marshaled every defensive effort to block a Tang occupation of the peninsula, but ultimately relied on diplomacy, coupled with a healthy gift, to soothe imperials egos. But even with this capitulation, Tang and Silla still skirmished for the next several years. Tensions between the two states gradually dissolved with the passage of time as Silla triumphed as the sovereign power on the peninsula.

**Koryǒ (918-1392)**

The peninsula was relatively free of foreign conflict from the start of the eighth century until well into the tenth century when the Khitan, who established the Liao dynasty (916-1125) in China, began to emerge in northeastern China. The Khitan had been a menace to Koryǒ’s dynastic founder Wang Kǒn, and also contributed to the destruction of the Parhae state in 926, causing many Parhae leaders to flee to the Koryǒ kingdom (918-1392). Song China (960-1279), also vexed by these aggressive warriors, turned to Koryǒ in the late tenth century, hoping to check Khitan forays into China. It was only a matter of time before Koryǒ encountered a direct clash with the Khitan which came in 993 when the Khitan raided Koryǒ’s northern border region. The Khitan, asserting that they were the successors to Koguryǒ, claimed the land around Koryǒ’s Western Capital (modern P’yǒngyang). Koryǒ responded by blocking the Khitan incursion and also relied on the able diplomacy of Sǒ Hǔi, who adroitly and diplomatically stated, “Our country is the former Koguryǒ and that is why it is named Koryǒ and had a capital at P’yǒngyang.”[[18]](#footnote-18) Sŏ Hŭi’s strong words and actions caused the Khitan to retreat and not challenge Koryǒ’s sovereignty. As part of the truce Koryǒ agreed to use the Liao year titles.

Diplomacy did not work for long. The Khitans, demanding that territory south of the Yalu River be turned over to them, and sensing a Koryǒ betrayal in 993, launched their second assault in 1010. This time they bypassed P’yǒngyang, took and destroyed much of the capital, Kaegyǒng (Kaesǒng), and forced the Koryŏ king to flee south to Naju. In the truce that followed, Koryǒ agreed to establish regular tribute exchanges with the Khitan Liao. This truce lasted for eight years until 1018 when the Khitan again invaded, but this time Koryǒ was prepared militarily. Not only had Koryǒ fortified its northern fortresses but also, under the skilled leadership of Kang Kamch’an (948-1031), Koryǒ routed the Khitans, ending further attacks. Koryǒ, in meeting the Khitan invasions relied on diplomacy and when that failed resorted to stiff military resistance which ultimately proved effective.

Roughly a century later another northern people, the Jurchen, began to push down on Koryǒ’s northern frontier. Koryǒ initially met the Jurchen intrusion with diplomacy and encouraged trade offering food, cloth, and agricultural implements as an incentive. The Koryǒ kingdom also presented royal titles as a way to assuage Jurchen egos. These overtures were not sufficient to prevent military clashes in which Koryǒ initially suffered defeats in 1104. In 1107 Koryǒ launched a counter offensive, enlisting a special cavalry corps, that succeeded in expelling the Jurchen from northeastern Korea. Koryǒ resettled people into that area to assure its suzerainty over the region. The Jurchen in the meantime struggled with the Khitan, ultimately supplanted the Liao dynasty, and established its own rule in China taking the name Jin (1115-1234). As Jin held sway over northern China, Koryǒ quickly established tributary relations with this new power. In a pattern seen repeatedly up to this time, Koryǒ used diplomacy and military force in its dealings with foreign aggressors, and usually this dual strategy enabled the kingdom to survive and flourish.

The Mongols authority which started to interact with Koryǒ in the early thirteenth century proved to be a more formidable foe. By 1218 Koryǒ had already established a tributary relationship with the Mongols who were slowing moving out of Mongolia. Wearied by excessive Mongol demands, Koryǒ’s ties with the Mongols grew tense and finally broke off in 1225 when bandits killed a Mongol envoy who was returning to the Mongol court.[[19]](#footnote-19) Not until six years later in 1231 did the Mongols return and this time with a large invasion force. Koryǒ, aware of this possible onslaught, prepared its northern defenses and put out a great army to resist the invaders. One of the most famous scenes of resistance to the Mongols took place in the fortress of Kwiju where the Koryǒ commander Pak Sǒ blocked countless Mongol forays. A Mongol observer is said to have stated, “Since my youth I have followed the army, and I am accustomed to seeing the cities of the world fought over and defended but I have never seen anyone being attacked like this and to the end not surrendering.”[[20]](#footnote-20)

Ultimately Koryǒ, like Song China, was no match against the Mongols. The Mongols launched seven separate invasions of the Koryǒ kingdom between 1231 and 1254. Koryǒ resisted each time. Not only did Koryŏ field great armies but used a number of other ploys to hold off the Mongols. Unwilling to submit, Koryǒ leaders who now included powerful generals, moved the capital to the offshore island of Kanghwa, and stayed safely ensconced there until 1270. Koryŏ leaders also turned to Buddhism, reproducing the tripitaka of Buddhist scriptures hoping for divine intervention to stave off the invaders. Pleas urging a cessation of attacks were so moving, it is reported that the Mongol emperor wept on hearing them. On the battlefield, Koryǒ people of all walks of life sought to protect their homeland and harassed the Mongols invaders with guerilla-like tactics.

The court and the generals as in the past sued for peace on a number of occasions, but refused to yield to harsh Mongol demands and so the invasions continued. In 1239 the Koryŏ court dispatched a subordinate member of the royal family hoping the Mongols would interpret this as a gesture of submission.[[21]](#footnote-21) This peace lasted until 1247. The final capitulation to the Mongols was not simple. The court under the control of the Ch’oe House was willing to submit, but the Ch’oe military leaders, fearful that their manipulation of the king and his advisors would end, refused to surrender. Although the Koryŏ court surrendered in 1259, because of a military rebellion it took eleven years for the capital and court to return to Kaegyǒng. Rather than fight on, the Koryǒ kingdom accepted Mongol domination for nearly a century from 1270 and became an allied state of the Mongol Yuan (1279-1368) dynasty in China. To hold off the Mongols, Koryǒ enlisted every tactic possible from appeals to divine intervention, diplomacy, false declarations of allegiance to staunch military resistance, but ultimately the Mongol attacks were too sustained to be blocked.

**Chosǒn (1392-1910)**

The Chosǒn kingdom emerged out of conflict over how best to resolve issues with China. The dynastic founder Yi Sǒnggye (1335-1408 ) chose practicality over idealism, refused to follow orders to attack Ming (1368-1644), and returned home to establish a new kingdom. Chosǒn pursued a careful policy toward China, wary that many of its challenges had historically come from the north, thus when the next major challenge to its sovereignty came from Japan in the late 16th century, the kingdom was utterly unprepared. Although there had been sporadic pirate invasions from the Japanese archipelago from earliest times, never had there been a major invasion.

In 1392, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (-1598), having united most of Japan under his banner, sought to conquer the world. Korea lay in his path. In well-documented histories, the records of this invasion and Korean resistance have been told. Chosǒn, like the earlier kingdoms, enlisted all forms of support to hold off the Japanese invaders. From innovative resistance such as Yi Sunsin (1545-1598) and his famed turtle ships, to strong guerrilla attacks, to diplomatic overtures, Chosǒn desperately sought to counter these invasions. In a play that differed from earlier tactics, Chosǒn also enlisted help from Ming China. It is difficult to discern which of these many tactics proved most effective, but with the death of Hideyoshi in 1598, the Japanese lost interest in pursuing this deadly folly and a truce ensued with Chosŏn winning a costly triumph.

Chosǒn’s peace with the outside was short lived as the Jurchen Manchus rose in the north and invaded Korea in the early seventeenth century. As in the past, Chosǒn pursued diplomacy backed by military resistance. After sustaining several major invasions, Chosǒn accepted Manchu authority, and when the Manchu’s established China’s Qing dynasty in 1644, Chosǒn was already an allied state.

**Late Chosǒn**

Chosǒn entered the late 19th century confident that through skillful negotiations, backed by a modicum of military strength, almost any foreign foe could be defeated. When the western forces represented by France and the U.S. launched brief forays in 1866 and 1871, Chosǒn resisted with limited success, certain that its tested policies would triumph. However, when the Japanese made their initial probes in the 1870s, Chosǒn reluctantly acquiesced to their demands for diplomatic exchanges. But by 1905 the situation in East Asia posed an entirely new set of issues to which Chosǒn was unable to respond.

As Japan started to assert its control over Chosǒn, Chosǒn could no longer rely on its traditional responses to outside threats: diplomacy and military resistance, for the conditions at the start of this new century were quite different. First, Korea was not confronted with an outright invasion of a foreign force as it had been in the Koryǒ or early Chosǒn kingdoms. When foreign troops entered Korea in the 1880s and 1890s it was ostensibly to protect Koreans or foreign legations. With the Russo-Japanese War in 1904, Japanese troops entered Korea allegedly for defensive measures not as an invading force. Following this virtual occupation, Japanese troops then remained in Korea to “protect” Korea, and to modernize Korea’s military, Japan sent advisers which, in effect, assured the dissolution of a Korean armed force. Impossible for Korea to put forth a central army to repel the ensconced Japanese army, Korea could only rely on traditional techniques of resistance such as guerilla offensives seen in the righteous armies in 1906 and 1907, but these were no match for the heavily armed Japanese army. For all these reasons Korea was unable to put forth a military of defense.

Diplomacy as seen in previous struggles with foreign threats often proved to be an effective weapon of defense. Here too, as retold by many, the Japanese skillfully manipulated Korea’s foreign contacts through a number of strategies. First Japan gradually took over Korea’s foreign office so that by 1905, Korea became a protectorate of Japan’s, relinquishing all rights to assert an independent foreign policy. But even more adeptly, the Japanese through its own negotiations and personal diplomacy, adroitly convinced the Western powers that Japan was best able to modernize Korea. In 1895 the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War effectively removed the threat of Chinese intervention in Korea. In 1902 Japan signed the Anglo-Japanese Treaty eliminating England from any possible role in Korea. Russia’s defeat in 1904 in the Russo-Japanese War also removed Russian influences from Korea. Japan likewise neutralized the United States, an early ally to Korea, through personal diplomacy. The popular history, *The Imperial Cruise*, retells this tale of Japan’s personal relationship with then President Theodore Roosevelt and its devastating consequences for Korea.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Korea never had a chance to defend itself against the Japanese seizure. At the start of the 20th century Korea faced a foreign threat in new forms it had never experienced before. Japan through a slow, subtle intrusion had effectively eroded any unified military response from Korea. An in equally effective strategy, Japan had engineered events so that no foreign power would come to Korea’s aid. Or to put it another way, Korea did not have one foe but many. Japan’s imposed isolation created the mythology that Korea was a hermit. Korea’s triumphs of the past no longer provided a lesson to block the tragedy befalling Korea at the start of the 20th century.

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1. Ties were also forged with the fledgling polities emerging on the Japanese archipelago as first Pyŏnhan, Chinhan, and subsequently Paekche and Silla had contacts with those units. As for the alleged Japanese colony on the peninsula called “Mimana,” there is little evidence to support such a contention. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Samguk sagi* (hereafter cited as SS), Hanguk kojŏn ch’ongsǒ edition, Seoul, Minjokmunhwa ch’ujinhoe, 1973, 20:1b. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. SS 20:1b-2a, “Liang, Prince of Han, was leaving Linyuguan when heavy rains halted the progress of provisions. As a result, his troops, without food, again suffered from infectious disease. Meanwhile, Zhou Luohou from Donglai was crossing the ocean toward P’yŏngyang when high waves and strong winds scattered and sank many of the ships.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. SS 20:2a [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. SS 20:3b. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. SS 20:5a. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. SS21:1b-2a. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. SS 21:13b. “Because the cold came early to the Liaodong region, the grass dried up, and water began to freeze, it was difficult to maintain soldiers and horses for long and what is more, provisions all but ran out, so the Emperor gave orders to withdraw.” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. SS 22:6b. “Though Koguryŏ is a small country, why must China extend so much effort there? If Koguryŏ were in fact destroyed then you would be forced to dispatch soldiers there to hold it.” … Also encountering Empress Wu’s objections, the Emperor then stopped.” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. SS 22:9b-10a. “A Tang official was confident that divisions within Koguryŏ would assure a Tang victory. ‘Now there is serious conflict between Namsaeng and his brothers providing us a local guide to allow us to grasp entirely the reality of their situation. Although their commanders are still loyal, their troops are thoroughly exhausted and for this reason I can say that victory will surely be ours.’” [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. SS 5:16a. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. SS 6:3b. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. SS 6:10b. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. SS 6:14a-b. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Again the SS 7:1b, “General Chukchi and others were dispatched to lead troops to trample the grain at Paekche’s Karim Fortress, and then fought against Tang forces at Sǒksŏng Fortress, beheading 5,300 people and capturing two Paekche generals and six Tang Guoi [Courageous Garrison] vice commanders.” [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. SS 7:11b-12a [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. SS 7:14a-b. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Koryŏsa* (hereafter cited as KS**)** Yŏnse edition, Seoul: Kyŏnginmunhwasa, 1972, 2:49b. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Koryŏsa chŏryo* (hereafter cited as KSC) Hosa bunko ed., Tokyo: Gakushuin, 1969, 15:33b. “First month, the Mongol officials left the Western Capital and crossed the Yalu River only carrying the nation’s gift of otter skins. The remaining silk and other things they had abandoned in the fields and left. In the road there were bandits who killed them. The Mongols on the contrary suspected us and finally ended relations.” [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. KS 103:26a. Also quoted in *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization,* edited by Peter H. Lee et. al, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993, p. 352. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. KSC 16:28a. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. James Bradley, *The Imperial Cruise,* New York: Little Brown and Co, 2009, p. 213 quotes Roosevelt’s private correspondence, “The sympathies of the United States are entirely on Japan’s side, but we will maintain the strictest neutrality.” Although Americans had led Koreans to believe they would support Korea, “Roosevelt had written that ‘impotent’ countries were legitimate prey for the civilized nations.” [↑](#footnote-ref-22)