COVER: The seal-shaped emblem of the RAS-KB consists of the following Chinese characters: 槿 (top right), 域 (bottom right), 菁 (top left), 萑 (bottom left), pronounced Kŭn yŏk Ch’ŏng A in Korean. The first two characters mean “the hibiscus region,” referring to Korea, while the other two (“luxuriant mugwort”) are a metaphor inspired by Confucian commentaries on the Chinese Book of Odes, and could be translated as “enjoy encouraging erudition.”

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Tel.: (82-2) 763-9483; Fax: (82-2) 766-3796;
email: royalasiatickorea@gmail.com

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Room 611, Christian Building, Daehangno 19 (Yeonji-dong), Jongno-gu,
Seoul 110-736 Republic of Korea
Tel: +82 (0)2 763-9483 Fax: +82 (0)2 766-3796
Email: royalasiatickorea@gmail.com
Homepage: www.raskb.com
The Shinmiyangyo

Thomas Duvernay

Introduction
The story of the first American military action in Korea in 1871, known as the Shinmiyangyo in Korean, was not well known over the years except to those who had an interest in Korean history. Even then, most people only knew parts of the story, or things that were either misunderstood or even completely fabricated. Most stories are derived from the same source: The Annual Report to the Secretary of the Navy [ARSN] for the year 1871. It is with good reason that stories are based upon that source as it consisted of the after-action reports of the main American officers involved, and was very detailed. That is why most articles written about the action tend to sound the same. It is also a very biased source, so it does not give any consideration to the Korean view of what happened. Still, it is important to give the story structure, so it will also be frequently referred to in this paper.

There was another article that was written on the subject, “United States-Korean Relations 1866-1871”, by Rev. E.M. Cable for Transactions of the RASKB back in 1938. It was an important research paper on the action, and used other sources along with the ARSN, some of which were from the Korean point of view, such as the Joseonyasa, or “Joseon’s hidden history”. It has numerous inaccurate details, but paints a much clearer picture as to what was going on in 1871. Cable’s work has been very important to the research of the Shinmiyangyo and many scholarly studies on the subject have referenced him at length.

This paper will use many of the same sources, but diverges from the usual narration in that the author has conducted empirical field surveys over the course of twenty years to date of the entire approximately 4.5km line of march that the US took from the beginning to the end of the battles. During that time, many artifacts from the battle have been recovered, which sometimes changed common conceptions about what actually happened during the two days of fighting. Every artifact has a story to tell, as type of item, location, and historical context are very important. Finding a certain type of artifact, depending upon what it is and where it
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was found, can add to the historical record as much as any original participant’s journal. For example, if one finds spent bullet casings, or dropped bullets tied to a certain military, you know members of that military were probably there; if you find spent bullets or exploded shell fragments in another area tied to that same military, you know it is in the area where the people they were fighting were probably located. As such, this paper will include relevant information when applicable. This work will not go deeply into the reasons for the conflict, as others have, but concentrate on the battles themselves, along with what actually took place along the way.

The short answer to most peoples’ question about why the US came to Korea is that the country was a bit of a missing puzzle piece. China and Japan had both earlier opened their doors to the West, but Korea was strangely still closed. It would have been a prize for any country to be the first to open it to trade. However, with a string of bad experiences with Western interlopers in the preceding five years¹, Korea was in no mood to even consider relations with another country. Two incursions in 1866 and another in 1868 put off the Daewongun, the regent of the country, from having any type of interaction with the people from the “Flowery Flag” country (Hwagiguk). Still, the US Asiatic Squadron was tasked with the mission to try and make a connection.

The Ship General Sherman

Regarding one of the 1866 incursions, there is a long and often misunderstood story. An American naval ship, the USS Wachusett, visited Korea in 1867 for the official purpose of determining the fate of the crew of the General Sherman, a privately owned, US-flagged, British-leased vessel that, ostensibly, was for the purpose of conducting trade. Contrary to popular belief, the later 1871 US contact with Korea had no direct relationship to the General Sherman incident of 1866, although there was some indirect relation. For that reason, it is important to explain why that is the case before the story of the 1871 military action can be discussed. Although the General Sherman incident was not directly related to the 1871 action, it was directly related to the 1867 visit by the USS Wachusett.

¹ The General Sherman incident took place in August 1866, and was soon followed by a French naval invasion the following month. Two years later, a German adventurer, Ernst Oppert, made his third and most notorious trip to Korea, in which he and a group of raiders attempted to clean out a royal tomb and hold everything for ransom.
as Commander Robert Wilson Shufeldt—who later in 1882 successfully concluded a treaty with Korea—was tasked with finding out what happened and securing the release of any survivors. That meeting was, unfortunately, not successful as he encountered a less-than-helpful Korean official who just kept repeating that he knew nothing of the General Sherman, and that Shufeldt should “depart speedily and return to your own country” (ARSN, 1867-68, p.48). Eventually, Shufeldt did leave, and the following year another ship, the USS Shenandoah, under the command of Commander John C. Febiger, sought the same information as Shufeldt. In the end, it was concluded that all hands of the General Sherman were lost. Most of the people aboard the General Sherman (numbers vary from twenty to twenty-seven) were either Chinese or Southeast Asian, with only a handful being either American or British. Commander Shufeldt in a memorandum noted that the Chinese onboard came to “this coast to rob and plunder, to the great dread of the whole seaboard,” and “Mr. Hogarth, an English subject on board of the Sherman, was known throughout China for his reckless character; and his acquaintances suppose that if a riot occurred, he would be very likely to be one of the means of causing it” (ARSN, 1867-68, pgs. 49-50). So, even at that time, the General Sherman had a poor reputation, and was probably more just a convenient excuse for the US to survey Korea. As Commander Febiger in 1868 concluded and accepted that the crew of the General Sherman were all dead, so was the issue officially. That is not to say that all US officials were going to let it rest; Minister Low, in a June 15, 1871 message to Hamilton Fish, Secretary of State, talked about the General Sherman and even ventured that “It remains for the government of the United States to say whether further efforts shall be made to ascertain the facts, and if the government of Corea is found to be culpable, to demand and inforce (sic) means of redress, or whether the statements of the semi-barbarians and hostile people shall be received without question in justification of their acts or robbery and murder, committed upon the property and people of the United States” (Cable, 1938, p.149). Still, as a matter of official policy, the General Sherman incident was not a direct reason for the US presence in Korea in 1871.

In official correspondence and reports from the US Asiatic Squadron in 1871, the General Sherman is largely ignored, with the only stated goals being a treaty for the welfare of shipwrecked seamen, and a possible trade treaty. The shipwrecked seamen treaty was indirectly related to the General Sherman, but it was one Koreans could see no need for as all shipwrecked seamen, with the exception of the crew of the
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*General Sherman*, were all treated well and returned to their countries via China.

**The Prelude to War**

In any case, in the middle of May 1871, five ships of the US Asiatic Squadron—USS *Colorado*, USS *Alaska*, USS *Benicia*, USS *Monocacy*, and USS *Palos*—left Nagasaki, Japan and headed for Korea under the military command of Rear-Admiral John Rodgers. They were off the west coast of Korea by May 19 and temporarily anchored around Ippado (Eugenie Island) on May 23. The next day, the *Palos* and four steam launches were sent to the squadron’s proposed main anchorage at Jakyak (Boisée) Island to survey the situation and report back. They did so and returned to the squadron on May 28. The next day, the entire fleet headed towards Jakyak Island, but temporarily anchored a distance away due to fog. However, on May 30, the ships dropped anchor on the north side of Jakyak Island, which is between Yeongjong Island and Incheon.

![Figure 1. KWG31—USS Monocacy (National Archives)](image1)

![Figure 2. KWG32—USS Colorado (National Archives)](image2)
Figure 3. KWG33—USS *Alaska* (National Archives)

Figure 4. KWG34—USS *Benicia* (National Archives)

Figure 5. KWG35—USS *Palos* (National Archives)
As the US anchorage was made, relatively low-ranking Korean representatives approached and boarded the *Colorado*, the flagship of the squadron. They came to announce the superior representatives who would arrive the next day. On May 31, three Korean representatives visited onboard the *Colorado*. However, since they were of the third and fifth rank, the minister plenipotentiary, Frederick Low, would not meet with them directly as he considered it a breach of protocol to meet with anyone not of the first rank. Instead, they met with Minister Low’s secretary, Mr. Edward Drew, who could read, write, and speak Chinese. According to Rear-Admiral Rodgers’ report, “Mr. Drew conversed with the envoys in the Peking dialect” (ARSN, 1871, p.276).

From that conversation came a major cultural misunderstanding that set the US and Korea on a collision course with each other. Mr. Drew informed the envoys that the US wanted “to take soundings of their waters, and to make surveys of the shores” [of the Yeomha/Salt River/Ganghwa Straits—this paper will refer to Yeomha from now on], to which “they made no objection.” Drew further requested that the survey party not be interfered with, and that twenty-four hours would be given for notice to be given up the straits before the survey party started out. To all this “they made no reply which could indicate dissent.” (Ibid.) To the Americans, the “no objection” and “no reply” indicated a tacit approval, but to the Korean envoys the same things meant that since no permission was given, the US did not have permission to proceed. Had the Korean side clearly stated that, it is possible the armed conflict to follow could have been avoided, but we will never know for sure.

Figure 6. KWG37—“Edward Drew and Frederick Low with Chinese translators” (National Archives)
First Shots Fired

The following day, June 1, the gunboats Monocacy (Commander E.P. McCrea) and Palos (Lieutenant C.H. Rockwell), along with steam launches and cutters, headed up the straits, under the command of Commander H.C. Blake. Commander Blake detailed what happened in his report from that day (Ibid., pgs.277-279). As the surveying party went up the straits, they started noticing fortifications starting at the bottom of Ganghwa Island, which were all displaying flags and small artillery. No action was taken against the Americans until they got caught in the swift current near the main fort at Gwangseongbo, which was near the end of a peninsula that jutted out from the island (on the end of the peninsula was a fortress called Yongdudonndae, or Dragon’s Head Fortress [earlier known as Sadudonndae, or Snake’s Head Fortress]. At that point, a small arms shot rang out, followed by shots from all types of fixed artillery. As the Korean artillery could not be aimed, the accuracy was low, plus the small caliber of most of the cannon made the shots ineffective. However, it got the Americans’ attention. The vessels could not slow down due to the rapid currents, but they turned around just north of the peninsula and shelled the forts and areas that had fired on them. They kept up their fire until there was no noticeable activity in those areas. Around that time, the Monocacy had hit a submerged rock and had a hole that was leaking; it was later repaired. Because of that, and also because the ships had used a large portion of the ammunition they carried, it was decided to return to their anchorage at Jakyak Island. The US only had two casualties: one sailor had a gunshot wound to the shoulder, and another lost two fingers that were caught in the recoil of a boat howitzer.
Calm Before the Storm

It was decided to give the Korean government ten days in which to explain why they fired upon the survey party, and also to apologize for doing so. The Americans honestly felt as though they had been blindsided by the Koreans and never considered that they had any culpability in the incident. The Koreans, likewise, considered the Americans totally at fault and could not understand why they had to account for—or apologize—for anything. After all, the Yeomha was a protected area where all boats needed written permission to travel—why would it not be even more so required for a foreign vessel of war? (Cable, 1938, pgs. 86-87).

The ten days given was not only to give the Koreans time to answer, but it also gave the Americans time to prepare their battle plans, and also the tides would be more favorable. During that time, nothing of great importance happened on the American side, aside from the death of a sailor from "inflammation of the brain". His name was Joseph Driver, a landsman aboard the Alaska, although most records show him as Thomas Driver; that was probably due to the way his first name was written in the Alaska’s deck log: Jos., which was undoubtedly mistaken as Tos. His body was taken to Jakyak Island and buried (USS Alaska Logbook, 1871).

One important event happened on the Korean side, however. The day of the ill-fated survey up the Yeomha, June 1, General Eo Jae-yeon was appointed the commanding general of the Ganghwa forces, and he took with him from his posting as gaseondaebu (a second-level rank) in Hamgyeong five companies (625) of soldiers and about 300 tiger hunters.
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Due to the urgency, he had skipped the formal installation ceremony and took his troops directly to Ganghwa on June 2 (Kim, W.M., 1992, p.503).

There were a few letter exchanges between the Koreans and Americans, but none of the messages from the Korean side contained what the Americans expected—an apology. There was also a raft floated down the Yeomha with “three bullocks, fifty chickens, and one-thousand eggs” and a note saying, “Appreciating the hardships of a voyage of 10,000 li of wind and wave, I send some worthless articles as a trifling assistance to your table, as becomes the host” (Johnson, 1966). However, it was also not considered an apology, so after the ten days had come and gone, Rear-Admiral Rodgers gave the order to attack the forts.

Figure 9. General Eo Jae-yeon (Photo by Author of a portrait)

A Look at the Two Sides

Before a discussion of the fighting itself can begin, one must be made of the men and weapons on both sides. The men themselves were fairly well-matched; while Koreans in 1871 were significantly shorter than they are today (average height was 161cm in the 19th century, while in 2010 it was 174cm), so were Westerners (average height was about 168cm for a range of different nationalities in the 19th century, while a more modern average is about 178cm)². So, while Westerners were still, on average, several centimeters taller than their Korean rivals in 1871, it was not by an overwhelming amount.

While the US Asiatic Squadron was under the authority and control of the United States government, a significant portion of the men

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involved were of other nationalities. Less than 45% of the enlisted personnel were born in the United States, with more than half of the crew coming from nearly forty different countries, including (in order of significance) Ireland, England, Germany, China, Scotland, Canada, Sweden, Norway, and France. Also, the US Navy was very integrated at the time, with at least seventy-three black sailors (Duvernay, 2012, pgs.54-55).

The largest disparity between the two opposing forces was not the men, but the weapons. It was a disparity that was large and, in the end, decisive. While, man-to-man, Koreans could have held their own against their foes, their superannuated weapons were no match for the then-modern and much more accurate and powerful weapons of the Americans.

Figure 10. American Sailors with Remington rolling block carbines (National Archives, from KWG-14)

Figure 11. Korean Musketeer (Scent of Contemplation)
Koreans
The Koreans’ weapons were limited. Their main longarm was a muzzle-loading\(^3\) matchlock musket (jochong/hwaseungchong), of about .45 caliber, that was based upon matchlocks used by the Japanese in the Imjin War of 1592-97. Like most muskets of the time and type, it had an effective range of about 50-100m, and, being a smoothbore\(^4\), it was relatively inaccurate. Upon examination of the areas where Americans were located during the fighting—often at ranges of an average of 194m from the Korean positions (far beyond the effective range)—a large number of musket balls were recovered by the author and his colleague; they were found at a very shallow level under the dirt (only a couple centimeters), so they impacted the ground with reduced energy.

\(^3\) Muzzleloading mean the powder charge and shot were loaded down the muzzle of the barrel.
\(^4\) Smoothbore means that there was no rifling in the barrel.
The Korean side did have some artillery, but it was of little use. The largest cannon were, as American sources mentioned, 32-pounders (ARSN, 1871, p.291). However, only four were mentioned and they were in a fixed position. The most common artillery used by the Koreans was the *bullanggipo*, which was a small-bore (only about 5cm) bronze breech-loading swivel gun that weighed from 38kg (#5 *bullanggipo*) to 60.5kg (#4 *bullanggipo*). The name was an adaptation from the Chinese regarding the Portuguese origin of the design, as the Portuguese were referred to as “Folangji” (Frankish) by the Chinese (Lee, 2002, 20). From American records, there were scores of these small cannon in each of the forts that were captured. Although they were numerous, they were also ineffective. They were small and, theoretically, portable, but there are no reports of Korean troops taking them in the field; they were only encountered within the forts taken. They were small bore and smoothbore, so they lacked range, accuracy, and impact. The only advantage they had was due to their being breech-loading, so that replacement pre-loaded chambers could quickly be exchanged for expended ones. That also was a disadvantage as the pre-loaded chambers did not have a complete gas seal in the breech, so energy was lost upon firing.

![Figure 14. Bullanggipo at the Korean Army Museum (Photo by Author)](image)

There was one other type of artillery the Koreans had and used, as referenced in several officers’ reports, but it was nearly just as limited as the *bullanggipo*. The Koreans called them *chongtong*, and the Americans referred to them as *gingalls/gingals*. They were, simply, gun tubes--metal tubes that were sealed on one end, had an open muzzle at the other end, and a vent (fuse hole) near the breech end. They could be loaded with metal balls, stone balls, or other items. One would put a fuse in the vent, load a black powder charge, and then load whatever projectile was going to be shot. They were generally inaccurate, short range

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5 The bore size of a 32-pounder is 6.4” (16.26cm) (Melton, nd).
6 Breech-loading means it was loaded at the rear.
The Shinmiyangyo weapons; however, they did have the advantage over the bullanggipo of being relatively light and portable, so troops could carry them in the field.

Figure 15. Jijachongtong at the Korean Army Museum (Photo by Author)

The only other weapons the Koreans brought to the fight were edged weapons, such as swords and spears. Of course, their only use was when the two sides faced off in hand-to-hand fighting in the final battle.

Figure 16. Sword possibly used in the 1871 action (Original source unknown\(^7\))

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\(^7\) Photo was sent to the author back in the 1990s, but the source information was lost.
One other item of interest that the Koreans used was a cloth body armor called *myeonjebaegap*, or *myeongap* for short. It consisted of multiple layers of a linen cloth. Typically, *myeongap* had twelve or thirteen layers of cloth, and was fairly effective against weapons contemporary with its origin, such as matchlock muskets (Park, 2005, pgs. 183-184). However, it provided little protection against Western weapons of the time, and may have even contributed to deaths. An article in the New York Times had the commentary, “Had their offensive weapons been as effective as their defensive armor, the result might have been less easily attained, for the latter, composed of nine thicknesses of cotton, was impenetrable except to rifle bullets” (1898). One thing that seemed to be a problem was the flammability of the vests. Lieutenant Commander Schley said, “As many were killed and fell into the river, besides many wounded who drowned” (ARSN, 1871, p.296). When the author talked with villagers on Ganghwa Island back in the 1990s, and mentioned what Schley said, some older villagers talked about the dryness of the *myeongap* and that when a hot lead bullet hit them, they would smolder and later burn; the villagers claimed that some soldiers jumped into the river not to commit suicide, but to douse the flames, with the unfortunate consequence that they were swept up by the swift current of the Yeomha.
How effective was the myeongap? In 2010, the author tried a rudimentary test of thirty layers of cotton and an equal amount of layers of Kevlar® against different types of projectiles (with a shooting distance of five meters for sidearms and twenty meters for longarms). A .45 caliber matchlock musket, with about fifty grains of black powder, penetrated thirteen layers of the vest, while a .50-45 Remington rolling block carbine penetrated all thirty layers and the bullet embedded itself in the clay backing. With the Kevlar®, the matchlock just dented the first layer, without penetration, while the rolling block penetrated the layer. For comparison, with a relatively modern cartridge rifle (Model 99 7.7mm Japanese Arisaka), all layers of both types of armor, the clay backing, and even the sand in back of that were penetrated. It was a fairly non-scientific test, but still was notable.
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Americans
The American weapons, although not all being completely modern, were still in general use in the West and were vastly superior to those in Korea at the time. There were several longarms fielded by the landing party of the US Asiatic Squadron. The sailors were equipped with modern single-shot Remington rolling block .50-45 caliber cartridge carbines. It was an arm developed at the end of the American Civil War (1861-65), but not put into service until post-war. The design was so rugged and simple that rifle and carbine versions were licensed and sold all around the world, and even used well into the 20th century. As shooting one was as simple as ejecting a spent cartridge, putting in a new cartridge, aiming, and then pulling the trigger, it was much faster than muzzleloading arms; an experienced shooter could fire as many as seventeen or more shots per minute, as opposed to the usual three shots per minute of an average musketeer. The effective range was much greater than the matchlock musket, with a mid-range distance of about 150m, but still effective at a distance of several hundred meters. Regarding the accuracy, just before the final attack, the Americans were about 120m distant from the Koreans and Captain McLane Tilton wrote, “The firing now commenced rapidly from both sides; ours increasing as the men got settled comfortably, and their fire was effective, as the forty or fifty killed and wounded inside the redoubts show” (ARSN, 1871, p.306).

Figure 20. .50-45 caliber Remington rolling block carbine from author’s collection (Photo by Author)

Figure 21. Reproduction and original rolling block brass and bullets (Photos by Author)
The Shinmiyangyo

The marines had different longarms than the sailors. They were armed with Springfield .58 caliber rifles (probably Model 1863) and Whitneyville Plymouth .69 caliber rifles, which were both muzzleloading arms. Although Captain McLane Tilton lobbied the Navy to let his men have the same arms as the sailors, he was denied. Even though the marines’ rifles were muzzleloaders like the Koreans’ matchlocks, they were still superior in other ways. They were rifled, and they used minié bullets\(^8\), so they had greater range and accuracy. Also, they were of larger caliber, so the impact was greater.

![Figure 22. Whitneyville Plymouth .69 caliber rifle in author’s collection (Photo by Author)](image)

![Figure 23. Springfield Model 1861 .577 caliber rifle (Wikipedia Photo)](image)

Along with longarms, officers were armed with .36 caliber Colt 1851 Navy revolvers. The author recovered a spent .38 caliber bullet, which indicates that at least some of the officers used a conversion cylinder, whereby they converted the .36 caliber percussion revolver into a .38 caliber cartridge revolver. Auxiliary forces (hospital corpsmen, sappers and miners) were armed with Remington rolling block .50 caliber pistols\(^9\). The land force also had swords and cutlasses for use in hand-to-hand fighting.

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\(^8\) Minié bullets were used extensively during the American Civil War. They had the typical pointed bullet shape, but also were hollow in the rear. When fired, gasses made the hollow rear expand, pushing it into the rifling of the barrel.

\(^9\) The Remington pistol used the same design of action as the carbine, and was of the same caliber, but it used a reduced black powder load and lighter bullet.
There was a variety of artillery, both land-based and ship-based. On land, the Americans had 12-pounder Dahlgren boat howitzers, both smoothbore and rifled. The smoothbore had a range of nearly 1,000m and the rifled was over 1,600m. The smoothbore could fire explosive shell,
shrapnel, or canister\textsuperscript{10}, while the rifled howitzer fired shell and shrapnel (Duvernay, 2012, pgs.85-91). The boat howitzers could either be mounted on a slide carriage on a boat, or easily transferred to a field carriage for use on land.

Figure 28. 12-pounder Dahlgren boat howitzer at the United States Naval Academy (Photo by Author)

Figure 29. Shell fixed to sabot and powder bag for 12-pounder howitzer (Photo by Don Radcliffe)

\textsuperscript{10} Explosive shell was a bursting shot in which the walls of the shell would fragment; shrapnel was similar to explosive shell, but also contained lead balls; canister was a round that carried 48 iron or lead balls in a metal can attached to a wood sabot, essentially turning the cannon into a large shotgun. Canister was used at ranges of 200-400m.
Shipboard artillery added another level of power to the American force. Although the three tall wood ships in the squadron could not be used in the action due to their size, two of their large 9-inch Dahlgren shellguns were transferred to the *Monocacy*. The shellgun could fire an 8.9 inch (22.6cm) 41kg solid shot or 33kg shell a distance of 3,155m. It was instrumental in bringing down fortress walls. The *Monocacy* also had 60-pounder Parrott rifles, which could send a 27kg shell 6,800m; 20-pounder Parrott rifles, which could send an 8.6kg shell 4,000m. They were very accurate, which, along with the long ranges, gave the US troops plenty of cover fire when needed. It also had 8-inch shell guns, and 24-pounder howitzers (Ibid.). As the *Palos* was put out of action early in the attack, its armament is not of importance.
Figure 32. 24-pounder howitzer mounted as broadside (Seacoastartillery photo)

Figure 33. Shells for 24-pounder howitzer (Photos by Harry Ridgeway)
The Attack Begins
The total force the US sent into action was 759 men from the three main ships (Colorado, Alaska, Benicia). From that number, 118 men were needed to take care of the auxiliary ships (steam launches and boat keepers), putting the actual force onshore as 651 men (546 sailors and 105 marines). The Monocacy (Commander E.P. McCrea) and Palos (Lieutenant C.H. Rockwell) were sent along as support, as they were the only ships capable of traversing up the Yeomha. Commander H.C. Blake was commander in chief of the operation (stayed onboard the Palos), while Commander L.A. Kimberly commanded the landing force and Captain McLane Tilton was in charge of the marines.
The expedition started sailing up the Yeomha at ten o’clock in the morning on June 10. The order of movement was the *Monocacy* following two steam launches, which surveyed the waters ahead of the group. The *Palos* came next, and it had twenty-two boats carrying the landing force in tow (ARSN, 1871, pgs.280-281). The first place they took any hostile action was when the boats came alongside Hwangsan Island (Louise Island to the Americans). They “saw a battery on the south end” of the island and “threw into it a few shells, but received no reply, as the battery was deserted” (Ibid., p.289). This was confirmed when the author’s research partner, Professor Daniel Morris, found a ground-exploded four-inch Schenkl rifled shell, which was fired from a 20-pounder Dahlgren rifle on the *Monocacy* into the side of Hwangsan Island, buried in the dirt just inside an old fortification wall. He was able to recover probably ninety-nine percent of the shell, including its percussion fuse. It could very well have been the first shot of the two-day battle.

After that, the force moved up the Yeomha and opened fire from about where the present-day Choji Bridge is located. They moved up the water a bit and the Choji forts opened fire, “doing but little damage” (Ibid.). The ships anchored just northeast of the forts, and kept firing on them until they were silent. The US artillery fire destroyed most of the
second fortress’ walls. After that, the landing party boats set out from the Palos and stopped back around the present-day Choji Bridge area.\[11\]

The boats carrying the landing party came up into an area that is slightly southwest of the current reconstructed Choji fort, in what is now reclaimed farmland, but was, in 1871, mud flats. Rear-Admiral Rodgers summation of the landing paints a vivid picture:

> The character of the shore was unknown, and it proved to be most unfavorable for our purpose. Between the water and the firm land a broad belt of soft mud, traversed by deep gullies, had to be passed. The men, stepping from the boats, sank to the knees, and so tenacious was the clay, that in many cases they lost gaiters and shoes, and even trowsers’ legs. The guns sank above the axles of their carriages, and it required the strenuous exertions of many men to get them through. (Ibid., p.281)

The Palos gave artillery cover for the force as it slowly made its way to solid ground. As the Palos was damaged, and could not travel further up the straits, this was a good duty for the ship and crew. Meanwhile, the Monocacy started shelling Deokjindondae, the next fort up the Yeomha.

Once all the troops made landfall, they began the destruction of the Choji fort, which they renamed Marine Redoubt. However, due to the protracted length of time it took to make it to land, the day was pretty much spent, so the final destruction of the fort would have to wait until the next morning.

Figure 37. KWG13--Choji fort (National Archives)

\[11\] After the landing party left, the Palos accidentally hit a submerged rock and suffered a hole; with the use of pumps, the ship was kept afloat, and later repaired.
That evening, the main contingent of Americans set up camp a short distance to the west of the Choji fort, up on a slightly circular elevated area overlooking rice paddies facing north for about 180 degrees circumference. In the rear of the area were the mudflats that the force had trudged through just hours earlier. It was a very secure location to set up camp. Today, that same area still exists, but has houses where the tents were once pitched, along with a children’s playground. The rice paddies are just as they were nearly one and a half centuries ago.

![Site of US main camp on June 10, 1871](Image)

The marines headed a short distance north to a small oval-shaped hill, to act as a picket to protect against any attacks that might happen during the night. The hill is still there, although it has changed a bit in the decade before this writing. Captain McLane Tilton described the hill as “a wooded knoll, covered with hemispherical mounds, and commanding a fine view of the beautiful hills and inundated rice fields immediately around us, and distant about a half a mile from the main body” (Ibid., p.304). The “hemispherical mounds” were old tombs. When the author first visited the hill, the tombs were still there, but several years ago they were removed and modern Korean military entrenchments were installed. Even to this day, the military value of that hill is still considered important.
Aside from some “rapid firing of small arms and howling from a hill inland from us, and about a third of a mile distant” (Ibid.), nothing significant happened during the night. Even with the small commotion mentioned, a couple of shots from the main body’s howitzers quieted the neighborhood for the night.

Early the next morning, the land force finished their destruction of the Choji fort by knocking down walls, burning stores, and tossing the small bronze cannon (bullanggipo) into the Yeomha. At some point, the photographer joining the expedition, Felice Beato, came to the fort area to take some photos. Although he did not take any photos of the battle itself—wet plate collodion photography required subjects remained very still, or else the image would turn out blurry—he took many immediate following the different actions.
Once the destruction was complete, the main force of sailors marched ahead to join up with the marines, and then the combined force carried on to the next fort, Deokjindondae. In back of that fort, one-third of the marines headed up the hill to dismantle the fort. When they arrived, it was deserted, so the walls were pushed over as much as possible, and the bronze cannon were rolled over the steep cliff overlooking the Yeomha. At the same time, a company of sailors likewise dismantled the adjoining fort, Deokjinjin (Ibid., p.291).

Figure 41. KWG-20 Marines on top of the Deokjin fortress walls (National Archives)

**Bonggol Village, Deokseong-ri**

Most historians—Korean or otherwise—are unfamiliar with this part of the story. The usual story told generally involves the three main fortress areas of Choji, Deokjin, and Gwangseong. However, a great deal of the fighting between American and Korean forces took place in the hills and valleys between Deokjin and Gwangseong in a small village called Bonggolmaeul, which is located in the area known as Deokseong-ri. The village is in a flat valley area surrounded by hills. The hills to the south and east run parallel to the Yeomha, and just next to it, which made it the perfect route for the Americans to take on their way to the main fortress at Gwangseongbo. The hills to the north and west of the village run parallel to the Americans’ route, so they were well-suited for the Korean forces to shadow the Americans and try to either flank them, or cut them off. Because it was the last opportunity for the Koreans to either slow or stop
the American forces before the main fortress, many attempts were made to attack.

When the destruction of the Deokjin fortresses was complete, the other two-thirds of the marines moved ahead as skirmishers on the string of hills that would go all the way to the main objective, while the previous one-third were kept in reserve. The marines not only took point on the hill, but also covered the flanks of the main force. Very soon, the marine skirmishers began trading shots with Koreans who were on a very high hill to the left of the line of march (Ibid., p.297). At that distance, the Koreans would not have been able to do any damage with their matchlock muskets, but American small arms and artillery could certainly keep them in check. As such, a battery of artillery was hauled up a rather steep hill that not only could cover forces heading forward, but also keep the Korean forces from flanking or coming up from the rear. This hill became the US first battery. During the author’s field surveys, the actual hill was determined by not only maps and charts, but also by physical evidence. The first major survey of the hill yielded many .50-45 caliber brass cases, along with whole cartridges. Another survey turned up very valuable evidence: a 5-second water cap, which was a lead seal to cover up the fuze on the end of a rifled artillery projectile; it was about the size of a 50 won coin. It was discovered on a part of the hill that was clearly dug into the top of the hill to position a howitzer.

Figure 42. Top-left--.50-45 cartridge; Top-right--.50-45 brass; Bottom--5-second water cap (Photo by Author)
The Americans were very cognizant of the Korean forces massing against them in the hills opposite theirs across the village. Lieutenant Commander Winfield Scott Schley mentioned in his report, “From this point the enemy was discovered in force on a knoll about one mile distant to the northward, evidently determined to contest our advance and to harass our rear” (Ibid., p.295). Lieutenant Commander Silas Casey reported the following:

We had approached but a short distance when the enemy was discovered in large numbers on the crest of the hills in advance. The gallant McKee was ordered forward to deploy his company to the left of the marines, and Lieutenant Commander Heyerman and Master Pillsbury were sent to take possession of a hill on our left, followed by a section of artillery commanded by Lieutenant Snow. A lively firing was kept up along the line for some time with small-arms and the howitzers; the fire of the latter being directed more especially against a redoubt on a hill beyond the range of musketry, and around which there appeared to be a large force concentrated. (Ibid., p.300)

That skirmish was verified with physical evidence. The author’s colleague, Dan Morris, found most of the relics associated with it, including many canister shot, .58 caliber bullets, and a crossed-anchor button. Also in that same vicinity, he found an unexploded Schenkl shell, which was fired by the landing party’s rifled boat howitzer\(^{12}\). The author recovered some canister shot, .58 caliber bullets, along with a mushroomed .50 caliber bullet that, \textit{in situ}, was shown to have been fired from the first American battery position. On a nearby high hill, Professor Morris also found fragments of rifled Parrott shells, which would have been fired from the \textit{Monocacy}.

\[\text{\^{12}}\text{ The Schenkl shell was given to the Korean Army Museum for deactivation and inclusion in their exhibits.}\]
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Figure 43. .50 caliber bullet--Top, *in situ*; Bottom, recovered (Photo by Author)

Figure 44. Left--.58 caliber bullet; Right--lead canister shot (Photo by Author)
The button that was found is of great interest and possibly great significance. The person leading the infantry into the skirmish was Lieutenant Hugh McKee, the only officer killed in the entire operation. He was in charge of Company D. Another member of Company D was Alexander McKenzie, who was a boatswain’s mate. He later received the
The Shinmiyangyo Medal of Honor for trying to protect Lieutenant McKee who was mortally wounded in the final battle that will be discussed later. The button, as mentioned, had crossed anchors, which is the symbol of a boatswain’s mate. As Alexander McKenzie was a member of Company D, and would have been with Lieutenant McKee during that skirmish, the question is, could it have belonged to him? From all the author’s checking, there is no evidence to support it. One expert in American Civil War naval uniforms said, “The USN did not use crossed anchor buttons. Nor buttons specific to any rate. Many other countries maritime uniforms, both Naval and Merchant, used anchor buttons. This is not USN”\textsuperscript{13}. However, as the button was found in precisely the area where the US forces were located, and a similar button could not be located in the author’s research, the question still remains: Where did it come from?

What was worrying the Americans was the apparent build-up of Korean forces in the hills opposite them. Lieutenant Commander W.K. Wheeler had this to say about it:

Immediately on our left were a number of Coreans with their heads just visible above the crest of the hill, firing occasional shots at us with gingalls. We paid very little attention to them at first, until their fire became more rapid, and I then noticed that their number was gradually increasing... As soon as Mr. Heyerman came up he reported there was a very large force of Coreans, amounting to between two and three thousand, coming across the hills in our rear...It was evident now that the Coreans were gathering in force behind the hill in your rear, for where a few minutes before only a few heads were visible, now the whole crest of the hill was lined with heads, and they were keeping up a pretty lively fire, but not at all a dangerous one, as they were distant about five hundred yards. (Ibid., p.303)

Because of the Korean forces’ build-up, the Americans were very grateful for the seven Dahlgren boat howitzers they had with them. They had a variety of projectiles that they could use against the Koreans, depending mainly upon the distance between the two forces. When they needed to hit relatively distant targets, they would generally use shell or shrapnel; if the target was too distant for the smoothbore howitzer, they would try to use their rifled howitzer. With both the shell and shrapnel,

\textsuperscript{13} From Internet messages with Steve Hesson, May 8, 2015.
the object was for the projectile to explode just a little bit ahead and above the intended target, as the fragments and balls would not only still be moving forward, but would also be forming into a cone shape. If the projectile exploded too soon, all the pieces would fall in front of the enemy; if it exploded too late, the pieces would fall in back of the enemy. The object was to time the explosion just right so that the pieces would cut into the enemy. This was accomplished by setting the fuze to blow the projectile at a certain time, which was usually somewhere between zero to five seconds after firing. When the estimation of enemy distance was made, how much time to set the fuze for was determined. With some, the time was set by pushing a special punch through a number on the pewter fuze. Others were done by lining up numbers. There were also percussion fuzes that detonated when they struck their target (Melton, n.d.).

When the enemy was relatively close and in the open—generally at 200-300 meters—a different type of anti-personnel projectile was used: canister. A canister had a thin wall of tin, with the top and bottom being covered with steel plates, with all being attached to a wood sabot\textsuperscript{14}, and filled with thirty-nine one-inch balls made of either iron or lead (both types were found in the battle areas). When fired, the tin covering, sabot, and plates would fall away, and the canister shot would form into the shape of a cone, becoming more dispersed the farther away it traveled. The howitzer was, essentially, turned into a large shotgun. Being hit by a canister shot—or shots—could amputate limbs or kill instantly (Ripley, 1970, p.379). Through both physical evidence found throughout the battle areas and officers’ reports, it is clear that this option was used frequently. Lieutenant Commander Wheeler summed it up well when he said, “...without the artillery the position which I held would have been perfectly at the mercy of the overwhelming numbers of the enemy; it was only by the aid of the artillery that I was enabled to hold the enemy in check” (ARSN, 1871, pgs.303-304).

The US forces continued the move towards their objective, still using the ridge of the line of hills that led all the way to the back of the main fortress area. To prevent being flanked or being cut off in their rear by the Koreans, a second artillery battery was set up on a hill that had a clear view of both the line of march of the American forces moving along the hills and also the Sondolmok fort where Korean forces were massing. The battery gave the approaching infantry cover fire while also shelling the Korean fort. The hill where the second artillery was located has, so far,

\textsuperscript{14} A sabot is a base that supports a projectile in a gun tube.
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not yielded any artifacts as the area has been excavated and tombs have been placed.

The American forces traveled down the hill the second artillery was located on and fanned out, heading directly toward the Sondolmok fort, which was at a distance of 700m. During that time, both the second artillery battery, along with the guns of the Monocacy shelled Koreans and the fort continuously. Before the Americans could take up positions to ready for the attack on the fort, Korean troops needed to be cleared from the hill opposite Sondolmokdondae. This was verified with both physical evidence of recovered shell fragments, along with reports, such as that from Rear Admiral Rodgers’ when he wrote, “At about 11 o’clock, on the forenoon of the 11th of June, the hill nearest the enemy’s stronghold, or citadel, was gained. The Monocacy having moved up the river, keeping nearly abreast our land force, had taken position and shelled the forts for some time before our men came up to their vicinity. This fire was continued until our assaulting force was ready, when signal being made it was discontinued” (Ibid., p.282).

At that point, the Americans took up positions on the hill across from the Sondolmok fort. The best description of the arrangement of US forces was by Lieutenant Commander Silas Casey: “We moved on to the redoubt on the hill, (the great stronghold of the enemy) with the marines thrown out as skirmishers, and Companies C, D, E, G, and H arriving at the brow of the hill nearest the redoubt, the column was halted and deployed along the crest, the marines on the extreme right, the other companies in the following order from right to left: Company H, Master Brown; Company C, Lieutenant Totten; Company E, Lieutenant Mcllvaine; Company D, Lieutenant McKee, and Company G, Master McLean, on the extreme left” (Ibid., p.301). The recovery of .50-45 caliber brass and whole cartridges at the top of the hill west of the fort, and numerous Korean musket balls in the side of the same hill, along with officers’ reports, verify the position of the main American force. There were fewer of the artifacts found along the hill as one moved east.

Still, one very important part of the arrangement was the position of the marines. The usual thought was that they were also lined up along that same hill, but on the eastern side. However, a discovery by Professor Morris changed that idea significantly. While searching the slope of the southeast part of the hill leading up to the fort, he found small groups of unfired .58 caliber bullets fairly evenly spaced in a line about 40m from the summit. Interspersed all around the area were spent Korean musket balls. The .58 caliber bullets were for the muzzleloading Springfield rifles.
that the marines carried. The small groups of unspent bullets were from what was either dropped or placed on the ground; it is most likely the latter case. The groups were spaced evenly as it would have been the spacing between marines. In battle, cartridges are often dropped while fumbling around in one’s cartridge box; also, sometimes troops would place a number of cartridges on the ground next to them for easy access so that they did not have to fumble around. That is the most likely reason.

The Korean musket balls are there simply because the marines were their targets. Also found in that area by the author was an unfired musket percussion cap, which was quite an amazing find due to its small size and fragility. It is very likely it was not far from this area that Private Denis Hanrahan—a marine originally from Kilkenny, Ireland—was hit by a Korean musket ball and died; he was the first US military death in Korea.

While the American forces were waiting for the order to attack, they noticed a number of flags that were lined up along a trail—still extant—that led up to the fort. As battle flags have long been a prize for capture, many marines and sailors went for them. Captain Tilton gives the following account (which includes the death of Private Hanrahan):

We then advanced cautiously, with our line of skirmishers parallel to the right face of the redoubt, which was our point of attack, concealed from view from the enemy, and took position along the crest of a hill one hundred and fifty yards from him, closing intervals to one pace on the right skirmisher; the line extending along the ridge, our right resting in a path leading to the redoubt, upon which were planted about twenty-five banners in single file, a few feet apart, and at right angles to our line, the first banner being only four paces from our right skirmisher. Thirty paces in front of us was another ridge, parallel to the one we now occupy, but in order to reach it the whole line would be exposed to view. The main body come up and formed close behind us. The banners seemed to be a decoy, and several of us went from our right, took about fifteen of them, which drew a tremendous hail of bullets from the redoubt, which relaxed in half a minute, when away we pushed, availing ourselves of the opportunity to get to the next ridge, accomplishing the move with the loss of only one man, a marine from the United States ship Alaska, although for several seconds exposed to a galling fire, which recommenced immediately after the rush began. (Ibid., p.306)
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One hundred and fifty yards from the fort is just about where the eastern side of the hill the main force was on is located, and where it connects with the trail leading up to the fort. The other ridge that was “thirty paces” (in actuality, a bit more than that) ahead of the marines was most likely the lower part of the area where the .58 caliber bullets were found.

When all the American forces were assembled, rested, and ready to attack the fort, a signal was made for artillery fire to cease. There was a contradiction on exactly what time that was. Rear Admiral Rodgers wrote in his battle summary, “At about 11 o’clock, on the forenoon of the 11th of June, the hill nearest the enemy’s stronghold, or citadel, was gained” (Ibid., p.282), while Lieutenant Commander Schley wrote in his report, “About 12.30 p.m the charge was made through a deep ravine, full 80 feet deep, with three hundred and fifty sailors and marines” (Ibid., p.295). The commander of the expedition, Commander Homer C. Blake, did not write the time in his official report, but he did note in the ship’s log of the Colorado, “At 11 am stormed and took the main fort at the bend of the river in most gallant style” (USS Colorado Logbook, 1871). Commander E.P. McCrea also tips the scale in favor of 11:00 a.m. with, “We commenced bombarding it [the fort], firing 15-second shell from the after 9-inch gun, until 11 a.m., when signal was made from the shore to cease firing. At this time our land forces had begun to assemble upon the hilltop, about five hundred yards to the west of citadel, and were about to storm it. At 11:15 a.m. the assault was made, and at 11.20 a.m. our flag was flying on the east parapet of the citadel” (ARSN, 1871, p.289). One discrepancy in that last report was the distance of the American forces from the fort; it stated “five hundred yards to the west of the citadel”, but at most the Americans were about 150 yards away; possibly, as Commander Blake was on a ship and not with the landing party, he might have just guessed at the distance, but that is also just a guess.

The order was given to attack the fort, at which time all the sailors and marines involved stood up and first charged down a hill into the valley that separated their resting position from the hill on which the fort stood. When they charged, most would have been running fast, and would not have had an easy time reloading; however, it is possible that the sailors—who had single-shot cartridge carbines—could have reloaded on the run. As brass cases for Remington rolling block pistols were found at the base of the hill the fort was on, and somewhat up its slope, auxiliary troops were firing as they climbed the hill. The officers had revolvers, so they were also able to fire on their way up the hill. The marines had
muzzleloading rifles, so it was not possible for them to reload while running; from their position near the southeast wall of the fort, they undoubtedly gave covering fire for the sailors until the latter started going over the wall, at which time they would have joined in the attack. The Korean defenders, who had slow loading muzzleloading matchlock muskets, did not have enough time to continue reloading as the Americans quickly advanced up the hill. As Rear Admiral Rodgers wrote, “The enemy maintained their fire with the utmost rapidity until our men got quite up the hill, then, having no time to load, they mounted the parapet and cast stones upon our men below, fighting with the greatest fury” (Ibid., p.282).

A great amount of the death and destruction the Koreans experienced came from artillery fire. For about an hour, the fort was hit with nine-inch shells from the Monocacy before the attack; even before that time, the fort was hit with artillery from both ship and shore. To give an idea of how much iron was raining down on the fort, consider the following. Each 9-inch shell, with sabot, weighed 33.33kg; the shell itself weighed about 31.73kg. When it burst, it broke up into many fragments. The author has a recovered 9-inch iron fragment that weighs 748g, which means if other fragments were of similar size, there were approximately forty-two of them with each shot. The rate of fire of a nine-inch gun was, at maximum, about once every forty seconds. However, due to gun barrel heating, that rate was probably not kept, and might have been once every minute or so. If that is the case, during the hour of shelling, up to about sixty shells could have been fired, which means possibly over 1,900kg of iron fragments were fired against the fort. A great amount of the Korean loss of life in the fort was due to this bombardment. In a letter to his wife, Captain Tilton said, “By the bye speaking of sights I witnessed some horrible ones in the Corean forts. Some of them were burnt coal black and dreadfully mangled by 9 inch shells bursting near them” (Tyson, 1966, p.14). From photographic evidence of the time, plus officers’ reports, we know that the walls of the fort were brought down by artillery fire. Rear Admiral Rodgers noted, “The hill side was very steep, and walls of the fort joined the acclivity with scarcely a break in the line. Had not the face of the walls been somewhat shattered by the shells from the Monocacy and the howitzers on shore, the escalade would have been most difficult” (ARSN, 1871, p.282). With the walls taken down, going over them during the attack was made possible.
Figure 48. 9-inch shell fragment (Photo by Author)

Figure 49. KWG-26--shattered walls of the fort (National Archives)
The first person over the wall was Lieutenant Hugh McKee. According to McKee’s best friend, Lieutenant Bloomfield McIlvaine,

McKee got the start of all of us in the commencement of the charge and kept it. I think his heart was set on being the first man in the fort. I was with my company, close behind and a little to his left. My men did their best, but we could not overtake him. When we got about half way up to the citadel, about where the tallest tree is, the enemy jumped up on the parapets and commenced throwing rocks and stones down at us, which we dodged as best we could, and shot them (the enemy) for their reward. At last McKee arrived at the head of his company at the foot of the parapet. He was very conspicuously dressed as an officer, but without an instant’s hesitation, and when he knew it was almost certain death, he clambored (sic) to the top, revolver in one hand and sword in the other; he stood for an instant facing the enemy inside, fired twice, and then leaped in the first and foremost, followed by his men. My men then made a rush and I got on the parapet a few seconds after McKee. (B. McIlvaine, personal communication, June 22, 1871, as appearing in the Lexington Morning Herald November 18, 1900)

What happened after McKee went over the wall is recounted by Lieutenant Commander Schley: “The honor of gaining the first foothold inside the fort fell to Lieutenant McKee, who was at once charged by the enemy. But a moment had elapsed until I gained the inside and went to his aid in his desperate fight with the enemy. In a moment he fell mortally wounded by a musket-ball in the groin and a spear-stab in the side. The same brave one who had speared McKee rushed upon me, but the spear passed between my left arm and my body, and before he could withdraw it for a second trial, he was shot dead and fell lifeless at my feet” (ARSN, 1871, pgs.295-296) Another American who was killed in action was a sailor, landsman Seth Allen, “who was shot as he scaled the parapet” (Ibid., p.283). Both Denis Hanrahan, the marine killed earlier, and Seth Allen, the sailor, were taken to Jakyak Island and buried, along with a Korean prisoner (“Yi Am”; Cable, p.212) who died. Joseph Driver was buried there after he died on June 2. Lieutenant McKee’s body was transported back to his hometown of Lexington, Kentucky for burial in his family plot.

The fight inside the fort was, by all accounts, very fierce, mostly hand-to-hand combat. Quickly, the Koreans could no longer use their
matchlocks as firearms. The Americans still were able to use many of their firearms (especially sidearms), but the fighting was at close-quarters, violent, and short. Lieutenant Commander Schley noted, “After a desperate conflict, hand-to-hand for a few minutes, the enemy was driven from the fort at the point of the bayonet, leaving some one hundred and eight of his dead and wounded in and immediately about the fort” (Ibid., p.296). Many Americans were wounded—some severely—but had just three killed in action. The Koreans, on the other hand, were not so fortunate, as Schley also noted, “...the enemy, estimated at several hundred, were in disordered flight, leaving their dead and wounded in our hands, numbering one hundred and forty-three. As many were killed and fell into the river, besides many wounded who drowned; I think their loss may be estimated at three hundred and fifty men” (Ibid.). Among the Korean dead was their commander, General Eo Jae-yeon, along with his brother, and other officers. He was killed by a marine, and his flag was captured by two other marines. The great-grandson of General Eo Jae-yeon (Eo Jae-seon) believes his great-grandfather is one of the dead shown in Figure 50, and the others are his great-granduncle and other officers.
The fight for the fort was over, but some fighting still continued. Within minutes, the American forces took control of the fort. However, many Korean troops outside the fort attempted to evade capture. Some headed toward the main fortress of Gwangseongbo a couple hundred meters north, while others fled to the Yeomha down below. Others took off on the trail leading away from the fort, but which went directly by US troops. Both US infantry and land-based artillery put the Korean soldiers in their sights. Commander L.A. Kimberley wrote, “The enemy leaving a large number of dead and wounded on the field, the remainder scattered and fled, many of whom were cut off by Master McLean, Company G, and Master Schroeder with the artillery, (two pieces light 12-pounders,) who intercepted their retreat, and did good service in demoralizing the fleeing Coreans” (Ibid., p.292). Lieutenant Commander Schley noted, “Seeing themselves defeated and beaten, the enemy retreated in great disorder to the river front” (Ibid., p.296). Lieutenant Commander Douglas Cassel wrote, “The precipitous formation of the ground made a direct advance impossible for the artillery, but in moving down the spur of the hills to the left, in order to reach the level ground, the advanced section was enabled to open with effect with canister and 1 second shrapnel upon a very considerable body of the enemy, which was in retreat along the beach in rear of the fort” (Ibid., p.298). Probably, the best description was by Lieutenant Commander Silas Casey about Master Thomas C. McLean:
“While the charge was in progress Master McLean, observing the enemy retreating from the fort, hastily collected a portion of his company, and on the double-quick moved it to the left to cut off their retreat. The enemy opened a heavy fire on him, and made two desperate attempts to rush past him; each time he drove them back with loss. At last he charged them with his handful of men. The enemy took refuge behind some rocks, and fought with desperation until they were all killed or captured” (Ibid., p.301). The reason for mentioning all of these strikes against retreating Koreans is because of evidence discovered.

While searching the side of the trail that led up to the fort, right at the intersection with the hill opposite the fort, Professor Morris found clusters of canister shot buried in the side of the hill. This is significant because canister shot will spread out in a cone very soon after leaving the cannon; however, as the shot was still tightly grouped together, it indicated that the boat howitzer was at point blank range—probably within a few meters—when it fired. The author found another very intriguing artifact in the same area. While searching for more canister shot, the author found a deformed .50 caliber bullet. It was soon realized that the deformation was caused by teeth marks. The bullet is what is often termed a “bite bullet” or “pain bullet”; when field surgery had to be performed when anesthesia was not available, sometimes a bullet would be placed between the teeth of the person being operated on. In this case, a canister shot evidently hit a Korean soldier—presumably in a limb—and the sailors attempted field surgery to save his life. Whether they were successful or not is not known, but there are records of Korean prisoners with severe wounds, and even of an amputation (Cable, 1938, p.212-213).
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The Americans stayed onshore overnight to June 12, to show the Koreans they could hold what they took. The Korean forces did not try to retake the fort. The US Asiatic Squadron further stayed in Korean waters until the early morning of July 3, when they set sail for China. Their reason for doing so was practical; if they had left directly after taking the forts, Koreans might claim that the Americans were driven out. That was an especially dangerous situation, not so much for the Americans in Korea, but for foreigners in China, as there was a large anti-foreigner sentiment there at that time. If it seemed like the Americans could be defeated by the Koreans, it might have emboldened some in China. Still, in the end, Koreans declared it a victory for them; they were correct, as they never gave in diplomatically to the Americans--the Koreans were defeated militarily, but still never gave in to the American demands.

Figure 53. Top--Canister shot *in situ*; Bottom--Canister shot recovered (Photo by Author)
The two weeks following the assault on the Korean forts passed rather uneventfully. Sailors often got bored and got into trouble (as the ships’ deck logs show), so commanders tried to arrange more duties and training exercises for the men. There was one event that kept the crews’ attention for a few days, and that was the unexplained sinking of a steam launch off the Benicia on June 15. For over a week, divers were lowered into the water to first find the craft, and then raise it. In the end, it was
recovered and it was in serviceable condition, along with its boat howitzer. All in all, what started with a bang ended fairly quietly.

**Conclusion**

The United States tried to open up relations with Korea in 1871, but ended up closing that door firmly for years to come. It was a matter of timing, as the *Daeweongun* adhered to his strict policy of not engaging outside countries. However, as King Gojong came of age in 1873, the *Daeweongun* fell out of power, and the young king—who had a relatively open mind—ascended the throne as ruler. In 1875, when the Japanese pushed their way into the country, the situation was very different, as their timing was good. Seven years after that, the United States would finally establish official relations with Korea, and there was no turning back for the king and his country.

The Korean side seemed to truly not understand what they did wrong in the eyes of the Americans; to them, their sovereign territory was intruded upon and they responded in a way they considered any country would do in such a situation.

Militarily, the United States easily was the victor in this conflict, but that was mainly due to a superiority in weapons. If the two sides had been more equally armed, the result could have easily been very different. At the very least, casualties would undoubtedly not have been as skewed as they were. Certainly, the Korean soldiers fought very bravely, which was attested to in US officers’ reports. Diplomatically, Korea arguably won as they never gave in to American demands. It all depends upon the viewpoint.

Today, Korea and the United States are allies and trading partners. General Eo Jae-yeon’s flag, which was captured in 1871, was returned to Korea in 2007 on a long-term loan; the author spent years campaigning for its return and finally succeeded. Whereas twenty years ago few people ever even heard of the *Shinmiyangyo*, today it is well-known in many circles. The two sides have come a long way since 1871.

There is a new related battle going on today, and that is one to preserve history. The battleground is the same, but the enemies are different. Today, the main enemies are the backhoe and bulldozer. Many of the very same places discussed in this paper are being eaten away by “progress”. There is a race on to try and preserve the traces of this short, but very important event in Korean-American relations. Sadly, history is losing this battle. It is the author’s hope that others will join in the struggle
to preserve as much of this history as possible, so that future generations will also know the story.

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Thomas Duvernay, PhD (Korean studies), is an associate professor in the College of Basic Studies at Yeungnam University in Gyeongsan, Gyeongsangbukdo, where he teaches Korean history and English.
The Decision for War in Korea:
Pyongyang, Moscow, and Beijing

Kathryn Weathersby

The sixty-fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War is an auspicious time to take stock of the state of knowledge and debate about the important issue of the war’s origins. Scholars now have access to extensive documentary evidence from Russia and China of the decision-making on the communist side and have had well over a decade to analyze these records.1 Earlier interpretations of the war’s origins that were based primarily on American sources have been re-evaluated in light of the new evidence and the more detached perspective made possible by the end of the Cold War. In particular, scholars have gained a more sophisticated understanding of the complex interactions between the domestic and international factors that combined to produce this devastating war.

This brief essay will survey what is now known about the key question of how and why a decision was made to attempt to reunify Korea through a full-scale military campaign against the South. An influential interpretation of the war’s origins published in 1990, based primarily on American sources, argues that the conflict did not have a clear starting point, that as a civil war it evolved gradually from the unrest caused by the division of Korea into two ideologically hostile states.2 It is true, of

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1 A collection of captured North Korean documents has long been available in the National Archives of the United States, but these include only records that the North Koreans and their Soviet advisers did not destroy or evacuate before they withdrew from Pyongyang as UN troops entered the city in October 1950. This collection thus does not include records of high-level decision-making.

course, that the precondition for the decision for war was the division of the country by the United States and the Soviet Union, who neither intended nor desired such an outcome. However, as the Russian documents discussed below record in detail, the move from armed border clashes to full-scale invasion of the ROK was a deliberate decision made by specific individuals at a specific time. As we deepen our understanding of the war on the 65th anniversary of its outbreak, it is important that we begin with an accurate view of how and why it began.

The first issue to establish is the relationship between the North Korean leadership and its great power patron, the Soviet Union. While Kim Il Sung shared with political leaders throughout Korea his determination to end the tragic division of the country, the DPRK leader also shared with Syngman Rhee’s government in Seoul an inability to use military force to bring about this end without the approval and support of the state on which he relied for his political and military survival. Prior to the release of Russian archival documents on Korea, some historians argued that the DPRK could have launched the attack on the ROK on its own. However, the thousands of pages of Russian documents recording Moscow’s dealings with Korea from 1945-1950 that were declassified and made available to scholars following the collapse of Communist rule in Russia reveal a very different picture.

The records of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Defense, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the highest offices of the Kremlin show that, although the DPRK gained considerable autonomy in the years following the Korean War, prior to and during the war the rump state created in the northern half of the peninsula was profoundly dependent on and subordinate to the Soviet Union. In addition to their economic and military dependence on Soviet assistance, the North

altering his 1990 conclusions after the publication of translations of the most important Russian documents.

Korean leadership naturally deferred to their Soviet mentors as the indisputable leaders of the worldwide Communist movement.\textsuperscript{4}

When the Soviet Army entered Korea in 1945, Moscow intended to extract Korea’s economic resources for its own use. It therefore immediately brought its occupation zone north of the 38\textsuperscript{th} parallel firmly into the Soviet economic system, severing the North’s previous ties with the rest of Korea as well as with Japan and Manchuria. Furthermore, because Korea had been economically devastated by Japanese rule and Tokyo’s wartime exactions, the North was dependent on economic support from the Soviet Union. Except for very limited trade with Hong Kong and two Manchurian ports, the Soviet Union was the only source of supply and the only market for North Korean goods. Moreover, since Japan had permitted only a small number of Koreans to gain higher education or management experience and most of those had fled to the American occupation zone to avoid persecution as Japanese collaborators, North Korea was dependent on the Soviets for technical expertise in virtually all fields of economy and administration.\textsuperscript{5}

The historian Bruce Cumings argues that China always offered an alternative source of support to North Korea, but Russian and Chinese sources show that prior to the war this interaction was quite limited.\textsuperscript{6} Besides, in the early years of the People’s Republic, the Chinese were

\textsuperscript{4} From 1991-1995, Kathryn Weathersby gradually obtained access to the vast collection of documents on Korea held by the archives of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the Ministry of Defense. She also obtained copies of approximately 2,000 pages of records of the highest level decision-making on Korea held by the Presidential Archive in Moscow. For a fuller discussion of these documents, see K. Weathersby, “The Soviet Role in the Korean War: The State of Historical Knowledge,” in William Stueck, \emph{The Korean War in World History} (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004): 61-92.


\textsuperscript{6} This point is emphasized in Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, \emph{Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War} (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993): 134.
themselves dependent on Soviet assistance for their economic and military development.\(^7\)

Perhaps even more importantly, Kim Il Sung was constrained by his political dependence on Moscow. With little support base within Korea and faced with numerous challenges to his leadership from more prominent political figures, Kim Il Sung owed his position solely to Moscow’s patronage. Moreover, with American troops across the sectoral divide, Soviet authorities exercised very close supervision of Korean affairs, even after Soviet troops were withdrawn. In the pre-war years, DPRK leaders willingly subordinated themselves to Moscow’s direction. Like Communist leaders elsewhere, Kim Il Sung feared and respected the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin; he neither could nor would take an important step without Moscow’s approval. As Kim Il Sung declared to Soviet Ambassador Terentii F. Shtykov in January 1950 “he himself cannot begin an attack, because he is a Communist, a disciplined person and for him the order of Comrade Stalin is law.”\(^8\)

For all the above reasons, after the establishment of the DPRK and the ROK in 1948 ended any hope for reunification by political means, Kim Il Sung turned to Stalin for permission to reunify the country by military means. While in Moscow in March 1949 to establish the first formal treaties between the DPRK and the USSR, the North Korean leader first raised the issue of a military campaign against the South. At that time, however, American armed forces were still in South Korea. Stalin consequently refused the request and informed Kim Il Sung that while he should be prepared to counter-attack in case of an invasion from the South, he must not mount an offensive.\(^9\)

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In August 1949, after the U.S. had withdrawn its armed forces from the ROK, Kim Il Sung again requested permission to attack the South, this time claiming that Seoul was preparing to invade the DPRK. Under the new circumstances, the Soviet leadership was ready to entertain Kim’s request, but in the end decided that the limited offensive operation Kim proposed was inadvisable at that time. Since the Korean People’s Army was not sufficiently strong, in their opinion, such an operation would probably turn into a prolonged civil war, which would be disadvantageous both militarily and politically. Moreover, a “drawn out civil war” initiated by an attack from the North would give the Americans an opportunity to intervene “more decisively than they had in China,” and in general to agitate against the Soviet Union. Thus, an attack on the South would be “correct” only if the North Koreans could be certain that the war would end quickly. In the meantime, the Soviet leadership instructed the North Koreans to strengthen the partisan movement in the South in order to prepare to unify the country through an armed uprising.\footnote{Ciphered telegram from [Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK] Shtykov to [Soviet Foreign Minister] Vyshinsky, 3 September 1949, AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 4, Papka 11, Listy 136-138; Ciphered telegram from [First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs] Gromyko to [Charge d’affairs of the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang] Tunkin, 11 September 1949 AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, List 45.; Ciphered telegram from Tunkin to the Soviet Foreign Ministry (in reply to telegram of 11 September), 14 September 1949, AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 3, Papka 11, Listy 75-77. For the full text of these documents, see K. Weathersby, “To Attack or Not to Attack?: Stalin, Kim Il Sung, and the Prelude to War,” Cold War International History Project Bulletin, 5 (Spring 1995): 1-9. Available online at www.cwihp.org.}

It should be noted that the Soviet leadership did not question the goal of bringing the rest of Korea under DPRK control; the issue was only whether the means would bring disadvantageous results to Moscow.

On 17 January 1950 Kim Il Sung again raised the issue, this time with increased urgency. The establishment of the People’s Republic of China in October 1949 had made it intolerable to the DPRK leader that Korean Communists were not allowed similarly to bring revolution to the rest of their country. Citing a promise Mao Zedong allegedly made in May 1949 that the People’s Liberation Army would help the Koreans once their struggle with the Chinese Nationalists was over, Kim fervently entreated Ambassador Shykov to allow him to go to Moscow to discuss with Stalin the possibility of launching an attack on South Korea. On 30 January the Soviet leader informed Kim that he was “ready to help him in
this matter” but that “such a large matter in regard to South Korea such as he wants to undertake needs large preparation.” Since he remained worried about the possibility of an American intervention on behalf of South Korea, which could endanger the Soviet Union, Stalin added that “the matter must be organized so that there would not be too great a risk.”

In late March Kim Il Sung and DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Hon-yong went to Moscow to work out plans for the offensive together with Soviet military and political officials. Stalin personally met with the North Korean leaders for three discussions, during which he explained his reasoning in finally supporting their request. He explained that the “changed international situation” made it now possible to reunify Korea by military means. First, the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in October 1949 which freed Chinese troops to go to Korea, if necessary. Moreover, the establishment of the People’s Republic of China showed the weakness of the United States. The Americans had not fought to prevent a Communist victory in China, and thus would not fight for the smaller prize of Korea. Another element of the “changed international situation” was the defensive alliance Moscow and Beijing had concluded the previous month, which, Stalin declared, made the Americans “even more hesitant to challenge the Communists in Asia.”

Reinforcing his point, the Soviet leader added that “according to information coming from the United States, it really is so. The prevailing mood is not to interfere.” This statement appears to be a reference to the


new American strategic policy for East Asia adopted in late December 1949, titled NSC 48, whose substance Stalin was in a position to know through his highly-placed British spy in Washington, Donald McLean. In any case, on January 12 Secretary of State Dean Acheson revealed the new policy in a public statement at the National Press Club. In light of the establishment of the People’s Republic of China and the limited military resources the U.S. had available in the wake of post-World War II demobilization, strategic planners in Washington had decided to restrict the territory the US was committed to defending in Asia to lands lying to the east of a line drawn between Japan and the Asian mainland and the Philippines and the mainland. The new “defense perimeter” thus excluded the Korean peninsula.

From Stalin’s point of view, Washington’s new strategic policy for East Asia created a power vacuum in the region, which he moved quickly to fill. In the first weeks of 1950 the Soviet leader altered his entire policy toward East Asia. On January 6 he informed Mao Zedong that he would now conclude an alliance with the People’s Republic of China, which he had been unwilling to do when Mao had arrived in Moscow the previous month. Because the agreement the Soviet Union had concluded with its wartime allies at Yalta in 1945, which had given the USSR significant territorial gains in East Asia, had been contingent on Moscow concluding a treaty with the Nationalist government of China, Stalin feared that abrogating that treaty through an alliance with the PRC would give the Americans a pretext for revising other terms of the Yalta agreement. However, after learning of NSC 48, Stalin concluded that such fears were baseless. He thus moved not only to ally with Beijing, but also to approve the North Korean attack on South Korea, to recognize Ho Chi Minh’s government in Vietnam, and to instruct the Japanese Communist Party to adopt a forward stance in place of its earlier defensive policy.

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13 This message to Mao was given before Secretary of State Dean Acheson’s January 12 speech at the National Press Club. This chronology leads K. Weathersby to conclude that Stalin had learned of the substance of NSC-48 from Donald McLean prior to January 6.

14 Record of the Conversation between Comrade I.V. Stalin and Chairman of the Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China Mao Zedong on 16 December 1949. Archive of the President of the Russian Federation [Hereafter APRF], Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 329, Listy 9-17; Record of Conversation between Comrade I. V. Stalin and Chairman of the Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China Mao Zedong on 22 January 1950, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 329, Listy 29-38. For the full text of these documents, see Cold War
Completing his explanation of the “changed international situation” to Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong, Stalin cited the fact that the USSR now had an atomic bomb. Nonetheless, despite these developments, the cautious Soviet dictator, who had come close to defeat at the hands of Nazi Germany, remained worried that the North Korean action might pull the Soviet Union into war with the United States. He was not in principle opposed to such a war, but he wanted to be sure that it would not come before the USSR was strong enough to win it. He therefore told Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong that they had “to weigh once again all the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ of the liberation. First of all, will Americans interfere or not?” Second, since he counted on the availability of Chinese reinforcements should North Korea need help, Stalin stipulated that “the liberation can be started only if the Chinese leadership endorses it.”

Kim Il Sung confidently asserted to Stalin that the Americans will not interfere. “Now that they know the USSR and China are behind Korea and are able to help it, Americans will not risk a big war.” As for the Chinese, Kim assured Stalin that Mao Zedong “always supported our desire to liberate the whole country” and had said on several occasions that “after the Chinese revolution is completed, China will help us, if necessary, it will provide troops.” Nonetheless, the North Korean leader was reluctant to seek assistance from his Chinese comrades, and thus proudly declared that we “want to rely on our own forces to unify Korea. We believe that we can do it.”

Stalin then discussed the measures that would be needed to prepare the Korean People’s Army for war and assured Kim and Pak that the Soviet Union would provide the requisite weapons and supplies. The Soviet leader laid out a three stage plan for the offensive. First, troops


\[\text{Ibid, pp. 9-10.}\]
would be concentrated near the 38th parallel. Second, the DPRK would issue new proposals for reunification. Third, once those proposals are rejected, an attack would take place. Stalin agreed with Kim’s suggestion to begin by engaging ROK forces on the Ongjin peninsula, “as it will help disguise who initiated combat activities.” After the South counterattacks on Ongjin, the DPRK would have a pretext for enlarging the front. Stalin emphasized that “the war should be quick and speedy. Southerners and Americans should not have time to come to their senses. They won’t have time to put up a strong resistance and to mobilize international support.”

Stalin made it clear to Kim Il Sung and Pak Hon-yong that they should not count on direct Soviet participation in the war, as he was determined to avoid being drawn into premature war with the United States. He thus repeated his instruction that Kim must consult with Mao Zedong before the war could begin. Assuming Beijing’s approval would be forthcoming, the Soviet and North Korean leaders agreed that “the North Korean army would be fully mobilized by the summer of 1950 and by that time the Korean General Staff, with the assistance of Soviet advisers, will draw the concrete plan for the offensive.”

In accordance with Stalin’s instructions, Kim Il Sung went secretly to Beijing on 13 May and informed Mao Zedong that he planned to attack the South. Mao was surprised and sent a telegram to Stalin requesting confirmation of this news. After receiving a reply from the Soviet leader that he had, in fact, decided to proceed with the military action, in Korea, Mao Zedong had little choice but to agree to the plan. Having just concluded an alliance with the Soviet Union that was essential for the PRC’s economic development and national security, Mao was not in a position to refuse to grant the assistance that Stalin counted on him to provide. Consequently, on 15 May Mao informed Kim Il Sung that he had intended to help North Korea liberate the South once Taiwan was liberated, but since this decision had been made to proceed first in Korea, he would assist the common cause by sending troops if the Americans intervened.

According to Kim Il Sung’s report to the Soviet ambassador to Beijing, Mao explained that “it is not convenient for the Soviet Union to participate in combat activities because it is tied by the agreement with America on the demarcation line along the 38th parallel. China is not tied

17 Ibid., p. 10.
18 Ibid. pp. 10-11.
by similar obligations and therefore can easily extend assistance to the North.”

After Kim Il Sung returned from Beijing in mid-May, preparations for the campaign proceeded rapidly. At the same time, Stalin became increasingly nervous over growing signs of American commitment to South Korea, including a $100 million economic and military aid package for the ROK and visits by high-ranking American officials to Seoul. On 29 May Ambassador Shtykov reported to Stalin that most of the armaments and equipment the Soviet Union had agreed to supply for the offensive had arrived. Kim Il Sung had inspected the newly formed divisions of the KPA and concluded that they would be ready for combat by the end of June. The KPA Chief of Staff together with Soviet General Vasiliev had prepared the “overall program for the offensive,” which Kim Il Sung had approved.

The movement of KPA troops to their positions 10-15 kilometers from the 38th parallel began on 12 June. Shtykov reported to Stalin the following day that “a special meeting was held for commanders of divisions, chief of staff and chiefs of artillery of the divisions and of the first echelon. At this meeting specific and concrete assignments were given to each formation. Special stress was put on keeping total secrecy of the preliminary arrangements.” Because of the emphasis on preventing the enemy from learning of the plan, Beijing was not informed of the specific preparations. The Chinese leadership learned that the offensive had begun only from foreign news services reporting the attack, a slight that caused lasting resentment in Beijing.

On 15 June the operational plan for the offensive was ready and the following day Shtykov reported to Stalin that the advance would start

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The Decision for War in Korea

in the early morning of 25 June. “At the first stage, formations and units of the KPA will begin action on the Ongjin peninsula like a local operation and then deliver the main strike along the western coast of Korea to the South. At the second stage, Seoul must be taken and the Han River put under control. At the same time, on the eastern front, North Korean troops will liberate the cities of Chunchon and Kangnung. As a result, the main forces of the South Korean army have to be encircled around Seoul and eliminated. The third stage, the final one, will be devoted to the liberation of the rest of Korea by destroying the remaining enemy forces and seizing major population centers and ports.”

As the invasion date drew near, Stalin continued to be concerned about the possibility of American intervention. Although he approved Shtykov’s request on 20 June to allow the KPA to use Soviet ships for amphibious landings in the South, he refused to allow Soviet personnel on the ships “because it may give the adversary a pretext for interference by the USA.” At the same time, however, the Soviet leader made a decision that greatly increased the likelihood of American intervention. On 21 June he received a report from Shtykov relaying Kim Il Sung’s message that North Korean intelligence had reported that Southerners had learned the details of the forthcoming KPA advance and were reinforcing their troops in the direction of Ongjin. In light of this development, Kim Il Sung urged that the original plan of the offensive be modified. “Instead of a local operation on Ongjin peninsula as a prelude to the general offensive, Kim Il Sung suggests an overall attack on 25 June along the whole front line.” Stalin replied the same day that he agreed with Kim Il Sung’s idea for “an immediate advance along the whole front line.”

The last-minute decision to alter the operational plan may have been sensible from a strictly military point of view, but it reflected a disastrous failure to foresee how a sudden, massive tank-driven assault across an internationally recognized border would be perceived in the West. Leaders of the United States and of all Western countries immediately viewed the invasion of South Korea through the lens of the trauma of World War II that had ended just five years earlier. They saw the attack of 25 June as a Soviet offensive which, like the piecemeal Nazi aggression of the 1930’s, would lead to a new world war if it were not rebuffed. As a result, the United States quickly formed a coalition of

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23 Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 16 June 1950. Ibid.
24 Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 21 June 1950. Ibid. p. 15.
25 Telegram from Shtykov to Stalin, 21 June 1950. Ibid.
26 Telegram from Stalin to Shtykov, 21 June 1950. Ibid.
fifteen countries that entered the war in defense of the Republic of Korea, fighting under the banner of the United Nations. The final decision by the North Koreans and Soviets regarding how to extend Communist rule into South Korea thus precipitated the outcome they hoped most of all to avoid—an American intervention that would prolong the war and deny them victory.

How then are we to view the decision for war in Korea as we mark the sixty-fifth anniversary of its outbreak? The evidence now available from the Communist side makes it abundantly clear that the attack on South Korea that began 25 June 1950 was the product of a carefully considered decision made after deliberations extending over many months, beginning in March 1949. It was not simply an escalation of the border fighting that occurred during that same period. Second, the evidence makes it clear that the initiative to reunify Korea through a full-scale military campaign came from Kim Il Sung but the decision to undertake such an action was made by his Soviet patron, Joseph Stalin. The Chinese leadership in Beijing played a supporting role in approving the decision already made in Moscow, but did not play any further role in the deliberations.

The question of Moscow’s reasoning regarding an invasion of South Korea is thus of central importance in understanding how the war came about. The Russian documentary record provides considerable evidence regarding why Joseph Stalin made this fateful decision, but since the Soviet leader was under no compulsion to record his reasoning fully, the question remains at least partially open. It is clear, however, that Stalin’s response to Kim Il Sung’s request to mount an offensive against South Korea differed significantly from the response of American officials in Seoul to statements by Syngman Rhee’s government expressing the wish to use military force to reunify the country. The Americans were unwilling even to consider such a venture, as they did not want to be drawn into a war on the Korean peninsula. The US thus failed to provide the ROK with the offensive weapons needed for such an action and furthermore informed the leadership in Seoul that any such attempt on their part would lead to a complete cessation of American aid. The Soviet leadership, on the other hand, never questioned the desirability of a military offensive against South Korea; the only question was whether such a campaign could succeed without bringing unfavorable consequences.

We must therefore ask why it was more important to Moscow to gain control over the southern half of Korea than it was to Washington to
gain control over the north. Both great powers saw the issue of the political fate of Korea in terms of their concerns over the war-making capacity of Japan. The Soviet leadership was keenly aware of Russia’s loss to Japan in 1904/05, Japan’s occupation of much of Siberia from 1918-1922, and the real possibility of an attack on the Soviet Union in the 1930’s. Moscow was therefore determined to deny Japan access to Korea—the land bridge to an invasion of the Soviet Union. Having the northern half of the peninsula as a client state provided some security, but Washington’s lenient occupation policy in Japan and its support for right-wing political figures in South Korea heightened Soviet anxiety that Tokyo, Seoul and Washington would join forces to attack not only the DPRK but also the Soviet Union itself. The United States, on the other hand, was concerned that a Communist government in all of Korea would put dangerous political pressure on Japan—the reason Washington proposed a joint occupation of the peninsula in 1945. However, with Japan firmly under American occupation while the US faced escalating commitments to contain Soviet expansion in Europe and the Near East, Washington did not regard securing the Korean peninsula as a top priority.

Despite Moscow’s concerns over a possible Japanese attack via Korea, Joseph Stalin was not willing to risk war with the United States in order to gain control over southern Korea. As the Russian documents reveal, the possibility that a North Korean attack on South Korea might lead to American intervention was the key factor in Stalin’s deliberations. The Soviet leader therefore approved Kim Il Sung’s request to mount an invasion of the ROK only because he concluded, based on solid intelligence, that the US would not enter the war. In other words, if Washington had made it clear that it would defend the ROK against attack from the North, the war would never have begun.

Note: An earlier version of this paper was published in Pierre Journoud, ed., La guerre de Coree et ses enjeux strategiques, de 1950 a nos jours (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2014)

Kathryn Weathersby Dr. Weathersby is a Professorial Lecturer in Korean Studies at the School of Advanced International Studies of the Johns Hopkins University, in Washington, DC. and Visiting Professor of Political Science and Diplomacy at Sungshin Women’s University, in Seoul. She holds a Ph.D. in Russian history, with a second field in Modern East Asia, from Indiana University. Following the collapse of communist rule in the Soviet Union, she did pioneering research in Russian archives on the creation of the North Korean state and the Korean War, and has published and lectured widely on these subjects.
Reforestation in Korea

Victor K. Teplyakov

Introduction

On the way to their current wealthy industrial economy, almost all developed countries underwent progressive deforestation in the 16th-20th centuries. A number of examples can be found in the West, e.g. the territories of modern Greece, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, the USA and other countries, as well as in the East, e.g. China and Japan.¹ However, there is one example, the Republic of Korea, where reforestation, the opposite of deforestation, has led to economic growth after a colonial period followed by the devastating Korean War.

During human history, from the earliest times forestlands were cleared for farming and cattle grazing, setting infrastructure (roads, canals), communities development and manufacturing (industries) buildings. The process of deforestation was irreversible, as no forests were planted back on the cleared lands. Timber from cleared forestlands were used mainly as material for civil constructions (houses, plants, mining, wind and water mills, bridges, churches, etc.), fortifications and shipbuilding, which reflected growing mobility for trade or conquest. Timber for furniture, utensils, and other goods comprised the minor volume of timber harvested, while the major volumes were used as a source of energy – firewood for home heating and cooking, fuel-wood and charcoal for iron making or potassium production for manufacturing, then later for steamers and steam trains, and other steam engines in a variety of enterprises.² The less forestland left in a country, the higher the prices for timber and firewood in the markets. When coal was introduced as a

substitute for firewood, most of the valuable forests were already gone in the economically advanced European countries. An expression used for the shortage in timber supply by some people was “timber crisis” or “national crisis.”\(^3\)

The term “national crisis” was rather an exaggeration of the situation from several points of view, major among them being the following. As a renewable resource, forest can self-regenerate or could be regenerated artificially by humans, who can also support the natural regeneration process. Local shortages of timber were not that dangerous compared to the hidden or invisible (to ordinary people) forest decline and destruction when a forest loses its quality. The quality of a forest lies in its species composition, density, age (the bigger the trees the better), etc. For that reason, the most valuable tree species are harvested (legally or illegally) for sale first. Selective harvesting of big trees without regeneration of similar quality tree species reduces the superiority of future generations of such species and a forest as a whole. Dramatic problems arose in mountainous regions when denudation of lands increased the risks of surface water runoff, landslides, avalanches and other natural disasters, including floods or drought.\(^4\) More problems arise during warfare or accidental incidents, when wooden constructions are burnt to ashes. For example, in Moscow, Russia, since ancient times there was a special place where people could buy ready-to-go wooden houses, barns or chapels.\(^5\)

Comparatively to the West, the Oriental world has followed its own way of development. For example, Japan had similar and different situations at the same time. A similarity with Europe was the level of deforestation due to population growth and increased demand for timber for ceramics production and iron smelting. The difference was that Japan received salt via seawater evaporation, requiring much energy, as well as being limited for economic growth due to the natural boundaries of the country, as an island state, and mountainous terrains where people had already occupied all vacant lands for growing rice and cattle. Later, the green areas used for raising cattle were replaced by settlements, and the people’s diet changed to more fish consumption. On the other hand, this change required more timber consumption for boats, shipbuilding. Thus, deforestation in Japan continued.

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\(^3\) Williams, p.152-153.
\(^4\) Tarasenko and Teplyakov, p.224-228.
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The growing wealth of certain families in Japan brought a new problem – a desire to leave something for the future generations, “when considering the forest used to satisfy the egos and ambitions of the ruling elites. They indulge in an almost peculiarly Japanese passion for grandiose and monumental building projects that consumed vast quantities of prime timber and that had few counterparts other than in, perhaps, Imperial Rome, although the latter built predominantly in stone and brick”. Another trouble for the forests was almost non-stop conflicts and wars of regional military and feudal lords with each other. For this fighting, many **daimyos** were built. They are “wooden defensive regional fortresses with barracks, watchtowers, gates, and residences that often became the nuclei of urban settlements.”

Over time, such forest overuse and other land use changes almost laid waste to the territory of Japan. A Confucian scholar Kumazawa Banzan harshly criticized this nonessential deforestation, saying that “eight out of ten mountains in this nation are deforested.” Later on, when there was almost nothing left to harvest, Japanese society awoke, and the country initiated forest preservation and conservation. To cover timber shortages during the industrialization of the economy, Japan turned towards the neighboring China and Korea. The last quarter of the 19th into the beginning of the 20th century became a period when wars and the colonization of Manchuria and the Korean Peninsula began.

Pre-colonial times

At that time, the whole Korean peninsula was a forested region, especially in the north. Due to the mountainous relief, temperate climate and sparse population, forests there were diverse, and wildlife rich. One of the most prominent travelers and researchers, Isabella Lucy Bird (Bishop), who actually “disclosed” Japan and Korea to Western readers by publishing a book after each of her journeys, named different native species of trees of the Korean Peninsula in her famous *Korea and her Neighbours*, first published in 1898. For pre-colonial Korea, she named

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6 Williams, p.221
7 Williams, ibid, p.221
over 40 different aboriginal tree species, e.g., “the Abies excelsa, Abies microsperma, Pinus sinensis, Pinus pinea, three species of oak, the lime, ash, birch, five species of maple, the Acanthopanax ricinifolia, Rhus semipinnata, Elaeagnus, juniper, mountain ash, hazel, Thuja Orientalis (?), willow, Sophora Japonica (?), hornbeam, plum, peach, Euonymus alatus, etc.” In the following chapters, she named a Platanus, juniper, mountain ash, plums, pears, cherries, Spanish chestnut, weeping lime, magnolia, Pinus sylvestris, “magnificent zelkawas” and other tree species.

She also mentioned that the Korean flora is rich and interesting, but lacking bright colors. She named such species as the azalea and rhododendron, a few species of clematis, the millefleur rose, and the Boston Ivy (Ampelopsis Veitchi). Other plants had almost no economic value, except for the ginseng (Panax quinquefolia), the wild roots of which were priced at about $15 per ounce. “The fauna of Korea is considerable, and includes tigers and leopards in great numbers, bears, antelopes, at least seven species of deer, foxes, beavers… Among birds there are black eagles, found even near Seoul, harriers, peregrines (largely used for hawking), pheasants, swans, geese, …” and numerous other birds.

Her description of deforestation around Seoul city is of interest. “The denudation of the hills in the neighborhood of Seoul, the coasts, the treaty ports, and main roads, is impressive, and helps to give a very unfavorable idea of the country. It is to the dead alone that the preservation of anything deserving the name of timber in much of southern Korea is owing. But in the mountains of the northern and eastern provinces, and specially among those which enclose the sources of the Tu-men, the Am-nok, the Tai-dong, and the Han, there are very considerable

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11 Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 77.
12 Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 167.
13 Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 176.
14 Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 180.
15 Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 196. Zelkova (correct modern name) is an Asian tree of the elm family, often cultivated for its wood as an ornamental or as a bonsai tree.
16 Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 7-8.
17 Treaty ports opened to foreign trade by the unequal treaties, such as the Japan-Korea Treaty of 1876 (February 26), which is also known as Treaty of Ganghwa Island (in Korean) or the Japan-Korea Treaty of Amity (in Japanese) signed between representatives of the Empire of Japan and the Joseon Kingdom.
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forests, on which up to this time the woodcutter has made little apparent impression, though a good deal of timber is annually rafted down these rivers”.\(^{18}\) This timber was used in Seoul, as well as providing a large proportion of the firewood and charcoal.\(^{19}\)

Meanwhile, the hills along the road between Chemulpo and Seoul were forested both with coniferous and deciduous species, while those along the Han River above Tan-yang was not that forested, but good forest covered the Paik-yang Gang area including Tan-pa Ryong. About a half of the area was covered with forests in the Geum-gang-san (the Diamond Mountain) area. Here, Chang-an-sa and Yu-cheom-sa temples were surrounded by “an elongated mass of serrated, jagged, and inaccessible peaks, and magnificent primeval forest, occupying an area of about 32 miles in length by 22 in breadth”\(^{20}\) that starts at 39 parallel of latitude in the Gang-won province. These forests were also “tiger-haunted forests.” The road to the sea-level at Chyung-Tai was sparsely populated and heavily forested, while some areas were “cleared for the planting of cotton.” A forest near Chyung-Tai was “a Royal reservation, made so by the first king of this dynasty, who built stone walls round the larger trees.” The road from Chang-an Sa to Won-San is described as well forested with presence of tigers and leopards.\(^{21}\)

At that time, Manchuria, a neighbor of Northern Korea, occupied about 380 thousand square miles with a population between 18 and 20 million. It was quite well forested, as agriculture was much more difficult there.\(^{22}\) The area and further east around Vladivostok in Russia was heavily forested with a dominance of valuable oak and pine species, providing a habitat for numerous tigers. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway and the development of Vladivostok severely denuded this region,\(^{23}\) while the 1000 miles of shores along the navigable Amur River were well covered with forests.\(^{24}\)

Timber has long been used in Korea for numerous purposes, starting from the plow to tables and gorgeous cabinets and simple wooden

\(^{18}\) Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 8-9.
\(^{19}\) Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 120.
\(^{20}\) Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 161.
\(^{21}\) Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 77, 110, 150-153, 157-158, 161, 159, 175, 177, 180, 196.
\(^{22}\) Bird, ibid, V.1, pp. 218-291.
\(^{24}\) Bird, ibid, V.2, pp. 25-26.
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utensils. As well, much timber was used in Seoul for housebuilding, guest and tea-houses, shrines, boats and bridges, charcoal production, salt evaporation, iron making, and many other purposes. Woodcutters, woodworkers or charcoal-burners professions were very common. Fuel-wood collection was allowed to everybody, and due to the heavy demand on forests for different businesses, the forests near villages had already been largely destroyed. Thus, “the road by which we travelled is the main one from Seoul to the eastern treaty port of Won-san. It passes through rice valleys with abundant irrigation, and along the sides of bare hills.”

Describing one of forty-five the Keum-kang San monasteries, Mrs. Bird displayed how the monks worked in forests. “The first impression of the plateau was that it was a wood-yard on a large scale. Great logs and piles of planks were heaped under the stately pines and under a superb Salisburia adiantifolia, 17 feet in girth; 40 carpenters were sawing, planing, and hammering, and 40 or 50 labourers were hauling in logs to the music of a wild chant, for mendicant effort had been resorted to energetically, with the result that the great temple was undergoing repairs, almost amounting to a reconstruction.”

Forests belonged to the government, but were open to the public. The major agency for forest control, management and administration was the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, and Industry, in which, the Bureau of Agriculture was in charge for Agricultural, Forest, and Natural Products affairs. Government forest policy was to protect mainly pine woodlands for governmental needs in timber.

Colonial period & Korean War

After the Ulsa Treaty (1905), the Japanese Government established a Forestry Office in its Residency-General in Korea (1907), enacted the Forest Law (1908), and after annexation of Korea in 1910, the occupational government enacted the Chosun Forest Policy Plan and began its full-scale implementation. In 1910, the country’s total volume of growing timber was over 715 million m$^3$, mostly in the northern part of the Peninsula, where, according to the plan, about 69.5 million m$^3$ of wood from 5.31 million ha of national forests were be harvested during a

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25 Bird, ibid, V.1, p. 140.
26 Bird, ibid, V.1, p. 155.
30-year period. The major goal was to maximize the revenue because reforestation, as it was planned, should go via natural forest regeneration, which would cost almost nothing in forest management.

The primary target for wood production from national forestlands was the 2.18 million ha of forests located in Manchuria, e.g., the Yalu-Tumen watershed covered with pine, oak, ash and other forests of valuable tree species. In 1910, growing stock (timber volume per hectare) here was about 200 m$^3$/ha, with the average 42 m$^3$/ha nationwide. By 1938, the average growing stock in the state forests had fallen to 20.5 m$^3$/ha while in private and common (village) forests it was 10.5 m$^3$/ha.

In 1939, Korean forestland comprised about 16 million ha including 11.4 million ha of stocked or dense forests, which covered more than a half of the Peninsula. One-third of all forests belonged to imperial Japan, or the occupational government. By 1942, the total growing stock of the Korean forests had decreased from 715 million m$^3$ to 224 million m$^3$, comprising less than one-third of that before occupation.

Timber harvested in the Korean Peninsula was shipped to Japan for domestic use: construction, military purposes, and as fuelwood. By following the Occupation Plan, large-scale deforestation in pine forests occurred. In Manchuria, the most valuable Korean pine (Pinus koraiensis) while in costal Uljin (울진군) and Bonghwa (봉화군) counties all kind of pines and other valuable tree species were harvested. People cut trees and collected deadwood mostly for fuel.

Massive clear-cuts occurred also in the southern part of the country. This destruction led to an enormous lowering of forest cover, both forest area and forest quality declined. The Korea Forest Service estimates that in 1950 the growing stock comprised only 6 m$^3$/ha. Such

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30 Yalu (Korean name – Amnok River – 압록강); Tumen (Korean – Duman River – 두만강, Russian – reka Tumannaya, Foggy River).
32 Youn, p.2028.
33 Choi and Woo, p.37.
34 Lee, K.J., p.11.
35 Korea Forest Service. 2013. Leveraging public programmes with socio-
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a decline was a result of clear-cuts for fuelwood and slash-and-burn agriculture under the colonial regime. Between 1916 and 1942, the areas of destroyed woodlands increased from 81.7 thousand ha to 374.2 thousand ha with a follow-up downturn from 63.4 thousand has in 1973 to only 455 ha in 1979.\textsuperscript{36}

During the Korean War the remaining forests were brutally damaged by bombing, wild fires, and overuse. Substantial amounts of timber were used as fuelwood for heating and cooking. Having almost no other sources of energy, this led to over-cutting and illegal logging in the long run.

After liberation, fertility in the country grew, and the total population increased by 25%. Furthermore, after the Korean War, about 5.5 million people came back to South Korea from other countries. Growing population led to dramatic shortages in food and fuelwood. Forest-land conversion into farm-land (slash-and-burn) for food production as well as timber harvesting for houses and infrastructure exaggerated the deforestation. The Korean Peninsula, having lost a large part of its remaining forests, experienced almost annually more severe landslides, floods, and soil erosion.

On April 5, 1949, Arbor Day (식목일, Sikmogil),\textsuperscript{37} was established to rehabilitate deprived lands and to enlighten citizens about the importance of forests.\textsuperscript{38}

President Syng-man Rhee (1875-1965)\textsuperscript{39} made further attempts to recuperate the situation. During 1948-1960, different plans were developed for reforestation, erosion control, soil conservation, fuelwood forests, etc. Some 2.8 billion trees were planted, and over 1 million ha reforested,\textsuperscript{40} but forest cover rehabilitation failed due to many reasons. Main causes were lack of knowledge and organizational skills, poor technologies, insufficient treatment and protection of newly established


\textsuperscript{37} Lee, K.-J., p.20.

\textsuperscript{38} It was national holiday until 2005 (other data – 2007). During Arbor Days, some 643,000 ha of forestlands were rehabilitated coast-to-coast.

\textsuperscript{39} Here and after – the years of the person’s life.

\textsuperscript{40} Lee, K.J., p.26.
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forests, lack of governmental will and, hence, poor financial support of reforestation activities.

Dramatic success under President Park Chung-hee

After the coup d’etat of May 16, 1961, General Park Chun-hee (1917-1979) proclaimed his desire for an immediate eradication of five major social evils, drugs, gangsterism, trafficking, financial falsification, and illegal logging. Gaining power as an elected President, during next few years, he endorsed major forest-related regulations. Among the principal acts were the Forest products regulation and Forest law (1961), the Erosion control and National poplar planting movement\(^1\) (1962), Forest reclamation (1963), Fuelwood plantations (1967), Chestnut tree plantations (1968)\(^2\) and others.

With the establishment of the Forest Service and introduction of the National Parks (1967), forest protection, rehabilitation and management received administrative order and planning system as well as conservation and recreation arrangements in Korea.

On April 22, 1970, President Park Chung-hee initiated a complex threefold program on reforestation, food security and poverty reduction as the New Community Movement (Saemaul Undong, 새마을 운동). One of the most valuable outputs of this political initiative was a modernization of the rural economy based on the traditional ideas of equality, self-governance and self-support of people.\(^3\)

This Movement became the major driving force for the national reforestation and erosion control projects. Women’s clubs, schools, military, villagers, and many other social groups were involved in the Movement, inspired by the national enthusiasm to build a self-reliant and cooperative society. The Korea Forest Service settled the reforestation strategy as well as the First 10-year forest development plan (1973-1982),

\(^1\) At that time, poplar (Populus ssp.) planting became very popular as its trees have pretty fast growth and allowed to get bigger volumes of fuelwood that other tree species in temperate zone. In South Korea, within 20 years, some 730,000 ha were forested using poplar. In parallel, black locust (Robinia pseudoacacia) trees were also planted.

\(^2\) Chestnut trees give not only fruits to resolve food problem, but also – valuable timber and shade, as well as attractive flowers for bees pollinating agricultural crop.

which was fully implemented within 6 years. About two billion trees were planted, and some 1 million ha of bare lands were reforested.\textsuperscript{44}

During 1970–1979, Korea’s average farm household income jumped from $825 to $4,602,\textsuperscript{45} setting a milestone in poverty reduction. The spirit of “Diligence, Self-help and Cooperation”\textsuperscript{46} spread widely among the rural population. The movement laid the foundation for Korea to grow into a major economy from one of the world’s poorest countries. The experience of the Korean people in this process is a valuable asset for humankind. Between 1970 and 2011, some 53,000 public officials and village leaders from 129 nations visited Korea to learn about the Saemaul Undong.\textsuperscript{47} In 1965, some 40.9\% of the Koreans suffered from poverty, while by 2007 this figure had decreased by almost 4 times to 10.9\%.\textsuperscript{48}

The success story of South Korea reforestation has received international recognition. The 1982 UN FAO Report stated: “Korea is the only developing country that has succeeded in reforestation after the Second World War.”\textsuperscript{49} Later, Lester Brown mentioned in his famous book: “South Korea is in many ways a reforestation model for the rest of the world. When the Korean War ended, half a century ago, the mountainous country was largely deforested. Beginning around 1960, under the dedicated leadership of President Park Chung Hee, the South Korean government launched a national reforestation effort. Relying on the creation of village cooperatives, hundreds of thousands of people were mobilized to dig trenches and to create terraces for supporting trees on barren mountains. South Korea not only reclaimed denuded areas, it also supported the effort with the establishment of fuelwood forests. Se-Kyung Chong, researcher at the Korea Forest Research Institute, writes, ‘The result was a seemingly miraculous rebirth of forests from barren land.’”\textsuperscript{50}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[44] Choi and Woo, p. 38-39.
\item[45] Other data: from 255,000 to 1,531,300 won (without inflation) – See Park S. 2009, p.117.
\item[46] Park Chung Hee, 1979, p.76.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
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The results of reforestation in South Korea can be summarized as follows:

- By 2008, the Republic of Korea had planted around 11 billion trees.
- Between 1953 and 2007, forest cover of the country increased from 35 to 64 percent.
- From 1961 to 1995, successful reforestation allowed an increase of forest area from 4 million ha to 6.4 million ha.
- Between 1960 and 2010, growing stock increased from 9.6 to 125.6 m$^3$/ha.
- Self-sufficiency of timber consumption increased from 9.2% in 2006 to 16.2% in 2012.
- In 2007, public benefits were valued at US$60 billion.\(^{51}\)

Reforestation activities made the southern part of the Peninsula (the Republic of Korea) green and prosperous. Meanwhile, recent research shows that deforestation in the northern part of the land (the DPRK) has led to an increasing level of precipitation in the south, especially during summertime. The precipitation patterns were investigated for the period from 1973 to 2005 by analyzing data from all the meteorological stations in South Korea.\(^{52}\) Later on, the opposite trends in summer precipitation in North and South Korea were further confirmed by using four global and regional satellite and rain gauge datasets.\(^{53}\) On one hand, the increase of annual precipitation is likely to increase the risks of flood and drought. On the other hand, it also “means that the increase of annual precipitation should not be helpful for water resources management but could be a burden to river management and dam operation in Korea.”\(^{54}\)

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51 Korea Forest Service. 2014 at english.forest.go.kr/
Current Efforts in the DPRK

Problems with deforestation in North Korea arose in the early 1990s. The last quarter of the 20th century has seen dramatic changes in the global political landscape after the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the demise of East-European bloc of countries in 1991. As well, significant changes on the political map have occurred in Asia, where the People’s Republic of China established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea in 1992. In such developments, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea found itself in difficult circumstances because its two big neighbors, Russia and China, almost completely terminated their support of DPRK in energy, agriculture and military spheres. Floods and droughts in North Korea became almost annual disasters.55

The DPRK energy consumption dramatically changed after 1991, when massive oil provisions from the USSR were terminated. Coal and coke still provided major energy to the DPRK military and civil sector, while the wood/biomass share in energy significantly increased and comprised about 1/3 of total energy demand.56 Indeed, as the DPRK has reported,57 the country’s forest area decreased from 8.2 million ha in 1990 to 5.7 million ha in 2010, e.g., forest cover declined from 68% to 47% of total land area. These figures show that the deforestation rate in the country during those 20 years was 127,000 ha/year land conversion for agricultural lands and timber harvesting mostly for fuel. Due to high demand for energy, dramatic changes occurred in the total volume of forests: a decrease from 504 million m³ in 1990 to 360 million m³ in 2010, or 28%. Fuelwood consumption for this 20-year period increased from 5.1 million m³ to 6.6 million m³. An assessment of forest cover in South and North Korea from 1980 to 2010 shows dynamic changes in both countries

due to urbanization, regrowth in abandoned fields in South Korea, as well as decline of dense forests in North Korea. The DPRK economy is vulnerable to natural disaster because the share of agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors in the industrial structure of the country comprises more than 20%, while in the Republic of Korea the figure is less than 3%. Thus, deforestation and land use change causing floods create risks for people’s wellbeing. For example, “devastating floods and consequent droughts from 1993-1998 reduced agricultural production from 9.0 million tons of cereals in 1993 to less than three million tons in 1996; from 2000 this has slightly increased to about 4.5 million tons annually”.

Strategic reforestation programs have become a key priority for the DPRK government. The country has the legislative base in place, all forests are in state ownership, and tree nurseries can produce enough planting materials for massive reforestation.

The country also participates in a few international forest-related projects. Main tasks in the DPRK general forestation program are divided into 10-year periods. The first period is a forest recovery stage, during which model units will be established and expanded in number; during the next stage forest recovery will reach completion, and then forest resources will undergo expansion.

Critical areas for aid and assistance are:

- Information (need of database-creation for land use, forest activities, biodiversity);
- SFM policies (lack of policies and legislation on forest use, planning and management);
- Knowledge-sharing (lack of clear understanding of land value, causes and consequences of forest and land degradation);

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60 Teplyakov and Kim, p.10.
62 Teplyakov and Kim, ibid., p. 93-111.
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- Financial aid;
- Capacity building.

Potential for cooperation with the DPRK for further development exists in various areas and forms. A major pattern for land reforestation is the South Korean New Village (Community) Movement, which is recognized by the international community, and brought success to local people from economic, social, and environmental points of view. There might be other projects linking historical, cultural, traditional and linguistic common features of North and South Korea, such as collaborative work on the Baekdudaegan mountain range\(^{63}\) or creation of a Peace Park in the Demilitarized zone (DMZ).\(^{64}\)

There is much potential in other development projects. Among them are the Tumen River Area Development Program (TRADP) known since 2005 as the Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI)\(^{65}\); a trans-Korean railway allowing a twice-faster delivery of goods between Western Europe and the northern part of the Pacific Rim Region;\(^{66}\) an integrated electric power system\(^{67}\) and others, but this is a topic for a different study.

**Conclusion**

The historical development of the Korean peninsula is subject to permanent challenges due to political, economic, and environmental circumstances. The political environment is currently very sensitive, but

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extremely important for further development in this region. Severe deforestation and the following successful reforestation in South Korea is well known. Energy and food problems causing deforestation in North Korea can threaten South Korea weather, especially the precipitation pattern, that might potentially create disastrous events in South Korea. Forest is a renewable resource, and deforestation is reversible; thus, reforestation is one of the most efficient methods to resolve environmental and economic problems in North Korea. In the DPRK, the significance of reforestation should be promoted at all levels of governance and management, bearing in mind that the establishment of real international partnerships at all levels is critical for the DPRK’s reforestation and economic growth. RoK’s success story is internationally recognized and can be used in DPRK as a pattern, especially, the Saemaul Undong (the New Village Movement).

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For several years, Victor K. Teplyakov has been a professor in the Department of Forest Science, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea. He will retire in the summer of 2015 and leave Korea to return to Russia.

E-mail: TeplyakovVK@gmail.com
Marie Antoinette Sontag (1838-1922)
“Uncrowned Empress of Korea.”

Dr. Sylvia Braesel

“It is personalities, not principles, that move the age”
(Oscar Wilde)

“But, surveying everything, old Ms. Sontag looks on. She sits in state, concealed from the eyes of the guests behind a traditional Korean screen or an ornate curtain, from which point she controls everything. A nod from her suffices to mobilize the entire retinue of imperial servants whose assistance is usually offered on such occasions”.¹

The above is taken from the writings of Mrs. Emma Kroebel, in her travel impressions and memories “How I came to be at the Korean imperial court” (Berlin, 1909). From the perspective of a solid bourgeois chronicle author, this is how Kroebel describes a woman who became a legend. This despite the initial impression that Sontag would have none of the prerequisites for a career of this sort, a career normally strictly reserved for men in the years around 1900. The stereotypes about women of power and (demonic) femininity do not seem to apply because Marie Antoinette Sontag (her full name) fulfilled in her behavior and her proper European clothing all the clichés associated with a conventional woman of this epoch from the western world. This unmarried lady with a stature resembling Alma Mahler-Werfel was neither young nor seductive. Men played a role in her machinations merely as a means to power. During the colonization of Korea (1896-1909) Antoinette Sontag rose to the forefront in the position of a mistress of court ceremonials, who even influenced imperial politics. She was not an emancipated world traveler from the highest social circles who conquered male domains worthy of public attention. Superficially she seemed to embody Schiller’s ideal of a

¹ Kroebel, Emma: Wie ich an den Koreanischen Kaiserhof kam, Berlin 1909, p. 131
“modest housewife,” but basically she was far removed from the exotic lifestyle of a *femme fatale* like Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904). At first glance Sontag would have corresponded to the thesis of the “absence of femininity in history.”

If one considers German-Korean relations a hundred years ago, one finds as a rule that women merely played marginal roles as the wives of diplomats, merchants or specialized experts. On the other hand, according to western colonial thought of the time, these women were also “subordinate members of a superior race” in East Asia. This opened up much latitude, because in non-western societies the gender of western woman lost part of its significance and allowed colonial, i.e. racial (skin color, cultural affiliation etc.), considerations to move into the foreground. This made it possible for a woman like Emma Kroebel who traveled to East Asia as the wife of a former military man to write about women in East Asia including another west-European lady—Marie Antoinette Sontag—who spent her career at the Korean imperial court at the very beginning of the 20th century.3

Yet one must ask how it came about that a foreign woman from a bourgeois background could gain such great influence, indeed such a dominant power, over the course of public affairs in a country that clung with fanatical tenacity to all things traditional and rejected everything foreign. The answer lies in the great diplomatic talent of this woman who in her timely decisions knew how to empower the Korean king in a way that drew him into her nets. The king at that time was an unsteady person, who lost his throne thanks to the Japanese.4

This critique from Emma Kroebel, who represented Ms. Sontag as mistress of ceremonial protocol during her European trip (1905/1906), helps us to understand how Antoinette Sontag, who gained considerable influence as court mistress of ceremonial protocol, is still appreciated to this day in parts of Korea.

This is documented, in part, by the publication in 1976 of a play premiered at the National Theater in Seoul, *Hotel Sontag* (손탁호텔) by the Korean author Cha Beom-Seok (차범석 ; 1924-2006). Almost thirty years later the composer Lee Yong-Jo (이영조) revised the original draft into an opera of the same name performed on 23rd November 2005. At the

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3 Cf. Photograph: The imperial Korean home minister with his palace ladies Ms. Sontag and Mrs. Hauptmann Kroebel. In: Kroebel *op.cit.*
4 Kroebel, Emma *op.cit.* pp. 134-135
A Korean Counterblaste to Tobacco

core of the drama and the opera is the resistance of Korean patriots to the colonizing policies of Japan that culminated in the 1895 murder of Queen Min (1851-1895). The legendary Ms. Sontag and the Russian chargé d’affaires von Waerber and his spouse, who in both versions appear as the only Europeans, are portrayed as friends and supporters of the aspirations of the Korean people for independence.

History, the travel memoirs of Emma Kroebel, and the diary entries of the bright, thoughtful court physician, Dr. Richard Wunsch (1869-1911), reveal Ms. Sontag as a personality who was totally capable of having her way by using shrewd sophisticated maneuvers, at least regarding the exercise of power, while maintaining a carefully planned discretion. Just like Alma Schindler-Mahler-Gropius-Werfel, who with calculated deliberation destroyed her diaries, Ms. Sontag always saw to it that personal information like political networks and business strategies were deftly concealed.

As a result, Ms. Sontag is ranked among the most prominent personalities of the early period of German-Korean relations, though contemporary travel reports and other sources of that time convey only speculation, her personal information (including her age!), her family background, and the further course of her life after her return from Korea remain obscure. It is therefore no surprise that there is no other person in the more than 130-year history of German-Korean relations around whom there is such a tangle of speculation and legends as there is surrounding this extraordinary woman, who was called “the uncrowned empress of Korea.”

The reasons for her unbelievable rise, while perhaps at first sounding trivial, are substantiated by weighty documentation. We know for a fact that in 1885 Ms. Sontag traveled to Seoul, where she was responsible for running the household of the Russian diplomat of German heritage Carl von Waeber (1841-1910). This was during the preliminary stages of the colonization of Korea by Japan. But in 1895, after the murder of Queen Min (known as Empress Myeongseong posthumously), who had bravely resisted Japan, the Korean King Gojong fled for his life, under the regnal name of Gwangmu. His son Sunjong was also politically weak and not assertive as Korean stakeholder; he succeeded Gojong as Emperor from 1907 -1910. On 22nd of August 1910 he was forced to sign the annexation treaty that made Korea a Japanese colony until 1945.

5 Kroebel, Emma op. cit. p. 136
6 Gojong was the last king of the Joseon dynasty and the first Emperor of Korea
disguised in women’s clothing, to the Russian embassy. Antoinette Sontag’s hour had arrived. It was then that the Korean monarch came to appreciate the nurturing care and cooking skills of Ms. Sontag. She introduced him to such western conventions as coffee at breakfast, and her sweets and pastry creations were highly popular at the court, gradually replacing the indigenous specialties. He subsequently awarded her attentions richly with land and with his favor.

After returning to the palace, King Gojong appointed Ms. Sontag as imperial mistress of court ceremonies. His appointment of a female foreigner to this position was a shock for many court nobles. However her ability to achieve her goals and the proficiency with which the European woman did this soon silenced her critics, at least in official pronouncements. In this position, acting as confident and advisor to King Gojong, Ms. Sontag gained an influence at court which she was also able to put to use for her own material gain. Only the Englishman Sir John McLeavy Brown had a similar position at court, as the King’s financial advisor. Diplomats often sought the help of Ms. Sontag in order to push through their goals with the government especially considering the intrigues that flourished at court.

Ms. Sontag was responsible not only for directing the receptions and banquets that were held to honor foreign dignitaries, but for managing the entire court budget. Thus, we can read about her in the documents of Alexander von Claer (1864-1946), who was military attaché in China before being appointed as first German military representative in Seoul: “as the champagne was served, (she rose) with a champagne glass in hand solemnly from her seat and spoke the words “His Majesty, the emperor!””

On the one hand she fought again the corruption at court, although she herself did not strive for frugality. Alexander von Claer mentions “her stately home, as the furnishings were gifts of the monarch; beautiful pieces of ancient Korean arts and crafts, including pottery, as they were even then disappearing from the market already,”. The material circumstances of Korean commoners were of less interest to her.

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*Lautloses Weinen. Der Untergang des koreanischen Koenigshauses*, Wuerzburg 2011

7 Cf: Clear, Alexander von: *Militaerbericht No. 16*, Seoul 15/05/1904, Bundesarchiv Freiburg MSg 2/11729, p. 10. For the provision of these documents I thank Dr. Gerhard Keiper, Archive of the Foreign Office in Berlin.

8 Cf: Clear, Alexander von, *op.cit.* pp. 10 / 11
This applies as well to the situation of Korean woman. Dr. Wunsch and Emma Kroebel concur in reporting about extravagant festivities arranged by Antoinette Sontag while this land was being convulsed by crisis, backwardness and poverty. “Thus truffle pastries, oysters and caviar have already become something quite ordinary, and French champagne flows here often more abundantly than at similar parties back home,”9 writes Kroebel in her travel journal. Antoinette Sontag even succeeded, step by step, in progressively introducing European protocol customs at formal receptions in this land, which at the time was “locked in isolation.” That led to a considerable reduction of Korean courtly ceremonials and to a loss of Korean traditions—reaching all the way to influencing the architecture of the capital Seoul, with new buildings in western, European style.

An example of this is the new imperial palace and its gardens. The German architect Curt Rothkegel (1876-1945), who was also well-known in China, traveled in the beginning of the year 1905 to Seoul, after the imperial palace, constructed of wood, was destroyed on 15th April 1904 in a massive conflagration. The court decided on a new construction in the “European” style and Ms. Sontag and Dr. Richard Wunsch supported awarding the task to Rothkegel.10 It is testimony to Ms. Sontag’s business acumen that for her services she was able to obtain ownership of three building complexes in Seoul from the King during this time. Thus the well-established “Hotel Sontag” was created following the designs of the Russian architect Aleksej Seredin-Sabatin, who was also responsible for the building design of the Russian legation and the gardens of the Deoksu and Gyeongbok palaces from 1884 to 1904. Frequent guests included the American diplomat John Sill, William Franklin Sands, the advisor to the Korean government, the British journalist Ernest Thomas Bethell, who founded the progressive newspaper Daehan Maeil Shinbo in 1904, the American Missionaries Horace Underwood, Henry Appenzeller, Homer Hulbert, Dr. Richard Wunsch, and Johann Bolljahn who established German language instruction in Korea. Furthermore, specialists invited by the Korean government also had their lodgings here. These included the American Henry Collbran, who was in charge of constructing the streetcar system in Seoul. But the most prominent guest at the Sontag Hotel was the young Winston Churchill (1874-1965), who

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9 Kroebel, Emma, op.cit. p. 131
10 For information provided about Curt Rothkegel my thanks to Prof. Wilhelm Matzat, Bonn and Renate Jaehrling & Anita Guenther, Eichenau
visited Korea as Undersecretary of State for Colonial Affairs in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. On the Korean side, the Sontag Hotel was frequented by representatives of various political movements like Min Young-hwan, a nephew of the queen as well as Yoon Chi-ho and Lee Sang-jae, who were among the founding members of the Independence Club.

Without the favor of Ms. Sontag, western business dealings in Korea at that time were difficult to transact. The fact that Ms. Sontag had “good language skills [...] also the Korean she had acquired in a surprisingly short time” is documented by Alexander von Claer. \(^\text{11}\)

In the legendary Hotel Sontag, Western guests, businessmen, diplomats “found a combination of the pleasant with the useful.” Its cottages, comfortably furnished for the standards at that time offered to the “garçons” of international diplomacy lodging as guests in exchange, of course, for appropriate remuneration. Thus, unmarried representatives of various legations lodged and dined in the Pension (later Hotel) Sontag. “It cannot be denied that under the circumstances the foreign states granted Ms. Sontag a certain degree of control,” Emma Kroebel \(^\text{12}\) noted ambiguously in her travel memoirs.

Thus Sontag, who seemed superficially to be counting on the traditional “female weapons” of protective care and excellent French cooking, became a central figure in the power game of the great powers struggling for spheres of influence in the lead up to colonization by Japan. Alexander von Claer wrote that “her homely nature, her natural wit made her likeable; occasionally she fell into melancholy reflections about the fate of her imperial patron.” \(^\text{13}\) Further he wrote about Ms. Sontag that she let go of her hatred against the Japanese freely when with her compatriots. \(^\text{14}\)

For Ms. Sontag “was the ‘medium’ to go through in dealing with the king.” \(^\text{15}\) Since she acted, in effect, as someone who could “open doors,” to reach the politically weak king, one could hardly do without her favor. Dr. Richard Wunsch, who in these years was the personal physician at the Korean imperial court, reports in his diaries repeatedly about invitations from Ms. Sontag, who preferred social interaction with the

\(^{11}\) Cf: Clear, Alexander von, \textit{op.cit.} p. 10

\(^{12}\) Kroebel, Emma, \textit{op.cit.} p. 136

\(^{13}\) Cf: Clear, Alexander von, \textit{op.cit.} p. 10

\(^{14}\) Cf: Clear, Alexander von, \textit{op.cit.} p. 10

\(^{15}\) Kroebel, Emma, \textit{op.cit.} p. 137
world of men, “The cuisine there is exquisite. Besides me, the Belgian Consul and the French embassy secretary also eat there. The language of conversations is French.”16 Sontag, who had both legs planted in practical life, also organized “enormous dinners”17 and many picnics outside the gates of the city as diversions for the Europeans and Americans. Finally, the emperor gave her the estate known as the Sontag Hotel, located today on the grounds of Ewha University School, even though the state treasury was empty and the people were starving. This Hotel Sontag became a culinary magnet and at the same time a business and political information exchange for various travelers, experts, and diplomats. Ms. Sontag was kept informed about the predilections of the imperial family as well as the moods of powerful ministers, the continual court intrigues and cabals—and thus was herself an important source if one attained her favor. Thus such a person as Dr. Richard Wunsch could only obtain a consultation with the King through the intercession of Ms. Sontag and the Russian representative Carl von Waeber.18

After a reception in the Sontag House for Prince Ito, who was decisive in expediting the colonization of Korea, Dr. Wunsch noted: “I had actually expected more from Ito. He makes a different impression on me than the Korean officials whose positions are of similar rank.”19 At the same time, Emma Kroebel, using a very feminine approach, capped the event by presenting the menu for a banquet in honor of Prince Ito given by the Emperor of Korea.20

The impending final Japanese colonization of Korea put an end to the activities of Antoinette Sontag in Seoul. Already in a letter of 17th July 1905, Dr. Wunsch reported that Ms. Sontag was going to Europe on vacation.21 Personal affairs and an inheritance were mentioned as official reasons for her journey.22 Concurrently during her sojourn, after the end of the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 (Peace of Portsmouth, September 1905), she is reputed to have championed the interests of the Korean Empire among the western Great Powers at a time when fewer and fewer

16 Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.): Dr. med. Richard Wunsch – Arzt in Ostasien, Buesingen/ Hochrhein 1976, p. 110
17 Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.), op.cit. p. 115
18 Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.), op.cit. p.134 & p.159
19 Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.), op.cit. p.175
20 Kroebel, Emma, op.cit. p. 165
21 Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.) , op.cit. p.235
22 Kroebel, Emma, op.cit. p.118
foreigners were serving the Korean state. Similarly, as Dr. Wunsch lamented in one of his letters, the posts were increasingly filled by Japanese officials, forcing many Western experts to leave Korea.

Since Antoinette Sontag was considered an outspoken opponent of the Japanese influence in Korea, her withdrawal from the declining Korean imperial court would appear to have been based on a realistic insight into the political situation there, especially since this woman, who thought strategically in arranging her activities, had such good contacts with the diplomatic representatives of the great powers and repeatedly took on the role of diplomatic mediator and “letter carrier” between the King and western interests. There is repeated speculation that Ms. Sontag worked as a Russian agent or perhaps even double agent. But in the files that have been examined to date there is no corroboration for these speculations that she was some kind of Mata Hari (1876-1917) without the erotic exoticism.

On 24th September 1909—before the official annexation of Korea by Japan—Ms. Sontag took leave of Seoul. Accompanied by the German teacher Johann Bolljahn (1862-1928), she traveled on board the steamer “Tsingtau” to Shanghai. There she boarded a French ship headed for Marseille. She returned to Europe a wealthy lady in the company of her gardener Yi Eiu Woon (born 1884 in Seoul), her servant Moda Takahochi (born 1867) and her nine favorite dogs.

This is where the legends begin to appear, even in specialized publications which circulate legends about the life of Antoinette Sontag. A study of archival material is now able to disprove these legends. Marie Antoinette Sontag neither died of grief and despair as an old woman in the Soviet Union, nor was she the sister-in-law of the well-known Russian diplomat Carl von Waeber, nor the step-sister of his wife Eugenie—claims which scholarly publications repeatedly maintain without a factual basis or substantiation. Even the biographical data on Ms. Sontag’s life are often only speculative.

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23 Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.), *op.cit.* p.235
25 For this information, as well as the following photos and family history information I am indebted to Mrs. Patricia de Maack, Paris.
Work with sources in archives to objectify the life of Marie Antoinette Sontag moves beyond speculations or obsolete positions stemming from the cold war and reveals considerable transnational historical and genealogical connections. The present narrative illustrates how internationality and interculturality may blend with the awareness of tradition and a living, widely-branching family history, which illustrate profound transformations in world politics in the 20th century. In the dignified family vault of Marie Antoinette Sontag, located in the Catholic section of the famous cemetery “Du Grand Jas” in Cannes, which the former Mistress of Ceremonials at the Korean imperial court (as the epitaph reads) acquired on 9th April 1921 with “eternal concession,” others also found their last resting place: her sister Marie Pauline Maack (née Sontag), Pauline’s husband, the Russian citizen Alexander Maack, and her personal lady’s companion from the imperial court: Omaki (Moda Takahochi).27

From the very beginning the various stages in the life of Ms. Sontag transgress borders in specific ways. This applies to the restrictions of social position, in matters of finance as well as culture, mentality and geographical regions. Still, the unusual rise of an unmarried western woman at the Korean imperial court around 1900 appears in retrospect to be the result of Ms. Sontag’s iron will coupled with a boundless eagerness to take calculated action, the ability to adapt to a new culture combined with cleverness in economic, political and personal questions. This career was not served up to Marie Antoinette from the cradle on a silver spoon. She was the first child of a young elementary school teacher who had a position in Alsace, on a border which periodically changed back and forth from France to Germany, at a time when it was undergoing a period of economic prosperity. Marie Antoinette Son(n)tag28 first saw the light of

deutsch-koreanischen Beziehungen, Seoul 1983, pp.194 & 196
27 For the photography and the information about the grave I thank Madame Christiane Lavigne / Cimetière du Grand Jas Cannes. My special thanks to Madame Patricia de Maack who is the probate administrator of de Maack – Sontag family, for providing the certificates of the burial site. For translations from French, I thank my friend, the German scholar Madame Marie Christine Fagnot.
28 Cf. Alphabetical birth register of the parish of Aubure for 1838. In the birth certificate for Marie Antoinette S. from 1st October 1838 is the spelling of the family name „Sonntag“. For searches in Aubure and the transmission of the birth certificate, I am indebted to Mr Michel Krucker, Association Généalogique Héraldique et du Val de Lièpvre (Alsace).
day on 1\textsuperscript{st} October 1838 in Aubure (German name: Altweier). According to the birth certificate “at 1:00 in the afternoon there appeared before us, the mayor and the head of the office of the justice of the peace in the municipality of Aubure, Canton St. Marie aux Mines, Département/Haut Rhin, Jean Georges Sontag, 23 years old, elementary school teacher living in Aubure to announce the birth of a child, of the female sex, this morning born to him and his 18 year old spouse Marie Anne Ballast, without profession, living in this municipality with her husband. The child is to be given the first name Marie Antoinette.”

Even at a time of prosperity the young family could not earn or accumulate any wealth, especially since between 1840 and 1845 four more children were born. In addition, the death registry in the Catholic parish office of Aubure notes the early death of the mother in the year 1847 and of the father in 1848. As complete orphans, Marie Antoinette and her siblings developed exceptional self-reliance from an early age, especially the sisters Marie Antoinette and Marie Pauline (born 1842) both had a talent for coping with the problems of life. A photo taken during these years shows Marie Antoinette, who had grown up bilingual (German/French), wearing a traditional Alsatian national costume. The posture and facial expression of the young woman look unusually wise to the ways of the world. The marriage of Marie Pauline Sontag (1842-1937) with Alexander Theodor Karlowitsch Maack (16\textsuperscript{th} February 1846 – 2\textsuperscript{nd} May 1923) from a well-known Baltic-German family in Arensburg turned out to be a stroke of good luck for the siblings.

The two young ladies quickly then learned the Russian language and, given the advantage of their background, were able to function comfortably in a multilingual cultural milieu. And so it appears that Marie Antoinette should have been able to integrate herself successfully into the new family in Tsarist Russia. Especially close contact developed with the sister of her brother-in-law Alexander Maack. Ella Alwina Alma (also Jenny or Eugenie) Maack (5\textsuperscript{th} December 1850 – 24\textsuperscript{th} November 1921), also born in Arensburg (today in Estonia), had just married a rising young German from Liebau (today Latvia) who was in the Russian diplomatic

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29 I would like to thank Madame Marie Christine Fagnot, Cons-La-Grandville for contacting the parish of Aubure / Alsace and for her translations (such as the birth certificate) into German.

30 For providing the family photograph of Marie Antoinette Sontag in Alsatian costume, I thank Madame Patricia de Maack, Paris.
service. His name was Carl Iwanowitsch (also Carl Friedrich Theodor) von Waeber (17th June 1841 – 8th January 1910).  

Marie Antoinette soon knuckled down to help out as the “right hand” in the private sphere of the von Waeber family. She accompanied the married couple to China and later to Korea. Antoinette Sontag is correctly described in official Russian sources as a “distant relative” of the Russian diplomat. In the relevant files of the foreign office, on the other hand, the French citizen née Sontag is entered after 1871 as a citizen of the German Empire.  

The biography of Ms. Sontag makes it understandable that she would realistically assess the world-political impact of Korea after the Russo-Japanese war, as it would affect her further plans for her future life. She needed to find an appropriate place to live as an elderly woman of almost seventy who might occasionally take upon herself the exertion of a voyage to Europe. Here it should be noted that in 1901, after the retirement of the diplomat with the rank of imperial Russian minister, the family von Waeber had already acquired a villa in “Sachsen Nice” (Radebeul in Saxony). The Elbe landscape northwest of Dresden with its mild microclimate and sunny vineyards was a hidden gem. The impressive villas attracted artists, diplomats and industrialists alike.

It attests to close family ties that after the death of her husband, in the year 1921, Eugenie von Waeber was living as a registered inhabitant in the villa of Marie Antoinette Sontag in Cannes. Already in the year 1906 the “uncrowned empress of Korea” had purchased the Villa Galatin on the French Riviera in the Rue des Anemones (today Rue René Viglieno) which she renamed Villa “Au Matin calme” (morning calm) in memory of her time in Korea. The census reports from the years 1921

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31 Carl von Waeber died on 8th January 1910 in Niederloessnitz (Radebeul) near Dresden in his villa “Korea.” His tomb in the cemetery in Radebeul, created by architect Otto von Rometsch, is a listed building today.

32 Cf.: Пак, Былла Борисовна, Российская Дипломатия и Корея, книга вторая 1888-1897, Москва 2004, стр. 212. I thank Dr. Gerhard Keiper, Archives of the Foreign Office in Berlin for providing the relevant file of Korea R 18767, No. 826 (29 2 - 04/03/1904) of the Foreign Office / Berlin in terms of A. Sontag.

33 Cf.: Folio 26/ Census 1921 - Archives municipales de Cannes. I thank Madame Marie Brunel, Archives municipales de Cannes. I sincerely thank Ms. Kathrin Drechsel, Erfurt for her invaluable assistance with the research.

34 Cf. land registry entry Folio 100/ 2836 – 1907; Commune de Cannes, Archives municipales de Cannes. I sincerely thank Ms. Kathrin Drechsel, Erfurt for creating and editing of the scans from above Archives.
and 1926,\textsuperscript{35} which included every member of a household in Cannes, prove to be important historical sources from various aspects. The lists preserved in the original verify that after the First World War, which among other things resulted in the collapse of the Russian empire and the incorporation of Alsace into France, people of various nationalities for various reasons were living under one roof. In the villa of Marie Antoinette Sontag, Marie Pauline Maack, the sister of Marie Antoinette had emigrated with her husband from St. Petersburg. Soon thereafter other relatives followed, including the grandparents of Patricia de Maack, the physician Dr. Georges (Georg) de Maack (1882-1938) and his wife Louise-Alma née Leuzinger (1884-1977). Both are also buried in Cannes. The family history, which is continued through the line of Georg Maack since the sister Pauline Maack had no children, documents in a striking way the successful integration of migrants into another culture and society through hard work and commitment. The father of Madame Patricia de Maack, Andre Patrick, born in 1915 in St. Petersburg, died in Paris in 1998 and was given honorable burial in the famous cemetery Père Lachaise. Other members of this family clan with its many branches married into such prominent families as von der Osten-Sacken.\textsuperscript{36} Their lives of tolerance and internationality enabled them to find their place already a hundred years ago in various lands and cultures, and actively to impact the formation of their new environments, without renouncing their own origins. Thus, for example, Patricia, the daughter of the German-Russian emigrant family de Maack, also mastered the Russian language which at one time made it possible for her ancestors to rise socially in the Russian Empire. These “bridge builders” are an important connecting link in the understanding between cultures.

So the census of 1921 already documents that in the villa of Marie Antoinette Sontag an international group of people had found lodging. It attests to the protective care given by Ms. Sontag and her sister Pauline, that her Korean gardener Yi Eiu Woon, who is registered in the 1921 census as a Japanese citizen born in Seoul in 1884, was married to Emma Clemenz who was twenty years younger (born 1905) and was from Ms. Sontag’s Alsatian homeland. This guaranteed Yi the right to remain in

\textsuperscript{35} Cf.: Folio 26/ Census 1921; Folio 37/ Census 1926 in Cannes; Archives municipales de Cannes

\textsuperscript{36} I am indebted to Madame Patricia de Maack, Paris for information on family history.
France after the death of Ms. Sontag. Ms. Sontag also wrote out a handwritten document of March 8, 1921 to the mayor of Cannes allotting Yi a place in the Sontag-Maack family grave. The villa “Au Marin calme” once an imposing estate in Cannes no longer exists. After the death of Marie Antoinette Sontag on 7th July 1922 the property was transferred to Pauline and Alexander Maack. After their demise, starting in 1937 the house was maintained by Dr. Georges (Georgi) de Maack (1882-1938) and from 1938 by his wife Louise-Alma (1884-1977). Today an apartment house is located on the site. But the lives of the family Sontag-de Maack-von Waeber continue to symbolically connect East and West, spanning diverse borders and boundaries. This legacy, that an energetic lady from Alsace created, remains for us to ponder.

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37 The marriage certificate from 28th November 1923 of Yi and Clementz is available to the author of this article and is quoted with permission of the Archives municipales de Cannes.
38 The photography of the villa “Au Matin calme” was provided by Madame Patricia de Maack for this publication only. I sincerely thank Mr. Sergej Tan, Erfurt & Kathrin Drechsel, Erfurt for the photo-technical editing of the original scan.
39 The villa was up to the seventies in the family. Today, on the property is an apartment block, “Corinne”.
40 Cf.: Death certificate of Marie Antoinette Sontag dated 7th July 1922 - No. 367
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Dr. Sylvia Braesel was from 1992 until 1996 an Assistant Visiting Professor at Yonsei University, Seoul. Currently, Dr. Braesel is a literary scholar at the University of Erfurt in Germany. Her research focuses on German–Korean Literature and German–Korean cultural relations. For further information, please see:  
https://www.uni-erfurt.de/koreana-erfordensia/  
https://www.uni-erfurt.de/literaturwissenschaft/ndl/lehrende/braesel/publikationen/
A Korean Counterblaste to Tobacco

Accompanied by a few notes on the history of smoking in Korea

Boudewijn Walraven

Painting on the wall of a temple in Seoul.

“Long, long ago when tigers smoked,” is a well-known expression, familiar to most people who have spent some time in Korea. Long ago it may have been, but not more than four centuries. The early seventeenth century was the time when tobacco reached Korea, as one part of what might be called the American Revolution in global food culture, which after the discovery of the Americas by Columbus in 1492 introduced South- and Meso-American products to almost all parts of the world. This included food items that would become essential to local cuisines, like tomatoes in Italy, potatoes in Ireland, red peppers in Asia, and cassava in Africa, as well as things that made the lives of people in many regions of
the earth more pleasurable, such as chocolate and vanilla.\textsuperscript{1} Tobacco might be included in the latter category, but it is exceptional for the diametrically opposed reactions it evoked in different parts of the globe. Some praised it as a panacea for all kinds of complaints or as a supreme pleasure, others judged smoking to be an execrable and dangerous abomination. In England, no less a person than the King, James I, joined the fray in 1604 with the publication of his \textit{Counterblaste to Tobacco}. (Not entirely coincidentally he was also the first one to put a tax on tobacco.) Tobacco was, he wrote, placing it in as unfavourable context as he could, “first found out by some of the barbarous \textit{Indians} to be a Preservative, or Antidot against the Pockes [syphilis], a filthy disease whereunto these barbarous people are (as all men know) very much subject… so that from them was first brought into Christendom that most detestable disease, so from them likewise was brought this use of \textit{Tobacco}, as a stinking and unsavorie Antidot… making so one canker or venime to eate out another.” In other words, tobacco was tainted with barbarism, disease, and paganism. The seventeenth-century Islamic scholar Muhammad-al-Wali warned that no proper Muslim should smoke as tobacco grew where the Devil had pissed.\textsuperscript{2} Whether one liked it or not, because of the cultural connotations tobacco almost instantly acquired wherever it was taken, it has always been much more than just a consumer product. Everywhere it has had additional meanings attached to it that go far beyond that of a simple commodity, not least with its original users, the American Indians, who used it primarily in ritual contexts. In this respect, it is similar to alcohol, which carries a multiplicity of socially determined symbolic meanings, both positive and negative.

According to both private writings and the official histories of Chosŏn, the Veritable Records (\textit{Chosŏn wangjo shillok}), tobacco came to Korea from Japan.\textsuperscript{3} The Japanese may have learned the habit of smoking from the Portuguese or Spanish, but in view of the fact that the Japanese word for pipe, \textit{kiseru}, is derived from the Khmer (Cambodian) \textit{ksher}, it is

\textsuperscript{1} All squashes hail from South America, too, which means that the pumpkins in the story of the brothers Hŭngbu and Nolbu, or the pumpkin that is changed into a carriage in the tale of Cinderella are products of the post-Columbian era, a good reminder that oral literature is not static.

\textsuperscript{2} According to the Leiden University Arabist Dorrit van Dalen.

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Injo shillok}, kwŏn 37, 16\textsuperscript{th} year of Injo’s reign, 8\textsuperscript{th} lunar month, 4\textsuperscript{th} day. A Franciscan friar is on record as having presented seeds of the tobacco plant to the Japanese.
not impossible that the Japanese, who in the sixteenth century still used to trade with South-East Asia, were (also) introduced to tobacco in those regions. The literatus Yu Mongin (1559-1623) wrote around 1612 that when relations were restored in 1609 after the Japanese invasions of the late sixteenth century, the Japanese brought tobacco to their trading post in Pusan as a remedy against phlegm. The taste of the smoke was bitter, he added, the smell awful, and it made one’s mouth feel as if it had sprouted thorns. Women who smoked would not be able to conceive and if they were already pregnant they might suffer a miscarriage. In spite of all this, Yu Mongin lamented, tobacco was accepted by the Koreans as a remedy against all kinds of ailments, and soon men and women of all ages in Seoul were smoking, whether they were ill or not, filling the streets with evil odours, while young louts were singing a song declaring that they could live without beautiful women and fine wine, but not without tobacco.

The Koreans called tobacco most commonly namch’o, the “southern herb,” or namnyŏngch’o, the “southern miraculous herb.” In these compounds “southern” should be understood as referring to the westerners, such as Spaniards or Dutchmen, who had brought tobacco to Japan (because they were thought to have come from the south, the Dutch sailors who were shipwrecked in 1653 all were given the surname Nam). An alternative name was tamp’ago or tambago, in which it is not too difficult to recognize the word “tobacco”. The insertion of a nasal sound, m in this case, is a phenomenon that may be observed in many languages from very different linguistic groups. It is also seen, for instance, in the Indonesian word for tobacco, tembako. There is no reason, therefore, to doubt that the current Korean term for tobacco, tambae, is derived from the same root.5


5 It may be noted that Sir Walter Raleigh in 1578 also used a bisyllabic variant of the word: tobah, which in turn is similar to the seventeenth-century Dutch toback (in which oe is pronounced as Italian u). Also cf. tombac, the variety of tobacco used to smoke in Middle-Eastern waterpipes.
Once tobacco was taken to other continents, its acceptance there was amazingly fast, as already hinted by Yu Mongin. During his thirteen-year stay in Korea from 1653 to 1666 the Dutch sailor Hendrik Hamel noted the prevalence of smoking: 6

The Japanese taught them to grow tobacco and how to smoke it. The seeds, according to the Japanese, came from Nampancoeck [Namban’guk] and so tobacco is still often called nampancoij [nambanch’o]. It is now in wide use, even by children of 4 or 5 years old, and by men as well as among women. One finds few people who do not smoke at all. When tobacco was first introduced they gave for each pipe a measure of silver [about 4 grams] or its equivalent.

Considering that even toddlers smoked, the price of tobacco quickly must have gone down.

Smokers in a kisaeng house depicted by Shin Yunbok

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Since its introduction, only a few decades earlier, the cultivation of tobacco had developed to such an extent in 1638 that the government had to control its smuggling to China. Moreover, people grew so attached to their smoke that they tended to light up in places where this was deemed unseemly, such as royal tombs, or considered to be dangerous because of the risk of fire at the royal palaces. Additional evidence for the degree to which Koreans of the Chosŏn period indulged in smoking is available in various forms. Tobacco pipes appear in almost all the paintings that depict scenes from daily life. These genre paintings also confirm that women smoked. In one painting by Shin Yunbok, kisaeng on horseback smoke their long pipes, and in another of his paintings a kisaeng with her pipe sits in dreamy contemplation at the edge of a lotus pond.

An official on Cheju, after a sketch made in 1845 when Edward Belcher visited the island.

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7 *Injo shillok*, vol 37, 16th year of Injo’s reign (1638), 8th lunar month, 4th day. It is possible, however, that some of the tobacco smuggled to China had in turn been imported from Japan through the Waegwan, the Japanese trading post in Pusan.

8 Sŭngjŏngwŏn ilgi (Daily Records of the Royal Secretariat), vol. 31, 8th year of the reign of King Injo (1630), 11th lunar month, 18th and 19th day and 10th month, 12th day.
Yet another picture shows a mother smoking a pipe while she is riding an ox with a child in her lap. A line from the p’ansori libretto Pyŏn Kangsoe ka (The Song of Pyŏn Kangsoe, also known as Karujigi t’aryŏng) describes how the sadang, itinerant female artists, while travelling from one place to another smoke their pipes while they are carried piggyback by their male companions, the kŏsa. Tobacco relieved the tedium and hardship of travel and was a consolation in solitude (Chŏng Tasan in a poem called it an exile’s best friend⁹), but also became an important part of social life which might be presented as a courtesy gift. The account books of nineteenth-century Seoul merchants show that consistently substantial sums were spent on tobacco to be presented to third parties.¹⁰

A particularly rich source for our knowledge of smoking in Chosŏn is the Classic of Smoking (Yŏn’gyŏng) by Yi Ok (1760-1850), one of the most original and interesting writers of that age. It was written in 1810 and in spite of its title, which irreverently mimics that of the great Confucian classics, deliberately deals with the very mundane details of everything that has to do with the consumption of tobacco.¹¹ From, obviously, tobacco and pipes to special knives for cutting tobacco, tobacco pouches and boxes, pipe cleaning gadgets, braziers and flint stone, nothing was beyond his attention. Yi clearly comes out in favour of smoking, as the section “The uses of smoking,” here translated in full, illustrates.

1) When after you have eaten your fill, a sharp taste or a fishy taste remains in your mouth, a single pipe of tobacco eases the stomach and refreshes the spleen.

2) If, when you wake up early in the morning, before brushing your teeth, you are bothered by phlegm or slime, you smoke a single pipe of tobacco, it feels fresh as if it all has been washed away.

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⁹ An Taehoe, Tambago munhwasa, p. 79.
A Korean Counterblaste to Tobacco

3) If, when worries and anguish accumulate or you have nothing to do and are bored, you slowly smoke a single pipe, it is as if you wash it all away with alcohol.

4) If, when your liver is inflamed and your breathing is hard because you have drunk too much, you relax smoking a single pipe, the feeling of oppression flows away with your exhalations.

5) If, when the rivers have frozen over because of the severe cold, when it snows and icicles form in your beard and your lips are numb, you smoke several pipes in succession, it is better than drinking hot water.

6) If, when the waters have swollen and mould has formed on your bedding and clothes because of heavy rainfall, you continue to smoke, you feel comfortable and all right.

7) If, when composing poetry you are stuck, rubbing your moustache and gnawing the end of your brush, you smoke a single pipe with special care, poetic ideas will follow in the wake of the wisps of smoke.

In another passage, Yi Ok lists the occasions when the taste of tobacco is particularly good. For instance, when you have been reading intently for a long time without eating or drinking anything, or on a cold winter morning when you smoke in bed under the bedcovers, which gives you the feeling that spring has come. A pipe is also a great comfort in Seoul in the heat of summer when the fish shops and latrines stink to high heaven. The taste of tobacco is particularly good to people at court, who silently have to wait on the king for hours and hours, solemnly maintaining decorum. As soon as they leave the palace, they quickly reach for their tobacco pouches and smoke, “a sweet fragrance filling their innards.”

Yi Ok devotes some attention to undesirable ways of smoking, which include smoking in front of one’s social superiors or when making sacrifices to the ancestors, and smoking during a storm or near a gunpowder magazine. He is also disgusted by a young female servant who sits smoking on the fireplace in the kitchen, bellowing smoke, and afraid of the ragged beggars in Seoul who block the way of people and demand some tobacco. Smoking itself, however, never becomes the target of his criticisms.

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The anti-tobacco lobby
In spite of the popularity of tobacco, voices could be heard that decried the addiction to tobacco right from its introduction to the end of the nineteenth century, some of them merely protesting against certain forms of smoking, as Yi Ok did, others condemning smoking outright. King Chŏngjo, although a fond smoker himself, at one moment ordered that the cultivation of tobacco should be forbidden, so that the land could be used for crops that could feed the people.\(^\text{14}\) There will be no need to add that this plan was doomed to fail. Another objection against smoking was that the habit might upset the social hierarchy.\(^\text{15}\) It was demeaning, for instance, for someone of higher status if his addiction forced him to beg tobacco from inferiors. Generally it was also thought improper if someone of inferior status smoked in the presence of a superior (a custom that has survived into modern times).\(^\text{16}\) In 1790, a student of the Sŏnggyun’gwan was thrown into prison after he had loudly protested when he was rebuked for continuing to smoke when the Minister of State passed by.\(^\text{17}\) The high price of tobacco was another reason to reject smoking (particularly for the less fortunate).\(^\text{18}\) It was repeatedly observed that the poor would not forego the pleasure of tobacco, no matter how destitute they were.

It is not known if Buddhist monks had such practical considerations in mind when they objected to smoking, but we have some evidence (as far as I know not noticed by earlier authors writing on the use of tobacco in Chosŏn) that they were among the fiercest critics of the “southern miraculous herb.” The main piece of evidence is a single page in a version of Yŏmbul pogwŏnmun, a Buddhist text published in the second half of the eighteenth century to promote the practice of yŏmbul, the mindful invocation of the Buddha Amitābha in order to be reborn in Amitābha’s Pure Land and avoid the torments of the many Buddhist


\(^{15}\) An Taehoe, Tambago munhwasa, p. 96

\(^{16}\) An Taehoe, Tambago munhwasa, pp. 233-236. The –juk in this compound stands for changjuk, literally “long bamboo,” the most common word used at the time for “pipe.”

\(^{17}\) An Taehoe, Tambago munhwasa, pp. 236-237.

\(^{18}\) An Taehoe, Tambago munhwasa, pp. 100-101.
hells. The heading of the page is *Yuma-gyŏng*, which is the Korean title of the *Vimalakirti sutra*, a celebrated sutra that records a debate between the learned lay devotee Vimalakirti and (among others) the Bodhisattva of Wisdom Manjuśri. The text has nothing to do with that sutra, however, and is an obvious apocryphon. It is the Korean “*Counterblaste to Tobacco*” mentioned in the title of this piece, and adds threats of infinite suffering to serious health warnings. Its full text runs as follows:

*Yuma-gyŏng* 

The *Yuma-gyŏng* says: When the Buddha went to the country of Pallae en expounded the Law there, the king of that country with his family and his officials attended and asked the Buddha: “Why is it that the people of this kingdom, whether they are men or women, suffer from so many illnesses and die early?” The Buddha answered: “Why is it so in this country? It is because there is the evil herb of illness and people like to smoke it, and they don’t take the words of the Buddha seriously. That is why there are severe plagues in this country and why they die early and go to the hells to suffer countless sufferings. It is sad to see it.” Hearing this, the king was shocked and he issued an order to all the people to forbid smoking: “The evil herb of illness is not to be smoked. Why is that? The evil herb of illness has five names. The first is *chilmyŏngch’o*, the second the herb of darkness,

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20 In theory, all sutras are the words of the Buddha. In practice, new sutras could be added to the canon when the need arose. Being a later creation (or as it often was phrased “a newly rediscovered sutra”) did therefore not necessarily disqualify a sutra as uncanonical, even if the version of the *Yumagyŏng* presented here never achieved such canonical status.

21 *Yŏmbul pogwŏnmun* is a bilingual text, but the *hanmun* and *han’gŭl* are not always exactly the same. This translation is based on the *han’gŭl* text in *Myŏngyŏn, Yŏmbul pogwŏnmun*, with translations by Chŏng Uyŏng and Kim Chongjin (Seoul: Tongguk taehakkyo ch’ulp’anbu, 2012), pp. 144-146.

22 The meaning is unclear. The *hanmun* text has *tam-akch’o*, bad phlegm herb.
the third the evil and lascivious herb, the fourth the herb of bad rebirth, the fifth the herb of great greediness. The sin of those who smoke this herb is great and serious, and therefore even if you have practiced self-cultivation and yŏmbul you will garner no merit, and so when you die and then the messengers of the Ten Kings [of the underworld] appear and take you away, after they have interrogated you under torture, you will enter Burning-Snakes-Hell and suffer there for 3,000 kalpas [eons], and then you will enter Boiling-Cauldron-Hell and suffer there for 3,000 kalpas, and then again you will enter the Avici Hell, suffering birth and death over and over again, and for one existence after another you will not be able to be reborn in the world of man, and so you will not be able to hear the words of the Buddhist Law.

There are indications that this was not a unique, one-off Buddhist condemnation of smoking. The reference to the practice of yŏmbul is not found in the hanmun text. It is not unlikely therefore that that is an addition to make the text fit better in the context of Yŏmbul pogwŏnmun and that the apocryphal sutra also was printed separately or in juxtaposition with other texts (although I have not yet found evidence of

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23 The invocation of the Buddha Amitābha.
24 The worst of all the hells, for those who have committed the most heinous crimes such as killing one’s father or mother, or an enlightened one.
25 In the hanmun text, the last part, with the specification of all the torments that await the smoker, is again spoken by the Buddha.
that). In a nineteenth-century Buddhist *kasa* by the monk Namho Yŏnggi (1820-1872), moreover, a monk who is begging in the streets of the capital addresses people from all walks of life, urging them to mend their ways, and near the end asks a smoker why he insists on consuming the “herb of five evils” (*oakch’o*). Perhaps the absence of smoking monks in genre paintings (which occasionally do depict monks having sex or spying on half-naked women) also may be taken as indirect evidence that there were strong religious objections against smoking.

In a sense, however, it may be wrong to speak of “religious” objections in this context. The rejection of smoking certainly was given a religious charge in this supposed excerpt from the *Yumagyŏng*. But the person who composed this apocryphon may very well have been motivated primarily by the practical considerations also entertained by certain members of the literate elite: that smoking was not healthy, that the land used to grow tobacco could better be used for the cultivation of food crops to avoid famine (a recurring phenomenon in Chosŏn that was so serious that it sometimes led to cannibalism), and that the poor should not squander their meagre resources on smoking. Seen in this way forging the sutra may be considered as an example of the Buddhist concept of *upaya*, “skilful means,” which refers to something which ultimately may not be true, but is acceptable as long as it benefits someone. Whether as such it was successful one may doubt.

References
*Injo Shillok*. Available online: sillok.history.go.kr.


Boudewijn Walraven is a retired Professor of Korean Studies of Leiden University and presently attached to the Academy of East Asian Studies of Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul.
Gangjin County is shaped like an upside-down V around an inlet called Gangjin Man on the south coast of Jeollanam-do. It is mainly known for its celadon industry, which dates back to the Goryeo Dynasty and is celebrated in an annual festival. Northwest of Gangjin-eup, which is at the northern tip of Gangjin Man, lies a temple named Muwisa whose Hall of Ultimate Bliss (geungnakjeon) contains National Treasure Number 301. This is the Amitabha Tathagata Buddha triad altar mural (amita yeoraebul
The Muwisa Amitabha Triad Mural

*samjon byeokhwa*, estimated to have been painted in 1476 and attributed to the great Seon painting master Haeryeon.\(^1\) Whatever the exact date of its composition, its similarities and differences with the Buddhist painting of the Goryeo (938-1390) mean the Muwisa mural is certainly from the early Joseon Dynasty (1390-1910), and its style anticipates the trends of later Joseon Buddhist art. It thus represents a transitional stage in Korean Buddhist art history that reflects the history of Korean Buddhism in general.

The mural in question is shown in fig. 1. Its main features are readily apparent: the figures in the foreground directly face the viewer in a simple but dignified composition, with the bodhisattvas’ heads even with Amitabha’s chest; behind them in mid-ground, Buddha’s disciples’ heads and shoulders are visible above the clouds; these in turn stretch back up to heaven in the upper background, where biseon or departed souls who have become Buddhas can be seen; the overall color scheme is a yellowish orange; and it is evident from the clouds and spatial perspective that the main figures have come down from heaven. All this becomes understandable if we classify the Muwisa mural as part of a Goryeo genre called the “welcoming descent” (*naeyondo*), which depicted Amitabha and two bodhisattvas coming down to Earth to greet the souls of deceased believers and guide them back to the Western Paradise. Examining examples of Goryeo welcoming descents shows how much of the Muwisa mural is continuity and how much innovation.

As is well-known, the Goryeo was the only dynasty in Korean history to adopt Buddhism as its state religion, resulting in the construction of many temples and the production of much art. Of the latter, most extant paintings are from the late 14\(^{th}\) century, but they are thought to represent the classic aesthetic of the whole period. There are fewer than 160 left, of which some 120 are in Japan (estimates vary).\(^2\) Whatever their exact number, over half depict Amitabha Buddha, who rules over the Western Paradise in heaven, in the center, since his Pure Land (*Jeongto*)

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2The Korea Foundation, *Masterpieces of Korean Art* (Seoul, 2010), 40. As for the number of Goryeo Buddhist paintings in existence, see Yukio Lippit’s figure is under 160 (see note 7), while Woothaek Chung’s is 150 (see note 3) and the Ven. Hyewon’s is 133 (see note 5).
The Muwisa Amitabha Triad Mural

cult was the most popular throughout the Goryeo. (Amitabha was also venerated by the Japanese, which is why they looted so many paintings of him in the 1590s). By the time of the Goryeo, Buddhism had become Koreanized enough to no longer be a foreign import. It was widely supported not only among the common people, but also among royalty and nobility, who granted it privilege and patronage. Finally, it was during the Goryeo that Seon Buddhism became the standard form of the religion in Korea. All these factors contributed to an outpouring of art dedicated to Amitabha.

What were the characteristics of Goryeo painting? For one thing, the royal and aristocratic patrons who commissioned it already knew Buddhist teaching, so it had a “strong sense of conceptual quality.” As for technical expertise, Yukio Lippit notes a “sophisticated representation of garment textures, meticulous attention to surface patterns and abundance of Pure Land subjects,” with a special emphasis on the bodhisattvas accompanying Amitabha, although he is clearly the dominant figure. Lippit more importantly notes the “disparities in scale between the main icons and accompanying figures [and] minimal emphasis on landscape or illusionistic space.” The primary colors of red, dark green and dark blue comprised the main color scheme of most, which made them distinct from Buddhist paintings of the same centuries in China and Japan. These colors were unmixed with other pigments and were layered, both of which kept them bright till today. Goryeo artists also applied heavy amounts of gold leaf, in which they were skilled, to their paintings to give them life, and the gold leaf medallion pattern on Amitabha’s red robe was unique to the Korea of the time. Finally, Goryeo paintings were small, usually about only one meter high, and intended for private meditational or devotional use in home shrines rather than temples. They catered to the Goryeo preoccupation with the afterlife and how to achieve it, and the phrase “For

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4 Youn, *Encounter*, 106.
8 Ibid., 207.
10 Ibid., 25.
these merits, I hope myself and others to be reborn in paradise” appears on many Amitabha paintings until the end of the Joseon.\footnote{Ibid., 26-28. See also Ven. Hyewon, 133.} All these points are relevant to an estimation of the Muwisa mural.

The most common depiction of Amitabha, other than that of him preaching, was of him with the bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta in the “welcoming descent” (naeyongdo), a kind of Amitabha triad (amitasamjonbul) that appears only in painting, although Amitabha triads can also be found in sculpture\footnote{Masterpieces of Korean Art (Seoul: The Korea Foundation, 2010), 40. See also Ven. Hyewon, 13.} (in fact, the Muwisa mural has a matching sculpture right in front of it on the altar). The naeyongdo genre showed Amitabha and the two bodhisattvas come down from the Western Paradise to guide the souls of deceased believers back up there.

Figure 2.

All the standard features of a Goryeo naeyongdo can be seen in fig. 2, the “Amitabha Buddha” at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City: the color scheme, much larger Amitabha figure and lack of background perspective noted by Lippit, as well as the heads of the standing bodhisattvas being below the knees of the seated Amitabha, with all three having transparent gold leaf halos against a somber, dark backdrop. Also typical are Amitabha’s lotus throne and red robe with gold leaf medallions, as well as the lotus foot supports on which the bodhisattvas Mahasthamaprapta and Avalokitesvara are standing. Finally, the bodhisattvas are in three-quarters profile to the viewer, as though their attention is divided between welcoming the departed soul and attending on Amitabha, or ushering the departed soul to him.

Before continuing to discuss the Muwisa mural in relation with its Goryeo predecessors, an explanation of the figures appearing in the naeyongdo genre is necessary. First, there is Amitabha himself: he is an immortal Buddha with limitless compassion who rules over the Pure Land (Jeongto) in the Western Paradise, and is the principal deity of the Pure Land school. Because Amitabha is so compassionate, all believers have to do to attain rebirth in his paradise is recite the words “Homage to/Taking
refuge in Amitabha” (*namu amitabul*). This expression recalls the one noted above on Goryeo and Joseon paintings, and is also relevant to evaluating the Muwisa mural.

In most welcoming descents, Amitabha is in the company of two bodhisattvas, or *bosal* in Korean. In Sanskrit, *bodhi* means “enlightenment,” while *sattva* denotes a living being. Bodhisattvas are therefore people on Earth who have attained a state as close to Buddhahood as possible without continuing on to nirvana, and who are determined to remain on this plane to help others achieve enlightenment. They thus altruistically delay passing on to paradise to relieve the suffering of others, and are general Buddhist exemplars. Today, the word is used for anyone intent on achieving Buddhahood, but in the Goryeo and Joseon, evidently, bodhisattvas were objects of worship.

Always by Amitabha’s left side in triads is the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, a Sanskrit name meaning “perceiver of the world’s sounds,” i.e. of suffering. He is formally known in Korea as Gwanseeum, or commonly as Gwaneum, and is called the “bodhisattva of compassion.” This is because he embodies compassion on Amitabha’s behalf, as well as his virtue, making him the most suitable assistant. Because compassion was traditionally considered a feminine virtue in Korea, Avalokitesvara has frequently been depicted as a woman, which is the case in the Muwisa mural. Then on Amitabha’s right is usually Mahasthamaprapta, the bodhisattva of wisdom. Known as Dae Seji in Korea, his Sanskrit name means “arrival of great strength,” and he represents the power of wisdom. In Chinese Buddhism, he is often portrayed as a woman similar to Avalokitesvara, which is interesting, since he is always male in Korea.

In some triads, however, including the Muwisa mural, Ksitigarbha is at Amitabha’s right instead of Dae Seji. With a name meaning “Earth treasury” in Sanskrit, he is one of four bodhisattvas deputed by Sakyamuni, the historic Buddha, to save souls from this world of suffering before the future Buddha, Maitreya, or Mireuk in Korea, comes. Thus Jijang, Ksitigarbha’s Korean name, vowed to rescue all souls from hell before continuing to paradise. He has long been an object of folk belief in

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14 Ven. Hyewon, 97-98.
17 “Mahasthamaprapta.” All About Buddha Dharma.
The Muwisa Amitabha Triad Mural

this country. Jijang is always male, and is depicted carrying a staff to open hell’s gates and a luminous jewel to attract souls in its darkness. His presence in the Muwisa mural and its subsequent developments is highly relevant to this paper.

To return to the historical context of Goryeo Amitabha paintings, the preoccupation of the period with the afterlife must be appreciated. As Junhyoung Michael Shin, evidently the only English-language scholar to have recently written on Goryeo naeyongdo, points out, “Both clergy and laymen of the late Koryo dynasty [sic] were consumed by the idea of transition to the Western Paradise.” Moreover, late Goryeo people believed they lived in the “Age of the Degenerate Buddhist Law,” when the world was descending into immorality, and that they could earn rebirth in the Western Paradise by invoking Amitabha’s name, especially on their deathbeds. Significantly, Shin quotes a late Goryeo-early Joseon monk named Kihwa describing the death of another monk who held a banner with Amitabha’s image and invoked his name devoutly in order to be reborn in the Western Paradise. Shin furthermore documents the Goryeo religious atmosphere in which many people longed to encounter Buddha via images, so that the contemplation of Amitabha depictions was common among Pure Land believers. As with the points previously made about Goryeo Buddhist painting, all this is directly relevant to the tradition from which the Muwisa mural was derived.

In an earlier article, Shin argues that a welcoming descent scroll painting at the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 3, now at the Leeum Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul) is an example of the kind that was brought to the bedside of a dying believer by a cleric, which would have been a standard practice then. He asserts that in cases where the triad is depicted frontally and there is no dying believer in the foreground, as there is in fig. 3, the dying believer is intended to be the viewer. Thus, “the picture turns into his visionary experience of transition into the Western Paradise.” By contrast, the three-quarters naeyongdo like

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21 Ibid., 6.
22 Ibid., 10-11.
Cleveland’s and Leeum’s “are nothing more than visualized narratives”—hence, there is no personal involvement by the viewer.23

While Shin could be wrong in his latter claim, since a viewer would have prayed to and meditated on three-quarters images as well as frontal ones, he does follow sound previous scholarship arguing that the three-quarters profile figures are moving toward someone’s soul outside the frame. An example of this is fig. 4, a recently discovered Goryeo painting of Amitabha by himself holding out his hand to the soul of a dead believer outside the left side of the frame.24 It is notable that Amitabha’s stance in both the solo and the triad paintings is the same three-quarters one.

Hence, the most important points Shin makes about the Goryeo Amitabha triads that have a bearing on the Muwisa mural are the “strong psychological impact” that frontal depictions would have had on the worshipper, and that both frontal and three-quarters images might have served for deathbed rites and “ritually oriented meditation.”25 Even more pointedly, he suggests that their lack of iconographic motifs means they represent a “descent of the deities into our realm,”26 which is of course what the name “welcoming descent” implies.

Citing more evidence that Goryeo Amitabha triad scrolls were for use at the bedsides of dying believers, Shin concludes that “the picture turns into [the viewer’s] visionary experience of transition into the Western Paradise.”27 Therefore, he is most on target when he asserts that early Joseon welcoming descents depicted the moment when Amitabha

24 Emi Hailey, “14th-Century Goryeo Buddhist Painting Found in Rome,” Buddhistchannel.tv. Jan. 24, 2013. This painting was discovered at the end of 2012 in the Museo Orientale in Rome, Italy.
26 Ibid., 2.
devotees achieved rebirth in his part of nirvana, and that late Goryeo artists abandoned three-quarters triads for frontal ones, which then became the norm.²⁸ Really, Shin’s studies can be interpreted as meaning that Goryeo and Joseon naeyongdo served the same purpose of depicting what Amitabha worshippers believed their souls would see after their bodies died, and thus explain the theological background of the Muwisa mural.

Having covered the tradition out of which it came, it is now time to examine the Muwisa mural itself. Quite naturally, it hangs in the temple’s geungnakjeon, or “Hall of Ultimate Bliss,” which can also be called a “Paradise Hall” or “Amitabha Hall,” since all such halls are dedicated to him and his area of heaven. As replications of the Western Paradise on Earth, all geungnakjeon inspire meditation on that place and its ruler.²⁹ Yet there is another reason why this mural is placed in the geungnakjeon of Muwisa, indeed why it exists in the first place. Professor Kim Junghee, an authority on Korean Buddhist art at Wonkwang University, informs me that despite the general repression of Buddhism by the Joseon Neo-Confucian regime, some of its ceremonies were encouraged. Among these was the “water and land” ritual (suryuk), which was performed so that the souls of the dead could continue on to paradise. The suryuk was performed at designated temples, of which Muwisa was one.³⁰ Professor Kim’s revelation, combined with the historical and theological background provided by Shin, explains why the mural would have been commissioned from a monk painting master like Haeryeon: its purpose was to aid both the suryuk ceremony with an updated version of an Amitabha triad welcoming descent, and private contemplation by worshippers who wanted their souls to see such a scene after they died.

Figure 5.

Once we understand what the Muwisa mural was painted for, we should see more examples of Goryeo naeyongdo to understand its antecedents. Fig. 5 shows the Amitabha welcoming descent triad at the Nezu Museum in Japan, one of over 100 such paintings brought back as loot in the 1590s. It is typical of the Goryeo tradition already seen in fig. 2,

²⁸ Ibid., 28-30.
³⁰ Email to me from Professor Junghee Kim, received Jan. 4, 2014. Apparently the only English corroboration for Prof. Kim’s information comes from Edward B. Adams, “Korean Murals at Muwi-sa,” Orientations (March 1984), 38.
but significantly all the figures face the viewer directly and there are clouds around them showing they descended from heaven. Still more significant are the *biseon*-like figures on clouds in the right and left upper corners, which are very similar to the ones in the Muwisa mural. This means it is possible that there were other such depictions in Goryeo welcoming descents which Haeryeon used as models. In every extant *naeyongdo*, however, the bodhisattvas are much smaller than the Buddha, with their heads below his knees, as can be ascertained on Wikipedia list of Goryeo paintings. These show that the Muwisa mural grew out of a fairly static tradition with only some variation, making its innovations all the more remarkable.

On this note, the observations of Kim Seunghee are valuable. She writes that the Muwisa mural “best represents the uniqueness of Joseon Buddhist painting breaking away from the strict compositional hierarchy that existed between Amitabha Buddha and bodhisattvas in Goryeo Buddhist paintings.” More specifically, Professor Kim Junghee identifies the Buddha’s topknot and small facial features, plus the style of clothing of all three main figures, including Gwaneum’s outer garment and wrinkled skirt hem, as well as the soft coloring, as carryovers from the Goryeo style. On the other hand, the simpler clothing patterns, shapes of the halos, cloudy background and bodhisattvas’ heads level with Amitabha’s chest are Joseon novelties. The presence of such an altar mural (*byeokhwa*) is itself not a Joseon invention, though, since there are historical records of others existing before the 1590s, but they were all destroyed by the Japanese. Professor Kim’s list of similarities and differences seems reasonable if we compare the Muwisa mural to its Goryeo antecedents, although there is the exception of the Eikando Amitabha in Japan (fig. 6), in which all three figures are standing so that the bodhisattvas’ heads are level with Amitabha’s chest, and Amitabha has a halo of similar shape to that in the Muwisa mural. These observations necessitate a closer examination of the Muwisa mural than has heretofore been done, at least in English.

The main overall feature of the Muwisa mural that differentiates it from its Goryeo models is the depth perspective filled with extra figures. The foreground has the traditional triad of Amitabha flanked by

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31 See Wikipedia’s List of Goryeo Buddhist Paintings.
33 Email to me from Professor Junghee Kim, received Jan. 4, 2014.
bodhisattvas, but in mid-ground are three *nahan*, or Buddha’s disciples, on each side of Amitabha, and they are found in no previous extant work. The *biseon* floating on clouds in the upper back corners have a precedent in the Nezu painting (fig. 5), although there are only two on each side in the Muwisa mural. Nevertheless, it does seem that the Nezu triad is an example of a traditional variation from which Haeryeon borrowed. Along with the depth perspective is the imagery of clouds that fills the whole painting and stretches back to the *biseon*, thus showing that the figures in mid-ground and foreground have descended from heaven to welcome a believer’s soul and guide it back up there. While we have also found a Goryeo precedent in fig. 5, the clouds in the Muwisa mural are clearly an innovation, especially since they are painted in a yellowish orange color never found in the Goryeo tradition.

Figure 6.

Amitabha is of course the main figure in the Muwisa mural, and he wears a traditional red robe with a medallion pattern, but the latter is not painted with gold leaf, possibly because the withdrawal of noble patrons in the Joseon made it unaffordable. Moreover, the medallions are not distorted by the folds of his robe as they are in Goryeo paintings, one reason why the Muwisa mural’s quality of execution is lower. Rather, the folds of cloth in the red robe are painted on as black lines, with no naturalistic detail. Also in line with tradition is Amitabha’s lotus throne and his right foot sole pointed upward; finally, his hands are in the su-in position, which symbolizes the nine stages of rebirth. As for his halo, there is the Eikando precedent for its shape (fig. 6), but not its black coloring around his head or the way it connects to the clouds at its pointed top. Moreover, it is much more finely detailed than any Goryeo example, making one wonder why Haeryeon cut corners on the robe while taking so much care with the halo. Finally, Amitabha is depicted frontally, looking directly at the worshipper, and thus clearly meant to be an object of contemplation and prayer.

The bodhisattvas, for their part, stand barefoot on lotuses in keeping with tradition, although the petrol green tiled floor underneath them has not been seen before. The clothing of both is also much the same with the Goryeo as Professor Kim points out, but their yellowish-orange oval body

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34 For more on Buddha’s hand positions, see Ven. Hyewon, 531-532.
The Muwisa Amitabha Triad Mural

halos are completely unprecedented, especially since they are semi-transparent, with the edges of Amitabha’s lotus throne showing through them. The green floor, however, is not visible, which may be another sign of lower craftsmanship by Hyeryeon. New, too, are their black head halos. Like Amitabha, they are depicted frontally, and look directly at the worshipper. The most significant thing about the bodhisattvas is the presence of Ksitigarbha/Jijang instead of Mahasthamaprapta/Dae Seji. While there are some Goryeo welcoming descents that have Jijang, his cult greatly increased during the Joseon, and the Muwisa mural when it was new was perhaps a step in cementing his place in the popular pantheon.

Behind the main figures in the foreground are the minutely detailed puffy, swirling clouds whose orange-yellow color forms the main hue of the mural. On each side of Amitabha, the heads and shoulders of three nahan project from these clouds with their hands pressed together in supplication or prayer. All are balding, and look to the left or right rather than at the worshipper: on Amitabha’s right, the outside disciples look to their left, and the central one to his right; on Amitabha’s left, the outside disciples look to their right, the central one to his left. It is unclear whether this serves some symbolic purpose or simply enhances the painting’s overall symmetry. Whatever direction they are looking, all of the disciples have earnest, but calm and reassuring, facial expressions. They also all wear robes with patterned lapels, except for the one in the center on Amitabha’s left. No extant Goryeo painting depicts nahan anywhere, so this is among the Muwisa mural’s biggest novelties.

The mid-ground figures of the disciples are part of the depth perspective stretching back to heaven prefigured in the Eikando Amitabha (fig. 6) and coming into full fruition in this painting. In the Muwisa mural’s case, the background in the upper right and left corners depicts biseon-like figures on greenish and yellow-orange swirling clouds on a black field with a red and blue floral pattern. The red and blue flowers in the heavens might represent the “red and blue” (dancheong) traditional color scheme of Korean Buddhist temples and paintings, and maybe even an allusion to the Flower Garland Sutra. Then, too, the flowers might simply indicate the blissful state awaiting a soul that ascends up to nirvana. Certainly the curly-cue clouds signify another astral realm from Earth. The four figures, who sit in the lotus position on lotus cushions wearing maroon robes, are either biseon, i.e. Buddhist angels, or else souls of

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The Muwisa Amitabha Triad Mural
deceased believers who have become Buddhas in the Western Paradise. In either case, they represent what a worshipper would have aspired to become after death. Another unique feature of this painting is how the swirling clouds intertwine top center and wind down thinner and thinner into Amitabha’s topknot, perhaps symbolizing that the Western Paradise emanates from his mind.

Figure 7.

This analysis reinforces the point made at the beginning that the main distinguishing feature of the Muwisa mural is its illusion of depth, with the position of the bodhisattvas’ heads coming second. The background stretching away to heaven is a sharp break with the relatively two-dimensional Goryeo tradition, and makes the Muwisa mural’s scene much more dramatic, even if its quality of execution is in some ways not as high. As for the level of the bodhisattvas heads, it may even mark the beginning of a Joseon tradition, since in subsequent paintings, such as the 18th-century Sakyamuni triad at the National Museum of Korea (fig. 7), in which the bodhisattvas’ heads are level with the lower half of the historic Buddha’s face. The final Joseon difference, although it had Goryeo precedents, is the presence of Jijang noted before. His replacement of Dae Seji leads to the present form that the naeyongdo assumed.

The welcoming descent genre died out during the Joseon, but it appears to have morphed into a new one that still exists: the “nectar painting,” or gamnodo. Like its naeyongdo ancestor, the gamnodo is unique to Korea, although it also drew its inspiration from China, in this case by condensing the Tang Dynasty altar scenes there. The upper portion of a nectar painting depicts Amitabha with heavenly attendants, including Jijang, appearing to souls in purgatory while bodhisattvas escort them to the Pure Land. In the center are “hungry ghosts,” or agwi, with large bellies but small throats; they are the souls of those who died without memorial rites. Surrounding the center are detailed scenes of life on Earth and in the underworld.36

In the possession of the National Museum of Korea is a nineteenth-century gamnodo that used to hang at Daheungsa in Haenam, less than 50 kilometers from Muwisa. Significantly, it portrays Jijang with Amitabha on the clouds at the top right. All around the agwi in bottom

center is a panorama of human earthly activity and hellish torment like something out of Hieronymous Bosch. A very similar one from about a century ago hangs in the museum at Tongdosa, too.

Figure 8.

An example of a nectar painting created in our lifetimes can be found on the wall of the main hall at Unheungsang in Samcheonpo, on the coast west of Busan (fig. 8). Although painted over a century after the Daheungsa one, it shows all the classic features of the genre, including Jijang by Amitabha’s side on the clouds upper right. The presence of Jijang in the same part of the painting in both means that this style had become a tradition by the nineteenth century at the latest, and possibly that the depiction of Jijang in the Muwisa mural contributed to starting it.

A point indirectly linking the Muwisa mural with the development of the nectar painting has been made by Kim Seunghee, who writes that,”[t]he Buddhist deities [in nectar paintings] are surrounded by clouds stretching away into the sky, suggesting [that they] are descending from the Pure Land,” thus connecting heaven, Earth and hell.37 This parallels the theory about welcoming descents put forward by Michael Shin asserting that the genre depicts the moment of leaving this world and going into the afterlife. Kim Seunghee makes another point that corroborates the information from Professor Kim Junghee: that gamnodo were used for the suryuk and other rituals for leading the souls of the dead to paradise; gamno means “nectar,” which is the food of paradise, so being fed with it by the suryuk enables the souls to enter it.38 Since the Muwisa mural is apparently the first to include so much cloud imagery and depth perspective to indicate a descent from heaven, it is therefore plausible to theorize that it constitutes a step, perhaps the first one, in the Goryeo welcoming descent’s morphology into the Joseon nectar painting. Doubtless there were other examples of such paintings in suryuk temples throughout the land, but Muwisa’s is the only extant example.

In conclusion, we should once again consider that the phrase “For these merits, I hope myself and others to be reborn in paradise” appeared on Amitabha paintings straight through the Joseon, despite its overall suppression of Buddhism. With the belief that invoking Amitabha’s name

37 Seunghee Kim, 84.
38 Ibid., 87.
on one’s deathbed, especially while regarding an image of him, ensured rebirth in his paradise, there is a sound theological basis for the Muwisa mural. It would have served, and evidently still serves, as a prop for death rites, as well as an object of meditation. Certainly anyone visiting Muwisa’s geungnakjeon today can find worshippers of this image in it. This means that Amitabha Buddha and his assistant Jijang hold an eternal relevance for Koreans despite all the changes the country has gone through over the past centuries, as the naeyongdo’s transformation into the gamnodo demonstrates. Some vitality of the Goryeo arguably still exists.

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A native of California, Dr. Swindall received his doctorate in comparative literature from UC Riverside in 1994, doing his dissertation on late nineteenth-century European novels and art criticism. Since then, he has taught at East Asian universities, and presently teaches English in the Dept. of Global Studies at Pusan National University.
The Remarkable Life of Hong Jong-u

Brother Anthony of Taizé

The first Korean to visit France, the translator of the first Korean works to be published in the West, the assassin of the Korean reformer Kim Ok-gyun, Hong Jong-u went on to become one of the most influential court officials during the early years of the Korean Empire, yet relatively little reliable information about him is available in English. The most easily available Korean source of information about him is a volume, 그래서 나는 감옥군을 쏘았다 (So I shot Kim Ok-gyun) by 조재곤 (Jo Jae-gon) published by 푸른역사 (Pureun yeoksa) in 2005. The page numbers included in the following text refer to this volume. Unfortunately, the sources of much of the information given there are not referenced.

Basic Biography

Some very scanty basic information is available from the Hong clan family register. Hong Jong-u (洪鍾宇) was born on the 17th day of the 11th lunar month, 1850 [page 31], probably in Ansan, Gyeongi province. He was the only son of Hong Jae-won (洪在源, 1827-1898), of whom virtually nothing is known. His mother was a member of the Gyeongju Kim clan [page 63]. Hong Jong-u’s Ja was SeongSuk (聲肅), his Ho was Ujeong (羽亭), his clan was the Namyang (南陽) Hong clan, he was the 32nd generation (세손) of the military branch (남양군파). The Namyang Hong clan formed part of the Noron (老論) Old Faction and some members held significant posts throughout the later Joseon period, but Hong Jong-u was descended from Hong Gye-deok (洪啓德), the third son of Hong U-sung (洪禹崇), who lived early in the 18th century, and none of his ancestors during those 5 generations held any official position. For many years, until 1894, at least, Hong Jae-won seems to have lived in Gogeum-do island in South Jeolla, where he is said to have known great poverty. He died in the 6th month of 1898 and received posthumous
honors as 가선대부 의정부참찬 (official at the State Council), as part of the reward for his son’s patriotic act in killing Kim Ok-gyun.

Hong’s mother died in the 3rd lunar month of 1886. By that time he was married to a woman from the Jeonju Yi clan born in 1855. According to Félix Régamey (see below), they had one daughter. It was only after his return to Japan in 1893 that Hong received a letter from his father telling him that his wife had died. At some later date he married a daughter of Park Haeng-ha who was much younger than himself, born in 1876. They had two sons and a daughter. The elder son, Hong Sun-bok, was born in 1897 and the second, Hong Sun-jin, in 1903. The daughters later married, their husbands’ names being Kim Kyu-seok and Park Gwang-rim, and the name of Hong Sun-jin is found once among the members of a church in Wando island in 1926. Beyond that nothing is known of the family’s further history [page 253]. In the autumn of 1899, Hong arranged for the reburial of his mother, father and first wife together in graves located in what is now Yeoksam-dong in Gangnam, Seoul. There was reportedly an attempt to rob this tomb not long after it was built.

The death of Hong Jong-u is recorded in the family register as having happened on the 2nd day of the first lunar month of 1913. There are differing, unreliable reports of his final years, and nothing certain is known of where he died; Mokpo and Incheon are both mentioned. Several reports claim that he died of starvation.

Early life
For much of his childhood, Hong Jong-u’s parents seems to have lived in the island of Gogeum-do in South Jeolla, where they barely survived, reduced to total poverty. Yet he must have received some kind of yangban education, since he knew the Chinese characters. In the Preface to the Guide (see below), Henri Chevalier recalls that Hong told him that “in his youth he had studied divination a lot, and that had earned him a severe reprimand from his father, and the burning of all his suspect books.”

An informative article about Hong, written by the French artist Félix Régamey (1844 – 1907), was published in Volume 5 of the review T’oung Pao in 1894, soon after the arrival in France of news of the killing by him of the Korean reformer Kim Ok-gyun. Régamey reports that Hong said he was present on June 4, 1886, as a secretary, at the ceremony marking the signature of the Treaty of friendship and trade in Seoul, by François George Cogordon and the governor of Seoul, Kim Man-sik. But it is not clear what his position can have been, there is no record that he held any official appointment at that time. The article by Régamey is
particularly interesting for the echoes it gives of Hong’s political opinions at the time of his stay in France. Régamey quotes *Le Figaro*, where an appeal in Hong’s favor explicitly stated that Hong belonged to the *Kaihua-to* (改化 道 usually known as the *Gaehwa-pa*), “the liberal party.” This coincides with the statement in the 1894 article by J.-H. Rosny, that Hong Tjyang-Ou had been “a lieutenant of Kim-ok-Kium [sic] in 1884,” an article where he also quotes words Hong told him had been spoken by Kim, to the effect that he would kill him (Hong) “if he ever changed.” This claim to having known and been closely associated with Kim Okgyun prior to his journey to France is unfortunately not given much weight by Korean historians, who mostly assume that the two men first met in Japan after Hong’s return and even suggest that it was merely Hong’s skill in French cooking that brought them together.

Equally significant is Régamey’s summary of Hong’s basic political positions: (1) Korea should be completely independent of China, Japan and Russia; (2) the barriers that isolate Korea from the outside world should be done away with. On this second point, Regamey adds that Hong had been a friend of the first Minister Plenipotentiary sent by Joseon to Washington, Park Jeong-yang. He mentions that Park was recalled at the demand of China for failing to respect the Chinese wish that he should be subject to strict Chinese control, since this was a time when China was asserting its right to treat Korea as a vassal state. Hong seems also to have expressed bitter resentment at the British support for the Chinese position in not allowing Jo Sin-hui (조신희), the ambassador the Korean king had sent to Europe, to leave Hong Kong “for 2 years” (1887 - 1890).

Hong seems to have decided on his own initiative to visit France in hope of receiving the same inspiration for democratic reform that Meiji Japan had received. In order to earn the fare, he went to Japan in 1888, after obtaining a Korean passport dated 1887 authorizing his visit to France (quoted by Régamey). He worked in Osaka as a typesetter for the *Asahi Newspaper* and raised funds by giving lectures etc. [page 64] He studied French and Japanese and read much about the outside world while he saved the money he earned. Régamey reports that Hong received a letter of introduction to Georges Clemenceau from the Japanese politician Itagaki Taisuke.

**In France**

Leaving Japan for France, a 40-day journey, he arrived in Marseille and headed for Paris. Régamey says he arrived there on December 24, 1890.
Luckily, he had been given a letter of introduction by a French missionary in Japan, addressed to Fr. Gustave Mutel, a priest of the Paris Foreign Missions, who had spent 5 years in Korea 1880-5, then returned to France to be in charge of the MEP seminary. However, after the death of Bishop Blanc in Korea, Mutel was appointed Vicar Apostolic of Korea in August 1890 and he left Marseille for Korea on December 14, 1890, just as Hong was arriving. When Hong knocked on the door of the MEP in the rue du Bac, speaking no French, they first called the priests who knew Chinese, to no avail. Luckily, Fr. Pierre-Xavier Mugabure, who had lived in Japan since 1875 (and was later to be archbishop of Tokyo), was there and they could talk in Japanese. A Catholic family was contacted and Hong was given an attic room in their house in the rue de Turenne to stay in, for a while, at least.

Félix Régamey was inspector of drawing in the schools of Paris at that time but, more important, he had accompanied Émile Guimet on a journey round the world in 1876-1877, where he was particularly struck by Japan, and he published a number of books inspired by it during the rest of his life. It is an interesting fact that he was involved in the Paris Commune of 1870 and as a result had to go into exile in London for a time. In 1872, he provided financial help for Rimbaud et Verlaine when they in turn arrived in London, and made drawings of them at that
troubled time in their relationship. Félix Régamey says he first met Hong Jong-u only a few days after his arrival, probably because of the Japanese connection. He says Hong could speak no French, and when a Japanese interpreter was brought in, Hong very soon showed signs of strong Korean pride and anti-Japanese feeling. The impression of caged fury (like a captured wild tiger) displayed by him impressed Régamey. Hong claimed that he had come to learn French law and French customs, but he also told Régamey that his ambition was to become leader of a group of young people like himself, currently residing in Russia and the US, who wished to lead Korea in the same direction as Japan’s Meiji reforms, an independent, modernizing transformation. He was, it seems, especially interested in the French political situation. Régamey at once invited him into his home and says that they lived under the same roof “for months.”

Throughout his time in France, Hong always wore Korean aristocratic dress. Régamey (and others) tried to find some benefactors for him, but it is clear that few or none were forthcoming. There was a fruitless visit to the aged Ernest Renan. Perhaps more significant was the meeting with François George Cogordan, who had been France’s Minister Plenipotentiary in Beijing and had come to Seoul to sign the treaty with Korea only a couple of months after signing the Treaty of Tianjin with China. Deeply moved to see someone he had seen in Korea, Régamey reports that Hong threw himself on his knees to kiss his hands, which might have surprised him. However, the official French attitude toward Korea at this time was oddly indifferent if not hostile; after the signing of the 1886 treaty, it was not until 1888 that Victor Collin de Plancy was sent to be the first French representative in Korea. Because of that policy of total indifference, it seems, Cogordan refused ever to meet Hong again, which must surely have shocked and humiliated him.

In the same year as de Plancy, 1888, the amateur ethnographer Charles Varat arrived in Korea, intending to undertake a study of the country and collect many artifacts from it. That was also the year in which Émile Guimet opened the Musée Guimet in Paris. Many of the objects collected by Varat came into the museum, to which de Plancy also contributed. It was only natural, then, that Hong Jong-u should be asked to help catalogue the Korean items in the new museum, thanks to the help of Régamey, as a way of earning his keep. At the same time, he somehow managed to learn enough French to help prepare translations of three Korean texts.

The first of these, *Printemps parfumé* (Perfumed springtime, a translation of the name of Chunhyang, the main character) was published
in the “Petite Collection Guillaume” in 1892, and has the name J.-H. Rosny as the sole author, although the name of Hong is mentioned as translator in a footnote to the Preface. J.-H. Rosny was the pseudonym shared by the brothers Joseph Henri Honoré Boex (1856–1940, the elder) and Séraphin Justin François Boex (1859–1948, the younger), both born in Brussels. It seems that *Printemps Parfumé* was in fact the work of Séraphin since *La Convention littéraire de 1935* (designed to distinguish between the share of each in the jointly published works) attributes it to J.-H. Rosny “Jeune.” There is no indication of how Hong met the Boex brothers but it was probably through Régamey.

The Preface claims that the text is essentially the translation of a Hangeul version of the Chun-Hyang story. Such a text seems to have been available in the Musée Guimet, included among the items sent back from Korea by Charles Varat and Victor Collin de Plancy. The names of the lovers are given here as I-Toreng and Tchoun-Hyang; they meet in the city named Nam-Hyong, in Couang-hoa-lou, which is explained as being “a great house built on a bridge,” rather than “a pavillion beside a bridge.” The French version does not indicate that Chun-hyang’s mother is a “gisae” but simply says that she is a commoner. One major difference with the traditional tale is that, once I-Toreng glimpses Tchoun-Hyang on
her swing, in order to be able to meet and talk with her he dresses as a beautiful girl. He also pays an old woman to bring them together. I-Toreng then says “she” would marry Tchoun-Hyang if she were a man. Tchoun-Hyang indicates similar feelings. I-Toreng makes her sign a paper to that effect, then reveals that he is in fact a man. They become lovers at once. The rest of the story follows the familiar tale and the later part includes social satire on the way the mandarins exploit the common folk.

In 1895, some time after Hong’s return East, a second literary work, *Le Bois Sec Refleuri*, was published in the *Bibliothèque de vulgarisation*, a division of the *Annales du Musée Guimet*. This time, Hong’s name stands alone as the author. The book must have been prepared for publication with some care before Hong left France, since it includes an exchange of dedicatory messages between him and Hyacinthe Loyson, who mentions visits by Hong to his family home in Neuilly. Father Hyacinthe Loyson (originally Charles Loyson) was a particularly celebrated figure in religious circles at that time and one can only wonder how Hong came to develop such a deep friendship with him. The dedicatory messages have little or nothing to do with the contents of the book, being on both sides concerned with mutual respect and questions of faith. Loyson had once been a famous Catholic priest, a Carmelite, and from 1865 preached the lenten Conférences at Notre Dame de Paris for several years. However, his modernist, liberal ideas led to his expulsion from the Catholic Church in 1869. Some years later he married an American widow and they finally settled in Neuilly. He gave frequent lectures and was associated with various “Old Catholic” and “Gallican” groups but was essentially an independent, spiritual man with a radically open mind.

The truly interesting aspect of Hong’s dedication is the concern he shows to formulate precisely his religious ideas, in a way that clearly reflects profound conversations with Loyson. He mentions how deeply struck he was on reading Loyson’s book (*Mon testament : Par Hyacinthe Loyson Père Hyacinthe. Ma protestation. Mon mariage. Devant la mort*) which was only published in 1893 (an English edition appeared in 1895). Hong stresses in a rather un-Confucian way his conviction that there is a God: “I believe that a single God has given us life. He is not a strange being dwelling far, very far away in the depths of ethereal space in a fantastic palace built beyond the stars. He is the Soul of our souls, the Life of our lives, our true Father, He in whom and by whom we all are. We are all brothers, for we are all issued from him; but how much more do we feel united as brothers since we both believe in him, even though our faith
is expressed in different ways.” His letter ends with the indication that he is about to leave France and return home; the last lines are a beautiful indication of his deep affection for Loyson: “When you see passing in the sky white clouds coming from the East, think of the faithful friend who is thinking of you, far away on a distant shore, and who is talking about you to all the clouds and all the birds heading West-wards, in the hope that some of them, docile to his voice, may come and revive in your heart the memory of his friendship.”

Unlike Printemps parfumé, Le Bois Sec Refleuri can hardly be considered as a “translation” in the normal sense. It has no obvious direct Korean original. Already at the time, the scholarly British diplomat Aston noted in a review (T’oung Pao 1895 Vol 6 p 526-7), “we seem to breathe an atmosphère far removed from Corea.” The complex narrative structure of Le Bois Sec Refleuri is unlike any known Korean original and although it owes some features to the Sim Cheong tale, that is integrated into a complex set of skillfully interwoven stories that are unlike anything found in Korea. The volume containing Le Bois Sec Refleuri also contains a summary of Korean history which is far from accurate and in which Aston already detected a strong Japanese influence. It might seem better to attribute the contents of the volume (published by the Musée Guimet) to a combination of the Boex brothers and Henri Chevallier, and to consider the brothers the main authors of the tale. In one article, “Rosny” evokes Hong in his hotel room telling them Korean stories. The whole volume might then have been attributed to Hong in order to justify publication by the Museum, or to avoid further association of the name Rosny with a notorious “political assassin.”

Summarized as briefly as it can be in all its complexity, it tells the story of two friends, high aristocratic ministers, who are sent into separate exiles with their wives by the machinations of the wicked and ambitious prime-minister Já-Jyö-Mi. The wife of one of them, Sûn-Hyen, gives birth to a daughter named Tcheng-Y, then dies. Sûn-Hyen weeps so much he becomes blind. The years pass quickly and the story follows that of the familiar Sim Cheong tale, with the father rescued from drowning by a “hermit” and told that in return for 300 sacks of rice prayers will be said, his sight will be restored, and he will become prime-minister. Tcheng-Y duly sells herself to a group of merchants going to China by sea, who want to offer a sacrifice for a safe journey, and sets off with them after arranging for her father to be cared for.

The other exile, San-Houni, is murdered by a wicked boatman, Sù-Roung, who has designs on his wife, Tjeng-Si. She escapes and along
The way gives birth to a son. She tattoos the name San-Syeng on the baby’s arm then abandons him by the roadside, taking refuge in a nunnery. Sù-Roung finds the baby without knowing whose child it is, adopts it and brings it up well. Again many years pass, the son learns that he is a foundling and leaves home. Arriving in the city of Tjen-Jou he meets a beautiful girl whose father has died and they become lovers; warned by her dead father in a dream that her mother intends to kill her lover, she sends San-Syeng off on her father’s horse with his sword. He gives her the ring left with him when he was abandoned.

The king dies, his heir is still a child. The wicked Ja-Jyo-Mi sends him to the island of Tchyo-To in solitary exile. San-Syeng hears of his plight, then in a dream sees a man named San-Houni, who refuses to tell him who he is, but urges him to help the boy-king. He arrives close to Tchyo-To but it is well guarded. We now return to Tcheng-Y, who jumps into the sea but does not sink down to the Dragon King. Instead she lands on the back of a giant turtle that carries her to a cave beneath an island. She climbs up to the surface and finds herself in a beautiful garden; here she meets the exiled boy-king, Ki-si, and they fall in love. Fearing that he will be killed, they set fire to the house and flee down the cave to the sea but there is no boat in sight. San-Houni again appears to San-Syeng in a dream and tells him to take a boat to the island quickly. There he rescues Ki-si and his wife. The population rebels against Ja-Jyo-Mi, Ki-si is hailed as the new king, the prime-minister is arrested, and the new king sends San-Syeng as a secret inspector to check the quality of the local governors.

We return to San-Syeng’s lover-wife, Tjyang-So-Tyjei, whose mother has died and who has lost everything in a rebellion. She arrives near the nunnery and is discovered by Tjyeng-Si, San-Syeng’s mother, who recognizes the ring. They identify themselves and set out in quest of San-Syeng. Reaching Saug-Tjyou, Tjyang-So-Tyjei refuses the advances of the inn-keeper’s son, is framed by him, is arrested, and finds herself in the situation of Chun-Hyang, when the magistrate gives her the choice between marrying him and death. Meanwhile San-Syeng has found Tjyang-So-Tyjei’s house empty, in ruins. San-Houni appears in a dream, reveals his identity as San-Syeng’s father and tells him what is happening to Tjyang-So-Tyjei. San-Syeng arranges to be put in the same prison, his horse is recognized by Tjyang-So-Tyjei, all are reunited, the role of San-Syeng as secret inspector is revealed, the magistrate is punished, Sù-Roung is also arrested.

When Tcheng-Y, now queen, hears all this she recalls her blind father, a feast is held for the nation’s blind men. Sûn-Hyen finally arrives,
very dirty, but when a palace lady criticizes him he makes a very eloquent, wise and poetic reply which is reported to the queen. They meet, his eyes open, he meets San-Syeng and learns that he is the son of his old friend San-Houni. Sûn-Hyen is made prime-minister. Finally, the king wishes to wage war on the Tjin-Han who defeated his father once, and there is still the question of the punishment for Ja-Jo-Mi and Sû-Roung. Sûn-Hyen asks the king to hold a great banquet for the whole population, saying that they should support whatever is decided, war or peace, punishment or forgiveness. He makes a speech in favor of peace and reconciliation, all agree. Finally he vanishes, perhaps taken up to heaven on a cloud.

In 1919, an English translation of this tale was published in Boston by Charles M. Taylor under the strange title Winning Buddha’s Smile: A Korean Legend. This volume must presumably be the first work of Korean literature published in English, only as we have suggested, it is far from being a “faithful” representation of an actual Korean work, and the version of the Sim Cheong story it contains is very unlike that known in Korea.

The third work “translated” by Hong was very different, an astrological treatise of divination, Guide pour rendre propice l’étoile qui garde chaque homme et pour connaitre les destinées de l’année, only published in 1897, again in the Annales of the Musée Guimet, with the name of Henri Chevalier added to that of Hong as author / translator. In a preliminary article about this book, published in Volume VI (1895) of the review T’young pao, Henri Chevalier explains that the book had been brought back from Korea by Charles Varat and Hong had begun to translate it at the request of Guimet. His departure interrupted the project and Chevalier had taken it over. In fact, it seems that the book was too difficult for Chevalier and he was obliged to seek help from W. G. Aston, the scholarly British diplomat. Chevalier was originally an engineer who worked for some time in Japan, who later developed an interest in oriental languages.

Hong must have moved out of Régamey’s house at some point, since Régamey says they only met again shortly before Hong’s departure, when he needed money for the journey home. His description of Hong’s extreme reserve when they parted suggests that he was deeply hurt that Hong expressed no gratitude for all his help and friendship.

As we read Régamey’s description of Hong in Korean robes being driven away, smoking a cigarette and not even looking back to wave goodbye, having spent 2 years cataloguing Korean artifacts, and translating Korean texts, it becomes clear that he had made no attempt to
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learn about French law or politics. Instead, during those years, Hong had focused on aspects of his own culture by working in the Musée Guimet and working on Korean stories with J.-H. Rosny, and may well have become more strongly aware of the imperialism of France and the other western countries, realizing that Korea would not be able to rely on outside help from any quarter. Where Kim Ok-gyun looked to Japan as a model for Korea’s future, accepted Japanese financial help, had taken a Japanese name and seemed unwilling to recognize the threat Japan’s colonizing intentions posed to Korean independence, Hong had moved in the opposite direction.

Three shots in Shanghai
Hong Jong-u left Paris on July 23, 1893, headed for Marseille. There he boarded the steamship Melbourne and returned to Japan. [page 95] Régamey ends his article by quoting verbatim the note he received from Hong after his return, written in rather awkward French, in which he reports having been sick for some time after his journey and adds the news that letters from his father and friends had informed him that his “poor wife” had died “in May” (by implication 1893). In December 1893, Hong received a visit from Yi Il-jik, who in April 1892 had been charged by the Min faction in Seoul to kill the refugees from the 1884 Gapsin Coup: Kim Ok-gyun, Park Yeong-hyo, Jeong Nan-kyu, Yi Gyu-wan, Yu Hyeok-ro etc. Yi told Hong that it was the wish of the king himself. Hong agreed enthusiastically, it seems. His first task would be to become acquainted with the Gapsin refugees. It was agreed that Hong’s task would be to encourage Kim Ok-kyun to travel to China, and kill him there since he was well-protected in Japan.

Hong, it seems, was quite easily able to meet the refugees and join their gatherings, perhaps on the basis of his family clan identity. There is no way of knowing if indeed he had been close to Kim Ok-gyun before the Gapsin coup, as he claimed while in France. He is said by Korean scholars to have gained Kim’s trust especially by preparing delicious food in the French style for him and his Japanese friends in Tokyo. At the time, Kim Ok-gyun had been living In Japan for nearly ten years and was not sure that the Japanese would go on protecting him indefinitely; at the same time, he seems to have abandoned his strongly negative attitude to China and begun to formulate a vision in which Korea, China and Japan would best ensure their separate independent status by combining to resist attempts by the western powers to dominate them. Meanwhile the Japanese were already preparing to wage war with China.
and take a more complete control of Korea; it began to seem to them that the death of Kim in China at Korean hands might serve a useful purpose. This would explain why Japan did nothing to warn or protect Kim after receiving a report written by Nakaga Kotaro (中川 恒太郎) its consul in Hong Kong on January 1, 1894, describing words spoken that day by Min Yeong-ik, the Korean Queen’s nephew, to a group of his supporters there, advocating the assassination of Kim Ok-gyun etc. and even telling them that in Osaka Yi Se-jik [sic] with a Korean recently returned from Europe, named Hong Jong-u, were actively engaged in a plan to that effect. [page 106].

Indeed, the Japanese government had probably always been less than enthusiastic about the presence in Japan of the Gapsin leaders and it is not always realized that Kim Ok-gyun was humiliated by being forced to spend some 3 of the 9 years he spent in Japan detained in the Bonin Islands and Hokkaido, far from Tokyo. Moreover, he was reduced to political silence, his days were spent eating, drinking and playing Baduk with a few friends. He quickly understood that Korea could expect nothing good from Japan and in mid-1886 had already written to the Korean King warning him against the ambitions of Japan and China. But for the Korean government he was a traitor, nothing more. Finally, Kim seems to have decided to explore the possibility of a visit to China; he had been living with the Japanese name Iwata Shusaku (岩田 周作) but now changed that to Iwata Miwa (岩田 三和). The use of the character for “3” symbolized his new vision of a reconciliation between the three nations of the region. Kim decided to travel to China to meet the great Chinese politician Li Hongzhang. He had been close to Li’s adopted son (his nephew) Li Jingfang (李經方) while he was Chinese Minister in Japan 1890-1892 and there might have been some preparatory correspondance between them.

Many of Kim’s associates urged him not to go with Hong; some did not trust Hong, although Kim Ok-kyun seems to have rejected their warnings. So he and Hong traveled together with Kim’s servant and a translator from the Chinese legation. They reached Shanghai on March 27, 1894, and lodged in separate rooms of the Towa yoko 東和洋行 Japanese ryokan in Shanghai. The following day, Hong went out to change money, then returned while Kim was resting in his room during the afternoon and, wearing Korean robes, shot him three times with a revolver. Kim died almost instantly. That was just after 4 pm. Hong then fled and was arrested the following afternoon.
Questioned by the police, he said he had killed Kim, first, because he and the other Gapsin conspirators had caused the deaths of many innocent people; second, that he was obeying a royal command. The third reason was that Kim was a threat to the peace of the region, and a traitor. Li Hongzhang decreed that Kim had been a Joseon traitor and Hong a Joseon official, so both should be sent back to Joseon at once. On April 12 Hong and the corpse arrived at Incheon, where they transferred to a boat for Seoul. During the journey, Hong had written on a banner the characters 大逆不道玉均 (Traitor Ok-gyun).
The body of Kim was left at Yanghwajin, down-river from Mapo at what is now Hapcheong, where it was beheaded, the hands and feet removed, and the trunk slashed three times. The parts were sent around the country for display. There exist photos of the head with Hong’s banner. Other measures were taken to punish surviving and dead participants in the 1884 coup, while the families of those officials killed by the conspirators celebrated. In Japan, the press immediately launched a virulent campaign acclaiming Kim as a hero and denouncing Hong as a monster.

After Shanghai

There is no way of knowing the precise reasons behind Hong’s attack on Kim Ok-gyun. Was he sincerely devoted to the King and convinced that Kim deserved to die, or was he driven by opportunism? He had come back from France empty-handed, and had no prospects of work in Korea. This was the ideal opportunity to establish himself. Whatever his intention, once back in Korea, Hong was soon the toast of the town. He was reportedly hailed by Gojeong himself, who came running out of his rooms in his stockinged feet on hearing he had arrived in the palace. Hong at once became a government official by special royal decree.

However, in the months that followed, everything went wrong. The Sino-Japanese War ran from 1 August 1894 until 17 April 1895. During that time, pro-Japanese forces took power in the government and Hong may have taken refuge in China. After the murder of the queen by the Japanese in October, 1895, power returned to the conservative side. From February 11, 1896, until February 20, 1897 the King was living in the Russian Legation and in the late summer of 1896 Hong seems to have helped mastermind the arrest of the pro-Japanese officials who had lost power a few months earlier. They were released in the autumn and became involved in the foundation of the Independence Club. Meanwhile, Hong had gained considerable influence with the King and advocated strongly the imperial model of power centered in the King which inspired the creation of the Korean Empire. It seems even that, while the King was in the Russian Legation, it was Hong who suggested that he should proclaim both at home and abroad that Joseon was an autonomous, independent state, then perform a ceremony taking the title of Emperor, turning King into Emperor, Crown Prince into Imperial Crown Prince, Joseon into Dehan (Korean) Empire, the regnal name into “Gwangmu,” so preparing the starting point for the proclamation of the Daehan Empire and the Imperial coronation ceremony. As the Japanese journalist Kenjō Kikuchi
put it, “To the King, who for the past year had been shut up in fear and grief as a result of the calamities of treason and rebellion, Hong Jong-u’s French gift was a bright light on a dark night.” Late in 1896, Hong was appointed head of the foreign affairs section of the palace administration. Early in 1897, when the Japanese Minister came for an audience, it is said that Hong was seated directly beside the King. In the following time, he played a major administrative role in setting up the structures of the Korean Empire and was responsible for composing the law code.

At the time when the Korean Empire was established in August 1897, Hong was acting as a member of the State Secretariat (비서원승), but by 1898 he was also Secretary General of the State Council (의정부 총무국장), Director of Regions, State Council (의정부 지방국장), General Director of the Department of Farming and Sericulture (농상공 부 광산국장), member of the Jungchuwon Advisory Council (중추원 의관), then in 1899 he served as Secretary General of the State Council (의 정부 총무국장), Judge of the Pyeongni-won Supreme Court (평리원 판사), in 1900 Head of the Sariguk division in the Justice Department (법부 사리국장), Chief Justice of the Pyeongni-won Supreme Court (평리원 재판장), in 1901 Member of the Council of Rituals (봉상사 부제조), member of the Jungchuwon Advisory Council (중추원 의관), in 1902 he was Palace Administrator (태의원 소경) and so held controlling positions in the departments of diplomacy, justice, administration, administration of legislation, industry. Hong, together with two other men of humble origin, Gil Yeong-su and Yi Gi-dong, known as the “Hong Gil-dong trio” enjoyed unrestricted access (별입시) to the Emperor and exercised immense influence. The list of his promotions from 1898 until 1902 shows how powerful Hong became in the early years of the Korean Empire.

One reason for Hong’s final downfall is easily summarized. He was completely unable to understand or sympathize with the growing demands of the international business community and opposed many financial and administrative measures which others judged essential, submitting a number of petitions to the Emperor. In the first, he opposed economic reform and the establishment of the Hanro Bank, opposed the establishment of shops by foreign merchants in Seoul and inland trading, opposed the leasing of Jeolyeong-do and Seontango, advocated restriction on the transport of cereals, opposed the transfer of mining rights, opposed the clandestine selling of red ginseng, advocated the use of Gwangmu as
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the regnal name, advocated that the government should play a leading role in business etc. He opposed the absolutising of royal power as a reform of politics and society, the establishment of military power and military interference by the great powers, opposed interference in domestic affairs by advisors in each ministry and each nation’s diplomatic representative, recommended the revision of unequal concessions, conformity to the public law of all nations, a theory of tolerance, the establishment of representatives elected by popular ballot.

One episode from this period is of special interest. In 1899, Hong Jong-u was presiding judge of the high court known as the Pyeongniwon. This was the time of the conservative crackdown on the members of the Independence Club at the end of 1898 and among those on trial was a young student, Yi Seung-man, better known in later times as Syngman Rhee. Hong and Rhee were diametrically opposed. At that time, Rhee might easily have been sentenced to death, yet Rhee later wrote how amazed he was to find Hong determined to save his life; instead he was sentenced to 100 blows on the buttocks and life imprisonment. He also wrote that Hong gave orders to be gentle when the beating was performed, so that after the 100 blows his skin was not even broken.

There was, however, no resisting the slow increase of Japanese control and the rise of officials prepared to work with Japan. The result was his appointment in January 1903 as 牧使 (moksa, magistrate) of Jeju Island. Dealing with the aftermath of the violent disturbances of 1901, focused on issues of taxation and involving the Catholic community with its French priests, might have been one reason for his appointment, but he seems to have understood that it was a kind of exile, the beginning of the end. There are indications that he demanded bribes and made no attempt to help the population; he was probably intent on securing funds for a bleak future. One last, rather sad photo of Hong and his wife was published in the first-ever “Guide to Jeju.”
In the spring of 1905 he resigned from the position and went to live in Muan-gun near Mokpo. He was still residing there early in 1909, but after that there are no reliable records of his final years. According to his clan register, he died on the second day of the first month of 1913, but there is no record of where he died or where he was buried. Rumors say that he starved to death.

**Bibliography**


George Clemenceau, “Hong-Tjyong-Ou” *Au fil des jours*, pages 320 – 327


Brother Anthony is currently President of RAS Korea.
Frank Carpenter’s Visit To Joseon

Robert Neff

In the 1880s, articles about Korea were quite popular and often appeared in American newspapers and magazines but most of them were written by missionaries and the occasional traveler. It wasn’t until early 1886 when the first American journalist – Maximillian Taubles – arrived in Korea. Unfortunately, Taubles died of smallpox before he had the opportunity to publish any accounts of Korea. The first American journalist to actually write about Korea was Frank G. Carpenter in 1888.

Carpenter was a reporter for the New York World – many of his articles seem to have dealt with social events in the Washington D.C. area. Thus, it is not surprising that when the first Korean Minister to the United States, Park Jeong-yang, and his suite – including Horace N. Allen, the embassy’s secretary – arrived in the American capital on January 9, 1888, that he was there to interview them. Through the assistance of Allen, Carpenter got his story but he failed to get a photograph for the article because Park “shut his almond eyes when asked to look at the camera.” 1 The Koreans informed Carpenter that they were too busy to pose for another picture. Undaunted, he resorted to hiring an artist to secretly sketch the minister as he ate in the hotel. This was the first image of the Korean representative to appear in American newspapers. 2 It was Carpenter’s first encounter with Koreans but it wasn’t to be his last. Ten months later, he and his wife, Joanna, visited Korea as part of their “belated honeymoon trip around the world.” 3

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1 Apparently Park was not that photogenic. One reporter described him as not being very handsome but his face has an intelligent look.” “Pak Chung Yang”, Daily Alta California, November 26, 1888, p. 1; Frank G. Carpenter, Japan and Korea (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1927), pp. 266.
2 Frank G. Carpenter, Japan and Korea, pp. 266-267.
3 Ibid. p. 1.
In early October, the Carpenters sailed for seven days from Yokohama aboard a Japanese steamer to Jemulpo (modern Incheon) – the port city or entryway to Seoul some 26 miles away. Travel from the port city to the capital was usually done overland and, while it was a tiring journey – especially in the heat of summer or the bitter cold of winter, it was generally not dangerous. The only danger he and his wife faced were being locked out of the city:

I rode a savage little Korean pony, while [my wife] came in a chair, borne on the shoulders of four coolies, with four others jogging along awaiting their turn to relieve their comrades. Toward the end we had to push on at top speed for fear we might not reach Seoul before the gates closed. As it was, we got into the city just in time to see the heavy doors, covered with thick plates of iron, swing to behind us.

Because there were no hotels, they were forced to stay with Hugh Anderson Dinsmore, the American Minister to Korea. Carpenter described the legation as a compounded surrounded by a high wall and contained a half dozen one-story Korean buildings. The minister’s residence “had many rooms finished with the great varnished beams of Korean architecture and his parlor and dining room are arranged that they

4 There is some question as to which ship they sailed on. They are listed as being aboard the Higo Maru –which stayed one night in Nagasaki and was bound for Tientsin – and the Saikio Maru which only took on passengers and cargo at Nagasaki and continued on its journey.”Shipping Intelligence”, The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, October 10, 1888, p.4; Frank G. Carpenter, Japan and Korea, p. 241.

5 Carpenter asserts that up until the late 1860s through early 1870s, “there were so many tigers in the forests between Chemulpo and Seoul that travelling over the road from port to capital was extremely dangerous. And so the ruler of that day ordered that a strip three miles wide be cleared on each side of the roadway” so as to destroy the cover of these great cats. Despite his claims, I have only found one reference in contemporary English accounts of someone hunting or encountering a tiger on the road. Frank G. Carpenter, Japan and Korea, p. 247.

6 Ibid, p. 252.

7 Hugh Anderson Dinsmore (1850-1930) of Arkansas served as the American Resident Minister and Consul General in Seoul from April 1, 1887 until May 25, 1890.
can be thrown together.” There was also a guest house behind the minister’s residence for the use of his friends. It was actually quite common for American visitors to stay at the legation and while it may have alleviated the loneliness of the minister, entertaining guests occasionally caused financial duress.

The Carpenters spent about two weeks in Korea – most of it with the American community in Seoul. “The Americans have the full swing” in Korea he proudly wrote and added that he had heard from the American minister that the Korean monarch favored the Americans. Carpenter’s Yankee pride probably did not endear him with the British nor did his decidedly negative view of the British government and its policies in the Far East. In Korea, the “British hog” was attempting to force its way into Korea through the support of China and its claim of sovereignty over the peninsula:

Great Britain has the most selfish foreign policy of any country on the face of the globe. It would be glad to throw Corea to China in order to keep it out of the hands of Russia, where, by the way, it is now in no danger of going. It would in this way be more easily able to control Corea's small foreign trade. The national honor of the British is a matter of shillings and pence. The English half-penny is bigger in their eyes than the comfort of this whole round earth. They forced the Chinese to become opium eaters to add a trifle to their national income, and it is an open secret in Japan that the adoption of English railways and the letting of contracts to English subjects was the price paid for their pretended support in treaty revision.

It is unlikely Carpenter spent any time with the British residents in Korea but fortunately for him, the largest contingent of foreigners living in Seoul was the Americans who dwelt in comfortable homes and were well-provided with provisions and all sorts of delicacies from

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10 Ibid.
Frank Carpenter’s Visit To Joseon

Shanghai which arrived by ship every ten days or two weeks.\textsuperscript{11} Carpenter wrote: “They have a pleasant society among themselves, play tennis, have concerts, and as far as I can hear, are the most free from social bickering and strife of any of the foreign colonies of the Western Pacific.” \textsuperscript{12} The Americans seem to have been on their best behavior while the Carpenters were in Seoul because there was a great deal of bickering amongst the Americans – missionaries and advisors – and with other nationalities.\textsuperscript{13}

While the American community supposedly dwelt in peace amongst themselves, there were external dangers such as the baby riots that occurred earlier that summer when “some of the anti-foreign fanatics among the natives started the story that the foreign devils were feasting on Corean babies.” \textsuperscript{14} American troops were summoned to Seoul to help protect the Americans and the king issued a proclamation calling for anyone with evidence of foreigners eating babies to step forward and make their case. According to Carpenter:

[The king] called attention to the fact that foreigners were civilized and asked the question as to how civilized people could eat children. “But,” the proclamation went on, “If children are being stolen, let the information be filed before the proper authorities and the offenders will be arrested and if found guilty by evidence will be punished. A reward of forty thousand cash will be paid for each person so found guilty, to the informant, but in case the information is not supported by the evidence the informant shall be fined in a like amount for bringing the charge. This proclamation was signed with the royal seal and was pasted on the gates and on the great bell in the center of the city.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{11} Frank G. Carpenter, “Americans in Asia”, \textit{The Salt Lake Herald}, April 21, 1889, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{13} For some examples of these early conflicts see Robert D. Neff, Sunghwa Cheong, \textit{Korea through Western Eyes} (Seoul, South Korea: SNU Press, 2009), pp. 24-24, 87-106 and 203-208.
\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid}. 
Fortunately there were no attacks upon the American community and the unrest soon died down.16

**Business in Korea**

Carpenter also had the opportunity to meet with Walter D. Townsend (1856-1918), an American merchant in Jemulpo. Townsend, who Carpenter described as a “young bright Bostonian”, came to Korea in 1884 and established the largest American merchant shop in the country. Carpenter learned in his conversations with Dinsmore and the merchant that American products, such as American cotton, despite being more expensive than its British competition, were very popular. According to Townsend: “The average Corean spends all he makes on his back and his belly, and the people according to their incomes spend as much upon clothes as any people in the world.” 18

But not all American products were a success. American Kerosene was initially very popular but once Koreans discovered that it froze during the winter (it was low-grade oil) they went back to their own poor quality and expensive native oil.19 There was also the problem associated with collecting money from products sold. “Business with [Koreans] has to be done largely upon the credit system, and they think nothing of forgetting to meet their payments at the time they are due.” 20

As for Korean businesses, Carpenter denounced them as a “parody”. 21 The stores were small – usually no more than little booths

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16 For more information on the Baby Riots see Robert D. Neff, Sunghwa Cheong, *Korea through Western Eyes* (Seoul, South Korea: SNU Press, 2009), pp. 107-118.
19 John Grigg Lee, an American advisor to the Korean military, claimed that both Standard Oil a Russian oil were sold on the streets of Seoul and that “Coreans burn it and bring their little lamps to be filled at the trading stores - lamps that are often nothing but old aniline dye bottles, holding half a gilt with rough, tin burners on top.” “Light of the World”, *Davenport Morning Tribune*, September 13, 1889, p. 1.
crowding the street or small huts – and the largest of these shops were generally located on Bell Street (Jongno) near the great bell “which is rung in the morning for the opening of the gates of the city.”22 Describing these “curious stores” he wrote that they surrounded an oblong court of some fifty feet in length and twenty feet wide. “If you would take one of the boxes used for the packing of a good-sized piano and stand it on end, make a curtain for the front, and line the inside with shelves, you have about the size and style of one of these stores.” 23 In front of the little stores were shelves about two feet wide and upon which the merchants, dressed in white clothing and wearing broad-brimmed hats tied to their heads with ribbons running from under their chins, sat on their heels and smoked four-foot long pipe as they dealt with their customers. Not all of the goods for sale were visible to the potential buyers and would only be brought out, one by one, as the customers inquired about them.

The inventory of the stores was modest – the entire contents could have been purchased for about ten American dollars. But the merchants displayed attitudes of indifference to whether their customers purchased their goods or not. They were especially reluctant to sell large quantities of goods and, as Carpenter later wrote in his book, “the more goods you want, the higher the price they will ask. You may get one pair of shoes, for instance, for fifty cents, but if you want a hundred, the merchant will be very sure to charge you at least a dollar a pair, on the plea that if he sold all his goods he could not keep his store open.”24

But there were not many goods manufactured in Korea that he felt were worth buying. “The Koreans are good workers in brass, and this is one of the few things that you care to carry away from the city. They make also very fine mats, and their fans are worth taking. The best of all things are made for the King, and it is only through him or one of his officials that you can get the best product of Korean workmen.” 25

But doing business transactions in Korea was greatly hampered by its coinage system:

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22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
The unit of money is the copper or brass coins known as the cash of which it takes more than 1,300 to make a Mexican dollar, worth here seventy-five cents. It cost me in the neighborhood of 50,000 cash to travel from the sea coast to the capital and back, and it is the custom in traveling in the interior of Corea to take an extra pack horse along to carry your money. The people outside of the three sea ports know nothing of silver and gold, and one of the common sights near Fusan, which is the southern port of the country, is a coolie laded down with a bushel or so of these copper coins, which he carries upon his back. Each coin has a square hole in it, and the common way of putting them up is in strands of hundreds strung on straw cords of about the thickness of a clothesline. Ten dollars is a load for a man, and thirty dollars would break down a mule if the journey was long.

His was a complaint shared by many Westerners – especially those traveling in the interior – along with the number of counterfeit coins that were in circulation.

Food
There was one group of merchants that Carpenter seemed to admire and found to be very enterprising – the roasted chestnut vendors who loudly advertised their goods through the streets of Seoul. “They are little boys with their hair parted in the middle like girls and braided in one tightly woven cord down the back. Their stock usually consists of about a quart of chestnuts and they have a little pan of coals over which they roast them while you wait.”

There were two commodities in Seoul that seemed to have a constant market: tobacco and food. Korea is “a land of smokers and the boys and men are seldom seen without pipes in their mouths”, declared Carpenter, and, shockingly, even the women were voracious smokers.

26 Mexican silver dollars were commonly used throughout Asia and were equivalent to 0.75 USD.
“[The Koreans] have, it seems, an ever present craving for food and they make their bellies their gods. To eat, to smoke, to sleep and to squat is all outward appearance the chief employments of the people and to be fat in Corea is a sign of wealth.”

Small restaurants were found scattered throughout the city and they served up dainties from raw fish to toasted liver and were served on small round tables and delivered to homes and businesses by boys who balanced them on their heads as they made their way through the busy streets.

Carpenter was generally willing to sample the local fare. While in Tokyo, he dined on slices of white uncooked trout that was covered with ice and served as one of the entrees. His Japanese friends devoured it with great gusto and Carpenter proclaimed it as “not bad to taste.” But in Korea he was very reluctant. “Such dishes as I saw were not at all appetizing and everything was seasoned highly with red peppers.”

Everything had red peppers on it. “[It is] not uncommon for the fishermen to take a bottle of pepper sauce along with them and to eat a fish as they take it from the hook, sprinkling a bit of red hot chili over it, and eating it down before cleaning anything off except the scales.” Even if red peppers did not grace it, he was in no hurry to sample it. Koreans are “by no means particular as to the manner in which their fish and meats are served,” and that entrails were sold in the markets and taken home and eaten. “[A] common dish at a big dinner is a chicken baked feathers, entrails and all and served whole on the table.”

According to him, food played such a key role in Korean society that “a big stomach is an honor, and the very small children in the country districts, in the summer, who, I blush to say, rarely wear more than a little jacket coming down two inches below the arm pits, are, in nine cases out of ten, pot-bellied. The skin of their abdomens is stretched like a drum head, and a leading authority on Corean life says that mothers, in order to increase the size of the stomachs of their babies, stuff them day after day after day

with rice, paddling them on the stomach to press down the contents to make room for more.”

It is interesting to note that after Carpenter returned to the United States he visited the National Museum in Washington D.C. in order to write an article about how people in the Far East coped with the heat of summer. This is what he wrote concerning Korea:

The Korean gentleman has a wicker-work shirt which keeps his clothes away from the body and acts as a sort of ventilator, lying between his abdomen and his gown. He has wicker cuffs which run from his wrist to his elbow, and which are made of the finest of stiff straw. These keep the sleeves away from the person, and the Korean embassy at Washington is the coolest of all the legations.

It is from these wicker bustles worn over the belly that the Koreans get their reputation of being such a fat race. They are fat, but not half so fat as is supposed. It is this wicker arrangement that increases their apparent avoirdupois, and as fatness in Korea is a sign of wealth, there is no hesitancy shown by a thin man in trying to make himself look like the fat man in the dime museum.

The wicker clothing not only provided comfort but also status in a land that valued fatness. A lot has changed since then.

Advisors and Teachers
Merchants, missionaries and diplomats weren’t the only Americans Carpenter encountered, he also met the military advisors and teachers brought to the peninsula to help educate young Korean men. The American military advisors were General William McEntyre Dye, Colonel Edmund H. Cummins, Major John Grigg Lee, and Captain John Henry Nienstead. Carpenter met “the leading Generals of Korea”

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37 Dye and Cummins had served as officers in the Union and Confederate armies (respectively) during the Civil War. Lee was a coroner by profession but had also served as an aide in the Pennsylvania Militia and Nienstead had served
Frank Carpenter’s Visit To Joseon

several times and learned through them that the Korean army had 4,000 men in Seoul (500-600 guarding the palace) and 8,000 scattered throughout the country. There was no cavalry. The soldiers in the capital were the best equipped and were armed with 2,000 Remington rifles while the troops in the interior were armed with old muzzle-loaders of different makes. According to them, the army had no cavalry and troops of the city are the best armed of the soldiers. They have 2,000 Remington rifles, and the others of the troops have old muzzle-loaders of different makes. The advisors’ role in reorganizing the military was hampered by a large number of Korean officials who “worships the things of China, and think the Asiatic civilization is the only one in the world.”38 Despite the opposition, the Americans were able to organize “a school of about 80 scholars” – all the sons of nobles who were “drilled twice a day in the palace grounds.”39 But government policies were not the only obstacles they faced. When the cadets were introduced to the new uniforms of foreign-cut pantaloons, vests and leather shoes, 14 of them refused to wear them. It was only after they were told that they would not be able to attend the academy that they relented.

Carpenter attended a review of the cadets and noted that “they marched very well but their evolutions were not those of war, and were, it seemed to me, of little practical value in a military sense. They were more a series of gymnastic exercises than anything else, and of great advantage, I doubt not, in developing the muscles.”40 Koreans were experts with bows and Carpenter had a chance to witness their prowess when he visited the archery grounds of the Mulberry palace with Colonel Cummins. “The distance between the palace where the arches stood and the target was fully 300 yards, and the judges had such confidence in the accuracy of the shots that they had their seats within five feet of the bull's eye.”41 While they may have been

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39 Ibid. 
40 Ibid. 

in the American navy in the Far East and then as the constable at the American legation in Kobe, Japan. For more information on the early American military advisors see Robert D. Neff, Sunghwa Cheong, Korea through Western Eyes (Seoul, South Korea: SNU Press, 2009), pp. 87-106.
accurate with bows, their skill with rifles was lacking and they could not hit a barn door at 100 yards with more than two shots out of five. 42

As for the old army, Carpenter had even less praise. The soldiers he met were “dressed in Zouave pantaloons, with heavily padded shoes and stockings; a blouse waist with big sleeves, and black hats, which set on the crowns of their heads. The color of their dress is blue or purple, faced with red, and they tie their hats on under their chins. They are not dangerous-looking men by any means…” 43 And yet, in another article, Carpenter claims that one of the soldiers sent out to escort him was “very fierce looking.”44

Carpenter had a short conversation with the commander of the army, General Han, who he described as “a bright young fellow of 33 … dressed in a long gown and a horse-hair hat … [and] bore on the front of his gown a piece of square embroidery representing the royal tiger.” 45 The general asked Carpenter some questions about the military and seemed to have an active interest in improving his own. Other generals were not. They were the “most pompous” of Korean officials declared Carpenter and gave this anecdote as evidence:

One of these silk-gowned, black horse hair hatted Corean generals was going up one of the hills about the capital the other day. He had two men behind him to push him and two others held his arms, when General Dye, who by the way is twice the man's age, walked by him with a springing step and asked him as he passed if he expected to have that retinue with him in battle. It took some time for the Corean to appreciate the sarcasm in this remark, but it finally crept through his top knot that among the Western people, that laziness and inability were not marks of honor and the next

42 Ibid.
time the two came together the yang ban general walked alone. 46

Carpenter was also interested in Korean education. He visited a Korean traditional school visited presided over by a very imposing-looking teacher who sat on the floor, wearing a bright gown, a cap of black horsehair upon his head and glasses with lenses the size of Mexican silver dollars. “His scholars squat about on straw mats studying their lessons out loud. They sway themselves back and forth as they sing out again and again the words they are trying to learn, all shouting at once. If one stops, the teacher thinks he is not studying, and calls him up for a whipping.” 47 Their chief subject was to learn “by heart the sayings of the great Chinese scholars.” 48

Seoul, at the time the Carpenters were there, had just hosted the literary examinations at the palace and those who had passed their tests took to the streets of Seoul “on horseback with their retinues. They were dressed in the gayest of trappings, and each had a crier and band. They made the ordinary people get out of their way, and they took the town in like a gang of cowboys on a raid.” He denounced them as the “curse of Korea.”

But changes were coming to education as well as the military. In the summer of 1886, Dazell A. Bunker, Homer B. Hulbert and George G. Gilmore arrived in Korea from the United States. They began instructing young Korean men using American schooling techniques and enjoyed a degree of success:

I visited today the king's royal school for the teaching of young Corean nobles on the American plan. I saw about forty bright young men sitting in a room before desks that might have been used in an American college, and using English books. I heard their superintendent, Professor Bunker, address them in a lecture in English, and could see that they understood what he said, though he talked very fast. I was asked to make a speech to them, and the few

48 Ibid.
words I uttered brought forth some English words in reply. Each student had his big round hat on his head and these school boys all wear their hats in the school room. Professor Bunker tells me there are many bright minds among them, and I learn that many of the pupils are of the royal family and that all are the sons of nobles. The best of them when educated will probably be sent by the king to serve in his diplomatic service aboard.\footnote{Frank G. Carpenter, “First Impressions,” \textit{Morning Oregonian} (Portland, Oregon) December 23, 1888, p. 1.}

This fascination with Western education would lead to other schools being formed in the 1890s run by Germans, French, English and Russian teachers. In the 1890s a number of young noblemen (including one of King Gojong’s sons) were also sent to the United States to study.

**Observations of Korean Society**

Carpenter’s observations were often mixed with a degree of smugness and while much of what he wrote about was based on his own observations, a part of it was influenced by others – including William E. Griffis. He seems to have especially taken pleasure of describing Korean men – especially the noblemen:

I wish I could show you a Korean noble. He is the gaudiest creature on the planet, and the richer he becomes the gaudier he gets. He dresses in silks of the brightest colors, wears a pair of yellow spectacles, the glasses of which are as big around as the top of a coffee-cup, and has an army of retainers to take care of him. These hold him up as he walks, and when he rides one leads his pony and two go on each side of him to steady him. He holds on to the front of his saddle. He has a band of howling musicians who trot along in front of him, and tell the poorer devils of the race to get out of the way. He prides himself on doing nothing, and some of these nobles have 100 servants in their households. They own all the land of Korea, and they hold all the offices. They squeeze the poorer farmers, and suck the blood out of the country. Their chief business seems to be squatting on
their heels, and there are but a few of them who are well educated.  

His contempt went beyond their clothing and work ethics. Carpenter, who was slightly built, very animated and a “blonde of the most violent type,” possessed a thick moustache which he apparently took some degree of pride in. He disparagingly described the Koreans as having moustaches like a baseball game – “having nine hairs on each side and one in the middle for the umpire” – and noted that Koreans, if they had beards, were usually thin and straggling. As for their hairstyles:

The boys of Korea dress their hair like the school girls of America: they part it in the middle and wear it in long braids down their backs. They are not considered men until they are married, and it is at this time they are permitted to wind up their hair into a knot on the top of their heads and put it under their hats. One of the most insignificant and contemptible specimens of manhood in the far East is a Korean boy of 40, with his hair parted in the middle, trailing in a braid below his waist. He is kicked around as though he were 6, because he has as yet got no wife to make a man of him.

Carpenter further declared that there were no barbershops in Korea and that the Koreans – men and women - saved “the combings of their hair and the parings of their nails, in order that they may be buried with them when they die.” This wasn’t quite true. Hair and nails were often saved and burned at the front gate of their homes on the New Year so as to protect themselves from malevolent spirits and disease. But not

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51 “Frank G. Carpenter at home”, *The Salt Lake Herald* (Salt Lake City) November 09, 1890, p. 7.
52 Frank G. Carpenter, “Barbers in Korea”, *Syracuse Standard* (Syracuse, New York) November 24, 1889, p. 11.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
all hair was burned. Some was used to wrap goods within Korea while quite a bit of hair was exported to Japan where some of it might have been exported to Europe.  

Like many early visitors, Carpenter noted the strange tapping or pounding sounds that could be heard at all hours of the day and throughout the night. The sound was caused by women ironing their families’ clothing “on a wooden block, and by pounding them with a mallet or stick of about the length of a rolling pin.” Women were, according to Carpenter, kept penned up in their homes attending to their household duties – the primary one being laundry. The views he espoused were similar to those of earlier writers concerning Korean women and their role in society:

Among the lower classes in Korea the women do the most work. They carry the heaviest loads in going to market, and they are supposed to never allow their faces to be seen by any other man than their husband. The touch of a strange man, even when no evil intent accompanies it, is thought to be pollution; and it is said that fathers have killed their daughters and husbands their wives when strange men have touched them with their fingers. The husband may be as unfaithful as he pleases, but if the wife falls from virtue the husband can divorce her, drag her before the magistrate and have her whipped. After such divorces she becomes the property of the judge, who gives her as a concubine to one of his servants. This slavery is the most horrible known to the civilized world, and laws of Korea give the wives and children of criminals to the judges who pass upon their cases. They act as slaves and do the most menial duties. The condition of the females under such circumstances is most

56 In Pusan – “Human hair figures for $1,512, and it may be noted that the Corean women's hair is recognized as of greater length and fineness, and therefore fetching more in the market, than that of Japanese.” “Trade Report of Corea, 1883”, The North China Herald, October 15, 1884, pp. 414-420; The North China Herald, June 18, 1886, p. 638; William R. Carles, Life in Corea (London, UK: MacMillan, 1888), pp. 77-78.
horrible. They are at the mercy of the officers and the lowest servants of the court, and are hired or sold as these judges desire. 59

Carpenter explained, “Slavery exists to some extent in Corea, but it is more a serfdom than such slavery as we had years ago in the South.”60 The number of slaves was declining but he speculated that slavery would continue for some time to come because of “the conditions of labor and government.”61 While criminal acts could lead to a life of slavery, so too, could acts of kindness: “[F]oundlings, when picked up and taken care of, become the slaves of those who take them.”62 Children, if we are to believe the knowledge provided to Carpenter, were especially vulnerable to slavery:

The selling of children is, however, not uncommon in Corea, and I am told that many are exported to China. Good, fat, well-disposed babies bring from $5 to $20 apiece, and a father has a perfect right to sell his children. Babies are sometimes bought for adoption and as to the girls, they are sold for purposes of which the less said the better. 63

Desperation also led to slavery. Men and women sometimes sold or gave themselves into slavery and farmers were “practically the slave of the tax-gatherer.”64 He was convinced that the Korean nobility were to blame for the poor conditions of the country.

An Audience with the Royal Family

59 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
64 Frank G. Carpenter, “Women in Korea”, The Daily Independent (Monroe, Wisconsin) January 9, 1890 p. 3
Prior to leaving Korea, Carpenter was granted an audience with King Kojong whom he described as having “the best qualities of his ancestors” and “one of the most progressive of the Asiatic rulers.”

Their procession to the palace was a colorful affair. Dinsmore and Carpenter both wore “high hats, dress shirts, and swallow-tail coats [while] the servants sent from the palace to attend [them] were dressed in white gowns, belted in at the waist with sashes of green.” They were conveyed in two chairs – Carpenter’s was covered with navy blue silk and Dinsmore’s was green – and each borne by eight “big-hatted Corean coolies and whole escorted by twelve of the King’s soldiers” who “wore blue coats and plum-coloured trousers, and from the back of their black fur hats streamed tassels of the brightest vermillion, each of which was as big as a fly brush.” In addition, they were accompanied by two splendidly-dressed nobles who were to act as their interpreters.

The procession made its way through the streets of Seoul with the attendants warning pedestrians to get out of the way for great men were coming. Naturally this elicited a great deal of curiosity. Carpenter wrote, “Groups of white-clad, almond-eyed, yellow-faced men squatting in the streets stopped their smoking as we passed. Women with green cloaks thrown over their heads scurried along to get out of the way” and even grooms leading nobles on their horses paused in respect.

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67 Carpenter seems quite pleased with his and the minister’s chairs but others weren’t. According to a letter from Seoul and published in an American newspaper: “Concerning the sedan chairs, however, the natives have a curious saying when they see a foreigner’s chair. If it be a brand new one it is a missionary who is coming; if only respectable, it belongs to one of the foreign Legations. If old and shabby, it must be that of the American Minister.” *The Van Wert Republican* (Van Wert, Ohio), March 21, 1889, p. 6; Frank G. Carpenter, *Japan and Korea*, p. 258; Frank G. Carpenter, “Audience with the royal family”, *Morning Oregonian*, (Portland, Oregon) January 6, 1889, p. 1.

68 Dinsmore translated the cry as: “Get out of the way, you villains. Don’t you see these great men coming?”

When they arrived at the palace they dismounted at the gate and then walked to the reception hall. Carpenter claimed that no one, other than the king, was allowed to enter the palace while being borne in a chair but this wasn’t accurate. The Chinese representatives often rode their chairs into the palace.  

Escorted by “two of the greatest generals of the Korean army”, they were led to “a long, one story, tiled building with [a] great overhanging roof upheld by massive beams, which showed in all the natural beauty of the wood. A Brussels carpet covered the floor, tables like those you eat from at home were in the center of the hall and upon these were plates of cakes, which might have been made at an American baker shop, and arranged around the table were glasses of champagne.” Here they drank with the Korean ministers while awaiting their 4 p.m. audience with the king:

They were all clad in their court dresses, and the head of each showed a top-knot shining through its fine Corean cap of horse hair, with great wings flapping out at the sides. They had gowns of fine materials of various colors, which fell from the neck nearly to their feet, and their feet were shod with great boots, which made each look as though he had the gout and had wrapped up his feet for the occasion. The most striking feature of their costume, however, was a

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70 It appears this wasn’t known to most of the Western and Japanese diplomats until September 1893 at an audience with the king. After the diplomats had dismounted and were walking across the courtyard for the audience they suddenly found themselves in a torrential downpour. A few were able to take cover and spare themselves from being drenched but they still had to navigate through the mud to the reception room. They were shocked when the Chinese Minister and his consul, still in their chairs, were left off at the reception room door. King Kojong then received them all in an audience – the Japanese and Western representatives muddy and disheveled while in contrast the Chinese were clean. The humiliated diplomats then demanded equal privileges as the Chinese – they threatened that they might be forced to decline further invitations to audiences with the king. The Korean government eventually built a covered path from the gate to the reception hall, thus protecting the representatives from the elements but the Chinese still were granted the right to enter the palace in their chairs until the Sino-Japanese War.

stiff hoop like belt, which ran around the body just below the arm pits, and which was so big that it came out about six inches from the dress. These belts are emblems of rank. They were about three inches wide, and they were plated with a great number of small squares fastened by joints. On some of the belts these squares were of gold, on others they were silver, and on others they were of green jade or other precious stones.\textsuperscript{72}

The hats that they wore captured Carpenter’s attention. He was told, as they sipped champagne, that the flapping wings symbolized the quick receipt of the king’s orders and the owner’s desire to fulfill them.\textsuperscript{73}

When they were finally brought before the king, Carpenter was clearly impressed with the Korean monarch who looked him in the eye while they talked. In his article, Carpenter described the king as:

[A] man that would attract attention anywhere; not over five feet high. He weighs perhaps 125 pounds and his bright, black almond eyes sparkle with intelligence. He has, like most Coreans, a very thin moustache and straggling chin whiskers of black. He has a pleasant smile, good well-kept feathers and his face is oval and the color of a rich Jersey cream. His hands are very small and delicate and he has no pompous airs about him. His hair was combed in a Corean top-knot and upon his head was the royal cap of dark blue color. This was of open work and I did not notice that it had the butterfly flaps of his ministers. His costume was a gown of brilliant red or scarlet satin which came up close around the neck and which bore upon the breast a square of embroidery, in gold, of the royal dragon. He stood easily during the talk and he did not look to be over 32 years of age, though I am told he is 36. He talked in a simple manner in one of the sweetest voices I have ever heard.\textsuperscript{74}

The audience was a pleasant one and Carpenter would later claim to be the first western journalist to have an audience with the king but he

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
neglected to note Henry Norman (1858-1939), an Englishman working for *Pall Mall Gazette*. Norman was also in Seoul at the same time and was staying at the British legation. Norman’s audience was at the end of October and Carpenter’s seems to have been just prior to his departure in mid November.\(^75\)

After his audience with the king, Carpenter was granted a short and “rather tame” audience with 14-year-old Crown Prince Sunjong. While the king looked younger than his actual age, Sunjong appears to have looked older. Carpenter guessed he was about 16 and noted that the boy was taller than his father but his face lacked his father’s strength and his ability to rule. Sunjong, dressed in strawberry-colored silk and attended by two eunuchs, “expressed a kindly feeling” for the United States.\(^76\) Carpenter’s description of Sunjong was far more complimentary than Henry Norman’s:

> I was presented to the Crown Prince, a flabby-faced youth of about nineteen, bloated with dissipation, turning helplessly to two horrible eunuchs who stood beside him, for what he should say to us, bobbing up and down and almost slobbering in his pitiable physical nervousness – a dreadful object, more fit so far as looks go to occupy a seat in an asylum for idiots than a throne.\(^77\)

Neither Norman nor Carpenter had an audience with the Korean queen as she was “never seen by men” and was surrounded by several hundred court ladies and attended by a “number of eunuchs among the regularly appointed officers of the court.”\(^78\) The queen wore fine silk Korean clothing and had many beautiful diamonds and carried a diamond-studded chatelaine watch. He also noted that the queen “smokes American

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\(^78\) *Ibid.*
cigarettes by the thousand.” How he came by this knowledge is unclear but perhaps it was from Lillias H. Underwood who had served as the queen’s physician. According to her, all of the palace women smoked cigarettes and were slightly put off by her refusal to join them in this vice when she visited the palace.

Closing
The Carpenters left Korea around November 11, 1888. Prior to leaving he wrote: “I feel that I have had but a taste of Corea, but that taste has shown me that there is here a rich meal for the man whose soul longs for things unknown and unwritten.” That taste lingered for he continued to be interested in Korean affairs even after he returned to the United States. He maintained contact with residents in Seoul – including Horace N. Allen, who later became the American Minister – and wrote several books about his journeys. He later returned to Korea in 1894 (in time for the Sino-Japanese War) and in 1908, this time accompanied by his daughter. His final voyage to the Far East was in 1924 and he most likely would have visited Korea had death not claimed him in China.

Carpenter’s writings are of interest because he is one of the few early journalists to travel to Korea during its final three decades and write extensively about his observations. Through his writings we can witness the turbulence of this period – the power of the Chinese influence in the 1880s, the struggle for Korea by the Japanese and Chinese in the 1890s, and the complete dominance by the Japanese in the 1900s.

Robert Neff is a writer and researcher of the late Joseon era. He has written or co-written several books including Letters from Joseon, Korea Through Western Eyes and Westerner’s Life in Korea. He also writes a weekly column for Korea Times.

79 Ibid.
Origins of the Catholic Church in Korea:
A Letter

Brother Anthony of Taizé

Korea welcomed Pope Francis in August 2014. During his visit, on August 15, he beatified 123 Korean Catholics and one Chinese priest who were killed for their faith between 1791 and 1888. Beatification is the step that precedes canonization; those beatified bear the title “Blessed” while those who have been canonized are entitled to the title “Saint.” In 1984, during a visit to Korea, Pope John-Paul II had already canonized 103 Korean and French martyrs; of these, seventy-nine had been beatified in 1925. They had died in the great persecutions of 1839 (Gi-hae persecution), 1846 (Byeong-o persecution) and 1866 (Byeong-in persecution). Another twenty-four were beatified in 1968, martyrs from the same periods.

Sixty-seven of the martyrs beatified in 2014 were killed in the early years, between 1791 and 1802; most of the others were killed outside of the periods of great persecution listed above. All had previously been excluded from the beatification process for lack of sufficient documentation or because of questions as to whether their executions had been for religious reasons or the result of factional politics. This was particularly the case for the martyrs killed in 1801-2 and it is a cause for much rejoicing among Korean Catholics that so many have now been recognized as authentic martyrs of the faith.

The story of the early years of the Catholic Church in Korea is not always easy to reconstruct because so many records were destroyed. The Latin letter written by the Bishop of Beijing to another bishop in 1797, that is translated into English below, is particularly significant by reason of its early date. It was quoted extensively by Charles Dallet in his monumental Histoire de l’Église de Corée (1874), having been published in French soon after its arrival in Europe. For some reason neither it nor
Dallet’s magisterial work have ever been translated into English. To help situate its contents, it may be helpful to begin with a brief account of the events as they are usually told.

The Origins of Korean Catholicism

Not included among the candidates for beatification, but hugely influential in his lifetime, Yi Byeok (李檗, 1754-1785) was a scholar of Korea’s later Joseon period who played a leading role in the foundation of Korea’s first Catholic community. He died prior to the first persecutions. Yi Byeok was born in 1754 in Gyeonggi-do, Pocheon-gun, Naechon-myeon, Hwahyeon-ri. From an early age he was an avid reader. His great-grandfather Yi Gyeongsang had accompanied Crown Prince Sohyeon (1612-1645) during the eight years he spent in China and it is likely that he brought back with him books written by the Jesuit missionaries (the so-called “Western Learning”). It is sometimes thought that the Crown Prince himself was deeply influenced by Catholicism, that he was perhaps even a convert, and that for that reason he was demoted and (maybe) murdered.

Yi Byeok decided at an early age not to study for the national examinations, which led to a career in government administration; instead he chose pure scholarship. His family belonged to the “Nam-in” (southern) faction, which included many families residing in Gyeonggi-do, and as such they were usually excluded from holding office by the factional politics of the Joseon period, except for a few years around the time when Yi Byeok was alive. This exclusion from power might explain why so many of the scholars from these families pursued studies which indicated dissent from orthodox Neo-Confucianism. The writings of the great thinker Seongho Yi Ik inspired many of the scholars who adopted the Practical Learning (Silhak) approach. Yi Byeok and the other scholars with whom he explored the tenets of Catholicism in the following years were surely no exception.

In 1777 (according to Dallet) or 1779 (according to the scholar Jeong Yak-yong) the Namin scholar Gwon Cheol-sin (權哲身, 1736-1801) started a series of study sessions for his pupils and other scholars influenced, like him, by the Silhak-inspired writings of Seongho Yi Ik, whose student he had been. These meetings were held in a remote mountain hermitage, Jeonjin-am, belonging to Ju-eo-sa temple near Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do. They were probably intended as an ongoing seminar attempting to gain a better understanding of human life through
renewed study of the Chinese classics as well as certain of the books introducing European knowledge written in Chinese by Matteo Ricci and other Jesuits. If there were books about Catholicism among them, they seem only to have given a very shallow presentation of the faith. Among others present were Jeong Yak-jeong (1758-1816), whose wife was Yi Byeok’s sister (she was dead by 1784), and (perhaps) Mancheon Yi Seung-hun (1756-1801) whose wife was the sister of Jeong Yak-jeon.

Dallet reports that it was Yi Byeok who, on hearing in 1783 that Yi Seung-hun was to accompany his father on the annual embassy to Beijing, urged him to contact the Catholic priests there and be baptized, then bring back more ample information. This he duly did, receiving baptism early in 1784. He returned to Korea bringing books and objects of devotion. Yi Byeok seems to have taken some time to study the books before declaring himself convinced. He then set about evangelizing those around him, including the scholars Gwon Cheol-sin and his younger brother Gwon Il-sin. In the *Jachan myojimyeong* (autobiographical epitaph) written later by the great scholar Dasan Jeong Yak-yong there is an account of a moment in 1783 (?) when Yi Byeok first told him and his brothers about Catholicism.

The baptism of these first converts, including Yi Byeok, by Yi Seung-hun is said to have happened in September 1784. Yi Byeok took the name John Baptist. It is probable that Jeong Yak-yong was among those who were baptised then, although he later denied it. His older brother Jeong Yak-jeon was destined to become the main leader of the community, along with Yi Seung-hun, and die for his faith in the persecution of 1801. Early in 1785 the growing group of believers and sympathizers moved their regular gatherings for study and worship from the Seoul home of Yi Byeok to that belonging to another convert, Kim Beom-u, on the hill where Myeongdong Cathedral now stands. Kim was not an aristocrat as so many of the others were. Almost immediately the authorities raided the house, suspecting it of being a gambling den, and were embarrassed on finding it full of nobles. A report by a government agent to the Minister of Justice lists those acting as leaders: Yi Seung-hun, the brothers Jeong Yak-jeon, Jeong Yak-jong, Jeong Yak-yong, as well as Gwon Il-sin, with Yi Byeok taking the leading role as teacher during the ceremony. All were arrested, the books found were confiscated, the nobles were then sent home with a warning not to continue, but Kim Beom-u was tortured, exiled, and finally executed since he was not of noble birth. [Source: Jean Sangbae Ri, *Confucius et Jésus Christ*, page 29-30.]

Yi Byeok was put under intense pressure by his father, kept inside
his home so that he could no longer meet the other believers, and is said by some to have finally more or less given up the faith, after which he was tormented by remorse until he died, perhaps of the plague, in 1786. Some stories claim that he starved himself to death. The leadership was taken at first by Yi Seung-hun. Dark clouds began to gather in 1791. Two years before, Paul Yun Ji-chung, one of the first baptized and a cousin to the Jeong brothers on their mother’s side, had gone to Beijing and received confirmation. There he learned that Rome had forbidden Catholics to perform ancestral rituals and that this was now being strictly applied by the recently arrived Portuguese Franciscan bishop of Beijing, Alexandre de Gouvea (see the letter below). When his mother died in 1791, Paul Yun therefore refused to perform the usual Confucian ceremonies; this became public knowledge, he was accused of impiety and was executed in Jeonju, North Jeolla province, together with his cousin, Jacobo Gweon Sang-yeon. These were the first Korean Catholic martyrs and both were beatified by Pope Francis in 2014. Some Koreans who had at first been sympathetic to Catholicism, horrified by the Church’s rejection of sacred traditions and rituals, turned away. Jeong Yak-yong may well have been among them, for his later writings stress the significance of rituals.

The second problem was caused by the arrival in Korea in 1795 of the country’s first Catholic priest, a Chinese named Zhou Wenmo, known in Korea by the Korean pronunciation Ju Mun-mo. This confirmed suspicions that this new teaching was a foreign heresy, a plot to undermine the state, and several Catholics were executed for bringing him in, although he himself managed to escape capture until 1801, when he surrendered to the authorities, hoping to protect others. He was then martyred and has now been beatified.

Then in 1799 the liberal-minded Prime Minister died, and in 1800 King Jeongjo himself died; some think he was poisoned for being open to the Namin scholars with their Catholicism. They had both been open-minded men who tolerated the interest in Catholicism of some of their close advisers. The new king, Sunjo, was still only a child and power fell into the hands of the widow of King Yeongjo (the king before Jeongjo), known as Queen Dowager Kim or Queen Jeong-sun. Her family belonged to the factions fiercely opposed to the reformist Catholic Namin group and she had been completely powerless during Jeongjo’s reign. She at once launched an attack on the Catholics, who were denounced as traitors and enemies of the state.

Jeong Yak-jong was the head of the Catholic community and he was one of the first to be arrested and executed, together with Yi Seung-
hun, the first to be baptized, on April 8, 1801. His eldest son, Jeong Cheol-sang, died then too, executed a month after his father. His second wife, Yu So-sa, was later to be martyred in 1839, as were his other son, Paul Jeong Ha-sang, who had become the main leader of the Catholic community in his turn, and his daughter Jeong Jeong-hye. They are already venerated as Catholic saints, having been canonized in 1984. Yi Seung-hun, however, seems to have been terrified of the tortures inflicted on the earlier martyrs and renounced the faith several times before 1801, withdrawing from the Catholic community where he had once played a leading role. This did not prevent him being arrested and executed, but it explains why his name was not included among those beatified.

Since he was Jeong Yak-jong’s younger brother, Jeong Yak-yong was sent into exile for some months in Janggi fortress in what is now Pohang, having been found after interrogation with torture not to be a Catholic believer. That might have been that, but what brought Jeong Yak-yong to Gangjin, where he was forced to spend eighteen years in exile, was the event that served as the final nail in the coffin of the early Catholic community. Hwang Sa-yong was a young Catholic of high birth. Fearing for his life, he hid in a cave during the persecutions and in October 1801 he finished writing a long “silk letter” to the bishop of Beijing, giving a detailed account of the recent events, asking him to bring pressure on the Korean authorities to allow freedom of religion and, disastrously, begging him to ask the Western nations to send a force to overthrow the Joseon dynasty so that Korea would be subject to China, where Catholicism was permitted. The man carrying this letter, written on a roll of silk wrapped round his body, was intercepted and the Korean authorities made full use of it to show that Catholics were by definition enemies of the state. The persecution was intensified and if it had not been very clear that Jeong Yak-yong and Jeong Yak-hyeon were in no sense Catholic believers, they would surely have been executed. Instead they were sent into prolonged exile together, parting ways at Naju, from where Jeong Yak-hyeon journeyed on to the island of Heuksan-do, Yak-yong taking the Gangjin road.

The Origins of the Catholic Church in Korea as told by Bishop de Gouvea

*Relation de l’ établissement du christianisme dans le royaume de Corée, rédigée, en latin, par Monseigneur de Gouvéa, évêque de Pékin,* et
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adressée le 15 août 1797 à Monseigneur de St Martin évêque de Caradre, et vicaire apostolique de la province du Sutchuen en Chine. Traduction sur une copie reçue à Londres le 12 Juillet 1798. A Londres ; De l’Imprimerie de Ph. Le Boussonnier & Co. No. 5. Hollen Street, Solio. Et se trouve chez les Libraires François.

[An account of the introduction of Christianity into the kingdom of Korea, written in Latin by Mgr. De Gouvea, Bishop of Peking and addressed on August 15, 1797, to Mgr. De St Martin, Bishop of Caradre and Vicar Apostolic of the province of Sichuan in China. Translation of a copy received in London on July 12, 1798. 1800. London. From the printing house of Ph. Le Bussonnier, & Co. No. 5, Hollen Street, Soho. Can be found in French bookshops]

Translated from French into English by Brother Anthony of Taizé.

The editorial notes in square brackets are mostly simply translated from the 1800 edition. Those marked * are additional modern explanations.

Introduction

Mgr. De Gouvea, [*Alexandre de Gouvea or Gouveia. Born in Evora, Portugal, in 1731, ordained priest in the Third Order of Saint Francis of Penance in 1775; appointed Bishop of Peking in July 1782, consecrated bishop February 1783, died July 1808] named Bishop of Peking by the Queen of Portugal, arrived in that capital city at the end of 1784 or early in 1785, with the permission of the Emperor, who had accepted him as one of his astronomers. At that time there was in China a violent persecution against the Christian religion.

Three bishops and twenty-three missionaries, both European and Chinese, from the different provinces of the Empire, had been imprisoned in Peking. Those of the capital, who enjoy complete freedom because they are there as artists, astronomers, etc. of the Emperor, no sooner learned of this than they did all that lay in their power to bring help to them in the prisons. They had the grief of seeing two of the bishops and several missionaries die of want, or as a result of the fatigue and bad treatment they had undergone before being brought to Peking, because they had not been told of their detention in time; but they had the consolation of saving by their care Mgr. de St. Martin, [*Jean Didier de St. Martin 1743-1801]
Origins of the Catholic Church in Korea

Bishop of Caradre, Apostolic Vicar of the province of Sichuan, as well as several priests. Later, thanks to the credit they enjoyed at court, they obtained the liberation of these witnesses to Jesus Christ. The Emperor, in granting them their freedom, gave them the choice of remaining in the churches in Peking or returning to Macao. Most of them, including the Bishop of Caradre and M. Dufresse, [*Blessed Gabriel Taurin Dufresse, born 1750; beheaded at Tschantu, China, 1815*] asked to return to Macao, hoping to find there a means of returning to their mission. They were allowed to remain for some time in the churches of Peking. The Bishop of that capital, being newly arrived, did not as yet know the manners and customs of the country. He felt that Divine Providence was offering him a favorable occasion to quickly be able to govern his diocese fruitfully, by making his the experience of so many servants of the Gospel who had been exercising the sacred ministry in China for a number of years. He had frequent conversations with them, but he grew especially close to the Bishop of Caradre, either because of his dignity or because of his personal merit. This prelate was then sent to Canton from where he was supposed to go to Europe but he avoided the vigilance of the mandarins and went to Manila in order to be closer to go back to his mission. In fact, he had the consolation of returning there in 1787. Since that time, these two bishops have maintained an uninterrupted correspondence, edifying each other and telling one another about the successes of their apostolic labors and the progress of the Gospel in their churches.

Text of the letter

Most illustrious and reverend Monseigneur,

Animated with an ardent zeal for the holy missions, you have asked me for a fuller account of the state of the Christianity established in such an admirable manner a few years ago in the kingdom of Korea, located on the frontier of my diocese, the first-fruits of which I had commended to your prayers and those of your Church. To satisfy your request, I will briefly trace the establishment and progress of the Gospel according to the information I was given by the Korean neophytes and according to the information contained in the most recent letters received this year from the missionary in Korea.

The new Church in Korea owes its origin to the conversion of a young man, son of an ambassador of the King of Korea, called Ly [*Yi Seung-hun, 1756-1801*], who came to Peking in 1784. [The Kingdom of
Korea (a large peninsula to the east of China) is a tribute-nation of this Empire. The King sends ambassadors each year to greet the Emperor and offer the customary tribute.] This young man, a great lover of mathematics, approached the Europeans to ask for books dealing with that science, and to receive lessons. The missionaries took advantage of the occasion to give him books about the Christian religion together with those about mathematics, and gradually taught him the principles of Christianity. With grace acting on the heart of young Ly, reading the books about religion, together with the conversations he had through writing with the Europeans, [the characters or letters of the Koreans are the same as those of the Chinese, but the pronunciation is different thus the missionaries and all the Chinese who know the Chinese characters can communicate by writing with the Koreans, who use the same characters; the Koreans are also able to read and understand the books about religion written in Chinese letters by the missionaries.] made a deep impression on him; he converted to the faith and then, after being instructed on the articles it is necessary to know, he was baptized with the name Peter.

[We hope that pious persons will be edified by a more detailed description of the conversion of this young man; therefore we will add here an extract from a letter written by M. de Ventavon, missionary at Peking, dated November 25, 1784: “You will no doubt learn with gratitude of the conversion of a person whom God will perhaps use to bring the light of the Gospel to a kingdom where so far as is known no missionary has ever penetrated; that is Korea, a peninsula located to the east of China. The king of this country sends ambassadors each year to the Emperor of China, whose vassal he considers himself. He loses nothing, for if he sends gifts to the Emperor, the Emperor gives him gifts of yet greater value. Those Korean ambassadors came, almost one year ago, with their suite, to visit our church; we gave them books about religion; the son of one of the lords, aged 27 and a very fine scholar, read them avidly. He saw the truth in them, and with grace acting on his heart he resolved to embrace the faith after being thoroughly instructed. Before admitting him to baptism, we asked him several questions, and he satisfied us completely. Among other things, we asked him what he was resolved to do if the King disapproved his action and tried to force him to renounce the faith. He replied without hesitating that he would accept every torment and death itself rather than renounce a religion the truth of which he clearly recognized. We did not fail to warn him that the purity of the Gospel law forbids a plurality of wives. He replied: I have only my legal wife and will never have any other. Finally, before his departure for Korea, he received
baptism, with his father’s consent, administered by M. de Grammont. He received the name Peter; his family name is Ly, he is said to be allied to the royal family. He declared that on his return he intended to renounce human ambitions, retire with his family to the countryside, and devote himself solely to his salvation. He promised to send us news of himself each year. The ambassadors also promised they would suggest to their sovereign to call Europeans into his state.”

He returned to his country that same year, provided with a good number of books about the Christian Religion. This new disciple of Jesus Christ informed his relatives and friends [notably Yi Byeok and the Jeong brothers] about the principles of the true faith that he had learned from the missionaries of Peking, as well as the monuments of the faith he had seen in their churches. He distributed the books he had brought. The reading of these books and the lively preaching of the neophyte soon brought several Koreans to a knowledge of the true God; in a short time many came to believe in Jesus Christ. Some even became more learned, more zealous preachers and promoters of the Christian faith than Peter Ly. He baptized many and many others were baptized by new Christians whom he had established as catechists; in the space of five years the number of Christians rose to about four thousand.

The propagation of the new faith could not long remain hidden from the ministers of the King of Korea; several people, nobles and commoners, were preaching it with the same sincerity as they had embraced it, and God gave effect to their words. In 1788, the governor of the royal city had Thomas King [*Kim Beom-u], a zealous Christian, arrested on the grounds that he was teaching a foreign religion and doctrine to which he was attracting his fellow-citizens. Hearing this, several neophytes presented themselves before the governor, declaring that they were Christians and preachers of Christianity, at the same time announcing Jesus Christ with zeal and fervor. Amazed at the great number of Christians, and knowing nothing of the intentions of the King toward the partisans of the new religion, the governor dared do nothing against the multitude; he ordered the Christians to return to their homes and exiled Thomas King alone, as a disturber of the public peace and a teacher of foreign doctrines. This preacher of Jesus Christ died gloriously in his exile the same year. The other Christians only grew bolder, they announced Christianity very successfully in the royal city and in the provinces. They brought to Peter Ly and the other catechists those whom they considered worthy of baptism. Realizing, however, from reading the books that there were a number of things in the Christian religion that they could not
understand and others that seemed impossible for them to practice, they together decided to send someone bearing letters to ask the church in Peking for instruction and other means of maintaining and increasing the faith among them.

In the year 1790, Paul Yn [*Blessed Yun Yu-il, 1760-1795] came to Peking accompanying the Korean ambassadors and brought letters from the Korean neophytes. They described the state of the propagation of the Gospel there, requested to be sent sacred objects, books about the religion, and asked for instructions on several points. The arrival of Paul Yn, which was not expected, was a most delightful sight for the Church in Peking. It was filled with extreme joy on learning of the wonderful spread of the Christian religion in a country where no missionary had ever set foot, where the name of Jesus had never been preached. For my part, after reading the letters from this newly-born Church and hearing the stories of the neophyte, I replied by a pastoral letter in which I exhorted these new Christians to give eternal thanks to the almighty and infinitely good God for the ineffable benefits of their vocation to the faith, to persevere in that same faith, and to employ every necessary means in order to preserve the grace of the Gospel they had received. Since I could see from the questions they asked in their letter that there was ignorance among them even on essential questions, I taught them briefly what they ought to believe and practice to be truly Christian and deserve to be regarded as such.

Paul Yn, after receiving the sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist, left full of joy in February to return home. The letter I gave him was written on silk so that he could hide it more easily and safely. [The Chinese write with a brush on silk almost as easily as on paper. The silk letter can then be more easily hidden in one’s clothing.] Once he was back in Korea, Paul Yn told of the churches he had seen in Peking, the European missionaries come from the extremities of the earth to spread the Gospel, the conversations he had had with them, the sacraments he had received, etc. etc. Inflamed by these tales with a new love for the faith, instructed on various points concerning them, the neophytes laid aside all fear, despised all danger. They agreed unanimously to send a messenger to Peking with a letter asking me for missionaries to instruct them, fortifying them by their preaching and the administration of the sacraments. That same year 1790 they sent that same Paul Yn I have just mentioned as well as a catechumen named U. These two deputies came in the suite of the special ambassadors sent to the Emperor of China by the King of Korea in September. [It is customary to celebrate a birthday specially every tenth
year. The Emperor of China celebrated in September 1790 his eightieth birthday. Ambassadors of almost every neighboring prince, including those from Korea, came for this celebration. The catechumen U was an officer of the King, who had charged him to make certain purchases.

Arriving in Peking, they gave me the letters from their Church. The Christians begged me earnestly to send missionaries to care for their souls; they also asked me several questions about contracts, the superstitions of their nation, etc. Once I had consulted, regarding such important matters of great consequence, the opinion of learned, zealous missionaries, I replied to the questions they had asked, promising to send a priest after agreeing on the time, the manner and means suitable to ensure the success of the journey.

The catechumen U was baptized and received the name John-Baptist; I gave him a chalice, a missal, a sacred altar-stone, ornaments and other things needed to celebrate the holy sacrifice of the Mass. I also taught him how to make wine from grapes so that all would be ready for the arrival of the missionary. The two envoys left Peking in October and returned safely to their country where they delivered the letters and objects I had given them. This newly-born Church received much joy and consolation from them.

John A remedii (*Wu Jo-han, 1764-1793) a diocesan priest from Macao I had designated as missionary to Korea, set out from Peking in February 1791. After 20 days of walking he arrived at the frontier of that kingdom just at the time agreed. The devoted missionary stayed in the agreed place for ten days, against his expectations, without being able to find any Korean Christian. We had decided to use the time of the fair that is held on the frontier of China and Korea, to which many merchants from both countries come. Korean Christians that the missionary and his Chinese guides would have recognized by certain signs were supposed to be there to welcome him and lead him into their country. The time of the embassy and the fair passed without anyone appearing. The missionary and his Chinese companions felt great pain at this and returned to Peking. The following year, 1792, we received neither letters nor news from Korea, since no Christian came with the regular embassy. However, certain reports spread by pagans from that Kingdom gave us to understand there had been a persecution of the Christians and that some had been executed for their religion. It was only at the end of 1793 that we were able to confirm that report. At that time, among the suite of the ambassadors, came Sabas Chi, a Christian, and John Po, a catechumen, with letters from the Church in Korea. There the Christians gave an account of the cruel persecution of
1792 and 1793 which had made it impossible for them to go to welcome the missionary.

Here is the cause of the persecution. Two brothers [in fact cousins], Paul Yn [*Blessed Yun Ji-chung, 1759-1791] and James Kuan [*Blessed Gwon Sang-yeon, 1751-1791] had refused to conduct their Christian mother’s funerals according to the rituals of paganism. They were from a noble family, of exemplary piety and full of zeal, following the example of their mother who had instructed them on her deathbed that they should not permit superstitious and pagan ceremonies to be performed during her funeral rites. According to the custom established by Korean laws, on the death of their parents, children are obliged by the public authorities to erect tablets on which the names of the dead are written, which are placed and kept very religiously in a decent house called for that reason the temple of the ancestors. All the descendants of a single family are obliged, at certain times of the year, to go there, burn incense, offer prepared food, and perform several other superstitious ceremonies. That constitutes the main element of what Koreans consider filial piety toward their deceased ancestors.

Among other doubts and questions that the Church of Korea had submitted to me in 1790, I had been asked if it was permitted to erect ancestral tablets or to preserve those that already existed. I replied, following the very formal decisions of the Holy See in the Bull of Benedict XIV *ex quo* and that of Clement IX *ex illa die* that it was not permitted. That reply was a stumbling-block for several noble Koreans. Taught by my Pastoral Letter that ancestral tablets and other ceremonies had been condemned as superstitious by the Holy See, they preferred to renounce a religion whose truth they had recognized, rather than the evil customs of their country. Paul Yn and James Kuan were not of that number; as soon as they learned that it was not permitted to erect nor preserve ancestral tablets, they burned those that they had in their home. When their mother died, their relatives and associates, almost all pagans, came to assist at the funeral following the custom of the country. Not finding the tablets of their ancestors in the place where they were normally kept, they grew furious and began to insult the Christian religion and the two neophytes, demanding with threats that they bring out and put in their place the tablets, which they believed they had simply hidden somewhere. The two brothers did not allow themselves to be intimidated: “We are Christians,” they replied frankly, “our mother was too, we are not allowed to combine the worship of the true God with the falsely religious cult of the dead. Our mother forbade that we should make during her
funeral any ceremony that was superstitious and contrary to the law of God; the tablets are not hidden; following her advice, we threw them in the fire. Convinced as we are of the truth of the Christian religion, of the uselessness and absurdity of a cult offered to planks and corpses, we are ready to suffer all sorts of torment and death itself, rather than violate the law of God by erecting and keeping tablets, which he detests.” These words and more, pronounced forcibly by Paul Yn, who was regarded in his family as a celebrated scholar, made his pagan relatives furious. United in a common mind, they went and denounced Paul Yn and James Kuan to the governor of the town as being guilty of filial impiety and professing a foreign religion.

The two brothers, summoned to judgment and interrogated by the governor, confessed Jesus Christ with a noble sincerity. Paul Yn demonstrated the truth of his religion; he did not deny having burned the tablets; he proved how useless and unjust was the superstitious cult rendered to the dead etc. The governor, an enemy of the Christian religion and of the family of Paul Yn, took this occasion to suppress them. He wrote to the ministers of the King to inform them of the accusations made against the two brothers; he exaggerated the danger he claimed this European religion represented to the King and the Kingdom; he claimed that it turned people away from the cult of the spirits protecting the nation, from venerating of ancestors, and obeying the laws of the state.

The ministers informed the King of the two brothers’ crime, and the dangers threatening the state if this religion was not completely rooted out. This Prince, essentially a friend of peace, was filled with fear and established one of the great lords of the kingdom as Inquisitor against those confessing the Christian religion. He commanded him to employ all the diligence and care possible to prevent the spread of this religion and to oblige children to render the regular cult to their ancestors.

In order to fulfill the functions of his charge, this grand inquisitor launched a major persecution of the Christian religion. He commanded all the subordinate governors in charge of towns to imprison all the Christians they might discover and not set them free until they had denied the faith aloud and in writing. He summoned the two brothers in chains to receive their judgment. To the various questions posed they replied: “We profess the Christian religion because we have recognized its truth; we threw the ancestral tablets into the fire because we consider them useless and detestable before God; we wish to live and die as Christians, according to God’s good pleasure. For the rest, we are ready to obey the King and the laws of the state in all that is not contrary to the law of God.” This reply,
brief but full of power, displeased the inquisitor. He ordered that torture should be applied to them until they renounced Jesus Christ. The two athletes of Christianity only grew firmer in the faith under the torments. After the torture they tried caresses with an equal lack of success. Then the angry inquisitor pronounced the death sentence, condemning them as members of a foreign religion, scorners of that of their land, and guilty of impiety toward their ancestors. Following the custom of the country, the sentence was presented to the King for confirmation. The Prince was sad, he had recognized the genius and fine qualities of Paul Yn and loved his family. He sent some people to the prison to exhort the brothers to renounce Christianity and set up the tablets in honor of their mother and their ancestors. They were authorized, if the brothers agreed to this, to commute their death sentences. It was pointless. The two athletes of Jesus Christ expressed their deepest gratitude for the King’s goodness and clemency toward them, but they replied that they could not renounce a religion they had recognized as being the only true one, nor agree to set up tablets that they knew to be an impious act toward God. Irritated by this reply, the King ordered the execution of the sentence. These generous athletes were at once transported from the prison to the execution ground, followed by a great crowd of pagans and Christians. James Kuan, half dead from the torments he had undergone, could scarcely pronounce occasionally the sacred names of Jesus and Mary, but Paul Yn advanced cheerfully toward the execution ground as toward a heavenly banquet. He announced Jesus Christ with so much dignity that both Christians and Pagans were seized with admiration.

Once at the place of execution, the presiding officer asked them if they would obey the King, celebrate the usual cult offered to the tablets of ancestors and renounce the foreign religion. On their negative reply, the officer ordered Paul Yn to read the death sentence confirmed by the King and written on a piece of wood according to the custom in the Kingdom. Paul Yn takes it, reads it aloud in a voice full of joy, and after having read it lays his head on a great block of wood then, having pronounced the holy names of Jesus and Mary several times, he very calmly gives a sign to the executioner to do his duty. The executioner cuts off his head, then that of James Kuan who, although half dead, was still pronouncing the holy names of Jesus and Mary. This happened on December 7, 1791, at 3 in the afternoon. Paul Yn was aged 33, James Kuan 41.

The King repented having confirmed the death sentence and sent an order condemning them to exile in the hope that they would change their minds, but when the message arrived the sentence has already been
carried out. The bodies of the two martyrs remained unburied for nine days. To intimidate the Christians, guards had been stationed there. On the ninth day the relatives who had obtained the King’s permission to bury them and the friends who came for the funeral were amazed to see the two bodies without any sign of corruption, pink and flexible as if they had been beheaded the same day. Their surprise grew greater still when they saw the block on which they had had their heads cut off and the piece of wood on which the sentence was written, sprinkled with blood still liquid and fresh as if they had been executed a moment before. These circumstances seemed the more remarkable because in December the cold was so intense that all the liquids had frozen, according to the Koreans, even enclosed in containers. The pagans, full of amazement, denounced the injustice of the judges, proclaiming the innocence of the two brothers; a few, touched by the miracle that they examined carefully, were converted to the faith. The Christians, no less amazed, praised and invoked God, lifting to heaven eyes wet with tears of joy. They dipped several cloths in the blood of the martyrs and sent several pieces to me together with a detailed account of the martyrdom, which I am writing an abbreviation of here in order not to be over-long.

In their account the neophytes write that a man given up by doctors and about to die was cured in a moment after drinking water in which the plank sprinkled with the blood of the martyrs had been dipped; they also report that several people on the point of death who touched a cloth dipped in the same blood were cured at once. These events strengthened the shaken faith of several neophytes and led a good number of pagans to embrace Christianity, so that we can say that the blood of these two martyrs was a seedbed of Christians.

As for the other Christians, the grand inquisitor recommended the governors of the towns to use exhortations and threats rather than torture and the death sentence. He said: “It is certain that the Christians like to die for their faith, after which people offer them glory and honor as saints. We read in their books that the more we kill the more people embrace their religion.” The inquisitor himself, following this principle, employed in the capital exhortations, caresses, promises of wealth and honors, and succeeded in making several apostatize, especially among the nobles. But he also sometimes had recourse to cruel tortures. In the provinces, the governors of the towns persecuted Christians severely or mildly, depending on their attitude toward the faith. Still, generally speaking, the neophytes were treated more severely in the provinces than in the capital. While we have to lament the apostasy of several, especially
among the nobles, who renounced Jesus Christ in speaking and writing, we have above all to rejoice at the perseverance of a far larger number who sacrificed to the faith honors, wealth and peace in this world. It is certain that a large number resisted torture to their last breath, while others fled into the deserts and mountains in order not to expose their faith, that virgins and pious widows gave up advantageous marriages in order to serve Jesus Christ more surely and easily; some, exiled for the Gospel, preached faith in Jesus in their place of exile with the same fervor as before. On learning that the people were complaining since so many persons were being imprisoned and tortured on account of the Christian religion, the King ordered the grand inquisitor in the second year of the persecution to set free the imprisoned Christians, exhorting them to give up the European religion and observe the customs and religion of their country. At the same time he commanded that great care should be taken to prevent the Christians going to China, from where the religion had come. This royal decree put an end to the first general persecution of Korean Christians. The faithful returned to their homes and the governors of the towns stopped troubling them.

Once the persecution had ended, the most fervent Christians sent to Peking Sabbas Chi [*Blessed Ji Hwang, 1767-1795] and John Po [?], whom I mentioned before, with letters giving an account of events and asking for missionaries. I discussed with the two neophytes how to send a priest to Korea. The priest John A remediis whom I had initially chosen for the task was dead, so I chose James Vellozo [*Blessed Zhou Wenmo, Chu Mun-mo in Korean pronunciation, 1752-1801], a Chinese priest, the first pupil of the episcopal seminary of Peking, aged 24, who as well as piety and a sufficient knowledge of ecclesiastical matters, has a deep knowledge of Chinese letters and sciences, and whose face is quite similar to those of Koreans. This missionary left Peking in February 1794, furnished with all the ordinary and extraordinary powers needed to exercise the apostolic ministry. After 20 days’ walking he arrived at the frontier between the two countries and found Korean Christians with whom he deliberated on the best time, manner and route to enter their country. Since the governors of Korea were particularly vigilant at the frontier on account of some local persecutions, they agreed that it would be difficult to enter before December. While he was waiting, he visited some of the missions we have in Tartary close to Korea, as I had charged him to do if the entry in Korea proved difficult. In the month of December that same year, the missionary returned to the Korean frontier, where he found Sabbas Chi and other Christians prepared to bring him into their
country. He took off his Chinese dress, put on Korean clothes, and entered the Kingdom around midnight on December 23; he arrived safely after 12 days walking at the capital city called Kim-Ki-tao.

His arrival brought inexpressible joy and consolation to the newly-born Church; he was received and welcomed as an angel from heaven. Without delay he prepared all that was needed for the celebration of the holy sacrifice and devoted himself entirely to the study of the Korean language, in order to be able to begin to exercise the sacred ministry as soon as possible. On Holy Saturday 1795 he administered baptism to several adults, completed the ceremonies for this sacrament for some others, and received several written confessions. On the holy day of Easter he celebrated the Holy Mass and gave communion to those who were prepared. Until then the sacrifice of the evangelical law had never been celebrated in that realm. The missionary was not troubled until the month of June; he took advantage of the calm to administer baptism to a number of people and complete the ceremonies for a large number who had been baptized by other Christians.

A woman who had just received the sacraments, on returning home, told her brother who was a catechumen of the arrival and preaching of the missionary. This man, who had renounced Jesus Christ in the previous persecution, feigned an ardent desire to make penitence and receive baptism and ran to the house of the priest; he asked him and his guide many questions about the faith and about his arrival in the country. On leaving the house after a lengthy conversation, he goes straight to the royal palace, and informs the ministers of the arrival of a foreigner, where he is living, those who brought him etc. It was June 27, 1795. A military governor was present at this denunciation who was an apostate Christian who had sincerely repented of his crime and longed ardently for a priest to whom he might confess, but the other Christians had not informed him of the arrival of the missionary, fearing he might betray them. Informed by the denunciation of the other apostate, who was also a military officer, of where the priest was staying, he ran there, warned him of the accusation laid against him, of the danger facing him and the faith, advised him to leave there at once and offered to take him elsewhere. The missionary took his advice, and he brought him that very instant to the home of a rich Christian widow who took him in and protected him until the storm was past. The missionary was safe there; following the customs of the kingdom, nobody was permitted to enter the house since there were no men living there. That same day, the ministers of the King after taking counsel together, sent two bands of soldiers, one to the house of Matthias
Xu [*Blessed Choi In-gil, 1765-1795], where the missionary had stayed, and one to pursue those who had guided him, with orders to bring them all to the high court. Obeying these orders, the soldiers impetuously entered the home of Matthias Xu, arrested him and brought him before the tribunal. At about the same time they arrested the two main guides of the missionary, Sabbas Chi and Paul Yn, and five other Christians they thought had also acted as guides. These five insisted that they knew nothing of the entry of a foreigner into the country. For about 15 days beatings and tortures were employed to make them renounce Jesus Christ, but they suffered without being shaken. At the end of that time they were sent home, and they set off praising and blessing the God they had generously confessed.

As for the three other Christians, Matthias Xu, the missionary’s host, Sabbas Chi and Paul Yn, who had brought him in, they were brought before the tribunal the night they were arrested. By their patience, their silence and their constancy, they wearied and disconcerted the wickedness, the cruelty, and the ruses of the judges. Questioned whether they professed the Christian religion, and if they worshiped a crucified man, they bravely replied that they professed the Christian religion and worshiped the Man-God crucified for the salvation of humanity. Ordered to curse and blaspheme against Jesus Christ, they replied that they could not and affirmed that they were ready to die a thousand times rather than proffer insults and blasphemy against Jesus Christ, true God and true Redeemer. The president of the tribunal ordered them to be struck, beaten, and have their knees crushed. This was to no avail, the three continued unanimous in professing the faith, without hesitating or showing any weakening. Then they were questioned about the foreigner they had brought from China, their accomplices in the so-called crime, the route they had taken to reach the capital, the houses where they had received hospitality along the way, the name, quality and place of origin of the foreigner they had brought in; they asked many other questions about their journey. Their only reply was to profess their faith and regarding all the questions just mentioned they kept totally silent as though they were deaf and dumb. The judges and the president employed caresses and threats to urge them to answer their questions; it was in vain. After spending a good part of the night with no result, the president ordered the use of even crueler torments to force them to answer. All the methods used in Korea were employed, blows, beatings, hand crushing, foot crushing, knee crushing. In the midst of such horrible torments, the courageous athletes of Jesus Christ spoke nothing but the sacred names of Jesus and Mary.
Finally, deciding that the three were mocking them, despairing of obtaining a single word about the arrival of the foreigner, the judges grew furious and ordered that every kind of torture should be applied until they died. The order was executed and the three confessors of Jesus Christ expired at about the same moment. They invoked Jesus Christ to the last moment, their faces were serene, a sign of the spiritual sweetness they were enjoying in the midst of their torments that they were enduring for the love of Jesus Christ and for the preservation of the Christian religion. This martyrdom occurred on June 25, 1795. Sabbas Chi was 29, Paul Yn was 36 and Matthias Xu was 31.

These three martyrs had distinguished themselves by fine acts ever since their baptism, the Church in Korea is full of praises of them. It is sure that they were zealous evangelists, and worked ardently for the glory of God. One clear proof of that is seen in the courage with which they braved the great dangers involved in bringing the missionary into the Kingdom, entry into which is strictly forbidden to any foreigner. With no other goal than the glory of God and the salvation of their compatriots, they brought the first missionary of the Christian religion to the capital safe and sound, despite the dangers, the fears, the difficulties inseparable from such an action. It seems that we may rightly consider the martyrdom they suffered so gloriously as a reward for the pains they had taken and the dangers they had faced for the glory of Jesus Christ. This grace of martyrdom is also an unequivocal proof that they now enjoy the celestial bliss to which who die for Jesus Christ are called.

Moreover, the Church in Peking and I myself witnessed the piety and devotion of Paul Yn during the two visits he made to Peking in 1790. He received the sacraments of Confirmation, Penance, and the Eucharist, with such striking fervor that several Christians were unable to keep back tears of joy and admiration on finding in this neophyte the external appearance, the discourse and the exemplary virtues of an ancient disciple of Jesus Christ, a master in the practice of evangelical maxims.

Then in 1793 we were witnesses of the piety of Sabbas Chi during the 40 days he spent in Peking. The faithful of our city were edified by the evident devotion, the great fervor and the tears he shed on receiving the sacraments of Confirmation, Penance and the Eucharist. As for Matthias Xu, we were not eye-witnesses since he never came to Peking, but I learned by the missionary sent to Korea that he was one of the first Christians chosen by Peter Ly for the propagation of the faith and that he distinguished himself by his fervor and piety, his zeal in extending the glory of God.
After the death of the three martyrs, people urged the King several times to order by public decree searches against the Christian religion. This Prince, peace-loving by nature, and not strongly opposed to the Christian religion, fearing too a popular uprising, refused to provoke by a public decree a general persecution of Christianity; but he removed their positions from several civilian and military officials and partially demoted several others because they were Christians. Paul Ly was sent into exile after being stripped of his position. After that, the King ordered all the governors in the Kingdom to be extremely careful not to allow the European religion to spread, exhorting the people not to give up the religion of the country to embrace one from abroad. If people do not obey, they should inform the supreme criminal tribunal so that it can take effective precautions, after asking the King for particular instructions. The King particularly instructed the governors in the frontier area and the ambassadors to be sent to Peking in future to take special care that no Christian should leave the realm and no Chinese enter it.

Although this royal command prevented a general persecution of the faith, it allowed the governors of the towns to vex Christians by rigorous searches. The only perceptible difference between this inquisition and open persecution is that most governors did not kill Christians, or subject them to the cruelest tortures. Yet there were some who, under the pretext of the vigilance commanded by the King, did torture people to death. A large number of neophytes abandoned their homes and took refuge in the deserts and mountains in order to escape their tyranny; many other died of hunger and deprivation in prison; there were also many who, weak in the faith, preferred the perishable goods of this world to the treasures of heaven and compromised, instead of confessing their faith clearly and openly. Yet, thanks to divine providence, the missionary was kept safe, in the midst of such great dangers, for the salvation of many. Once the vexations had diminished somewhat, and the young Church began to breathe a little, a great number of apostates came thronging to him, to lay at his feet the crime of apostasy that fear or weakness had made them commit, and seek absolution. Those who had not bowed the knee before Baal found strength and consolation in receiving the sacraments.

The death of the three martyrs we have just mentioned, and the searches that the governors undertook after that were the reason why I only received news and letters from the missionary two years after he entered Korea. We had agreed that in the spring after he entered Korea he would send a Korean courier to the frontier to give letters to a Chinese
messenger I would send, so that I could know his situation and the state of the mission entrusted to him. Contrary to my expectation, the messenger I sent saw no Korean Christian throughout the duration of the fair. His return to Peking without letters cast us into great anxiety concerning the state and the fate of the missionary and the mission in Korea. This grew even worse when a courier I sent early the following year told me on his return that he had seen no Korean neophyte and that on sounding out a pagan merchant of the country, he learned from him that people had been killed on account of the Christian religion. This report was confirmed by several pagans from Korea during the annual embassy. Combining these different reports, there were reasons for fearing that the missionary had been caught and put to death.

Once the searches by the governors along the frontier had slackened a little, the missionary was at last at the end of two years able to send to Peking a Christian bearing his letters to give details of the new Church. This pious and fervent Christian was called Thomas Vam. Although he was of noble family, he pretended to be a man of the people in order to come to Peking as a servant of the ambassador. He had paid money to purchase the position from a true servant of the ambassadors. His arrival in Peking on January 29 of this current year of 1797 filled us with a joy that was the greater for no longer being hoped for. The letters from the missionary that he brought me were in Latin and dated September 14 of the previous year, those from the Christians were in Chinese characters and of more or less the same date. They were written on silk and the messenger had hidden them in his clothing to escape the vigilance and searches of the officials. By them I learned everything about the state of the faith in Korea, I could verify the details learned in previous years of the origin and progress of the preaching of the Gospel, the persecutions and the obstacles erected by the pagans; I learned that in 1795 the missionary had been in the greatest danger, from which he had barely escaped. He notes, as I had charged him, the dangers he is surrounded by in the exercise of his apostolic ministry on account of the constant searches by the governors; he informs me that the superstitious cult that the Koreans offer the dead and the tablets is a great obstacle to the progress of the Gospel, and that forbidding that cult in my pastoral letter made a great number of noble Christians and catechumens turn back. He speaks of the King as a naturally good, peace-loving prince who only persecutes those who follow the Christian religion because he is forced to by his ministers and he fears some kind of revolution in his kingdom. Finally he enters into various details about the country [The Koreans have
the same morals and customs as the Chinese, from whom they descend and to whom they belonged in the past. They adore the same false divinities, they follow the same masters, Confucius and the other Chinese doctors. The form of their government is substantially the same; the only difference lies in a small number of objects introduced by the modern Chinese under the currently ruling Tartaro-Chinese dynasty[,] its morals, customs, laws, temporal government, religion, and other such things the knowledge of which might prove useful to those charged with the care of the Church in Korea, to govern it well. Among the means which the missionary and the Christians of Korea propose in order to preserve and promote the Christian religion, here is what seems best and preferable to all others: to beg the Queen of Portugal to send an ambassador to the King of Korea, accompanied by missionaries learned in mathematics and medicine, to greet that prince and propose a treaty of alliance. The Koreans say that the King of Korea, naturally good, passionate about mathematics and medicine, by no means hostile to Christianity, flattered and grateful at the arrival of a great European ambassador, would honor that ambassador’s religion, allow it in his kingdom, treat the missionaries favorably and allow them near him, to the greater profit and safety of the Christian religion.

There, Monseigneur, you have the abridged history of the newly-born Church in Korea, on which the infinitely good God has recently deigned to look with mercy, sending light to people sitting in darkness and leading them in the way of peace and salvation, by means that are the more admirable for seeming ineffective in human eyes.

When I think of the extraordinary conversion of part of this nation, the means by which some 4,000 men have come to a knowledge of the truth, when I think of the courageous virtue, the heroic constancy with which they have embraced and kept their faith in the midst of so many violent upsets and contrarieties, I recall these words from Exodus, “The finger of God is here,” and those of the Apostle, “Oh the depth of the riches and wisdom of the knowledge of God.” What but the Spirit of God can operate a so sudden change in hearts, that men so long seated in darkness and the shadow of death should suddenly stand up at the sight of the light and follow it? What but the Spirit of God can work such great wonders of omnipotence with such weak instruments, that a young man barely instructed of the things needed for Baptism should become the preacher and the apostle of his compatriots and have the strength to draw to the faith such a large number? And what, finally, but the Spirit of God,
can fortify by his grace the hearts of the weak that they resist the attractions of the world and allow themselves to be put to death amidst horrible torments, rather than abandon the God they have begun to worship? The propagation of the Gospel and its progress in the kingdom of Korea is therefore a truly divine work. It can be compared to the primitive Church, this Church from its beginning exposed to storms of persecution, sprinkled with the blood of five martyrs, strengthened by the virtues of a great number of confessors! May the all-good and almighty God enable the Church in Korea, like the primitive Church, to see the number of its children grow day by day, and grow in virtue, so receiving the fruits of heavenly blessings! The Sovereign Pontiff, the Pastor of the universal Church, has entrusted to me the care of this new Church, daughter of that of Peking. [His Eminence Cardinal Antonelli, in a letter he wrote to me in 1792, informed me of the joy and pleasure that the Sovereign Pontiff Paul IV experienced on learning that Christianity had recently been established in Korea. He wrote: “Our excellent Sovereign Pontiff has read with the greatest eagerness the account you wrote of this wonderful event. He shed tears of joy at it, and felt an ineffable pleasure in being able to offer to God these first-fruits in lands so far away.” A little later the same Cardinal adds: “Therefore His Holiness loves with a very paternal tenderness these illustrious athletes of Jesus Christ. He longs to give them all sorts of spiritual good things. Though absent in body, he sees them with the eyes of the spirit, embraces them cordially and wholeheartedly bestows his apostolic blessing.”]

I recommend the Church in Korea to your prayers, to your holy sacrifices, your fervent prayers and those of your Church, in which I have the greatest trust. I hope they will be of the greatest help to me. Farewell, illustrious Prelate. Continue to love me as ever and to pray for me.

Monseigneur,
Your very devoted friend and affectionate servant,
signed, F.R. Bishop of Peking.
Peking, August 15, 1797.

Books referenced

Relation de l’établissement du christianisme dans le royaume de Corée, rédigée, en latin, par Monseigneur de Gouvéa, évêque de Pékin, et adressée le 15 août 1797 à Monseigneur de St Martin évêque de Caradre,

(The text translated here) This book is available for free download from Google Books, under its French title.


Brother Anthony is the current President of RAS Korea
Among the longterm members of RAS Korea (as we tend to call our Society nowadays) are a few Americans who first came to Korea as members of the Peace Corps in the 1960s and 1970s. They can remember times when it was rare to see a non-Korean on the streets of Seoul, when travel around Korea was difficult, when there were no guide-books, and when there was very little to do in Seoul in the evening or at weekends. Not surprisingly, in those times the few thousand foreign residents, including many ambassadors and diplomats, all gladly joined the RAS in order to benefit from the well-organized and instructive excursions, the lectures, and the books about Korea on sale in the office. There was nothing else like it. Much has changed in recent years and although there are far, far more foreign residents in Korea, there is also a whole lot more for them to do, both in their work and in their leisure. Seoul is today a vibrant international city and its inhabitants seem to be busier than ever.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the RAS does not today hold the monopoly of interesting things to do. At the same time, we remain grateful to see new members joining, former members renewing their membership, and good numbers attending our lectures and other events. The year 2014 was a good year, as the lists of our activities show, although the numbers of people joining our excursions are certainly down from even a few years ago. We have been trying to find new forms and it seems that short walking tours of places in Seoul are often more popular than overnight excursions with long slow drives through horrendous weekend traffic. But we keep trying to help our members discover more remote destinations as well.

One new venture in 2014 was an evening of traditional Korean music on November 14th at Buam Art Hall. This was well attended and we
hope to repeat similar special events in future. On the whole, 2014 was marked by a continuation of the regular meetings of our new special-interest groups, each of which has now become a recognized part of our activities. The numbers attending are not large, compared with the 60 – 80 or more people who usually attend our lectures, but we are glad to be able to find different activities to interest our members.

We were especially grateful to our Honorary President and Mrs. Wightman, who very kindly allowed us to hold our Garden Party in their beautiful garden for a second year, when a sudden problem arose in the traditional arrangement. The party was well attended in beautiful weather. We wish the Wightmans well in their new life away from Korea and welcome H. E. Charles Hay, the new British Ambassador, as our new Honorary President.

I want to express my gratitude to our officers and Council members, the members of the different committees and those helping run our various activities. We remain extremely grateful to Yonjoo Hong, our office manager, for all her hard work, and Mr. Shim who helps with our book-sales. Finally, our heartfelt thanks go the Seoul Cyber University for their very generous financial support, without which we would be severely challenged. We are also very grateful to our other sponsors.

At the end of 2014, the Council asked me to continue serving as President for another 2 years and I am hoping that by the end of 2016 we will have found somebody better able to guide the RAS in Korea during the coming years and decades.

Respectfully submitted,

Brother Anthony
President, RAS Korea
## 2014 RAS Lectures

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### 2014 RAS Excursions

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<td>January 31 – February 1</td>
<td>Seoraksan (Sue Bae)</td>
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<td>Saturday, February 22</td>
<td>Cheorwon (Robert Koehler).</td>
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<td>Saturday, March 22</td>
<td>Hwanghakjeong (Robert Koehler, Cho Insouk)</td>
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<td>Sunday, March 30</td>
<td>Seoul City Wall (Robert Fouser)</td>
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<td>April 12 – 13</td>
<td>Namhaedo &amp; Jinhae Cherry Blossom (Sue Bae)</td>
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<td>Sunday, April 20</td>
<td>Bukchon walking (David Mason)</td>
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<td>Tuesday, May 6</td>
<td>Buddha’s Birthday in Seoul (Jeremy Seligson)</td>
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<td>May 10 – 11</td>
<td>Tea-making in Jiri-san (Br Anthony)</td>
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<td>Saturday, May 24</td>
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<td>Saturday, May 31</td>
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<td>Daehangno (Bob Fouser)</td>
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<td>Saturday, June 14</td>
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<td>Sunday, June 22</td>
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<td>Saturday, June 28</td>
<td>A Walk through Yongsan (Jon Dunbar)</td>
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<td>Saturday, August 2</td>
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<td>Sunday, September 21</td>
<td>Seonunsansa flower festival, ongi pottery (Br Anthony)</td>
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Sunday, September 28  Sungkyunkwan (Jon Dunbar)
Saturday, October 4  Visit to Buddhist calligrapher (Brother Anthony)
Saturday, October 11  Ganghwado  (Sue Bae)
Saturday, November 8  Japanese-era buildings in Gunsan (Robert Koehler)
Sunday, November 9  Joseon-era Seoul (Peter Bartholomew)
November 15 – 16  Jiri-san (David Mason)
Saturday, November 22  Geumsan-sa, Eunjin Mireuk (Brother Anthony)
Sunday, November 23  Jeongdong (Matt VanVolkenburg)

2014 RAS Visits to the National Museum of Korea

English-speaking staff of the National Museum lead a guided visit of one particular portion of the Museum's displays, often beginning with an illustrated lecture, on Wednesday evenings, when the Museum is open until 9 pm.

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<td>April 2</td>
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2014 Meetings of the RAS Reading Club

We meet usually on the first Monday of the month in the library of the Jongno District Office. We are most grateful for permission to use this space and to the staff member who stays late.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Book Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 6</td>
<td>“Winter That Year” by Yi Munyol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 10</td>
<td>“The Road to Sampo” by Hwang Sok-yong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>“Watching Father” by Choe Yun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2014 Meetings of the RAS Cinema Club

We meet with the Seoul Film Society at Seoul Global Cultural Center in Myeongdong, usually on the first Saturday of the month, to watch and discuss a fine Korean movie.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Film Title</th>
<th>Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>A Flower in Hell (1958)</td>
<td>Shin Sang-ok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>Memories of Murder (2003)</td>
<td>Bong Joon-ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Mismatched Nose (1980)</td>
<td>Im Kwon-Taek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7</td>
<td>The Housemaid (1960)</td>
<td>Kim Ki-young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 5</td>
<td>Our Happy Time (2006)</td>
<td>Song Hae-sung</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2</td>
<td>Holiday (1968)</td>
<td>Lee Man-hee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 6</td>
<td>Aimless Bullet (1961)</td>
<td>Yoo Hyeon-Mok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>A Road to Sampo (1975)</td>
<td>Lee Man-Hee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>The Barefooted Young (1964)</td>
<td>Kim Ki-Deok</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2014 Meetings of the RAS Business & Culture Club

Members meet for a short cultural event in central Seoul at lunchtime on one Tuesday each month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 14</td>
<td>Woori Bank Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 11</td>
<td>Cheongyechon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>Myeongdong Chinatown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 13</td>
<td>Deoksung National Museum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>Roof top of old Seoul city hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 8</td>
<td>Culture Station Seoul 284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Seoul Anglican Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 14</td>
<td>Jeongdong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 11</td>
<td>Cheongyechon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2</td>
<td>DOAM art exhibition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2014 Meetings of the RAS Photo Workshop

Former RAS Vice-President and professional photographer Tom Coyner offers workshops to enable RAS members and friends to better understand how modern cameras work and how to take better photographs with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Workshop Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 24</td>
<td>Getting to Know Your Digital Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 21</td>
<td>Street Photography – Gangnam Style!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 19</td>
<td>Effectively Using Your Flash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 23</td>
<td>Photographing Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>Photographing Landscapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Photographing Sports &amp; Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Photographing Traditional Buildings in Autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 13</td>
<td>Photographing Christmas Lights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2014 Meetings of the RAS Colloquium in Korean Studies

The Colloquium offers a meeting-place for people professionally engaged in Korean Studies as students, faculty or researchers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| January 18  | 1. Keith Scott (AKS), The Internet, Protest, and Democratic Participation in South Korea: A Case Study of the 2008 Candlelight Protests
|             | 2. Boudewijn Walraven, (Sungkyunkwan University) Kasa and communication: the public sphere in Late Chosŏn |
| February 15 | 1. Tobias Lehmann (Gongju University), “Brothers and Sisters” or “Confrontation of Strangers”: Division and Disrupted National Identities in Korea and in Post-Unification Germany
|             | 2. Agnieszka Smiatacz (AKS), Park Chung Hee, Anti-Communism, and National Mobilization through Education |
| March 15    | 1. Jan Creutzemberg, Recent experiments in ch’anggŭk
<p>| April 19    | 1. Robert Fouser                                                             |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>1. Edward Shultz&lt;br&gt;The task of translating the Samguk Sagi&lt;br&gt;2. Milan Hejtmanek&lt;br&gt;New Perspectives on the Chosŏn Munkwa Examinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 21</td>
<td>1. Frank Dax&lt;br&gt;Transforming the Body: Individual and National Re-creation in South Korea&lt;br&gt;2. Balazs Szalontai&lt;br&gt;The role of the Vietnam War in North Korea’s militant strategy toward South Korea, 1966-70.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td>Peter Bartholomew, Robert Neff, Jacco Zweetsloot.&lt;br&gt;Reform and continuity in late Joseon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>1. Uri Kaplan&lt;br&gt;Becoming a Lay Buddhist in Contemporary Korea&lt;br&gt;2. Werner Sasse&lt;br&gt;Translation of the mid-19th-century hanmun text Tongguk-sesigi, focussing on Korean vs. Western academic habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>1. Martin Weiser&lt;br&gt;Discourse on Homosexuality in Korean History: Facts and Fantasies&lt;br&gt;2. Thomas Park&lt;br&gt;In defense of an instrumental understanding of Korean shamanic healing rituals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 20</td>
<td>1. Henry Em&lt;br&gt;Seventy Years After Liberation/Division: Two Modes of Government in South Korea&lt;br&gt;2. Michael Hurt&lt;br&gt;Hangukinron: The Shape of Korean National Ideology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Samuel Hugh Moffett: An Obituary by Sung-Deuk Oak

Older members of the RAS will recall Sam Moffett, who served as RAS President in 1968.

Samuel Hugh Moffett (April 7, 1916 – February 9, 2015) passed peacefully at his home in Princeton, NJ, on February 9, 2015, with Eileen Flower by his side, after a long life of loving kindness, faithfulness, and unwavering hope in his missionary service and scholarly works.

He was born in Pyongyang, Korea, on April 7, 1916, as the third son of Rev. Dr. Samuel Austin Moffett (1864-1939). His father was the founder of the Presbyterian Church in Pyongyang and Northwestern Korea and the leader of one of the largest mission stations in the world for 40 years. His mother Lucia Fish Moffett (1877-1962) was from the well-known family of that name in Carpentaria, CA. He had two older brothers—James McKee (1905-1986) became a missionary to India from 1945 to 1952 and then served the churches in US like pastor Charles Hull (1908-1976), and two younger brothers—Howard Fergus (1917-2013) served Korea as a medical missionary from 1948 to 1992 and Thomas Fish. Once he said, “She [my mother] brought me up on the classics, and my father brought me up on the Westminster Catechism.”

He graduated from Pyongyang Foreign School as valedictorian in 1934 and Wheaton College with summa cum laude in 1938. He graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1942 and married Miss Elizabeth B. Tarrant in July 1942. Moffett received Ph. D. in history at Yale University in 1945, on the relations of the Presbyterian mission board with its work in the Shandong station in China. Professor Kenneth Scott Latourette was his PhD mentor.

Moffett followed in his parents’ footsteps in spiritual life, missionary service, and teacher’s work. In 1947 he and his wife were appointed by the Presbyterian board as missionaries to China. When the civil war was going on, he served as a faculty member of Yenjing University in Beijing and then of Nanking Theological Seminary until forced out of the country in 1951 by the communists. He returned to Princeton Theological Seminary as a faculty member from 1953 to 1955. Yet his wife Elizabeth died of cancer in 1955, after which he returned to the land of his birth—Korea—in November 1955. He remarried with Miss Eileen Flower in September 1956. They started their missionary work in the rural area of Andong and learned Korean culture and language there
for three years. He was appointed to a faculty of Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1959. Until 1981 he served as Dean of the graduate school and co-president of Korean Presbyterian Seminary. He also participated in many ecumenical organizations such as Soongsil University, Yonsei University, and Korea Bible Society as a member of board of directors or a committee member. He also served as the first director of the Asian Center for Theological Studies, which was built for the education of Asian church leaders in 1973.

After 26 years work in Korea, he returned to America and was appointed as Henry Luce Professor of Ecumenics and Mission at Princeton Theological Seminary for five years, retiring in 1986. Since retiring, he published the first volume on the History of Christianity in Asia in 1996. He published this second volume in 2005, thirteen years after the publishing of the first, at the age of 89.

He is the recipient of many awards and honorary degrees, including the prestigious Peony Medal awarded by the government of South Korea (1981).

He was a leading scholar on the history of Christianity in East Asia and in the global ecumenical movement. He was the author of numerous publications, including *Whe’er the Sun* (1953), *The Christians of Korea* (1962), *The Biblical Background of Evangelicalism* (1968), and his *magnum opus* two volumes of *A History of Christianity in Asia*.

Now Mrs. Eileen Flower Moffett is 86 years old. She has lived with Dr. Moffett for 59 years. The Korean church has lost one of its best friends and mentors. The world has lost a great man and a saint.

We also record with sorrow the passing in May 2015, in the United States, of Barbara Mintz. She was RAS President in 1983, the year in which her husband Grafton K. Mintz died.
Our Sponsors

We are very grateful to the institutions and companies which in one way or another provide sponsorship and we hope that our members will have recourse to their services whenever a need arises.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seoul Cyber University</th>
<th>Samsung Fire &amp; Marine Insurance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>국순당 (Oriental Brewery Company)</td>
<td>하이트진로</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset Palace Seoul</td>
<td>Seoul Press</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some Recently Published Books in Korean Studies

2015


2014


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**RAS Publications - Detailed Descriptions**


_Challenged Identities: North American Missionaries in Korea 1884-1934_. Elizabeth Underwood, RAS-KB, 2004. Hardbound, 326 pp. ISBN 978-89-954424-0-1. A fascinating look into the lives of the first Protestant missionaries to Korea: the challenges they faced in their lives, from overcoming culture shock and learning the language to raising a family and building a house; and the challenges they faced in the Christian work that they did, challenges that shaped their identities, their policies, and indeed their beliefs in the land of Korea more than a century ago. $33 / KW33,000
Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys: The Opening of Korea, 1875-1885. Martina Deuchler. RAS-KB and U of Washington p, 1977. Hardbound. 310 pp. ISBN 978-89-93699-05-0. The only thoroughgoing study of the opening of Korea after centuries as the "Hermit Kingdom": discusses the rivalries among China, Japan, and Russia and the problems of the traditional Confucian scholar-bureaucrats trying to cope with their rapidly changing world. $20 / KW20,000


This detailed guidebook written by two authors who have had long experience living in the city, describes the historical monuments and sites in Seoul, grouped by neighborhoods for easy location. It includes maps, references to the subway system, diagrams and color photographs, with explanations of the history and significance of each site. There is also a Chinese-character glossary and index. $8 / KW8,000


The book consists of six essays on late 19th century Korean history. All of them were originally prepared and presented as conference papers or keynote speeches at major conferences held in Korea and the US. They deal with Korea’s relations with the US and Japan mainly between 1882, when the Jeoson Kingdom signed its first modern treaty with the United States, and 1905 when the same kingdom called the Daehan (Great Han) Empire from 1987, degenerated into a protectorate of Japan. $25 / KW25,000


This book has chapters describing the origins, faith and practice of the three main 'new' religions of Korea, Cheondo-gyo, Daejong-gyo and Won-Buddhism, written by members of each, as well as general chapters considering them from a sociological viewpoint, and a Christian perspective. The book ends with a transcript of an open exchange between senior members of the religions. $15 / KW15,000

The only Korean musicologist of international repute. Dr. Lee Hye-Ku has struggled over the past few decades to keep Korean traditional music from being swallowed up in the tide of Westernization. Until now, apart from a few translated articles, his work has been accessible only to Korean speakers. A definitive text on Korean traditional music in English. $15 / KW15,000

_Hamel’s Journal and a Description of the Kingdom of Korea, 1653-1666._ Hendrik Hamel, English translation by Jean-Paul Buys, RAS-KB, 1998. Softbound. 107 pp. ISBN 89-7225-086-4. The first Western account of Korea is the glory of a group of sailors shipwrecked on Cheju-do. Some thirteen years later, after escaping to Japan, Hamel gave the outside world a firsthand description of Korea, an almost unknown country until then. This is the first translation based on the original manuscript. $15 / KW15,000

_Imjin War, The._ Sam Hawley. RAS-KB 2005. Hardbound, xvi pp. + 664 pp. + 20 pp. illustrations. ISBN 978-89-954424-2-5. The most comprehensive account ever published in English of this cataclysmic event, so little known in the West. It begins with the political and cultural background of Korea, Japan, and China, discusses the diplomatic breakdown that led to the war, describes every major incident and battle from 1592 to 1598, and introduces a fascinating cast of characters along the way. $45 / KW45,000

_In This Earth and In That Wind._ Lee O-young, translated by David Steinberg, RAS-KB, 1967. Softbound. 226 pp. ISBN 89-954424-5-X. A collection of 50 vignettes of commonplace Korean life. The author often contrasts aspects of Korean culture with that of foreign nations and draws a variety of conclusions about Korean society from these contrasts. $4 / KW4,000

_Introduction to Korean Music and Dance, An._ Lee Hye-ku, RAS-KB, 1977. Softbound. 54 pp. A general discussion for non-specialist Western reader. $4 / KW4,000

_James Scarth Gale’s History of the Korean People,_ edited by Richard Rutt, RAS-KB, 1967. Hardbound. 174 pp. ISBN 978-89-954424-1-8. A reprint of the classic English-language history of Korea first published in 1927. It has been extensively annotated by Bishop Rutt with reference to sources and including commentary. It is introduced by an extensive and, to date, the only biography of Dr. Gale, a towering scholar in the early days of Western residence in Korea. $25 / KW25,000

study of the success of Christianity in Korea, especially in contrast to China. $6 / KW6,000


*Korean Shamanism: Revivals, Survivals and Change.* Keith Howard, ed., RAS-KB, 1998, Softbound, 258 pp. A thoroughly readable collection of critical research from prominent scholars in the fields of anthropology, religion, history, and the arts. Koreans, virtually alone in the world, have kept the ancient traditional religion of shamanism alive at a time of massive industrialization, modernization and Westernization. $15 / KW15,000


*Korea's 1884 Incident: Its Background and Kim Ok-kyun's Dream.* Harold F. Cook, RAS-KB, 1982, Softbound. 264 pp. ISBN 978-89-93699-08-1. A description of an attempted coup aimed at bringing more rapid reform and modernization to Korea in the early years after her opening to the rest of the world and the role of one of the leaders. The work includes an analysis of the situation in 1884 and evaluates the motives of the plotters and the results of the attempt both on the nation and for the individuals. Scholarly, yet exciting reading, and of some insight to political attitudes in Korea even today. $20 / KW20,000

*Pioneer American Businessman in Korea: The Life and Times of Walter David Townsend.* Harold F. Cook, RAS-KB, 1981. Softbound. 100 pp. ISBN 978-89-93699-11-1. This biography of one of the first foreign businessmen in Korea becomes the framework for a unique view of early trade issues and difficulties, with a description of life for foreign traders in Korea a century ago. $8 / KW8,000
Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven: A Korean Epic. 2nd ed. Translated by James Hoyt, RAS-KB, 1979. Softbound. 187 pp. ISBN 978-89-93699-02-9. One of the classics of Korean literature, both in its own right and as the first book to have been written entirely in Hangul, the Korean alphabet promulgated by King Sejong in 1446. This edition contains both the Korean version and a literary translation, with extensive commentary, bibliography, and glossary. $8 / KW8,000

Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch, Volumes 60-86. KW10,000 per volume. The complete bound set, hard-bound, containing Volumes 1-85. $1,000 / KW1,000,000 (Please contact our office for the price of a complete set where only volumes b1-40 are hardbound.)

Virtuous Women: Three Classic Korean Novels. Translated by Richard Rutt & Kim Chong-un, RAS-KB, 1974. Hardbound. 399 pp. ISBN 89-954424-3-3. The three most significant works of traditional Korean fiction: A Nine Cloud Dream, The True History of Queen Inhyon, and The Song of a Faithful Wife, Ch'unhyang. The major characters are all women and the three novels together give a vivid picture of the Korean ideal of womanhood before it felt the impact of Western culture. $20 / KW20,000


Yogong: Factory Girl. Robert F. Spencer, RAS-KB, 1988. Softbound. 185 pp. ISBN 89-954424-4-1. The author's work is based on a field study done on one of the reasons for Korea's economic miracle, the workers. Here the author focuses on the girls or the young women who work behind the scenes producing the goods that have pushed Korea into another classification. A look at background data, the workers in a Korean context, work situation, associations, relationships and future perspectives. $10 / KW10,000

RASKB Reprint Series (copies in stock)

Fifteen Years Among the Topknots. 1904 and 1908. Lillias H. Underwood, RAS-KB Reprint, 1987. Softbound. 403 pp. A delightfully written personal, perceptive account of a long-gone Korea, shedding new light on a period too often passed over as reactionary and of no import to the modern world, but which was also a period of incredibly rapid change. The 1908 edition contains three new chapters and this edition includes a personal sketch of the author by her 20-year-younger sister. $15 / KW15,000
Softbound. 238 pp. A delightfully informal account of Korean affairs and foreign policy at the turn of the century as seen by a young American foreign service officer. $15 / KW15,000

The Song of a Faithful Wife, Richard Rutt, trans. RAS-KB Reprint, 1999, Paperbound, 97 pp. Here is the timeless love story of Korea--the story of Ch'\unhyang. An official's son and a girl of lowbirth fall in love and are secretly married. The official and his family are sent far away, and the girl becomes the property of a local official who abuses her. Her lover, though, attains the rank of government inspector and returns to punish the local official and rescue his beloved. Rutt's translation in narrative form is the most readable of English translations currently available. $7 / KW7,000

Books from other publishers (copies in stock)

Korean Ideas and Values, Michael C Kalton, (Philip Jaisohn Memorial papers)
Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation (1979) ($4 / KW4,000)

South Korea (P. Bartz) Clarendon Press ($8 / KW8,000)


Korea through Myths and Legends. Robin Rhee. Seoul Press. ($10 / KW10,000)

Democracy in Korea. Sang-yong Choi Seoul Press for the Korean Political Science Association, 1997 ($6 / KW6,000)


RASKB Reprint Series (Print on Demand)

I Married a Korean. 1953. Kim Agnes Davis, RAS-KB Reprint, 1979. Softbound. 260 pp. The author's personal account of an early international marriage, its almost insurmountable difficulties and unexpected joys. A postscript in this edition describes the Kims' lives in Korea and America during the 25 years since the book's first publication. $18 / KW 18,000
Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia. M. F. Nelson, 1946, RAS-KB Reprint. 1975. Hardbound. 330 pp. This classic in the field of Korean studies examines the assumptions and traditions which conditioned events in late 19th century Korea. Nelson reconstructs the system of international relations which existed before the onset of Western influences. $25 / KW 25,000

Korean Repository, The, Vol. 1 (1892)-v. 5 (1898). RAS-KB Reprint, 1975. 5 vols. Hardbound. One of the early English-language periodicals (monthly) on Korea, the articles of culture, events and other Koreana provide a wealth of primary material during a fascinating period in Korean history. $420 / KW 420,000

Korea Review, The, 1901-1906. Homer B. Hulbert, ed., RAS-KB Reprint, 1975. 6 vols. Hardbound. One of the early English-language periodicals (monthly) on Korea, the articles of culture, events and other Koreana provide a wealth of primary material during a fascinating period in Korean history. $480 / KW 480,000

Korean Patterns. Paul S. Crane, RAS-KB Reprint, 1999, Paperbound, 188 pp. A classic observation of Korean culture and daily life, written by a country doctor and missionary who worked and lived in Korean in the 1950s and 1960s. While many things have changed in Korean society, Crane's observations are still valuable for both understanding modern Korea as well as having a look at Korean in days gone by. $12 / KW 12,000

Korean Sketches. J. S. Gale, 1898. RAS-KB Reprint, 1975. Hardbound. 256 pp. A personal view of the "Hermit People" by one of Korea's most famous scholar-missionaries. Of interest both as a picture of what Korea used to be and for its frequent relevance to attitudes today. $25 / KW 25,000

Modern Korea. A. J. Graijdanev, 1944. RAS-KB Reprint, 1975. Hardbound. 330 pp. The author takes a hard look at Japanese claims of their contribution to Korea during the colonial period, interpreting their own statistics to show exploitation and discrimination. $25 / KW 25,000

New Korea, The. Alleyne Ireland, 1926. RAS-KB Reprint, 1975. Hardbound. 352 pp. Ireland's study gives a positive view of the Japanese colonial rule in the mid-1920s. Detailed information on the bureaucratic and judicial systems. Stress on Japanese contribution to economic development. $25 / KW 25,000

"Hermit Kingdom". The author served in Korea from 1884 to 1903, first as a missionary doctor, then as an American diplomat. $25 / KW 25,000

*Voyage of Discovery to the West Coast of Korea and the Great Loo Choo Island.* Basil Hall, RAS-KB Reprint, 1975. Softbound. 222 pp. Hall's 1816 account of his voyage to Korea is a classic of Far Eastern travel literature. Keen observation and vivid description characterize Hall's account of the Hermit Kingdom; he reveals, simultaneously, the deep gulf between Eastern and Western culture. $16 / KW 16,000