**COVER:** The seal-shaped emblem of the RAS-KB consists of the following Chinese characters: 槿 (top right), 域 (bottom right), 菁 (top left), 萌 (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.”

**SUBMISSIONS:** Transactions invites the submission of manuscripts of both scholarly and more general interest pertaining to the anthropology, archeology, art, history, language, literature, philosophy, and religion of Korea. Manuscripts should be prepared in MS Word format and should be submitted in digital form. The style should conform to The Chicago Manual of Style (most recent edition). The covering letter should give full details of the author’s name, address and biography. Romanization of Korean words and names must follow either the McCune-Reischauer or the current Korean government system. Submissions will be peer-reviewed by two readers specializing in the field. Manuscripts will not be returned and no correspondence will be entered into concerning rejections.

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Room 611, Christian Building, Daehangno 19 (Yeonji-dong), Jongno-gu, Seoul 110-736 Republic of Korea
Tel.: (82-2) 763-9483; Fax: (82-2) 766-3796;
email: royalasiatickorea@gmail.com

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Homepage: www.raskb.com
Korean Christian Nationalists and Canadian Missionaries

1919 – 1945

Voices from the Helen Fraser Macrae Oral History Project

Frederick J. Glover

Helen Fraser Macrae, the daughter of two Canadian Presbyterian pioneer missionaries in northeastern Korea, Duncan and Edith Macrae, was born in Hamhŭng in 1910.¹ She left Korea when she was a teenager but remained a Koreaphile throughout her life. Macrae’s affection for the country of her birth compelled her to spend much time reflecting on childhood experiences and gathering material evidence related to the Canadian missionary movement. She donated all she had assembled to the Public Archives of Nova Scotia with the primary objective of preserving the legacies of the missionaries and Korean Christians as well as providing future scholars of the Canadian mission to Korea with sources upon which they could base their studies.²

The Helen Fraser Macrae fonds, similar to others of its kind, is comprised of letters, articles, books and photographs but it is different in

¹ The Foreign Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Eastern Division) sent the newly married couples Rufus R. Foote and Edith Foote (née Sprott) as well as John Grierson and Lena Grierson, née (Veniot) and Duncan Macrae to Korea in 1898. A few months after their arrival they set up a mission station in Wŏnsan. Others were founded in Hamhŭng, Sŏngjin (now Kim’chaek) Hoeryŏng and Yong Jung (Lungchingstun) Manchuria. In 1925 the United Church took over control of the mission - little change in policy or personnel ensued. In 1942 the missionaries were forced to leave with the coming of the Pacific War, but re-established their mission (in South Korea) soon thereafter.

² Helen Fraser Macrae fonds – MG.1.volumes 2248 – 2351.
so far as it contains cassette tape recordings of Christian converts. Macrae conducted audio interviews with Koreans who had lived and worked with the Canadian missionaries during the first half of the twentieth century in effort to document the native side of the mission story and thus make her collection as comprehensive as possible.

Macrae usually allowed her subjects to speak freely on any topic without interruption, but she did try to guide them toward issues she considered both important and obscure in the documentary records. Some of the most common sets of questions she asked the Koreans were in regard to their struggles with and persecution by the Japanese imperial authorities between 1919 and 1945 as well as the attitudes they had about the Canadians. Even though not all the interviewees gave detailed replies to these questions, enough information was given that an overall assessment of their answers can be made. Many of those who elaborated on their opinions either explicitly or implicitly identified themselves as Christian nationalists. They had remained loyal to their church and nation while living under an imperialist regime which was hostile to both. Throughout the entire colonial period the Japanese specifically targeted Korean Christians because of their supposed allegiance to the western imperialists and their very real, albeit non-violent, patriotism.

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3 The United Church of Canada Archives in Toronto has extensive collections related to the Canadian Protestant foreign missionary movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

4 Most of these interviews were done in 1972. Macrae did 29 interviews of active and retired Canadian missionaries, 31 interviews of Koreans who had worked with Canadians and escaped to South Korea between 1945 and 1950, 17 interviews of Korean Presbyterian and Methodist Clergymen and 8 interviews of Koreans living in Toronto. The majority of these interviews were conducted in Korean, however, some were all or partly in English and most were translated into English. Macrae conducted these interviews over 40 years ago, however little use has been made of them. The exception is Kim Jung-gun. He utilized the interviews for his discussion of Korean immigrants to Canada in his unpublished dissertation, “‘To God’s Country’: Canadian Missionaries in Korea and the Beginnings of Korean Migration to Canada (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1983).

5 The Koreans interviewed by Macrae were leaders in the church and the community. The extent to which their opinions and ideas were shared by the majority of Christians is not altogether clear. Most of the Koreans who had been associated with the Canadians remained in North Korea after 1945.
few of Macrae’s respondents had been imprisoned and tortured by the Japanese for their faith as well as their anti-colonial activities.

Unsurprisingly, the Koreans portrayed the Japanese in an almost entirely negative light. Their perceptions of the missionaries were more complex. The Canadians were judged primarily by way of their contribution to the advancement of the Korean nation and the level of respect they exhibited for Koreans and their culture. Generally, all expressed a deep gratitude for missionary assistance in their struggle against the imperial regime. The Canadians had been among the most vociferous opponents of the atrocities the Japanese committed against the Koreans during the 1919 Independence Movement and the Chientao invasion one year later. The respondents also felt indebted to the missionaries for the hospitals and schools they had built to serve the Korean people. Education was particularly prized by the Christians because they considered it to be one of the main ingredients which fostered the preservation of Korean civilization during the colonial period. Yet many of the Koreans also articulated their frustration and disappointment at what they saw as a lack of appreciation for Koreans and Korea on the part of some missionaries. This was deeply disturbing to the

6 It would be disingenuous to deny the veracity of the feelings the interviewees had on this point, but one does wonder how being interviewed by the child of a famous ex-missionary, Duncan Macrae contributed to the nature of the responses. Duncan Macrae had earned a tremendous amount of respect from the Hamhŭng Christians because of his vocal opposition to the Japanese in 1919. See, Helen Fraser Macrae, A Tiger on Dragon Mountain: The Life of Rev. Duncan M. Macrae, D.D. (Charlottetown, P.E.I.: A. James Haslam, Q.C, 1993).

7 In 1919 mass arrests took place within Canadian mission territory. Many were tortured and some died. In October 1920, the Japanese burned down churches as well as Christian schools and killed hundreds of Korean Christians associated with the Canadians in the region of Chientao in Manchuria. Canadian historian Hamish A. Ion provided a detailed treatment of this subject in his, The Cross and the Rising Sun: The Canadian Protestant Missionary Movement in the Japanese Empire, 1872 – 1931 (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1990), 188-208. Korean missionary expert Donald N. Clark has also given a good assessment of this topic, see Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900 – 1950 (Norwalk CT: Eastbridge, 2003), 53-59, 64. Ku Dae-yeol, Korea Under Colonialism: The March First Independence Movement and Anglo-Japanese Relations (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch, 1985), 267 – 275.
Interviewees because they adamantly believed that Korea was just as deserving of respect as any other nation in the West or elsewhere.

I will analyze the responses that the Koreans gave in regard to their attitudes about the missionaries and the experiences they had under the Japanese imperialist system in order to illuminate the nationalist-Christian nexus that existed in the Canadian missionary sphere of operations in northeastern Korea and Manchuria between 1919 and 1945. Particular attention will be paid to the Korean discussion of their participation in the March 1\textsuperscript{st} Independence Movement of 1919 and the experiences they had during the 1930s until the end of the Pacific War—the era when the colonial government had strongly enforced its assimilation policies.\(^8\) Respecting the Korean view of Canadians, much attention will be given to the early 1920s—the nadir of Korean-Canadian relations, imperialism as well as the daily interactions between missionary and convert.

The link between the rise of Korean protestant Christianity and the nationalist cause has received much treatment by scholars. Historians such as Kang Wi-jo and Choi Jai-keun, as well as many others have argued that one of the main reasons why the Koreans embraced Christianity was their belief that it was a potential source of power which could enable them to reclaim their nation.\(^9\) The Japanese and the Chinese on other hand were much more skeptical because they thought it was tied to Western imperialism. After the Japanese took control of Korea, the Church was the only establishment not dominated by the colonial government and as such became a meeting point for Korean nationalists.\(^10\)

\(^8\) Ordinance no.19 issued in 1939 for example compelled all Koreans to assume Japanese surnames.


\(^10\) Min, 233 – 235, During 1919 the churches provided a nationwide network connecting leaders and protesters, 295.
Historian Kenneth M. Wells has convincingly demonstrated that Christians were certain the philosophy and institutions of the Church (especially the schools) would inevitably help them overcome Japanese imperialism and build not only an independent nation, but a far better nation than had existed previously.\textsuperscript{11} The connection between Korean Christianity and nationalism becomes even more apparent when considering that 16 of the 33 leaders of the seminal event of nationalist history, the March 1\textsuperscript{st} 1919 Independence movement, were Christians.

Woodrow Wilson’s “Fourteen Points” combined with rumors that former Emperor Kojong had been poisoned by the Japanese in January 1919 provided the impetus for nationalist leaders to plan an uprising. They launched the Independence movement in Seoul in the afternoon of March 1\textsuperscript{st} and soon thereafter it spread to all corners of the peninsula. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets waving Korean flags and demanding the withdrawal of the imperialists. Even though the movement was non-violent the colonial government quickly crushed it by killing thousands and imprisoning many more. Korean prisoners were often deprived of the basic necessities of life and tortured. The Canadian missionaries in 1919 have garnered attention by historians because many of them had publicly protested against the inhumane treatment of the Koreans at the hands of the gendarmes. Frank W. Schofield, a medical missionary based at the Severance Hospital in Seoul, is particularly famous because he spent all of 1919 attempting to make Japanese brutality an international issue.\textsuperscript{12} Detailed accounts of the Korean-Christians living in the northeast who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the nationalist cause are not as well known as the Canadians who tried to protect them because, they, unlike the missionaries, did not leave behind much of a paper trail. Helen Macrae’s oral history project rectified this situation to some extent.


\textsuperscript{12} Ion, 193 – 196. Barbara Legault and John Prescott, “‘The arch agitator,’” Dr. Frank W. Schofield and the Korean Independence Movement.” \textit{The Canadian Veterinarian Journal}, v.50 (8) (Aug 2009): 865 – 872. The Korean community in Toronto has sponsored the creation of the Dr. Frank Schofield Memorial Gardens at the Toronto Zoo in order to honor his contribution to Korean independence, as well as make known their historical ties to Canada.
Korean Christians in Canadian mission territory were well informed about the plans to hold demonstrations – unfortunately, no one Macrae interviewed specifically mentioned how they obtained this information. It is highly probable that Kil Son-ju, the “father of Korean Christianity” and one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, helped provide the faith and conviction the members of his flock would need to carry out their insurgency in March – he conducted revivals in the northeast in January, but the interviewees made no reference to him.\(^{13}\) Kim Sang-pil, who was a teacher at a Canadian missionary high school in 1919, did however provide details concerning the preparations of the Sŏngjin protests.\(^{14}\) Kim asserted that a few days before March 1\(^{st}\) he told the Canadian medical missionary Robert Grierson that he had to go to Seoul for a few days, but did not tell the missionary why he was leaving in effort to save him from being placed in a potentially precarious position. Kim stated that he kept Grierson ignorant of his plans because he knew that if and or when his activities were discovered by the police, missionaries would inevitably be questioned.\(^{15}\)

Kim took part in the Seoul demonstrations and then immediately proceeded north to trigger the uprising in Sŏngjin. He and some of his Christian comrades quickly made thousands of copies of the Declaration of Independence in Grierson’s basement (with the missionaries’

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\(^{14}\) MG.1 2343, tape 6, Sang-pil Kim, interview by Helen Macrae, Seoul, South Korea, April 17. 1972. Kim became the principal of the Boys Academy in Hamhŭng later on in life.

\(^{15}\) Robert Grierson stated in his memoir that on February 27\(^{th}\), 1919 he allowed a group of Koreans to have a meeting at his house (without specifically mentioning Lee) therefore he was entirely aware of the plans to hold demonstrations. Robert Grierson, *My Life in Korea as a Missionary, 1898 – 1934* (Michael Scott: Toronto, 2002), 57. The memoir can be found at the UCCA - BV3460g572002PAM.
knowledge) and on the following day helped lead the inhabitants of his town on the streets demanding that the Japanese colonial government be disbanded. Japanese reaction was swift and merciless – within a very short time the protesters were beaten into submission by the authorities. Kim Sang-pil, along with many others, was arrested, imprisoned and tortured. He was reluctant to go into detail about his experiences as a prisoner, but he made sure to mention that his ordeals at the hands of the Japanese did not deter him from remaining a staunch nationalist. He continued to propagate the cause of independence among his compatriots while on itinerating trips in the northeast with the Canadian missionary Maud Rogers during the 1920s.

Like their counterparts in Sŏngjin, the Christians in Hamhŭng were also at the vanguard of the independence protests. Dr. Lee Chun-chul was a 17 year old student at the Canadian high school for boys when he participated in the insurrection. On March 2nd he along with YMCA leaders had a meeting at Lee Gun-jae’s home (a teacher at the mission school) to plan the insurgency. Lee mimeographed the Declaration of Independence – which they received from a fellow conspirator from Wŏnsan, Cho Yong-sin, and everyone else drew Korean flags that were to be used by the protestors. The Japanese police however had found out about their plot and subsequently arrested most of those who had been at the meeting. Lee fled Hamhŭng once he learned of the gendarmerie’s penetration of his conspiratorial circle.

Lee Chun-chul immediately went to see the Presbyterian Elder, Lee Yea-suk in Chang-jin county because he had the strong desire to tell his senior of Wilson’s “14 Points” and the plans to demonstrate against Japanese authority. Soon after meeting, Chun-chul convinced the Elder of the rightness of the cause and so they both went to a nearby lumber camp in the Bujeong mountains to tell the men there of the independence movement. According to Lee, all of the lumberjacks were incredibly enthusiastic. They transformed the Japanese flags they had found into

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16 Kim did not explain why he had changed his mind concerning involving Grierson in the uprising.
17 Sang-pil Kim, interview
18 Grierson asserted that the leaders of the movement addressed the crowd from his hospital porch. My Life, 57.
19 Sang-pil Kim, interview.
20 MG.1 2343, tape 9, Dr. Chun-chul Lee, interview by Helen Macrae, Seoul, South Korea, Aug 3, 1972.
Taegukgi by adding the colour blue and four black trigrams then marched to the local police station shouting Mansei! Being in such an isolated location the police officers had not heard any news from the outside world so they thought that perhaps the Koreans had really won independence, thus they began to cheer Mansei as well. A few days later however, the very same police officers were ordered by their superiors to round up the agitators – Dr. Lee was among those arrested and imprisoned.  

Chun Chang-sin, the most politically engaged of all the women who told their stories to Macrae, provided many details about life in Hamhŭng during 1919. Like Kim Sang-pil and Dr. Lee, Chung had spent much of her young life associating with the Canadian missionaries. She converted to Christianity in Sŏngjin under the influence of her Canadian missionary teacher Jennie Robb when she was eight years old. She then moved to Hamhŭng in 1916 to attend the Canadian missionary school for girls but her studies were cut short in March of 1919 when she was arrested and tortured by the colonial police for helping to lead her fellow students in denouncing Japanese rule. When asked about the torture, Chun took a long pause and stated that she had been, “treated inhumanely.”  

Chun avowed that there were 42 principal architects of the Independence movement in Hamhŭng – the majority of them being male and Christian (Chun was one of the two female leaders). She asserted that Christians had been so prominent in the uprising because they were the most “advanced.” Although she did not thoroughly explain what she meant, thinking that Macrae would understand, it would seem that like many of the other Christians who had taken part in the 1919 Independence movement, Chun believed that the Koreans who had converted to Christianity were better equipped than non-Christians to guide the nation because they had embraced the values of democracy and social justice for all people regardless of gender or social status. Chun herself maintained a

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21 Ibid.
22 MG.1 2341, tape, 10, Chang-sin Chun interview by Helen Macrae, Seoul, South Korea, April 24, 1972. She became a teacher at the Girl’s High School in Hamhŭng in the 1920s.
23 Canadian missionary Stanley Martin based in Yong Jung asserted that he was certain that women who were arrested had been “violated” by the Japanese. He heard from American missionaries that girls from a Christian school, while imprisoned, had been forced to remove all their clothes and walk on all fours while boiling water was poured on them. He ended this story by saying other things were done to them which were “unmentionable.” UCCA, Stanley Martin to A.E. Armstrong, 24 May 1919, 79.204C, fond 122, box 4, file 62.
strong belief in this idea throughout her life. After fleeing from North Korea in 1945 she waged battles against trusteeship, the communists and misogyny. Before the Korean War broke out she spoke at large gatherings on behalf of women’s patriotic associations to discuss the evils of a divided Korea and the dictatorship established by Kim Il-sung. She also became one of the first female police officers in South Korea in order to help the cause of women, especially those who were suffering from domestic abuse.24

Missionaries were prominent figures in many of the stories about 1919. A few Koreans recounted how Duncan Macrae had rushed to the Hamhŭng police station to lodge a protest soon after seeing Japanese policemen, firemen and peddlers brutalizing Koreans on the streets.25 Chun Chang-nim, a former student of the Canadian Academy in Hamhŭng and assistant to the missionary Emma Palethorpe in Northern Korea and Manchuria said he had heard the missionaries hid Koreans so the Japanese could not find them.26 Chun Chang-sin declared that the missionary teacher Ethel B. MacEachern had always argued against Christians taking part in political activities but put these feelings aside in 1919 and helped the Koreans who had been beaten and attacked by the Japanese.27 Most of the interviewees were too young to have taken part in the demonstrations, but, like their elders, they too discussed their appreciation for the Canadian missionary endeavor in 1919.

The Korean attitude toward the missionaries was not altogether positive. Unfortunately however the negative assessments provided by the Koreans were somewhat opaque because they often obfuscated their criticisms in generalities – they rarely mentioned names or gave specific instances of missionary transgressions.28 This said, the information provided by the respondents is valuable because it allows researchers an opportunity to evaluate the Korean-Canadian relationship and the Korean-Christian nationalist worldview after 1919 in a more comprehensive

24 Chang-sin Chun interview.
25 MG.1 2343, tape 4, Neun-keun Kim interview by Helen Macrae, Seoul, South Korea, 1972. MG.1 2344, tape 8, Reverend Chai-il Pak and Chang-hyun Hong interview by Helen Macrae, Seoul, South Korea, June 30 1972.
27 Chang-sin Chung interview.
28 Macrae supplied questionnaires to respondents in effort to make them feel more comfortable answering questions openly – 16 gave written replies, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, MG.1.2347.
manner than would have been possible by only taking into account the documentary record.

Until the 1920s, Korean Christians by and large accepted their subordinate position within the Canadian mission. This is not to say that they were powerless, but they did not have much control over mission policy since the Canadians made the crucial decisions about education and medicine. After 1919 however Church leaders, emboldened by realizing their ability to organize the flock, came to believe that an essential feature of providing pastoral care now included a struggle to wrest more power from the Canadians over how and where mission funds should be spent. In December 1923, after reading a copious amount of letters about the demands of Korean church leaders and students at the mission schools, A.E. Armstrong, the Assistant Secretary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church in Canada became so despondent that he suggested it might be wise for him to write a letter to the congregations threatening to force the withdrawal of the Canadian mission if the dissention did not abate.29 The missionaries on the ground decided to capitulate to the demands instead and started joint education boards in which Koreans and missionaries would decide school policies together. In 1927 a mission wide joint board was established whereby all major decisions concerning not only education, but finances and evangelism were made in this fashion.30

Students at mission schools also protested against missionary policies during the 1920s. They regularly went on strike because of the inadequacy of school buildings, equipment and teachers. In February 1922, some of the students in Hamhŭng went so far as to burn down the Boys Academy in effort to show their anger at the Canadians.31 The

31 UCCA, L.L. Young to R.P. Mackay, 28 March 1922, fond 122, box 6, file 84. Roll 23.632. NSARM – UCC 79.204C, reel 5/M1069. Scott did not discuss in any detail the animosity of the students toward the Canadians in his interviews or his book. The Korean respondents also made no mention of the depth of student anger against the Canadians at this period. Donald N. Clark, provided some insight into the situation, see Living Dangerously, 100. Elizabeth Underwood argues that much of the trouble during the 1920s was the result of a lack of familiarity with Korean culture on the part of newer missionaries. See her book,
missionaries assumed that Korean hostility toward them was driven primarily by resentment concerning the low quality of the schools, lack of leadership opportunities within the mission and Japanese or communist propaganda. They believed this propaganda to be the leading factor which accounted for the rebelliousness of the second generation of Korean students at mission schools. According to the missionary Frederick Vesey, anti-Western literature (mostly written in Japanese) had flooded into Korea during the 1920s, and some of it depicted Christian missionaries in a very unfavorable light. In March 1925 he wrote that this propaganda had helped to poison the minds of his students, many of whom had started to challenge their teachers’ stance on Christianity in class. He argued that if the situation in the schools became any worse, “… it will not be long before she [Korea] and Japan have the same attitude toward Christianity.”

Vesey’s presumptions on the origins of the grievances were correct to some degree but the oral history project reveals that some of the animosity Korean Christians harbored (especially among the young in the mission schools) also stemmed, at least in part, from a belief that the Canadian missionaries treated them inequitably and their cultural traditions with disrespect. Helen Macrae explicitly attempted to compel her respondents to discuss these sorts of criticisms about the missionaries openly because, as she stated more than once, she wanted to know the extent to which Koreans shared the opinions of those who at the time of the interviews, denounced the missionaries of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as being champions of the hegemonic system of western imperialism.

Macrae asked some of those she interviewed if they thought missionaries had adversely impacted Korea – or, as she sometimes put it using the parlance of the day, if the Canadians could be seen as “imperialists.” Not one answered in the affirmative seemingly because

References:

Challenged Identities: North American Missionaries in Korea, 1884-1934 (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch), 212.

32 UCCA, Frederick Vesey to A.E. Armstrong, 7 March 1925, fond.122, box 8, file 132. Roll 23,631. NSARM - UCC 79.204C, reel 6/ M1070.
33 MG.1 2345, tape 18 (2), Dr. William Scott interview by Helen Macrae, Brantford Ontario, February 19, 1972.
they thought of imperialism in terms of its political nature – Japan, not a western power had colonized their nation. One respondent, Chun U-lim, did say however that the Canadian missionaries were, for wont of a better term, “religious imperialists.”\textsuperscript{35} Many, if not most Canadian missionaries believed that in order for native converts to become authentic Christians they needed to cut any ties they had to animist and or Buddhist belief systems as well as Confucian ritual practices (the most important of these being ancestor worship, or veneration).\textsuperscript{36}

When speaking on the subject of Korean religions and philosophy, Chun U-lim emphasized that missionaries should have been more tolerant regarding Confucianism because it is a moral-philosophical system, not a religion in the traditional sense, therefore it could not pose a threat to the Christian cause. Furthermore, he argued, if Canadians had been more accepting of Confucianism (especially by way of allowing Koreans to venerate their ancestors) the number of conversions might have been higher. Other interviewees, unlike Chun, did not criticize the missionaries directly, but they affirmed that although Christian, they were also great admirers of Confucianism. Reverend Lee Sang-chul, a former student of the Canadian middle school for boys in Yong Jung, and who at the time of the interview was a minister at the Korean United Church on Bloor Street in Toronto, held similar opinions, but he went one step further and stressed that the missionaries held only a very superficial knowledge of the Korean heritage (such as its Confucian basis),\textsuperscript{37} in part because they presumed their culture was more civilized.\textsuperscript{38}

Continuing on the theme of imperialism and the missionary movement, Macrae asked her interviewees if they had come across Canadians who exhibited what she referred to as “superior” dispositions in

\textsuperscript{35} Woo-lim Chun interview.

\textsuperscript{36} Missionaries were not entirely unified in their stance on Confucianism. For more on this see, Sung-deuk Oak, The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876 – 1915 (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), 189 – 217. James Scarth Gale, a Canadian missionary working for the North Presbyterian (U.S.A) missionaries was one of the first Korean experts in the West. Unlike many of his colleagues he grieved over Korea losing its Confucian heritage during the first few decades of the twentieth century. Richard Rutt, A Biography of James Scarth Gale and a New Edition of His History of the Korean People (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 1983), 319

\textsuperscript{37} My emphasis.

\textsuperscript{38} MG.1 2343, tape 12, Reverend Sang-chul Lee interview by Helen Macrae, Toronto, Ontario, February 3 1972.
their interactions with Koreans. Frustratingly, many of them evaded answering the question, but enough was said that the listener could come to the conclusion that the relationships between Canadian and Korean were not always harmonious, but were often mercurial. One of the most common criticisms the Koreans expressed related to what they saw as the aloofness of the Canadian missionaries. Chun Chang-nim argued that some Canadians were reserved or unapproachable because they distrusted Koreans and were disdainful of Korean culture. He continued answering in this vein by venturing so far as to say that when Canadians did become too close to Koreans they were persecuted by their peers. In one particularly enlightening part of the interview Chun asserted he understood that life must have been difficult for the missionaries living in Korea, but he questioned why they employed Korean servants and maids.  

Chun Taek-kyun, a member of the Korean Association of Toronto, also insisted barriers had existed between the Canadians and Koreans. He said that from what he witnessed the missionaries did seem to think they were superior to Koreans and because of this a genuine true fellowship between missionaries and native Christians could not have developed – the two only came together for church-related affairs. Continuing on this train of thought, he then explained that the missionaries were willfully ignorant of Korean customs and had contempt for Korean art and music because they thought it was tinged with paganism. Chun was not in any way entirely negative in his assessments of the Canadians. however. He told Macrae he had heard that some believed the missionaries did more harm than good, but he disagreed. He thought the Canadians had done a great deal to help Koreans in 1919 and in the areas of medicine as well as education.  

During his interview with Macrae, Baek Hak-kyu, a theological student of Emanuel College at the University of Toronto, revealed he had conducted his own interviews with members of the Korean-Canadian community in Toronto – many of whom had lived and worked with the missionaries. According to Baek, his respondents said they held the

41 The location of this survey has yet to be discovered. It is possible that Baek did not give it to an archive or library.
missionaries in high regard (for the same sorts of reasons outlined by Chun Taek-kyun) but felt the Canadians had considered them to be an inferior people and because of this simply gave orders to native converts without asking for their input.\textsuperscript{42} Moon Chae-rim, a retired minister and former student of Emanuel College during the 1920s himself, also believed the contributions the Canadians made to Korea were far more positive than negative.\textsuperscript{43} Yet, he did mention that even though some missionaries he worked with such as Dr. William Scott and Archibald Barker were to be respected, others tended to ignore the wishes of the Koreans and often treated them with derision. In 1928 Moon saw a way in which to try and communicate his displeasure with some of the missionaries when he met A.E. Armstrong. Moon said Armstrong asked him what kind of missionary should be sent to Korea. He replied, “a real friend of Koreans – a person who understands Korean hearts.”\textsuperscript{44}

Minister Moon Ik-whan quite strongly expressed some of his criticisms of the Canadians. He professed that missionaries were imbued with a puritanical spirit and placed little value on Korean culture. He thought the fundamentalist views of the missionaries combined with the far too pro-Western stance of native Christians retarded the growth of a distinctly Korean theology. On the other hand, he also asserted that missionaries had helped liberate Koreans.\textsuperscript{45} The responses given by Reverend Moon and many of his fellow interviewees might seem anomalous, but when keeping in mind their nationalist worldview, a consistency can be surmised. The Canadian missionary movement as a whole was deemed good because it had seemingly aided in the preservation of the Korean nation, but certain individual missionaries (who always remained nameless) were considered beyond the pale for their perceived lack of sincerity in their dealings with Koreans and inability to accept and embrace the foreign culture in which they lived.

The Koreans were much less reluctant to speak about their experiences under the Japanese after the Independence movement than they were their feelings about the Canadians. They wanted to describe

\textsuperscript{42} Hak-kyu Baek interview.
\textsuperscript{43} Chae-rim Moon interview.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid. Moon was certain the Canadian missionaries would help the Koreans in Manchuria after the Pacific War. See Ion, 218. Kim Jung-gun discussed Moon’s experiences under the communists, 146-147.
\textsuperscript{45} MG.1 2343, tape 17. Ik-whan Moon interview by Helen Macrae. Seoul, South Korea, July 3, 1972.
how they survived one of the darkest periods of modern Korean history and in doing so kept the nationalist ideal alive. The listener gets a sense from the stories the interviewees told that they considered themselves to be the embodiment of Korea and as such had the strength to endure all trials and tribulations.

Throughout the post 1919 period, the Christians were deemed by the colonial government to be just as dangerous as the communists. The basis for this belief on the part of the Japanese was their failure to understand the spiritual nature of Christianity. They thought it was first and foremost, a political ideology. The Japanese assumed Christianity was nothing more than a weapon to be used by western imperialists against their empire – a view which seemed to be confirmed every time missionaries and their converts objected to colonial policy.

Chang Chung-guk, a former teacher and clerk-bookkeeper for the Canadian mission, poignantly described how the Japanese suspicions of Christians and missionaries contributed to the creation of a foreboding atmosphere. Knowing that Chang frequently interacted with the missionaries and travelled extensively throughout the mission, the police asked him to spy on his employers and fellow Christians. He understood that he had little choice but to accept their offer, so he agreed. Chang said he was constantly followed by the police (even when he went to the bathroom) and had to report his findings on a regular basis. He asserted that he never revealed anything of great importance.46 The medical missionary Florence Murray told a similar tale. She said that every Canadian had their own personal “shadow” and had to report to Japanese officials whenever they left the city in which they resided. They then had to report to other officials when they arrived at their destination.47 Murray disclosed that throughout her very long career as a missionary she avoided contact with the Japanese as much as possible because every interaction produced a fair amount of unpleasantness.48

The Japanese were particularly mistrustful of Korean students in mission schools after 1919. They became even more so with the growing

48 Murray interview.
The popularity of communism among the youth and the habitual strikes that took place on Canadian campuses during the 1920s and the 1930s.\textsuperscript{49} The largest and most raucous of the strikes occurred a decade after the March 1\textsuperscript{st} Independence movement. In the fall of 1929, students in Hamhŭng decided to take part in the nationwide protests which followed in the wake of the persecution of students in Kwangju – they had called for the Japanese withdrawal from Korea. Kim Do-jun, who later in life was elected by North Korean exiles to be the “Governor of Hamgyŏng Province (South)” said he was arrested by the Japanese soon after the strike and was given what he described as “airplane torture” by the police as a means to compel him to give them the names of the student leaders.\textsuperscript{50}

One of Kim’s classmates, Chun Taek-bu, also demonstrated but he escaped arrest. In 1932, however, he was not able to elude the police after helping to lead yet another anti-Japanese protest. One of the more interesting aspects of Chun’s story was the influence that his senior classmates and Korean language teacher had on him. He said that even though the Japanese had banned the teaching of Korean history in the classroom, his teacher continued doing so nonetheless. Chun’s mentor also spent much time discussing the similarities between the Jews in the story of Exodus and the plight of the Koreans.\textsuperscript{51} Teachers in Hamhŭng were not the only nationalist educators in Canadian missionary territory. Reverend Choi Moon-hahn, although only 11 years old at the time of the demonstrations in Manchuria in 1919 said he remembered that the teachers from the mission schools were among the main conspirators.\textsuperscript{52}

One physical education teacher had come to the conclusion that Koreans might have to fight for their independence – therefore he trained his students in military style maneuvers.\textsuperscript{53}

Helen Macrae’s line of questioning on the Korean Christian–Japanese relationship often involved an inquiry into the Shinto shrine controversy of the 1930s and 1940s. As a means of furthering their assimilation policy, the colonial government compelled all Koreans to

\textsuperscript{49} Kim Neun-keun said that on average strikes occurred once a year.
\textsuperscript{50} MG.1. 2343, tape 3. Do-jun Kim interview by Helen Macrae, Seoul, South Korea, July 14 1972.
\textsuperscript{51} MG.1 2341, tape 15. Taek-bu Chun interview by Helen Macrae, Seoul, South Korea, April 1 1972. Chun was the secretary of the YMCA.
\textsuperscript{52} MG.1. 2341, tape 1. Moon-hahn Choi interviewed by Helen Macrae, Seoul, South Korea, June 16, 1972.
\textsuperscript{53} Macrae, \textit{A Tiger on Dragon Mountain}, 159.
honor the emperor by taking part in Shinto ceremonies on a routine basis. This became one of the most acrimonious issues in the history of the Korean protestant church, because the more conservative-minded refused to placate the Japanese by worshiping what they thought of as “idols,” while the liberals saw the ceremonies as not much more than civil in nature. Most Canadian missionaries and Christians in the northeast agreed to abide by the new law primarily because if they did not do so the future prospects of mission school students would be uncertain. The new laws stipulated that the credentials of students who graduated from non-compliant schools would not be recognized by the government.

Some of Macrae’s interviewees made sure to mention that they attended the Shinto shrine ceremonies in body only. The Canadian missionary Dr. William Scott also expressed the notion that the Koreans who took part in the rituals disassociated themselves from what they were doing. Reverend Kim Chun-bai said that Christians in Hamhŭng were opposed to the Shinto services but believed they had no other alternative if they wanted to preserve the credibility of their schools. (4). Tong Shunsun, a former teacher, characterized the attitudes of Christians living in Sŏngjin in a similar manner. Korean participation in the Shinto shrine ceremonies was heralded by conservative Christians as an act of betrayal to church and nation. Kim, Tong and others who Macrae interviewed portrayed it as having little importance since it was just another duty they had to perform in their daily routines – therefore they could argue, their nationalist credentials remained untarnished.

By the beginning of the Pacific War, the Japanese had become even more suspicious of Korean Christians and the Canadians. Soon after the Canadians left in 1942, the situation for the converts became even graver than it had been before since they lost whatever protection their

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55 MG.1. 2344, tape 19 (3), Dr. William Scott interview by Helen Macrae, December 18, 1971. Conservative Korean Christians distrusted Scott because of his stance on Shinto and his liberal theological leanings, Min, 545.


associations with the missionaries could have afforded them. The Japanese took control of all mission property including schools, hospitals and homes. Chang Chung-guk related the story of how one opportunistic minister in Hamhung, named Kim Hyung-su, helped to sell missionary furniture at low prices to Japanese buyers.\(^{58}\)

Students and those suspected of disloyalty bore the brunt of Japanese persecution during the Pacific War. In March of 1945 pupils at the mission schools in Hamhung were compelled to leave their desks and go to work at ammunitions factories.\(^{59}\) Reverend Cho In-suk emphasized that near the end of the war the Japanese tried to compel ministers to preach in Japanese and forced all of them to attend an institution-like school (his characterization) to study Shintoism for one week and do compulsory labor. The ministers who seemingly did not live up to Japanese expectations were badly beaten. Cho could no longer stand the situation in which he found himself so he resigned from his post.\(^{60}\)

As the war dragged on, the Japanese became convinced that Korean Christians, especially the ministers, were allied to the western imperialists and as such were bent on sabotaging the imperial war effort. Therefore, they embarked on a systematic persecution of the church. Chang Chung-guk was arrested and tortured because of his strong connections to the Canadian missionaries in Hamhung. During interrogation his captors asked him if God was more powerful than the emperor. He insisted that God ruled the spiritual realm while the emperor controlled the temporal world. Chang came to this answer because he knew of one prisoner who had been beaten to death by insisting that God was the only omnipotent being in existence.\(^{61}\) Reverend Kang Heung-su was arrested three times in his life, the final instance being one month before the end of the war.\(^{62}\) He was tortured for 29 days and was only released the morning of the Japanese surrender. Another minister, Moon Chae-rim, suffered under both the Japanese and the Soviets. In 1945 he was arrested by the colonial gendarmerie and then the communist military.

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\(^{58}\) Chung-guk Chang interview.

\(^{59}\) Neun-keun Kim interview

\(^{60}\) MG.1. 2341, tape 4 (1). Reverend In-suk Cho interview by Helen Macrae, Busan, South Korea, May 13, 1972.

\(^{61}\) Chung-guk Chang interview.

\(^{62}\) MG.1 2342, tape 16. Reverend Heung-su Kang interview by Helen Macrae, June 12, 1972. According to the information on the cassette tape the name of the interviewee is Yu Young-kyung – but Macrae referred to Kang Heung-su.
The regime that Kim Il-sung eventually established was similar to the Japanese one it had replaced – especially in regard to its antipathy toward Christians. From 1945 to 1950 multitudes of Korean Christians from the northeast and Manchuria who had been associated with the Canadians fled communist persecution in order to attempt to re-establish their lives, church and nation in what seemed to them very unfamiliar territory in the south.

The oral histories contained in the Helen Fraser Macrae archive provide insights into the Korean Christian world of northeastern Korea and Manchuria which are difficult to gain through an analysis of the tactile source material alone. Missionary letters, articles, journals and autobiographies are invaluable sources as well, but the thoughts and emotions of individual native converts are either obscured by missionary perceptions, or lost in the descriptions of the extremely busy day-to-day details of mission business. Korean nationalism was a subject the Canadians discussed, but they only did so for the most part when it could no longer be ignored, such as in 1919. The main occupation of the missionary was to create Christians, not to get involved in politics. They only became embroiled in doing battle with the Japanese when they had come to the conclusion that there was no other option.

Koreans who accepted Christianity were among the most politicized on the peninsula. Many of the interviews Macrae conducted make it clear that Korean Christians, at least the leaders, viewed the success or failures of their lives in terms of their ability to help their nation first to survive then to gain independence. They had a tremendous amount of appreciation for the Canadians because they were seen as having helped Korea during its time of great need, but they were unwilling to prostrate themselves before the missionaries, just as they would not do so in the case of the Japanese imperialists. Their faith in Christ and Korea compelled them to believe that they were deserving of dignity, yet this was something they were certain could only be obtained once they controlled their church and nation.

Fred Glover is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of Calgary. His dissertation is tentatively titled, “White unto the Harvest – Canadian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Northern Korea and Manchuria, 1894 – 1925. Fred earned a B.A and M.A in history from Carleton University in Ottawa as well as an M.A in Asian Studies at Sejong University. He spent many years teaching English in Korea and became interested in the Korean missionary enterprise thanks in great part to the Royal Asiatic Society bookstore.
North Korea and the Armistice Negotiations

Kathryn Weathersby

Among the myriad consequences of the Korean War, one of the most long-lasting is the set of attitudes the North Korean leadership developed toward its allies over the course of the conflict. While Kim Il Sung and his inner circle began the war as confident, willingly subordinate members of the communist bloc, they emerged from the devastation with a notably altered posture. All but ignoring the decisive roles played by their allies, they began to present the war, at least to their domestic audience, as a great victory won by the North Korean people alone. At the same time, confident that their allies would continue to provide the aid essential for their survival, they boldly presented their demands for assistance. Pyongyang’s distinctive combination of resentment of outside influence along with a sense of entitlement deepened over the postwar years, infuriating and repelling North Korea’s allies.

This paper argues that the manner in which the war was prosecuted on the communist side during the two year-long armistice negotiations fostered North Korea’s distinctive attitudes toward its allies. Pyongyang had little voice in the negotiations and was compelled by Moscow and Beijing to prolong the war, despite the vast destruction it brought North Korea. At the same time, Soviet and Chinese determination to tie down American forces in Korea in order to allow time for the socialist bloc to rearm necessitated that they provide enough aid to the DPRK to enable it to continue the fight. Thus, while the North Korean leadership resented their helplessness, they came to believe that the DPRK’s “special status” as foremost victim of “American imperialism” and defender of the front line in the global anti-imperialist struggle entitled them to virtually unlimited assistance. This status moreover enabled them to develop a heterodox ideological posture of supposed
“self-reliance” – *Juche* – without losing their essential ties to their communist allies.

This paper is based primarily on Russian documents the author obtained from several archives in Moscow: the Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, which houses the records of the Soviet Foreign Ministry; the Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History, the repository of documents of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union; and the collection of high-level documents on Soviet involvement in the Korea housed in the Presidential Archive. Most of the documents cited from the first two repositories are examined here for the first time. The records from the Presidential Archive have been published previously and are examined here from a new perspective.

**The Roles of the Communist Allies in the Armistice Negotiations**

As the Chinese historian Shen Zhihua has shown, once Chinese armed forces entered Korea in October 1950 to save the DPRK from imminent defeat, the PRC took over the day-to-day command of the war. Though this process was quite predictable, and in fact mirrored what happened in the South following the US entry into the war, it nonetheless caught Kim Il Sung by surprise. Kim initially resisted PRC requests to establish a unified command structure. It was only after Stalin ruled in favor of the Chinese plan that Kim agreed to create a joint command structure led by Peng Dehuai, with Koreans playing a supporting role. Chinese commanders and their superiors in Beijing then took the lead in deciding tactical questions, such as how far to advance, and in managing North Korea’s infrastructure, particularly the railroads. Whenever disputes arose between the Chinese and Korean leaderships, the issue was brought to Stalin for resolution and the Soviet leader invariably sided with the Chinese.\(^1\)

This basic structure of allied decision-making continued with regard to the armistice negotiations, with the exception that Stalin became more actively involved in this aspect of the war. Since the Soviet leader was far more experienced in diplomacy than was Mao Zedong and Soviet interests were more directly at stake in negotiations with the United Nations Command, Stalin intervened more often in questions regarding

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the negotiations than he did with respect to military tactics. Thus, when UN Commander Matthew Ridgway directed his proposal to open negotiations in June 1951 to Kim Il Sung – since the Chinese were participating only as “volunteers” and the Soviets were not openly belligerents – it was Mao Zedong who wrote to Stalin requesting instructions on how to respond. The Soviet leader then sent a draft reply, with instructions that it be signed by both Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai, explaining that the Americans would not take it seriously if it were signed only by the Korean leader.\footnote{Ciphered telegram from Stalin to Mao Zedong, 30 June 1951, Archive of the President of the Russian Federation [hereafter APRF], Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 339, Listy 95-96. Also found in Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation [hereafter AVPRF], Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 4, Papka 11, Listy 14-15. For the text of the document see Kathryn Weathersby, “New Russian Documents on the Korean War,” \textit{Cold War International History Project Bulletin} 6/7 (Winter 1995/1996): 64-65. This document, as well as others cited below, has two archive locations because copies of the collection of documents on the war assembled in preparation for President Yeltsin’s gift of such documents to ROK President Kim Young Sam in July 1994 were deposited in the Foreign Ministry Archive, Fond 059a. Since foreign researchers do not have access to the Presidential Archive, it is particularly helpful that a copy of this collection was placed in the Foreign Ministry archive.} As the Chinese and North Koreans prepared to begin the negotiations, they agreed that the Chief of Staff of the Korean People’s Army, Nam Il, would head their delegation. However, Stalin quickly made it clear that Koreans would not play the leading role in the negotiations. When Kim Il Sung wrote Stalin requesting approval of the proposed agenda for the talks, the Soviet leader upbraided him for not having first worked out the proposal with the Chinese.\footnote{Ciphered telegram from Stalin to [Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK] Razuvaev with a message for Kim Il Sung, 1 July 1951, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 340, List 5. For the text of the document, see Weathersby, “New Russian Documents,” p. 65.}

Once the negotiations began, the communications channel generally originated with Li Kenong, the chief Chinese representative, who sent reports on the course of the talks and requests for instructions to Mao Zedong, with copies delivered to Kim Il Sung and Peng Dehuai. Mao then forwarded to Stalin these reports and queries, as well as the instructions he sent to Li in reply.\footnote{See, for example, Ciphered telegrams from Mao Zedong to Stalin, 31 July 1951 (APRF, N 67 II, N 68 II, N 69 II); 2 August, N 70 II); 3 August 1951 (APRF, N
as the work of journalists in Pyongyang, Mao instructed Li to ask Kim Il Sung for his assistance.\(^5\) On particularly important questions, however, Li sometimes communicated solely with Mao, without sending a copy to Kim Il Sung. For example, on 13 August 1951, Li sent a lengthy message to Mao alone stating his view of the enemy’s intention regarding the dispute over setting the Military Demarcation Line and the tactics the communist side should pursue. Li urgently asked for Mao’s instructions on the matter, and made no reference to having discussed the issue with the North Koreans.\(^6\) Later in the negotiations, when Mexico advanced a proposal in September 1952 for resolving the issue of repatriation of prisoners of war, Mao requested Stalin’s instructions on how to respond; Stalin obliged, and neither made reference to Kim Il Sung’s opinion.\(^7\)

At other key moments, the Chinese included Kim Il Sung’s recommendations in their reports to Stalin but the Soviet leader disregarded the Korean view. For example, following the strafing of the negotiations site at Kaesong on 22 August 1951, Mao informed Stalin that the delegation had temporarily ceased negotiations, and sent the Chinese assessment of the broader situation as well as Kim Il Sung’s suggestion that they invite representatives of neutral states to monitor the site.\(^8\) Stalin

\(^5\) Ciphered telegram from Mao Zedong to Stalin, 2 August 1951 (APRF, N 71 II).
\(^6\) Ciphered telegram from Mao Zedong to Filippov [Stalin] conveying the 12 August 1951 telegram from Li Kenong to Mao regarding the armistice talks (APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 341, Listy 56-58). For the full text see Weathersby, “New Russian Documents,” pp. 67-68.
\(^8\) Ciphered telegram from Mao Zedong to Filippov [Stalin], APRF, Fond 45 Opis 1, Delo 340, Listy 86-88 and AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 5, Papka 11,
replied to Mao that he agreed with the Chinese leader’s assessment of the strafing incident but did not support Kim Il Sung’s suggestion to invite representatives of neutral states to serve as monitors, “since the Americans will view it as an indication that the Chinese-Korean side has more need quickly to reach an agreement about an armistice than do the Americans.” But, he taunted, if Mao was indeed “of such an opinion,” he should communicate this view to Kim Il Sung. Predictably, Mao replied to Stalin simply that he agreed with the Soviet leader’s view and that he had “already communicated this to Comrade Kim Il Sung.” In other words, Stalin communicated only to Mao on this important issue, leaving it to the Chinese to communicate their decision to Kim Il Sung.

On occasion, Mao Zedong instructed Li Kenong to inform Beijing of Kim Il Sung’s view of the negotiations, such as when the talks resumed in October 1951. However, Kim Il Sung’s reply in this instance suggested that he viewed the request as pro forma. His curt message to Mao stated simply “I received your telegram of October 24 which gives the situation regarding the course of the negotiations. I agree with you.” Likewise, in a lengthy message to Stalin on 14 November 1951 regarding the reasons for abandoning their earlier insistence on the 38th parallel as the demarcation line, Mao mentioned that Kim Il Sung was of the same opinion; “this time it also was done with his agreement.”

9 VSP9b) CC Politburo decision with approved message from Filippov [Stalin] to Mao Zedong, 28 August 1951, APRF, Fond 3, Opis 65, Delo 829, Listy 4-5 and AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 5, Papka 11, Listy 54-55. The telegram was sent to Beijing on 29 August. For the text of the document, see Weathersby, “New Russian Documents,” pp. 69-70.
10 Ciphered telegram from Mao Zedong to Filippov [Stalin], 30 August 1951, APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 340, List 97 and AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 5, Papka 11, List 56. For the text of the document, see Weathersby, “New Russian Documents,” p.70.
11 Ciphered telegram from Mao Zedong to Filippov [Stalin], 25 October 1951 (APRF, N 98 II).
12 Ciphered telegram from Mao Zedong to Filippov [Stalin], 31 October 1951, transmitting the reply from Kim Il Sung (APRF, N104 II).
While the allies sometimes took into account Kim Il Sung’s opinions, the Soviets forcefully rebuffed Korean efforts to take the initiative regarding the negotiations. On 19 November 1951, DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Hon-Yong broadcast over the radio, without prior approval from Moscow or Beijing, an appeal to the United Nations for an immediate cessation of military operations. Pak called for the withdrawal of troops from the front line, the creation of a two kilometer wide demilitarization zone, and a decision to make those guilty of prolonging the war accountable for their actions. Alarmed by Pak’s appeal, the Soviet Politburo sharply rebuked the ambassador in Pyongyang for allowing it to be broadcast and instructed him to advise the Koreans to cease the initiative. As the Politburo explained to Ambassador Razuvaev, the Korean statement “could be evaluated in the present situation, in conditions of blackmail by the Americans, as a sign of weakness on the Chinese-Korean side, which is politically disadvantageous.”

Russian records of the war for the period after Stalin’s death on 5 March 1953 suggest that the new collective leadership that assumed power in Moscow may have more readily solicited Kim Il Sung’s opinion. On 25 March 1953, Stalin’s former second-in-command V. Molotov asked the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang to communicate Kim Il Sung’s answer to Moscow’s suggestion that they respond positively to a request from the French government for information about French POWs. On the most important questions, however, the Soviets continued to control decision-making. Thus, on 19 March the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union, having decided to bring the war in Korea to an end, approved letters to Mao Zedong and Kim Il Sung with instructions on the steps the DPRK and PRC should take to reach an armistice agreement.

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15 Ciphered telegram from Molotov to Soviet Ambassador in North Korea, 25 March 1953, APRF, N 78, I.
Prior to the signing of the armistice, Moscow informed the North Koreans that they considered it inadvisable for Kim Il Sung to travel to Panmunjom to sign the agreement, because the South Koreans might stage an anti-Kim Il Sung provocation.\textsuperscript{17}

**The Utility of Prolonging the War**

Moscow was alarmed by Pak Hon-Yong’s aforementioned call for immediate cessation of hostilities in November 1951 because already at the beginning of that year, as soon as Chinese forces had eliminated the danger of an American conquest of the DPRK, Stalin had begun to regard the war in Korea as advantageous to Soviet interests. Romanian archives have revealed that in January 1951 Stalin summoned the political and military leaders of the East European fraternal states to a secret meeting in Moscow to discuss the opportunities created by the American failure in Korea. “The opinion arose in recent times,” the Soviet dictator began, “that the United States is an invincible power and is prepared to initiate a third world war.”

As it turns out, however, not only is the US unprepared to initiate a third world war, but it is unable even to cope with a small war such as the one in Korea.

It is obvious that the US needs several more years for preparation. The US is bogged down in Asia and will remain pinned down there for several years.

The fact that the US will be tied down in Asia for the next two or three years constitutes a very favorable circumstance for us, for the world revolutionary movement. These two to three years we must use skillfully.

The US has atomic power; we have that too. The US has a large navy, but their navy cannot play the

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\textsuperscript{17} To Presidium of the TsK KPSS [Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union] to Comrade G. M. Malenkov and Comrade N.S. Khrushchev, from V. Molotov, 23 July 1953, APRF, No 88, I.
decisive role in a war. The US has a modern air force, but theirs is a weak air force, weaker than ours.

Our task consists of using the two to three years at our disposal to create a modern and powerful military force. This we are capable of doing, we have all the prerequisites for this. China has created a better army than those of the People’s Democracies. It is abnormal that you should have weak armies. This situation must be turned around. You in the People’s Democracies must, within two to three years, create modern and powerful armies that must be combat-ready by the end of the three year period.

Stalin concluded the meeting by reminding his vassals that “the three years at our disposal are not for sleeping, but for arming, and arming well...This is necessary in view of the imperialists’ way of thinking: they are in the habit of attacking unarmed or weakly armed countries in order to liquidate them, but they keep away from well armed countries. This is why you need to arm during this respite, and arm well, in order that the imperialists respect you and keep away from you.”

The East European communist states and the Soviet Union accordingly began rapid and massive rearmament in 1951, which reached a peak the following year. It seems unlikely that when Stalin cited two to three years as the length of time the US would be engaged in the war in Korea, he was simply making a forecast. After all, he could not have known that UN forces would rebound sufficiently in the spring of 1951 to prevent a complete Chinese/North Korean victory, or that the Americans would make demands in the ensuing armistice negotiations that the Chinese were unlikely to accept. It appears, therefore, that Stalin was not so much forecasting a likely course for the war as he was indicating his intention to prolong it for two to three years in order to exploit the advantages it brought to the communist camp.

Thus, when Mao Zedong informed the Soviet leader on 14 November 1951 that he expected the talks would be drawn out for another

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year and a half, Stalin readily agreed, adding that “although the Americans are dragging out the negotiations, nonetheless they have more need to rapidly conclude them. This is based on the overall international situation.” In order to ensure the Americans would be denied a quick resolution of the war, Stalin informed Mao that the Soviet leadership “considers it correct that the Chinese/Korean side, using flexible tactics… continue to pursue a hard line, not showing haste and not displaying interest in a rapid end to the negotiations.”

Mao Zedong was also determined to continue the war so that the Chinese could obtain a politically advantageous position from which to end it, but by early 1952 the North Korean leadership began to voice a desire to bring their suffering to an end. With American bombing causing intolerable damage, on 16 January 1952 Pak Hon-Yong ventured to express to Peng Dehuai his opinion that “the Korean people throughout the country demand peace and do not want to continue the war.” As a loyal communist, however, Pak added that “if the Soviet Union and China consider it advantageous to continue the war, then the Central Committee of the [Korean] Workers’ Party will be able to overcome any difficulties and hold their position.”

After a further six months of stalled negotiations and devastating bombing, Kim Il Sung asked Stalin to relieve North Korea’s suffering by strengthening their antiaircraft defenses and allowing them to prepare for more active ground and air operations. Kim noted that during the past year of negotiations “we have virtually curtailed military operations and moved to a passive defense,” as a consequence of which “the enemy almost without suffering any kind of losses constantly inflicts on us huge losses

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in manpower and materiel.” He cited as an example the recent destruction of all of North Korea’s electrical power stations. Since US bombing made it impossible to restore the power stations, he noted, the North Korean economy was being severely weakened. Kim also mentioned the bombing of Pyongyang on 11-12 July that killed more than 6,000 inhabitants. He expressed agreement with the Chinese view that the enemy’s demands at the negotiations were unacceptable, but asserted that while preparing for more active military operations, “we need simultaneously to move decisively toward the soonest conclusion of an armistice, a ceasefire and transfer of all prisoners of war on the basis of the Geneva Convention.”

Kim Il Sung apparently communicated his opinion to Li Kenong as well, for Mao Zedong immediately informed the Korean leader that he rejected his proposal to reach an immediate agreement on an armistice. “At present,” Mao stated, “when the enemy is subjecting us to furious bombardment, accepting a provocative and fraudulent proposal from the enemy, which does not signify in fact any kind of concession, is highly disadvantageous to us.” The Chinese leader explained that the only harmful consequence of rejecting the enemy proposal will be further Korean and Chinese losses. However, he argued, since China began to aid Korea, the Korean people have been standing “on the front line of defense of the camp of peace of the whole world.” Moreover, through the sacrifices of the Korean people, both North Korea and Northeast China have been defended from American aggression. An additional benefit is that “the people of Korea and China, especially their armed forces, have received the possibility of being tempered and acquiring experience in the struggle against American imperialism.”

Mao further emphasized the international importance of the war in Korea. The increased might of the Korean and Chinese people in the course of this war, he asserted, “is inspiring the peace-loving peoples of the whole world” in the struggle against aggressive war and is facilitating

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the development of the movement for defense of peace throughout the world.” This international support “limits the mobility of the main forces of American imperialism and makes it suffer constant losses in the East.” Moreover, with US forces bogged down in Korea, the Soviet Union, “the stronghold of peace throughout the world,” can accelerate its rebuilding from World War II and “exercise its influence on the development of the revolutionary movement of peoples of all countries. This will mean the delay of a new world war.”

With the international stakes so high, Mao Zedong admonished his Korean “younger brother” that accepting the enemy’s proposal would “bring great harm.” To agree to the enemy’s proposal “under the influence of its bombardment” would put China and North Korea in a disadvantageous position both politically and militarily. Rather than bringing any lasting peace, it would encourage the enemy to further pressure them and make new provocations. Since the Koreans and Chinese would then be in a disadvantageous position, they would possibly fail to rebuff the new enemy provocations. In that case, the advantages the war has brought to the global struggle against American imperialism will be lost. Consequently, even if the enemy does not make a concession and the negotiations are further delayed, or if the enemy breaks off the negotiations, Korea and China must continue military operations until they find “a means for changing the present situation.”

Kim Il Sung replied by accepting Mao’s analysis without elaborating. At the same time, he also accepted Mao’s encouragement “not to be ashamed to raise questions about the assistance we need.” Interpreting the latter as a reference to military aid, Kim insisted that they must move to more aggressive military operations, since otherwise “the enemy will continue furious bombardment for the purpose of putting military pressure on us.” Kim proposed that they increase their anti-aircraft artillery strength, adopt a more active strategy for Korean and Chinese air units and improve their command. Although Stalin had sharply limited the range of Soviet air operations to the Yalu River corridor when the Soviet air force entered the war in November 1950, 25

Kim Il Sung now boldly declared that allied fighter units must now extend their operations to the border of Pyongyang. At the same time, their bomber units must go deep into enemy territory and their infantry units must attack at several points along the front line.\textsuperscript{26}

We have no record that Mao replied to Kim Il Sung’s proposals for more offensive operations, but when Zhou Enlai discussed the status of the war with Stalin the following month, in a series of meetings covering a broad range of international and domestic issues of concern to Beijing, he mentioned that the North Koreans were ready to end the war by accepting the UN offer to return 83,000 POWs.\textsuperscript{27} Zhou made it clear that the Chinese did not take the Korean view seriously. As the historian Chen Jian has documented, Mao Zedong regarded the issue of POW repatriation as a serious political struggle worth continuing the war in order to resolve to their advantage.\textsuperscript{28} Zhou thus explained to Stalin that the Koreans “have not considered the crafty game that America is playing here – out of the 83,000, only 6,400 are Chinese, and the rest Koreans…This clearly shows that they are out to provoke us, by trying to drive a wedge between China and Korea.” While Mao Zedong, Zhou reported, believed they should hold firm in their demand that all POWs be repatriated, the Koreans “believe that the continuation of the war is not advantageous because the daily losses are greater than the number of POWs whose return is being discussed.” Mao, on the other hand, “believes that the continuation of the war is advantageous to us, since it detracts the USA from preparing for a new world war.”\textsuperscript{29}

Stalin agreed with Mao’s view that prolonging the war was advantageous and dismissed the Koreans’ concerns with the memorable

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Ciphered telegram from Mao Zedong to Filippov [Stalin] 18 July 1952, conveying the telegram from Mao to Kim Il Sung on 15 July 1952 and the reply from Kim to Mao on 16 July 1952. APRF, Fond 45, Opis 1, Delo 343, Listy 72-75 and AVPRF, Fond 059a, Opis 5a, Delo 5, Papka 11, Listy 90-93. For the text of the document, see Weathersby, “New Russian Documents,” pp. 78-79.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
comment that they “have lost nothing, except people.”

The Chinese and Koreans do not need to accept the American terms, Stalin declared, because the US knows it will have to end the war. The communist allies must therefore endure and be patient. “Of course,” he conceded, “one needs to understand Korea – they have suffered many casualties. But it needs to be explained to them that this is an important matter. They need patience and lots of endurance. The war in Korea has shown America’s weakness. The armies of twenty-four countries cannot continue the war in Korea for long, since they have not achieved their goals and cannot count on success in this matter.”

To ensure that the war continue until the US gives up, Stalin was ready to assist North Korea by providing additional weapons and supplies. He asked Zhou Enlai specifically about the food situation in Korea, asserting that the Soviets can help the Koreans. Zhou reported that Korea “is having difficulties in this regard,” but that the Chinese had told Kim Il Sung that they would give them food and clothing and “everything they ask for, but that they cannot give weapons.” Stalin quickly offered to fill that gap by giving Korea additional weapons. “We will begrudge nothing to Korea,” the Soviet dictator declared.

Returning to the issue of the armistice negotiations, Zhou repeated that they cannot yield to the Americans. Stalin countered, however, that “if the Americans back down a little, then you can accept, assuming that negotiations will continue on questions still unresolved.” Zhou agreed but added that “if the Americans don’t want peace, then we must be prepared to continue the war, even if it were to take another year.” Stalin voiced agreement with China’s determination to continue fighting. Zhou then emphasized his agreement with the Soviet leader’s view that “this war is getting on America’s nerves and that the USA is not ready for world war.” He added grandly that “by playing the vanguard role in this war,” China was staving off a world war for fifteen to twenty years. By that time, “the USA will not be able to unleash a third world war at all.”

Not content with Zhou’s declarations of determination to continue the war, Stalin warned that “if America does not lose this war, China will never recapture Taiwan.” Moreover, appealing to Chinese pride, Stalin asserted theatrically that the Americans were not even a worthy opponent.

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30 Ibid. Translation by the author.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid. p. 13.
33 Ibid.
Americans are merchants. Every American soldier is a speculator, occupied with buying and selling. Germans conquered France in twenty days. It’s been already two years, and the USA has still not subdued little Korea. What kind of strength is that? America’s primary weapons, comrade Stalin joked, are stockings, cigarettes, and other merchandise. They want to subjugate the world, yet they cannot subdue little Korea. No, Americans don’t know how to fight. After the Korean war, in particular, they have lost the capability to wage a large-scale war. They are pinning their hopes on the atom bomb and air power. But one cannot win a war with that. One needs infantry, and they don’t have much infantry; the infantry they do have is weak. They are fighting with little Korea, and already people are weeping in the USA. What will happen if they start a large-scale war? Then, perhaps, everyone will weep.\footnote{Ibid.}

After further discussion of tactics for reaching agreement on POW repatriation, Zhou brought up Kim Il Sung’s proposal that they start bombing South Korea. Presenting it as a request for advice, he explained that the Koreans “are not sure whether it’s the right way to go.” By this time Soviet air units based in Manchuria had trained both Chinese and Korean pilots, hoping to turn the air war over to them. Stalin was nonetheless unwilling to have allied pilots engage the enemy over South Korean territory. He also rejected Kim Il Sung’s suggestion that they launch a new offensive. “When armistice negotiations are taking place,” Stalin declared, “they should not be launching either strategic or tactical offensives.”\footnote{Ibid.}

The Soviet leader informed Zhou that he would give China everything it needed to continue the war, and then asked about Korean morale. Zhou answered that the bombing of the electrical power station on the Yalu River had affected the Koreans’ morale. Although the Americans had failed to frighten Korea with their bombardment, “Korea is wavering somewhat. They are in a slightly unsteady state. Among certain elements
of the Korean leadership one can detect a state of panic, even.” In response, Stalin simply acknowledged that he had been informed of this.  

**North Korean Attitudes**

The Soviet leader was, in fact, kept well-informed about the morale of the North Korean leadership and population and their attitudes toward their allies as the negotiations progressed. After the first round of talks in July/August 1951, Ambassador Razuvaev reported to Stalin that when the North Korean leadership received the news that the Soviets had proposed armistice negotiations, they greeted this news “with some caution, without direct and frank statements.

Although the majority of them understood the situation and agreed with the necessity of an armistice, nonetheless, from private observations it was possible to conclude that the Korean leaders were depressed by the awareness that the war, which has destroyed the country, has not led to the unification of Korea and that now they are forced to reconcile themselves to the restoration of the prewar status quo under significantly worse conditions.

Careful to avoid angering Stalin, Kim Il Sung expressed his frustration by blaming the Chinese. He described the speech by Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations Ia. Malik on 23 June, which had signaled willingness to open negotiations, as an indication that China wanted to reach an armistice to free itself of the burden of having to assist Korea. Razuvaev reported that Kim had been disappointed in the Chinese attitude when he travelled to Beijing in July to discuss the negotiations, but he nonetheless had “objectively evaluated the forces of China, its possibilities and interests, and equally the role of Korea in the general struggle of the democratic camp.”

Kim Il Sung’s “objective” attitude consisted in avoiding any suggestion that the Soviet Union should ensure victory in the war by sending its ground forces to Korea – holding to the condition Stalin had

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37 Report from Soviet Ambassador to the DPRK Razuvaev, “The Political Mood and Korean-Chinese Relations in Connection with the Negotiations for an Armistice.”

set forth when first sanctioning the attack on South Korea.\textsuperscript{39} As Razuvaev reported, Kim repeatedly stated that the Soviet Union “represents the main reserve of the democratic camp” and therefore it is “premature” to introduce Soviet forces into the conflict. The ambassador noted the same attitude among the Korean population. On the one hand, “a general fatigue from the war is felt, and the wish to avoid further trials” while on the other hand, “a disappointment was widely felt” because an armistice would mean the “destruction of hope for final victory.” Nonetheless, “the Korean friends” wish to reach an armistice as soon as possible.\textsuperscript{40} For the remainder of the negotiations period, the embassy in Pyongyang sent regular reports on conditions in Korea, including the morale of the population and leadership.\textsuperscript{41}

Embassy reports reveal that while the Korean leadership continued to avoid questioning Soviet strategy regarding the war, they began pointedly to ignore the support they were receiving from the fraternal countries. In June 1952 the Soviet Foreign Ministry felt compelled to revise a draft resolution of the Political Council of the Central Committee of the KWP regarding the party’s tasks in the period of

\textsuperscript{39} For documentation of the terms Stalin laid out to Kim Il Sung in April 1950 see K. Weathersby “Should We Fear This? Stalin and the Danger of War with America,” Working Paper No. 39, Cold War International History Project (July 2002).

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}

the armistice, noting that “point two doesn’t mention the help to the Korean people from the Chinese People’s Volunteers and from the whole camp of peace and democracy headed by the Soviet Union.” Their corrected text read, “To make clear to the Korean people that they could gain victory in the war against the American aggressors and their satellites thanks to the fraternal help of the Chinese People’s Volunteers and the material and moral support rendered to the Korean people on the part of the camp of peace and democracy, headed by the Great Soviet Union.”

The Soviet Foreign Ministry also noted that the KWP resolution said nothing about the need to strengthen relations with the PRC. Moscow’s corrected version resolved that the task of the KWP was

In every way to strengthen the political, economic, and cultural ties with the peoples of the democratic camp, and first of all with the people of the Great Soviet Union, the Chinese People’s Republic, and the countries of people’s democracy. The unity of the peoples of the democratic camp is the hope of a guarantee against the brigand intrigues of the imperialists. The friendship with the peoples of the Great Soviet Union, the Chinese Peoples Republic and the countries of the people’s democracy is the hope that guarantees freedom, independence, and successful development of the DPRK.

On rare occasions – exceptions that proved the rule – North Korea did express gratitude for Soviet assistance. In October 1951, after Stalin presented a gift of 50,000 tons of wheat flour, the DPRK held 6,255 rallies to “allow its people to express thanks, with cries of “Long live the

42 From V. Zorin to Grigorian at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, sending the comments of MID [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] on the draft resolution of the Politsovet of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea about the tasks in the period of the armistice. Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Recent History [hereafter RTsKhIDNI], Fond 17, Opis 137, Delo 947, Listy 82-86. This repository holds the records of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party though the Stalin era.

43 *Ibid.* For other examples of Soviet supervision see “Annotations of Bulletins No. 8 and No. 9 of the North Korean Press for the Period from 15 April to 15 May 1951, dated 15 August 1951, AVPRF Fond 102, Opis 11, Delo 2, Papka 14, Listy 10, 14, 15.
great Stalin!” The Korean press published numerous articles about the “powerful demonstration of international solidarity of the camp of peace, democracy, and socialism.” The party and social organizations of the DPRK successfully elucidated to the “broad masses of workers the colossal significance of the Stalinist gift to the Korean people, tying this act with the policy being carried out by the Soviet Union of unselfish aid to the Korean people, the policy of peace and respect for the sovereign rights of large and small peoples.” Moreover, the embassy reported, Stalin’s gift and the measures connected with it have raised the fighting spirit of the population and the army.  

**Wartime Exports to the Soviet Union**

Throughout the period of the armistice negotiations, the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang compiled detailed records of the nature and scope of the destruction wrought by US bombing and the results of allied efforts to rebuild. Thus, for example, the “Account of the Work of the DPRK Ministry of Communications for the first half of 1951” recorded that over this period of time, North Korean railroads suffered the following losses: 452 of the prewar total of 559 factory buildings; 396 out of 624 station buildings; 543 out of 878 service premises; 1928 out of 2410 warehouses; 11 out of 12 schools; 40 out of 43 hospitals; 3687 out of 4500 housing structures; 2779 km out of 5644 km of rail lines; 67 out of 508 tunnels; 443 out of 1861 bridges; 73,500 km out of 99,000 km of telephone/telegraph lines; 2320 km out of 2760 km of electrical lines, stations and substations; 114 out of 368 pumping stations; 1036 out of 1249 locomotives; 830 of 945 first-class rail cars; 13,114 out of 16,986 cargo rail cars. The ministry had 15,000 people working in reconstruction, who, together with Chinese rail reconstruction workers, succeeded in keeping trains moving, though with some disruption. The report also details the Ministry’s efforts to mobilize workers for this task and the organizational measures it adopted.

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44 “About the Political Mood and Response of the Population of the DPRK in Connection with the Receipt from Gen. Stalin of the Gift to the Korean People of 50,000 Tons of Flour,” RTsKhIDNI, Fond 17, Opis 137, Delo 947, Listy 114-119.
45 “Account of the Work of the DPRK Ministry of Communications for the First Half of 1951,” by S. Lazarev, First Secretary of the Embassy of the USSR in the DPRK, 7 September 1951, AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 7, Por 54, Papka 30, Listy 45-54. See also “Report on the Damages to the National Economy of the DPRK by the American Interventionists,” by Third Secretary of the Embassy of the
Despite the massive destruction it was experiencing, North Korea was compelled to maintain its exports of valuable mineral resources to the Soviet Union. It will be recalled that when Stalin first informed Kim Il Sung in January 1950 that he would, at last, support a North Korean attack on the South, he coupled this offer with a request that the DPRK provide the USSR with a yearly minimum of 25,000 tons of lead. Even though the course of the war proved disastrous beyond anything Kim Il Sung had envisaged, his Soviet patron held him to his promise. Thus, as the abovementioned report on the work of the DPRK Ministry of Communications noted, the ministry paid extremely great attention to ensuring that the transport of lead and other ore exports continued without interruption.

Thus, although planned exports to China were suspended during the war, the DPRK continued to deliver substantial quantities of precious metals to the USSR.

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47 “Account of the Work of the DPRK Ministry of Communications for the First Half of 1951,” p. 52.
minerals to the Soviet Union. For the first eight months of 1951, the following resources were delivered to the USSR: 5,346 tons of gold/silver ore (52.7% of the planned amount for 1951); 37,840 tons of copper ore (32.6% of plan); 902 tons of tungsten concentrate (50.8% of plan); 7,600 tons of non-ferrous metal ore (58.8% of plan); 22 tons of molybdenum concentrate (30.5% of plan); 0.84 tons of beryllium concentrate (2.8% of plan); 1.29 tons of niobium concentrate (32% of plan); 2,579 tons of zinc concentrate (8.5% of plan); 13,290 tons of zinc cake (122% of plan); 186 tons of zinc (143% of plan); 75 tons of carbide (15% of plan); 588 tons of ferrosilite (106.9% of plan); 978 tons of instrumental steel (133% of plan); 13,322 tons of lead concentrate (86% of plan); 1,062 tons of lead ore (44% of plan); and 8,443 tons of lead (120.4% of plan).48

Since North Korea could not provide the required mineral exports without the help of Soviet technicians, Moscow had dispatched fifteen geologists to North Korea as early as April 1950 to do exploratory work. Despite heavy losses of personnel and equipment from the bombing, the Soviet team not only carried out their work but also trained Korean specialists, with a total of 161 trained in 1951-1952.49

Fraternal Assistance
In order to ensure that the DPRK could maintain the war effort despite the bombing, the Soviet Union sent technicians and trainers in various fields. For example, in September 1951 Moscow dispatched three specialists in the production of artificial limbs, as well as technical documentation and equipment.50 In 1952 and 1953 the Soviet Ministry of Communications sent technicians and equipment to build an underground radio broadcast station on the outskirts of Pyongyang.51 The Soviet Ministry of Defense Industries provided technical assistance in the construction of two underground defense plants.52

48 “On the Fulfillment of the Export-Import Plan of the DPRK for 1951, as of 1 September 1951,” by B. Akimov, Third Secretary of the Embassy of the USSR in the DPRK, APRF, Fond 0102, Opis 7, Delo 54, Papka 30, Listy 77-92.
49 “Report on the Technical Assistance of the Soviet Union to the Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea,” by Second Secretary of the Embassy P. M. Petrov, January 1954, AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 10, Por. 22, Papka 53, Listy 1-39. The report gives detailed information about the mineral resources in the regions of the DPRK where the teams worked and the results of their work.
50 Ibid. pp. 4-5.
51 Ibid. pp. 23-27.
The Soviet Union also ensured that China and the East European fraternal countries sent essential goods to North Korea. For 1951 the remarkable list of deliveries included: 240,000 tons of coal, 300 tons of coking coal, 300 tons of coal pitch, 12,000 tons of cast iron, 200 tons of nails, and 300 tons of wire from China; 2,100 tons of fittings from Poland; 260 tons of iron pipes, 80 tons of steam-fired pipes, 330 tons of gas pipes, 430 tons of water pipes, and 840 tons of smoke stacks from Hungary; 4 air compressors, 1,150 amp meters, 350 battery meters, 250 volt meters and 1,000 universal wrenches from Romania; 25 locomotives from Czechoslovakia and 22 from Poland; 15 cargo engines from Poland; 25 passenger locomotives from Czechoslovakia and 3 from Poland; 20 4-ton trolleys, 500 hand trolleys and 380 air brakes from Czechoslovakia; 1,000 sewing machines, 100 stock machines, 100 knitted fabric machines, and 45 silk machines from Czechoslovakia; two button presses, 27 tons of offset ink and 10 tons of typographical ink, and 32,500 meters of driving belts from Romania; 27,000 tons of auto parts and 1,250,000 tons of handicraft equipment from China; 80 telephone switchboards and 5,500 telephones from Poland; 5,000 bicycles from Czechoslovakia and 500 from China; 5,000 radio receivers from Hungary; 6 offset machines and 6 x-ray units from Czechoslovakia; 150 areometers from Romania; 150 x-ray machines from Hungary; 150 sets of dental equipment, 5 mobile dental clinics, 100 microscopes and 50 sterilizers from Czechoslovakia; 10,000 syringes and 20,000 dozens of needles from Hungary; 100 million units of penicillin from Czechoslovakia; 500 kg ether, 2,000 kg permanganate potassium acid, 21,500,000 doses of medicine, 50 tons of cotton wool, 1,000,000 meters of gauze, 1,000,000 meters of bandages from Hungary; 500 tons of plain paper, 20 tons of glossy paper from Romania and 1,000 tons of newsprint from China; 500 tons of wrapping paper, and 2,000 tons of paper for textbooks from Romania; 150 tons of cardboard bindings from Romania and Bulgaria, each; 10,000 meters of imitation leather and 1,000 tons of cotton from Romania; 100 tons of cotton yarn from Bulgaria; 2,000,000 meters of cotton fabric from Poland; 80,000 rolls of sewing thread from Bulgaria and 700,000 from Romania; 100,000 towels, 3,000,000 pairs of heavy-duty stockings from Bulgaria; 100,000 meters of woolen fabric from Romania and Bulgaria, each; 1,000,000 meters of cloth of various types from Hungary; 5,000 workers’ tents from Bulgaria; 100,000 pairs of army boots from Romania; 500,000 pairs of workers’ boots from Czechoslovakia and 100,000 from Poland; 2,000,000 dozen pencils and 237,000 toothbrushes from Czechoslovakia; 500,000 sewing needles, 40,000 tons of millet, and 20 tons of vegetable...
seeds from China. While the author did not obtain copies of equivalent reports for 1952 and 1953, there is no reason to believe this assistance did not continue for the remaining months of the war.

**Requests for Aid for Postwar Reconstruction**

As soon as the armistice was signed, Kim Il Sung displayed a new level of assertiveness in presenting Moscow with requests for postwar reconstruction. We have no records that directly reveal Kim’s thinking at this time, but from his actions it appears that the North Korean leader believed his allies owed him whatever was required to rebuild his country, since much of the destruction of the DPRK had resulted from their insistence on continuing the war for the benefit of the entire socialist camp. The pattern of aid established during the war may have strengthened this view and the passing of his fearsome patron in Moscow must have emboldened the young Korean leader. In any case, just four days after the armistice was signed, Kim confidently informed Soviet Chargé d’Affaires Suzdalev, who took over the embassy after the departure of Razuvaev, that the DPRK had decided to invite sixty-two Soviet specialists to spend six months in North Korea in order to ascertain the scale of the reconstruction work, establish the requirements for equipment, materials and workers, draw up estimates for the reconstruction of industrial enterprises, establish priorities for reconstruction, and fulfill other tasks.

53 “List of Goods Delivered to the DPRK in 1952 by China, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria,” AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 7.

53 “On the Fulfillment of the Export-Import Plan of the DPRK for 1951, as of 1 September 1951,” by B. Akimov, Third Secretary of the Embassy of the USSR in the DPRK, APRF, Fond 0102, Opis 7, Delo 54, Papka 30, Listy 77-92.

53 “Report on the Technical Assistance of the Soviet Union to the Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea,” by Second Secretary of the Embassy P. M. Petrov, January 1954, AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 10, Por. 22, Papka 53, Listy 1-39. The report gives detailed information about the mineral resources in the regions of the DPRK where the teams worked and the results of their work.


54 Letter from Kim Il Sung to S.P. Suzdalev, Charge d’Affaires of the USSR in the DPRK, 31 July 1953. Attached to the letter is information on the most
A week later Suzdalev relayed to the collective leadership in Moscow his assessment of the situation regarding Korean requests for reconstruction aid. He informed them that the DPRK intends to appeal to the Soviet government and to the governments of the people’s democracies for assistance in reconstructing the industrial enterprises that have been destroyed. The Soviet Union’s share of the work will be the restoration of six large enterprises: the Kim Chaek ferrous-metallurgical plant in Chongjin, the steel foundry in Songjin, the non-ferrous metallurgical plant in Nampo, the Hungnam chemical plant, the cement factory in Sunchon, and the Supung hydro-electric power station. Moreover, Kim Il Sung intends to ask the Soviet government to create a Soviet-Korean joint share society to restore the liquid fuel plant in Aoji, which they expect will produce liquid fuel from coal and refine the oil received from Sakhalin Island.55

“Apparently,” Suzdalev explained, the North Koreans intend “that the Soviet Union will take on the restoration of the six above indicated enterprises, i.e. the provision of engineering-technical personnel, equipment and materials, as the rendering of promised assistance.” The DPRK expects that the total request for goods from the Soviet Union for 1954 will be covered in part by Korean exports and in larger measure by long-term credit. Suzdalev noted drily that it is evident from the plans the Koreans have drawn up that “the fundamental calculations are based not on the maximal use of domestic resources but on receipt of maximum aid from the Soviet Union and the people’s democracies.”56

Kim Il Sung’s confidence was well-placed, as the Soviet Union and the other fraternal countries did in fact provide a remarkable quantity of aid to the DPRK. This assistance enabled the North Korean economy to recover from the war far more quickly than did South Korea’s, and in the process even to be touted by some Western observers as a model for developing countries.57 According to Soviet scholars, during the first

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55 Ciphered telegram from Suzdalev on 7 August 1953 to Malenkov, Molotov, Voroshilov, Khrushchev, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Saburov, Pervukhin, Gromyko, Zorin, Pushkin, Podtserob, Ilichev. APRF, No. 24, I.
56 Ibid.
57 For example, British scholar Gordon White concluded that the DPRK was “a model in the application of economic policy to safeguard and extend national
postwar planning period, the Three Year Plan for 1954-1956, 75.1% of all capital investments were financed through grants from the communist bloc; 24.6% of the state budget came from direct aid, much of it through credits; and fraternal aid and credit financed 81.5% of imports.\(^{58}\) In addition, thirty-four divisions of Chinese People’s Volunteers remained in North Korea to provide free labor for postwar reconstruction.\(^{59}\)

Suspicious of integrating North Korea’s economy with those of his communist allies as he devised plans for reconstruction, Kim Il Sung held to the autarkic model the Soviets had followed under Stalin, even though the post-Stalin leadership in Moscow had abandoned that approach on the grounds that it was an inefficient use of resources. Soviet and East European leaders criticized Kim Il Sung for stubbornly holding to an autarkic strategy, both immediately after the armistice and throughout the postwar period, but they nonetheless continued to support the DPRK.\(^{60}\)

**Conclusions**

It is fair to assume that as Stalin and Mao shaped their strategy toward the war in Korea once the armistice negotiations began in July 1951, they gave little thought to the long-term consequences that might result from political independence.” See “North Korean Chuch’e: The Political Economy of Independence,” *BCAS* (April-June 1975): 44-53.


North Korea’s response to that strategy. Instead, with full conviction in the rightness of their ideological prescriptions, they improvised tactics for the Korean situation in a manner that seemed logical and prudent. However, as was true of their treatment of their own people as well, their disregard for the well-being of their Korean allies produced unintended consequences. The Korean War left Moscow, Beijing, and the other fraternal states with a badly damaged, resentful ally they were compelled to support.

It is also fair to say that when Kim Il Sung doggedly pressed Stalin and Mao to support a full-scale invasion of the South, he could scarcely have imagined that a little over a year later his patron and his ally would insist on prolonging the destruction of his country the war unexpectedly brought, in order to advance the cause of the communist camp worldwide. North Korea’s experience of fraternal relations during the two years of the armistice negotiations thus left a toxic and paradoxical legacy. On the one hand, it created resentment and suspiciousness that have made it difficult for the DPRK to engage constructively in relations with other countries, while on the other hand, it ensured a continued flow of aid that has enabled North Korea to perpetuate these detrimental attitudes.

Dr. Kathryn Weathersby is a Visiting Professor in the Department of Political Science and Diplomacy at Sungshin Women’s University and Professorial Lecturer at the School of Advanced International Studies of The Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC. After the collapse of communist rule in the Soviet Union, she conducted extensive research in newly-available Soviet archives on Moscow’s policy toward Korea from 1944 to 1953. She has published and lectured widely on the Korean War and the Cold War in East Asia, and has taught the history of Soviet foreign policy and the history of South/North Korean relations. In 2013 the Ministry of Veteran’s Affairs of the Republic of Korea honored her with the Civilian Medal of Merit for her research on the Korean War, and in 2012 she received the Special Prize for the Promotion of Democracy from the Federation of Korean Industries.
History as Fact and Social Process

Korean Attitudes toward History in Contemporary Relations with Japan

Boudewijn Walraven

Introduction

It is but all too obvious that in the relations between Korea and Japan perceptions of history play a major and, at certain moments, decisive role. A casual glance at the daily news in the papers or on television suffices to realize this. It is worthwhile therefore to reflect what history actually means when utilized in such a context. That is by no means an easy task and I cannot pretend that in this paper I will deliver a definitive answer to that question. But I hope to stimulate some reflection on the issue by presenting some insights in the matter inspired by a research project entitled “History as Social Process: Unconventional Histories of Korea,” which I engaged in with several of my colleagues while working at Leiden University.1 Basic to that project was a distinction between the past, everything that has happened before the present moment, and history in the sense of meaningful representations of the past. This goes of course against common usage. Most people use the word history to refer to the past as well as in the sense of a narrative about the past. But it is not just a useful, but also a necessary distinction. The facts of the past are virtually innumerable. Without a selection of what is meaningful these facts “do not make sense”. The logical inference we can draw from this is that from the infinity of (objective or intersubjective) facts different selections can be made, which are equally valid in that they have an authentic relation to the past, that they are based on facts people can agree upon. Whether these selections are meaningful depends on the persons, the social groups, they are presented to and their concerns and preoccupations. To some this

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1 Results of that project can be found in the online journal that was published as part of the project: Korean Histories (www.koreanhistories.org).
may sound as a post-modern effort to destroy common-sense certainties, but it is nothing of the kind. This view of history is more than a hundred years old and was propounded by the likes of the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), who formulated it as early as 1913, and Johan Huizinga (1872-1945), the author of *The Waning of the Middle Ages* and *Homo Ludens*. Huizinga expressed it as follows:

“History does not simply equal the past. The past is a notion of time, and inasmuch as any concept is linked to it, it is one of chaos. *History, by contrast, is a product of the mind – the intelligible representation that generation after generation and civilization after civilization have to create, ever anew, out of the rough chunks of the past visible to their eyes...*” (emphasis added)

For Croce it led to his famous dictum that all history is contemporary history, which is sometimes misunderstood, but means nothing else than what Huizinga said, too, namely that in order to make history meaningful every generation of the living has to reconstitute the narrative of history on the basis of contemporary concerns.

A simple example of the selective rendering of the past is furnished by the Korean genealogies. According to Korean tradition, descent is patrilineal and the main line of a lineage is constituted by the eldest sons. That means that in the Confucian concept of the lineage there is one great-great grandfather, while if we think of inherited DNA there are eight great-great grandfathers (not to mention the great-great grandmothers).

The view of history propounded by Croce and Huizinga recognizes the relativity of any history in the sense that different narratives can be constructed on the basis of the same events in the past. But this does not necessarily condemn us to a post-modern negation of all certainty and mean that narratives are all completely arbitrary and can be fashioned just according to the fancy of the historian. Interminable discussions are possible about the questions what exactly a fact might be, what facts concerning the past are available to us and what facts not, and what are the consequences of the limitations of evidence, and the problem of how facts once we accept them as such are to be interpreted, but there are forms of evidence that with sufficient persuasive force establish

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2 This is discussed in detail in Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).
certain facts. Examples of such cases are the fact that there was a place called Auschwitz that was the site of mass murder, or the fact that in East Asia numerous women were enslaved to serve the needs of Japanese soldiers.

The Importance and Authority of History

Compared with Europe, arguments derived from history, and particularly ancient history, are quite frequently used in both Korea and Japan. If I take the Netherlands as an example for Europe, it is not wrong to say that except for professional historians and history buffs nobody cares much who lived in Holland in the first centuries CE, let alone that it would play a role in debates about the national territory. In contrast, it is striking that almost as soon as the Japanese started to entertain thoughts of expanding their territory on the continent and especially to Korea they looked for historical events in antiquity that might support this. The notorious controversy regarding the Kwanggaet’o stele of 417 CE, celebrating the exploits of the eponymous Koguryo king, was ignited in 1883, when a Japanese officer obtained a rubbing of the epigraph, and in the form of a battle of nationalisms the debate still continues. In Korea in certain circles the fact that the territory of Koguryo at a certain time covered a large part of Manchuria is seen as a valid argument for the claim that the borders of Korea should be more to the north (cf. the book title 만주는 우리 땅이다: “Manchuria is our territory”), a form of irredentism that has roots in the late Chosŏn period. Another example of the importance attached to ancient history is the controversy with China around the “ownership” (itself an intriguing notion when applied to the past) of the history of Koguryo, which aroused considerable public indignation in Korea.

A simple explanation for the importance attached to ancient history, and one that may not be altogether incorrect, might be that both Korea and Japan are in comparison with European countries nations with greater historical depth. Although I have not studied the case of Japan sufficiently to confidently pronounce about this issue, I nevertheless do not think that this means that Japan and Korea have attached great value to history for exactly the same reasons. In Japan it has probably been the

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(spurious) ideology of the unbroken line of emperors going back to 660 BCE, which was officially promoted after the Meiji Restoration, that has promoted a historical awareness that attaches great value to ancient times. In Korea, I think, other factors have been crucial. From an early date, history has been more than a succession of events. Behind the events of human life there were the principles of the cosmos, with Heaven as the supreme force, a force that was impartial, but not neutral as to morality. Virtuous rulers would earn the Mandate of Heaven, evil monarchs lose it. Heaven might also send warnings in the form of unseasonal weather or strikes of lightning. History therefore was seen as a kind of morality play, which if properly studied might guide humankind. Policy discussions at court invariably would invoke historical parallels and precedents. This gave history a unique authority.

It would be absurd to suggest that present-day Koreans have the same concept of history. But I do think that what has survived is a tendency to attach great value to history and to see history in moral terms. This tendency is certainly not absent in other cultures, but in Korea appears in a particularly pronounced form. It has contributed, I would venture, to inform the nationalistic education of history, itself a common phenomenon in many modern nation-states all over the globe, which in turn has strengthened views of the past as a Manichaean struggle between the forces of good and evil.

Overcoming the limits of nationalistic history
Linking historiography to matters of morality is not something to be categorically rejected. Prominent thinkers about the uses of history such as Hayden White have endorsed the connection. But when nationalism is involved there is a problem. It has for a long time been recognized that history writing functions as one of the ways in which nation-states create their imagined communities, usually by focusing on the positive aspects of history, while closing their eyes to less palatable episodes, for instance moments of internal strife and bloody conflict (or deliberately erasing them). Viewing history as a social process leads one to understand the need for such historiography, but becomes problematic when the past one tries to understand also concerns social groups that are smaller than

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the community of the nation, or social groups that go beyond the nation-state. One instance of the latter is seen when two nation-states confront each other.\textsuperscript{6} This is of course the situation of Korea and Japan and it is an all too well-known fact that one of the greatest problems between the two countries is Japan’s refusal to assume responsibility for the issue of sexual slavery forced on women of several nationalities during the wars that Japan fought in China and the Pacific. In Japan’s relations with China a similar case is furnished by the Nanjing massacre. My personal stance on this is simple. I regard it as totally unacceptable that the Japanese government continues to deny responsibility, in whole or in part. Some nuances may be added, but the evidence is overwhelming in both cases and there is a very wide consensus in the international community that Japan should recognize this. Yet, for a resolution of the conflict it may be useful to consider the attitudes toward certain shameful episodes in the past in a more general comparative perspective.

The study of the past tells us that despicable acts have been committed by the people of almost any nation, including countries we usually admire as civilized and enlightened. Americans have been guilty of genocidal killings of the native population of North America and massacres such as in My Lai. The British were guilty, for example, of exterminating the aboriginal population of Tasmania.\textsuperscript{7} Israel during its initial push to clear the land in 1948 indiscriminately massacred 300 civilians in a manner we would now rather associate with the Islamic State.\textsuperscript{8} The Dutch in Indonesia committed massacres both when they “pacified” the country in the 19th century and when the Indonesians fought for their independence after 1945 (and, I should add, the government dragged its feet in recognizing responsibility for the more recent crimes).

What about Korea? Is it an exception? There are fierce debates about this, but there is a very widely diffused perception that Korea always has been a peaceful nation. Yi Kwangsu in \textit{Na ūi kobaek} voiced

\textsuperscript{6} There are of course social groups that go beyond the boundaries of the nation-state of a different kind as well. An example would be the Kurdish people, who live in an area that is part of four nation-states, none of which is Kurdish politically.
\textsuperscript{7} Tom Lawson, \textit{The Last Man: A British Genocide in Tasmania} (London: Tauris, 2014).
the opinion that Korea never had invaded another country and at a conference I recently attended one of the participants claimed that there was no country on earth as kind as Korea (우리처럼 착한 나라가 없다). I do think that Korea probably has a better record than many other countries, but the view of Korea as 100% benign ignores centuries of war between the Three Kingdoms (an ignoring that, as Benedict Anderson has reminded us in the revised edition of *Imagined Communities*, is quite typical of the way nations remember or do not remember their past). It is moreover not nations but people who are kind-hearted. Seen in this way, the massacres perpetrated by both sides during the Korean War and the killing of civilians by ROK forces in the Vietnam War make it difficult to maintain that the Korean record is totally unblemished in this regard. Nor would the World War II POWs and civilian internees in the camps in Indonesia agree that the Koreans who guarded them on behalf of the Japanese were generally “kind.” On the whole they were more feared than the Japanese. Some were convicted of war crimes.

The relevance of this for the current confrontation between Japan and Korea is not that it exonerates Japan. Japan should recognize the dark spots in its past and where the consequences of its aggression and inhumanity linger take action to atone for it. But when making demands for this, Korea should recognize that Japan is not the only country that prefers to close its eyes to certain parts of its past. When Korea demonstrates an awareness of instances of its own moral frailty, and realizes that abysmal conduct is not the privilege of just a few nations, it will paradoxically gain in moral prestige and be in a position to claim the moral high ground. This will not solve the problems immediately, but will be conducive to creating a climate that allows a resolution. It will also put a brake on efforts to fan a mindless nationalism for which it is an axiom, not in need of further reflection, that Korea is right.

In this context, one might add, as the Tokyo correspondent of the *Hankyoreh* newspaper wrote, that the introduction in the Republic of Korea of a uniform government-controlled history textbook (something not even the Abe government is considering doing in spite of its efforts to efface disagreeable aspects of the past) would weaken Korea’s claim to the moral high ground and “would fundamentally damage South Korea’s national interests in its diplomatic relations with Japan” (*Hankyoreh* August 27, 2014). Affecting freedom of education, it will also have a negative impact on Korea’s image in the OECD countries. In the final analysis, and for various reasons, a teaching of history that also recognizes
its less glorious aspects is in Korea’s best interest (and the same, of course, goes for Japan).

The Dokdo Question
The Dokdo controversy is a prime example of a conflict in which historical arguments play a major role. I will not repeat all these arguments, which would anyway be impossible within a paper of this kind, but review some of the problems attached to the use of such arguments, as well as reflect on the way the arguments are used. Not to keep you in suspense I want to make clear from the outset that I think that Japan should acquiesce in Korea’s domination over the island, although I would like to question the wisdom of some of the policies of the ROK with regard to the issue.

Many of the arguments concern the question who was there first, the most fundamental historical question. In this respect Korea seems to have the strongest claims, be it that the fact that the island appears to change names over time somewhat diminishes the persuasive force of records and maps. However, unless there is uninterrupted possession and occupation of a particular place, there is a problem with historical evidence to the effect that at a certain date a particular site was in the hands of a particular actor. Which date in history should be decisive? Are the Jews entitled to Palestine because they lived there in the days of the Roman Empire? If so, should the maps of Europe all be redrawn to reflect the state of affairs in Roman times? Should Korea take possession of Manchuria because at a certain moment it was the territory of Koguryŏ? It is obvious that from a pragmatic point of view that is a non-starter. It is also theoretically absurd. If the oldest date would be the most authoritative, we should all move back to Africa, the ultimate origin of *homo sapiens*. If we are to use historical arguments at all (and I think we should), we have to look for dates that somehow carry a meaning that is more than a notch on a time scale, that is look for what we may call qualitative historical arguments.

The year 1905, the date of the supposed agreement that might justify Japanese claims to Dokdo, has exactly the quality I speak about. Viewed in the context of what happened then, it obviously means that the agreement was part of Japan’s encroachment, of Japan’s colonial expansion. Rather than being evidence for Japan’s claims, to the historian the agreement speaks in Korea’s favor (although specialists in international law may take another view). Perhaps it is not necessary for Japan to demonstrate remorse for colonialism in perpetuity, but it should
at least take the stance that in the present it will not profit from colonialism at the expense of the colonized.

The importance of the year 1905 has also been emphasized by Wada Haruki, who advocates recognition of Korean sovereignty over Dokdo, but also thinks that “the South Korean government should not designate Dokdo as a starting point of the state’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and should ensure the fishing rights of Japanese fishermen as they stand now” (Hankyoreh, November 6, 2013). In reaction to this the paper reported that Lee Won-deog, director of the Institute of Japanese Studies said, “In terms of Koreans’ national sentiment, there are many aspects of [Wada’s] ideas that would be impossible to accept, but his opinion that we must aggressively and swiftly move to solve the Dokdo issue is a very fresh take on the matter.” How should we regard “Koreans’ national sentiment” as mentioned by Lee Won-deog in this case? Is it a given, which cannot or should not be changed? Is it equivalent to Korean patriotism and as such desirable or indispensable?

The issue of Dokdo is potentially connected to concrete interests, the exploitation of the seas around the island (fishery rights) and possible resources under the seabed (oil, gas). It is clear, however, that both parties have aggravated the conflict by inciting the general public to take a stand. In Korea, “national sentiment” has been influenced by concerted calls on ordinary citizens to do something about Dokdo, in various forms, to join committees for the defense of the island, for instance, and show their support by brief visits to Dokdo. The veterans of the marines have demonstrated in front of the Japanese embassy, with blood-thirsty slogans (미친 개 한테는 몽동이 악이다: “A good beating is the best medicine for a mad dog”), and proclaiming a willingness to go to war over the issue. More innocuously, television spots invite us to love and admire Dokdo’s nature, its flowers, birds and even its insects, which is presented as the duty of a true patriot. In the past two years I have failed to detect any doubts as to the wisdom of this on the part of the Korean public, but it can be argued that all this does more harm than good. To begin with, it is superfluous and thus a waste of resources; Dokdo is firmly in Korean hands. I leave it to others to judge why in spite of that considerable sums are spent on “Dokdo campaigns”. It is clear, however, that Korean actions lead to Japanese reactions, weakening Japanese willingness to take a step back and diminishing options for reconciliation. It should also be noted that the rather strident tone of some of the Korean insistence that Dokdo is
Korean does not always go down well overseas. The Japanese claim to the island, although not justified, is moreover not an example of flagrant iniquitousness harming people in a serious way (which makes it very different from the sexual slavery issue). Fundamentally it belongs to a rather simple type of international conflict, a territorial dispute about national interests that does not immediately involve the identity and wellbeing of people. In the final analysis it is the Korean frustration about Japan’s attitude to past history in general that turns the heat up so much in this conflict. In a way this frustration is understandable, but at the same time it is regrettable, because it stands in the way of the resolution of the Dokdo problem, the solution of which in turn might improve relations more generally.

**Conclusion**

We have seen that the past does not always deliver a clear verdict as to what should happen in the present. In the final analysis, there is one issue that should be decisive in the disputes where historical arguments are marshaled to buttress political positions: the interests of people presently living, irrespective of their nationality or ethnicity. Judged by this criterion yet another issue, the debate about the name of the sea between Korea and Japan, is hardly relevant. Neither party has reason to get worked up about this issue. The passions the matter rouses in Korea can only be explained by the linking of the question of the name of the East Sea to other outstanding issues. To a considerable degree it seems motivated by pique that the outside world has tended to follow Japanese usage, also in other instances. This, once again, is understandable, certainly in view of past events, and there is no harm in reminding the world that Japan and Korea have different names for what is in essence a nameless expanse of water, but there is no reason to represent the Japanese claim that the sea is called the Sea of Japan as an act of villainy.

The interests of those presently living may include correct historical representations. This is the case when a representation of the past negatively affects the reputation of the living. An example might be representing the Korean people as fundamentally incapable of taking care of themselves, a stereotype that was promoted by the Japanese to justify the annexation of Korea but not rarely shared by western observers. A representative of the latter was the prominent American philosopher and educator George Trumbull Ladd who in 1908 published *In Korea with
Prince Ito, a title that unabashedly reveals its author’s sympathies. Remnants of such thinking that encourage negative views of Korea in the present deserve to be vigorously condemned. As far as serious professional history is concerned this is not a great problem, but among the general public old prejudices sometimes survive with remarkable tenacity.

In conclusion, it is important to distinguish carefully between different uses and different kinds of representations of history. Some representations contradict historical evidence and are morally despicable; some others are weakly supported by evidence but morally more or less neutral; others, again, can be justified with evidence, even though the events to which they refer might also justify a quite different representation. It may be difficult to accept for the general public, educated as it is with monolithic visions of history, but the past can render different histories, potentially of equal value in their own contexts. If all representations of the past formulated by one nation at a particular moment are regarded as of the same value and order, irrespective of their moral implications, and used indiscriminately as building blocks to fortify the condemnation of the Other, the result will be a climate of distrust in which even comparatively simple problems cannot be solved. Recognizing the creation of histories as the social process it is may help avoid this pitfall.

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.

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“Go-un” Choi Chi-won’s Pungryu

Korea’s “Flowing Like the Wind” Cultural Theme

David A. Mason

“No-un” Choi Chi-won1 (857-?), the key ancestral figure of the august Choi family with its roots in Gyeongju, Korea’s greatest ancient capital, was a noted Korean government official, philosopher, poet, scholar, writer and spiritual sage of the end of the Unified Shilla Dynasty (668-935 CE). He remains one of the world’s favorite figures of all Korea’s cultural history, displaying a plentitude of national virtues and talents, and also symbolizing many key themes. Exemplifying the spirit of the Shilla Kingdom’s waning days, and the incipient harmony among Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism, he is altogether a general “culture hero” of Korean tradition.

He was a brilliant student and then scholar-official who studied for six years in the Chinese capital, passed the Tang Dynasty’s imperial examination, and rose to high office there before assisting in the defeat of a major rebellion. He then returned to Shilla, where he made ultimately futile attempts to reform the governmental apparatus of a declining and corrupt royal government there. Becoming a wandering Daoist adept in the deep mountains, he transformed into a legendary sage, with many tales told about him and many classic writings left behind.

He is honored today as the effective progenitor of the Gyeongju Choi Clan, which has produced so many illustrious figures in the 1100 years after him. He has been proclaimed to be a “great sage” since the 11th century and is still called that today, and he is already rather casually referred to by the title “the ancient sage” in the main history of early Korean culture written around 1280.2 When western scholars such as the

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1 孤雲 崔致遠, 고운 최치원.
2 Iryeon, pg. 29.
early protestant missionaries first began to study the history of Korean thought, he was one of the first great persons to be researched and written about in the first journals of Korean Studies, already hailed as the ‘father of Korean literature.’ One of the leading contemporary scholars of Korean religions calls him “the most significant Confucian scholar of the Shilla period.”

Choi Chi-won is primarily known to Koreans and international scholars by the literary / scholar appellation (pen-name) Go-un which means “Lone Cloud”, with the implication of “lonely” along with solitary. This is believed to be a reference to the youthful loneliness he expressed while living in China far from his family, and also to traveling without companions around the southern part of the nation near the end of his life, just drifting like a wind-swept cloud in a mood of regretful despair over the ongoing collapse of his native kingdom. He is sometimes known by the similar appellation Hae-un which means “Sea Cloud,” due to his strong association with Haeundae beach in Busan.

He remains to us today as one of Korea’s most interesting and iconic historical figures, who ranked as one of the primary luminaries of traditional Korean culture, particularly its Daoist traditions known by such native terms as Seondo and the Shinseon-sasang. He is considered to be a successor of the early “Four Immortals of the Shilla Kingdom” and the great Korean Daoist master Kim Ga-gi who taught near Xian, China.

Choi is regarded as one of the progenitors of all Korean literature, especially skilled in composing historical, biographical, diplomatic and government-policy essays, and in classical poetry. The famous late-Joseon scholar “Dasan” Jeong Yak-yong proclaimed him to be one of the three best writers of Korean literature’s first millennium, the Shilla Kingdom and Goryeo Dynasty eras (the other two were Confucian Prime Minister Yi Gyu-bo and Buddhist National Master Cheonjack). He served both the

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3 Jones, 1903, particularly pg. 16.
5 Seondo: 仙道, 선도, Immortal Pathway or Way to Longevity. Shinseon-sasang: 神仙思想, 신선사상, Spirit-Immortals’ Ideology or Philosophy of Spiritual Longevity.
6 茶山 丁若鏞, 다산 정약용, 1762-1836; one of the leading figures in Korea’s intellectual history.
7 이규보, 1168–1241. 천책국사, 13th century.
Tang and Shilla dynasties as magistrate of important local areas and as an official composer of government proclamations.

In addition, Master Go-un is credited by Seondo [Korean Daoism] adherents and other cultural nationalists with discovering the "original version" of the Cheonbu-gyeong\(^8\) carved on a cliff or stone monument at a holy mountain now in North Korea, and translating it into classical Chinese characters. He thereby is credited with producing the version of it that is today regarded as the fundamental yet brief Korean Daoist sacred-text, obscure in meaning but mainly interpreted as a cosmological, spiritual-practice and/or healing treatise in the same tradition as China's ancient I Ching [Classic of Changes]; and yet uniquely Korean.

Following a remarkably successful career as a brilliant, honest and dedicated Confucian government official in Tang China and then back in his native Gyeongju, Choi Chi-won is considered to be one of only a handful of Koreans who achieved the highest level of Daoist sage-hood during the Three Kingdoms and Unified Shilla eras. He is held by religious tradition, popular opinion and old folktales to have achieved *shinseon*\(^9\) status at the peak of Mt. Gaya-san rather than dying as a normal human, and therefore during the 20\(^{th}\) century recounts of Korea’s cultural history the dates of his life have generally been written as “(857-?)” to indicate that we just don’t know any certain facts about the date or circumstances of his death – and that some people don’t believe that he “died” at all.

Choi was awarded the highest possible honors by the next thousand years of dynastic rulers, throughout the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties. Statues and other relics of him are still enshrined in several places in China, and he is even honored by Japanese cultural traditionalists.

Today, there are many sites all around South Korea that claim association with him, asserting that he was present there at some point and perhaps accomplished some spiritual attainment, wrote a poem or so-on. He is known to have left Chinese characters in his calligraphy carved on rocks and cliffs in various places, and to have authored the inscriptions on

\(^8\) 天符經，천부경, Celestial Amulet Scripture.

\(^9\) 神仙 / 仙人, 신선/선인, spirit-immortal / immortal-person; “immortality” of reputation & legacy at least, said to be of spirit and possibly with some continued corporal appearances on Earth.
a few *biseok* stone steles at temples in the mountains, four of which still survive.

Records about his actual biography and accomplishments more than 1000 years ago are only fragmentary however, found in various documents surviving from both China and Korea, and in some cases appear to contradict each other. It has been difficult for scholars to separate the folklore myths and legends about his life from the solid facts, and make a coherent story out of them. There are nearly one-hundred associated tourist and cultural sites found around South Korea that exemplify his legacy. These many sites associated with him are now utilized as attractive cultural tourist sites, mainly for Koreans; they could be promoted for attraction of international visitors.
In particular, Choi is credited with the first-known usage of the concept-term “pungryu”,\(^\text{10}\) which has become a basic and essential idea in all discussions of Korean culture, especially those about the traditional performing arts. He cited it as Korea’s characteristic blending of the “Three Doctrines” of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism on the basis of indigenous spiritual culture, “so as to transform the people into sages,” offering a way of self-cultivation that emphasized seeking natural yet tasteful beauty as context for pleasurable song and dance, as a pathway towards vitality infused with wisdom.

*Pungryu-do*\(^\text{11}\) or the “Way of Flowing like the Wind” incorporates ideas such as living within and in harmony with nature; enjoying and being skilled at music, singing, dancing, painting, poetry and calligraphy; being merry and free from worldly cares yet retaining elegance and dignity. It is strongly related to the more aesthetic and spiritual, but less martial, aspects of the *Hwarang-do*\(^\text{12}\) of the ancient Shilla Kingdom, which also encompassed the enjoyment of activities that combine the elements of nature, vitality and art. It is a practical and aspirational pathway to transcend material and secular desires towards developing a healthy body, a tranquil mind and enlightened freedom within the cosmic absolute. Today, *pungryu* is also a term for traditional ensemble-chamber music and dance compositions and performances, one of the best representations of the elegant aristocratic philosophy of the pre-modern Korean society.

In the section on King Jinheung in the *Samguk Sagi*,\(^\text{13}\) in discussing developments of the Hwarang Corps and their ideology / customs,\(^\text{14}\) Choi Chi-won is introduced as writing in his “Preface to the Stele of Hwarang Leader Nallang” (the *Nallang-biseok*, no longer extant; nothing else is known about Mr. Nallang):

\(^{10}\) 風流, 풍류, wind-flowing, sometimes also spelled *pungnyu*.

\(^{11}\) 風流道, 풍류도, wind-flowing pathway; also spelled *pungnyudo*.

\(^{12}\) 花郞道, 화랑도, Way of Flowering-Youth, referring to Buddhist-inspired elite warriors.

\(^{13}\) Jinheung Year 37, 576 CE; see Kim Bu-shik page 131.

\(^{14}\) Hwarang-do, 花郞道, 화랑도, Way of Flowering-Youth, referring to teenaged Buddhist-inspired elite warriors and cultural practitioners, a key institution in the Shilla Kingdom’s development and eventual supremacy over the three rival Korean states (including Gaya).
“Our country has a wonderful mysterious dao (tradition, principle, way; 道) called pungryu,
which is profound and sublime.
Its source is described in detail in the Seonsa.\(^{15}\)

In fact it combines the Three Doctrines
(Confucianism, Daoism & Buddhism),
and grafts them together
so as to transform the people into sages.

To practice filial piety within the family
and loyalty to the nation outside
was taught by Confucius.
To practice non-action\(^{16}\) and instruction-without-words
was taught by Lao-tzu.
To practice good deeds and avoid all evil
(thus improving karma towards enlightenment)
was taught by the Buddha.”

This is the first known mention of the term pungryu [風流; wind-flowing; also spelled pungnyu], and the only time it is used in the Samguk Sagi (it does not appear of all in the Samguk Yusa or any pre-Goryeo writings). Choi apparently coined this term to mean “refined, elegant, noble tastes” (especially in music, singing & dancing) as a unique aspect of Shilla culture practiced by the elite Hwarang soldier-leaders, and then handed down as an indigenous Korean cultural factor that integrates the three imported Chinese religions in a way that preserves native spiritual practices – beyond mere animistic shamanism. In this phrase “the flowing of the wind” or “flowing like the wind”, it is important to understand the deep and broad meaning of the initial character 風/풍/pung. Beyond its common meaning “wind” it can also, in usage with other characters, mean cultivation, atmosphere, mood, customs, demeanor, morality, style,

\(^{15}\)仙史, Immortals’ History, thought to be a Chronicle of the Hwarang Corps, no longer extant.

\(^{16}\)無-為, 無為 or 无为; 무위, muwi in Korean; literally “not-doing” or “not acting,” but really meaning acting in this world not with egoist intention but rather heart-intuitively, a primary ancient Daoist concept. “instruction-without-words” is also a key Seon [Chan, Zen] Buddhist idea.
"Go-un" Choi Chi-won’s Pungryu

manners, conduct, discipline and ‘virtue-power’. We must combine all these to comprehend that which Choi meant was flowing, or should flow.

This seems to be quite a novel idea in all of Northeast Asia back in those days; the “three teachings” of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism (and not to mention indigenous folk-shamanism) remained quite distinctly separate back in China for another 600 years or so – only well into the Ming Dynasty did Chinese intellectuals come to believe that they could be harmoniously blended as a broader humanist philosophy and the conduct of a ‘good’ lifestyle. It is possible that this statement of Choi and the Goryeo-era explications of it influenced this development in the Ming, but I have so-far found no direct evidence for that.

Pungryu continues to be a key concept in discussing traditional Korean culture, meaning an aesthetic expression of devotion to nature and serene naturalness, seamlessly integrating them with lifestyle and the arts; particularly in the musical arts, including dancing and singing; but especially associated with the gayageum and geomungo stringed zither instruments, which Choi is said to have been an enthusiastic master of. It is also applied to skilled and soulful classical playing of the haegeum fiddles, piri & daegeum flutes, and janggo drums.

Today, pungryu is also a term for traditional ensemble-chamber music and dance compositions and performances, one of the best representations of the elegant aristocratic philosophy of the pre-modern Korean society. It remains a basic and essential idea in all discussions of the older forms of Korean culture, especially those about the traditional performing arts. There are popular national repertories of what is broadly called ‘pungryu music’ (the term is also used in official designations of musical genres of local cultural heritage, such as the Gurye Julpungnyu and Iri Julpungnyu).

This concept is also very much involved in all discussions of Korea’s traditional landscape and genre paintings, traditional architecture and landscape design, and the relaxed sensual pleasures of literati retreat-garden culture with its associated customs of drinking alcohol and green tea while creating lovely poetry and enjoying witty conversation.

Choi might only have intended to describe the Hwarang corps’s combination and blending of the “Three Doctrines” of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism in their ideology and behavior, but the 1100-year legacy so-far of this brief statement has been extremely profound. It has

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17 For initial reference, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanyi_teaching
18 Zoh and Seo, 2000.
come to be widely cited as Korea’s characteristic blending of those three religions in a balanced way on the basis of indigenous spiritual culture, offering a way of self-cultivation that emphasized seeking natural yet tasteful beauty as context for pleasurable song and dance.

Recognizing the dynamic creativity in the best of Korean thought even as he struggled to realize the highest wisdom in the imported Chinese traditions, Choi could not find the words for his profound insights of the ‘mysterious currents’ that swirl at the crossroads of these three ‘Dao’-religions, and that Korean culture had long manifested them. Further evidence of Choi deeply believing in this concept as it burgeoned in his mind is provided by Seoul National University senior professor of Religious Studies Keum Jang-tae, in describing the famous inscription on the biseok stele-monument at Jiri-san Ssanggye-sa:

“Choi Chi-won … began his eulogy of the royal mentor [Wangsa] Jin-gam by saying ‘The Way [Dao] is not far from humanity and does not differ from man to man. Therefore the young people of our nation worship both Buddhism and Confucianism. Therefore, during the Three Kingdoms period, Buddhism and Confucianism benefited our people side-by-side in harmony with the Way.’”

Pungryu-do combines the best doctrines of those three Chinese-Korean religious traditions, such as practicing filial piety in the family and loyalty to the nation (as taught by Confucius), practice-ing non-doing and instruction-without-words (as taught by Laozi), and practicing good deeds while avoiding evil (as taught by the Buddha), and grafts them together “so as to transform the people into sages” – to educate them toward ethical behavior and eventual enlightenment. It therefore also offers a pathway to deeper spiritual experience in a context of all the best of Northeast Asian philosophical thinking of three millennia, through practices of contemplation of beauty, inner peacefulness, diligent scholarship and vibrant artistic endeavors that unify enjoyment of authentic nature with mindful self-control, towards self-cultivation into ‘sage-hood’. Choi himself is widely said to have practiced this pungryu on pavilions in scenic natural spots.

There were a few hardline Neo-Confucian scholars of the late Joseon period that misunderstood Choi’s pungryu doctrine as revealing

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19 Keum 2000, pg. 36.
him to be overly sympathetic to Daoism and Buddhism, not a ‘pure’ enough Confucian, but only hiding his mystical religious beliefs while faking to be a rationalist scholar like them. They denounced him for placing Daoism and Buddhism on the same level of value as their “orthodox” Confucian doctrines.20

These critics did not seem to understand the great complement he was paying and contribution he was making to the entire realm of Korea’s spiritual traditions, using the ancient harmonious spirit of the Hwarang corps as a base upon which he built a practical theory that incorporated with precision and depth the best aspects of the “Three Teachings” – actually a sagely precursor of what the great founder Neo-Confucianism Zhuxi would accomplish in-full three centuries later. His ideas were based not only on a rigorous analysis of the texts of the three ancient masters Confucius, Buddha and Laozi, but on his passionate love of the enlightened wisdom contained in all of them. His attitude was ecumenical and open-minded, the very mark of a great mind, as opposed to his critics’ narrow fundamentalism; a contrast that still bedevils public affairs in our contentious modern world.

In one of his lines Sage Go-un was even critical of conventional Buddhist believers who only donated money in public for their own reputation for karmic benefit but neglected the deeper wisdom that required great struggle to obtain: “It is a simple matter to build a temple, but a difficult one to discover the Dharmā [law, teachings, truth].” He was in search of universal Dharma, not the limited dharma of any one particular religion. And he lived in full recognition of how difficult that pilgrimage is, declaring in a few works that the only dao worth talking about is to realize the 常道 or 至道 – both of which mean the higher, essential, universal, unchanging Dao – while never being satisfied with what one has already discovered in studies and practice, but always having the courage to continue climbing ever steeper slopes in one’s research towards the infinite summit: “It is like piercing a hole in a blade of dew-covered grass.”

If Choi had really wanted to devote himself to one or the other of the more otherworldly religious traditions, he certainly could have become a Buddhist or Daoist monk in his last years of wandering in Korea’s sacred mountains. Many of the Confucian scholar-officials in China and Korea did exactly that both before and after his times, and there was no authority that would have sanctioned him for doing-so. But he remained

with his own true identity right to the end, not attempting any ‘escape’ into mysticism, but still hoping as a Confucian that the severe ills that he had witnessed in his era might be ameliorated through the *pungryu* spirit that he described, in an attempt to revive it towards national salvation.

In an initial summary here, it has been recently declared on Arirang Television that:

“For over 2000 years, *pungryu* has broadly influenced Korean artistry and traditional Korean beliefs. It also instilled Koreans with a strong desire to achieve peaceful coexistence with the world.”

There is even some discussion in contemporary Korean Christian theological expositions of a “Pungryu Theology” that can be developed out of Choi’s *pungryu*-do, seeking to reconcile traditional Christian theology with the three traditional northeast Asian religions and fit them together with modern Korean sensibilities and lifestyles. “Live One Beautiful Life, Let Nature Be (with no killing), All living beings Harmonize to become One, Be Benevolent to Everyone, Pursue Creative Liberation, and Have a Good Day Everyday!” are some of the ambitious slogans of this movement that were communicated to this author some two decades ago (source seems no longer known or available).

An official government online dictionary of Korea’s traditional musical culture offers this broader definition:

“Pungryu, according to Choi Chi-won, is an indigenous Korean perspective that encompasses foreign philosophies and religions. Practices of *pungryu* can be traced to principle training methods of Hwarang groups; members dwelled in the mountains and enjoyed nature, singing and dancing to train the body, purify the soul, and control the mind. Pungryu, thus, is used as a collective term indicating an aesthetic enjoyment of nature, central to traditional Korean thought. It is defined as refined and stylish recreation, intrinsic to a tasteful lifestyle, and relevant to Korean collective and individual entertainment culture.

In terms of collective leisure, Koreans have traditionally celebrated seasonal festivals such as *Seol* (lunar new year’s day), *Dano* (fifth day

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of fifth lunar month) and Chuseok (fifteenth day of eighth lunar month). By enjoying these festive occasions, people recharged by taking a break from hard work and remembering their ancestors. While pungryu played a part in seasonal festivals, it was perhaps more conducive to an individual level of leisure, entertainment, and lifestyle.

As a reflective activity, pungryu was a tool for transcending material and secular desires and developing peace of mind. Pungryu activities included enjoying nature by traveling, and singing and dancing to achieve harmony with nature.

Cultivating musical skills was seen as following Do (Tao in Chinese), or the Way, and pungryu outlined the underlying basic assumptions. Music was a useful tool of self-discipline to achieve a proper state of mind and cultivate culture, which by way of pungryu, could result in harmony among people, nature, and refined arts.

Later the term pungryu was associated with the Neo-Confucian ideology of the Joseon period and the philosophical stance of the ruling elite of Korea. Pungryu was deemed an important activity, and Confucian literati cultivated their distinct pungryu music culture accordingly.22

Dr. Jeong Hae-young, a leading contemporary psychologist and psychotherapist in the context of Korean culture, explicates in a deeper way:

*Pungryu* is essentially a notion of living in harmony with or becoming one with nature. It refers to a lifestyle of living naturally like the way the wind blows and the flow goes, representing a harmonious way of life in tune with nature. As a philosophy aspiring towards nature and harmony, it rejects all sorts of dichotomies and embraces a variety of different thoughts and beliefs. When Buddhism, Confucianism and other non-indigenous thoughts were introduced to Korea, *Pungryu* attitudes and approaches were able to facilitate their local integration without any problem. The philosophical features of Pungryu clearly enabled Korean societies not to lean towards any particular religion or ideology, but to gain a comprehensive understanding of various spiritualities and philosophies and to strive for their successful coexistence.

*Pungryu* also refers to both aesthetic practice and a spirit of play. It is to enjoy the good things in life such as music, arts and literature while being in a naturally free and easy atmosphere. *Pungryu* encompasses everything there is about fun and enjoyment in Korean culture.

22 http://www.gugak.go.kr/download/data/dict_20101124195149.PDF
… Choi Chi-won explained it with the notion of *jeophwa-gunsaeng* [接化群生] meaning that one is to interact with every living being including animals and plants, and it is *Pungryu* that enables this. At that time, *Pungryu* was regarded as a way for Koreans to relate to others in solidarity and harmony, while disciplining the body and the spiritual state of mind. …

As a foundation for the Korean philosophy of maintaining a natural lifestyle that generates the spirit of play along with an emphasis on its meaning in art and nature, *Pungryu* is profoundly imbedded in the Korean mind. Representing a philosophy of life in harmony with nature within the national spirit of *Han* (oneness), commonly referred to as the backbone of the Korean mind, *Pungryu* has apparently led Koreans along the path to social awareness, of the need for justice and freedom. The philosophies of *Ilshim* (one mind), *Gi* (matter or vital energy), *Donghak* (eastern learning) and *Sisal* (seed) in particular are notable illustrations of such aspects of the influence of *Pungryu* throughout the centuries.²³

And in a typical laudatory modern-media evaluation, famed South Korean journalist Yun Sang-woo recently credited Choi Chi-won with combining “foreign-rooted ideologies of the great Confucian scholars, Buddhist masters and *Seondo* Daoist sages on the basis of ancient indigenous Shamanist belief (巫, 무) and thereby fusing and harmonizing them all to establish the pungryu ‘taste’ (unique flavor) for the first time ever.”²⁴

In conclusion, “*Go-un*” Choi Chi-won left a profound and long-lasting legacy in all subsequent Korean culture by his creation of the concept-term *pungryu*, and indeed *Han-guk munwha* cannot really be understood unless this ‘flowing of the wind’ factor is included.

**REFERENCES**


²³ Jeong 2014, Chapter 2, “Korean Philosophy”.
²⁴ Yun, 2014.
“Go-un” Choi Chi-won’s Pungryu


David A. Mason is a Professor of Korean Public Service at Chung-Ang University in Seoul City, Korea. He serves as the international Honorary Ambassador of the Baekdu-daegan Mountain-Range; as a tour-guide for many local and international groups, and as a researcher, lecturer and author on religious tourism to Korea's mountains and other traditional cultural sites. He earned an MA in the History of Korean Religions from Yonsei University in 1997, and worked 5 years for the national Ministry of Culture and Tourism, developing programs such as “Dynamic Korea” and the popular “TempleStay.” He has authored nine previous books on Korean culture and tourism, including Spirit of the Mountains and An Encyclopedia of Korean Buddhism; his main website is www.san-shin.org E-mail: mtnwolf@gmail.com
Henri Zuber’s Day-by-Day Record

An Unpublished Account of the 1866 French Expedition

Translated and edited by Brother Anthony of Taizé

Jean Henri Zuber
Born 24 June 1844 in Rixheim, Alsace, into the Zuber family, who were the owners of a factory producing a celebrated brand of painted wall-paper, (Jean) Henri Zuber studied in Strasbourg then Paris, before entering Brest Naval School in 1861. There he met the painter of seascapes Étienne Mayer, becoming his pupil from 1862 until 1863. Having received the rank of “aspirant” (midshipman), he embarked on the Montebello, then in 1864 he joined the frigate La Thémis which was to escort the Emperor Maximilien from Austria to Mexico. In January 1865 he embarked on the corvette Le Primauguet which was on its way to join the naval division of the China seas, a part of the French naval forces in the Far East based in Saïgon, whose Commander-in-chief at the time was the Admiral and Governor of Indochina, Pierre-Paul de La Grandière. During the long journey, Zuber made notes on and drawings of the places visited, reaching Saïgon in November 1865. From there the ship moved to Hong Kong before ending up in Yokohama in Japan, where le Primauguet joined the French squadron.

On 8 June 1866, le Primauguet received orders to set out for Shanghaï, where, under the command of Rear-Admiral Roze, a French expedition against Korea was being prepared. The immediate reason for this expedition was the news that early in 1866 nine French Catholic missionaries had been executed by the Korean authorities. The arrival on a small boat from Korea of Father Félix-Clair Ridel, the first of three missionaries who were able to escape, made a strong impression on the Europeans living in China. There was a strong feeling that “something should be done” and Rear-admiral Roze had as one of his tasks that of ensuring the safety of French nationals living in the region. He therefore decided that it was his duty to sail to Korea, confront the authorities, and demand reparations as well as the punishment of those responsible for this
Roze realized at once, however, that nobody knew where the capital of Korea was located or how to reach it. He decided to divide the expedition into two stages, the first a survey with a small number of ships, allowing him to locate Seoul and see what action might be possible with his limited forces. Then he would assemble all the forces at his disposal for the actual campaign. These two journeys took place September 18 – October 3, and October 11 – November 21, 1866. On the first, two shallow-draft ships found the mouth of the Han River and sailed as far as Yanghwajin, from where the walls of Seoul were visible in the distance. The Korean authorities showed clearly that they had no desire to discuss anything with Roze, so the French returned to China to prepare a military attack on the island of Ganghwa, at the mouth of the Han River, which offered a clearly defined small-scale target, whereas to attack Seoul would have required large numbers of troops and complex supply lines.

Given his artistic training, the young ensign Zuber seems to have participated mainly in the surveying and mapping of the coastline of Ganghwa Island and to have prepared a plan of the anchorage near île Boisée (Woody Island, Jakyak-do). He later prepared a map of the entire Korean peninsula using documents found during the expedition. He was, however, already senior enough to be one of the junior officers. Therefore, when Admiral Roze sent a force of some 120 men to see what the situation was at the fortress surrounding the temple of Cheondeung-sa, several miles from the main camp, on November 9, he was one of the leaders of the force. He describes briefly in his unpublished text what happened as they approached the fortress walls. They walked into an ambush and the French were lucky not to have had anyone killed. The incident marked the end of the French expedition to Korea. As they left, Roze set fire to the royal palace and government buildings in Ganghwa city, after removing a large quantity of silver and some three hundred large, elaborately illustrated books, the Uigwe or Royal Protocols, which were finally returned to Korea in 2011.

After the expedition Zuber spent several months in various ports of China, and made a considerable number of drawings and paintings which have survived. He returned to France via Java, Sydney, and New Caledonia. His notebooks are filled with drawings, sketches and caricatures. All through the long campaign, Zuber produced many sketches and paintings, particularly in China and Japan. Of Korea, however, all that survive are the engravings based on his drawings which were published in various magazines.
On reaching France in 1868, Zuber resigned from the Navy and entered the studio of the Swiss painter Charles Gleyre, determined to make a career as an artist and illustrator. He was admitted to the Salon des artistes français in 1869. In 1870-1871, Zuber was mobilised during the war with Prussia; he saw action in the defense of Paris and the battles at Mont-Valérien. He was demobilized in March 1871 and, Alsace having become German, opted for France and settled in Paris. On 20 July 1871 he married Madeleine Oppermann. They had 4 children. He set up a studio in the rue de Vaugirard in Paris in 1872.

In 1873 he published an article based on his participation in the 1866 expedition to Korea in the illustrated magazine *Le Tour du Monde*, produced by Hachette, a celebrated periodical consecrated to voyages and discoveries. Henri Zuber is the first French writer to produce an account of Korea accompanied by images drawn directly *in situ*. Some of his other drawings had served as the basis for engravings published in the weekly *L'Illustration* early in 1867. Instead of descriptions of the military action that he was intimately involved in, the article in *Le Tour du Monde* gives the priority to a more general description of Korea, with evocations of the life of the ordinary Koreans he saw, so deferential and childlike, and the magnificent autumn landscapes.

Henri Zuber moved south to Menton and Cannes on account of his wife's poor health but she died at Cannes in 1881. Remaining alone in the Midi, he mastered the techniques of watercolors. This brought him to the notice of English admirers. In 1883, Henri Zuber married Hélène Risler, with whom he had another 3 children. He was admitted to the Société des aquarellistes français where he exposed regularly each year. He later moved his studio to 19 rue Vavin; the building that housed his studio still exists today. In 1897 he became a member of the jury of the Salon des artistes français. In 1906 he was promoted to the grade of officer in the order of the Légion d'honneur. In 1909 Zuber died after an operation for a stomach ulcer he had been suffering from since 1883.

What follows below is the English translation of a text hitherto unpublished in any English or French publication, which was transcribed many years ago (with omissions) from a notebook which seems to have been in the possession of Henri Zuber’s grand-daughter, Jeanne Frey (1911-1993), by her cousin (at some removes) Henri Ernest Zuber (1901-1967), the father of Professor Roger Zuber, Professor Emeritus of the Sorbonne. It is translated and published here with the permission of Professor Zuber. A volume by a Korean historian published some years
ago which is now out-of-print included the French text as an appendix, but without receiving any permission from the Zuber family.

The original seems to have been a letter written in the form of (or based on) a diary; it is probably addressed to a close friend or younger relative, the use of ‘tu’ suggests that the intended recipient would not have been one of his parents, who at the time would normally have been addressed with the more formal “vous.” Unfortunately, the original which was transcribed cannot now be traced.

This vivid record of the day-by-day course of the expedition offers a unique insight into the state of mind of a junior naval officer. Comparison with the article which Henri Zuber later published in *Le Tour du Monde* only serves to reveal how far that latter piece is from reporting the author’s direct experience of combat. Also intriguing is the difference between that article’s glowing, detailed account of the Buddhist painting found in a temple and the brief, scornful mention of it here. What is striking in both this and the published article is Zuber’s sharply critical, anti-imperialist attitude; he clearly had a very independent mind. The contents of the passages which are indicated as having been omitted may have been included almost unchanged in the article published in *Le Tour du Monde*. This might be the reason why they were not copied. Their absence is frustrating.

Chefoo, 12 September 1866

At the moment we are starting our expedition to Korea I must tell you the reasons for this campaign.

Nine French missionaries have been murdered in Korea under the following circumstances: The Russians who, as is far too little known in Europe, are inclined to a complete invasion of the East, had sent an ambassador to the Emperor of Korea to conclude a Treaty of Amity and Commerce. The Emperor, before answering, had the idea of consulting the Catholic missionaries whose presence in his territories he suspected; by means of multiple promises, he drew them out of their secret hiding-place and brought them to his court.

The missionaries advised him to refuse the treaty and, in case of difficulties, to address himself to France and England, countries which they represented as being the most disinterested among the world powers. The Emperor suspected a ruse, and after sending away the Russians by promising to consult with the Emperor of China, his suzerain, he
beheaded nine missionaries. There remained a tenth in Korea, Father Ridel, who managed, thanks to the dedication of Korean neophytes, to reach Chefoo; from there he went to Beijing and made his report to the Minister of France. The Minister wrote to the Admiral, telling him that an expedition to Korea would be very timely and would correspond to the views of the French Government. It may be remembered, indeed, that the Emperor (Napoleon III) at the time of the occupation of Cochin, had regretted not being able to take control of a point in Korea. After some hesitation Admiral Roze thought this possible, and that is when we were called to Chefoo.

It is, alas! too easy to see that the moral value of this expedition is purely negative; it is just one more of those acts of theft, that are only too common today. Indeed, we have no treaty with Korea which, until now, has remained outside the movement. The Christian religion is abhorred there; therefore the missionaries who venture into this country can foresee the fate that awaits them; politics has nothing to do with their business.

Unfortunately many people consider the missionary as a kind of diplomatic agent, and so distort the character of the apostolic institution. Passions are brought into play on both sides and the Christian idea gives way to this detestable policy of invasion that characterizes the European in the Far East.

The force prepared for the expedition consists of:
- 7 ships, 66 canons
- 725 men, about 800 with the officers, for the landing forces.

As for me, I command a section of the mountain artillery. We intend to immediately attack Seoul, the capital. They say this city is not far from the sea, but we cannot establish its position exactly to within 70 leagues. Father Ridel, having only lived by night in Korea, could provide only very general information; we have no map of the coasts that are most dangerous, which means that the ships will often be in danger. The latest project is to send the “Primauguet” with the Admiral’s flag to explore the coast. When they have found the river that leads to Seoul, the other vessels will appear and the attack will take place. Our preparations are complete. Everything on board is prepared for a likely landing and in three days we will set sail. It appears that the Jardine company of Hong Kong, having sent several merchant ships to Korea, has made a reasonably good map that it has promised to give the Admiral on condition of secrecy, but that is hearsay.
The expedition that is about to start astonishes us for two reasons: it is being done without the help of the English and what is more, officially unknown to them, which seems to me to be contrary to the procedure adopted by the two powers in the Far East. Admiral Roze is engaging French arms without consulting his government, at a time when European peace is so troubled. What if we were to be engaged in a war with Russia or England? We would be caught in a trap, as the Russians and the British in the Far East have forces far superior to our own. Finally, there is a consideration of another order that should have influenced the decisions. We know that the climate in Korea is very rigorous, that the month of October is already cold and that the temperature in the month of December is on average minus 12°. What will become in this Siberia of men accustomed to the sun of China?

September 27, 1866: At anchor in the river of Seoul. (Zuber seems to start writing on this date, and launches into an account of the first, surveying expedition, beginning with the departure from Chefoo. He was on the “Primauguet,” which was ordered to stay behind near the mouth of the river leading to Seoul after it struck a rock on September 22, and so he did not sail up the Han River with the two small ships.)

18 September: The “Primauguet,” carrying the Vice-Admiral’s flag and towing the “Tardif” and the “Déroulède” left the harbor of Chefoo. Nothing new until noon on the 19th. Then we saw a group of islands marked on the French map under the name of Ferrières Islands (Admiral Guérin, during his campaign on the “Virginie”, sailed along the coast of Korea and left behind a few attempts at charts that have been of some use to us). After the Ferrières came the “Islands of the Prince Impérial,” but here the chart was much less explicit and the two ships we had been towing until then had to be sent ahead to scout. We anchored at 10 pm after many twists and turns.

September 20: The “Déroulède” was charged by the Admiral to look for the entrance of the Seoul river. A difficult task indeed, since it was a matter of choosing between eight or ten estuaries, but much facilitated by the presence of Fr. Ridel and a Korean Christian who had accompanied the missionary during his escape. During the absence of the “Déroulède” we made a survey of our anchorage and the surrounding areas. This task took us to several charming, completely deserted islands. The prettiest flowers, red dog-roses, jasmine, etc. grew freely, while the beaches were covered with oysters and other shell-fish that were good to
eat. Needless to say, our work did not prevent us from gathering enormous bouquets and eating our fill.

21 evening: The “Déroulède” returned after completing its mission with exceptional good fortune. Luck had enabled it to find at the very outset what it was searching for. It was resolved that on the next day the three ships would sail up the river as far as possible.

22 morning: We set sail and with our little escort leading the way, we engaged in the countless passes that lead to Seoul. On seeing us fight victoriously against currents that no junk could overcome, and so enter the interior of the country, the Koreans in their white robes gathered in groups on the hills and gazed, probably with a mixture of fear and admiration, at these fire-driven machines with such great power and such a new aspect to them.

Everything was going as our leaders wished and already we were 4 or 5 leagues from the sea when the crew of the “Primauguet” felt a very strong impact, immediately followed by a great lean to port. The poor ship had struck a rock and her false keel, broken by the shock, rose wretchedly to the surface of the water. Fortunately, the tide was rising: half an hour was enough to have the sloop afloat, but caution commanded that it should stop there; we anchored a little further down and it was decided that the “Primauguet” would wait to go further until the gunboats had sounded the river carefully.

September 23: The admiral raised his flag on the “Déroulède” and, accompanied by Commander Bochet, set off up river, while we headed for an anchorage which seemed excellent. Our anchor fell to a depth of 15 meters at high tide, and everyone thought of getting some rest, but at around 8:30 pm we found only 7 meters of water (and we draw 6!) It was becoming worrisome. Immediately we prepared to move off but before the engine had enough pressure we were stranded and the only thing to be done was to prop up the ship. The yards were quickly set up as crutches, we drew in the top masts and waited; at 9 o'clock there were no more than 4 meters along the side and you could see most of the copper. But then it was over: the water was rising. So the sea fell by 11 meters: it was really frightening! It is fair to say that we were at the equinox, at a syzygy, and near a lunar eclipse, all circumstances that determine the tides. Nevertheless, the highest tide at Brest, which is found to be considerable, is 7 meters.

The “Primauguet” fortunately suffered no damage; it had encountered only mud and easily came afloat again; it was taken to another place, the choice of which was determined by experience.
September 24: A senior Korean came alongside in a junk of miserable appearance; he was escorted by wretched-looking satellites in considerable numbers. We had part of the crew take up arms, placed sentinels everywhere, then brought the Mandarin and his escort on board. After some greetings he began to examine with curiosity the canons, guns, compasses, etc. then he presented to Mr. Laguerre, acting commander, a rather poor fan along with a piece of paper covered with Chinese writing. A Chinese cook in the service of the General Staff acted as our interpreter and translated into French the meaning of the Chinese characters traced by our visitors. They meant:

“Why are you here? What are you doing in Korea? How many armed men have you on board? Do you need food? You must go!”

The answer was not long in coming. Here’s what the Chinese wrote in his best hand:

“We are here for our own pleasure. We have come to watch the lunar eclipse that will take place tonight. We have on board 200 armed men and 12 guns that fire with remarkable accuracy. We do not need food. We shall go when we deem it appropriate, but as long as you enjoin us to leave, we will stay.”

This reply, so clear, so neat, however, did not seem to satisfy the Mandarin; he nodded grimly and all the efforts that we made to show him the curious features of the ship failed to lighten his darkened features. He finally left, little reassured about the purity of our intentions. The lunar eclipse did not seem reason enough.

Despite this, the next day they sent us presents, a bull, chickens, eggs, salted fish, fruit, and finally a dozen fans: definitely the answer had its effect. The following day our relationship with the Koreans continued on the same footing. Even as I write there are a hundred on board, they are allowed to visit the deck but they are not allowed below.

(Here a description of the costumes and manners in Korea).

September 30, 1866

There is news. We were very worried these last days about the gunboats, whose prolonged absence seemed ominous. They were supposed to be back at the latest on the 26th and on the 29th we were still waiting. The Admiral had left no instructions. Our relations with the natives were beginning to grow tense; they ordered us to leave; more reason to stay, but their insolence did not allow us to receive them on board and our guns were ready to vomit shrapnel. It was decided that on
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October 1 we would head up-river, come what may, then this morning we saw smoke to the north, it was the gunboats! Here is what I learned about their expedition:

All went well until the morning of the 25th, the population seemed quiet and just a few mandarins allowed themselves to make remarks; they were politely dismissed and things stayed as they were. But at a given moment, about 4 miles from Seoul, the river was found to be barred by junks tightly bound one to the other. We ordered these junks to give us free passage, giving them an hour to maneuver; this order was accompanied by a threat that had to be executed. At 11:00 firing began. Some 30-calliber shells were fired at the junks, which immediately cut their cables and fled.

Meanwhile the natives assembled on the two banks fired many projectiles, most of which were lost somewhere; however, some fell near the gunboats without causing any damage; we responded with a hail of bullets and shells which soon dispersed our enemies. We then continued up the river all the way to Seoul. There a mandarin calling himself “the friend of the people” came begging the Admiral to cease firing, assuring him that our bullets had caused great misfortune and that they would no longer seek to hinder our progress. We promised not to shoot so long as we were not attacked and began to descend the river, slowly enough to be able to make a chart. When they reached the level of a town called Kangoa, the gunboats were greeted by a lively but not deadly fire; we replied while continuing to advance, but a serious accident brought grief to the “Déroulède.” Two men were seriously injured by the accidental detonation of a canon. One of these unfortunates was even thrown into the water by the force of the impact, but we were able to fish him out. These last events took place on the 30th at 9 am. At 11 am the “Tardif” and the “Déroulède” were at anchor beside us.

The maritime achievements of the gunboats were superb; the possibility of sailing up to Seoul is recognized, at least for small vessels; undoubtedly the “Tardif” and “Déroulède” ran aground several times, but these accidents had nothing surprising in a journey of exploration and the river remains easily navigable.

On setting out, the Admiral had published the following order:

“Officers and Crew!

“A great crime has been committed in Korea: several of our missionary compatriots were horribly massacred by the orders of the Government of that country. It is up to us, who have received the noble
mission of showing everywhere our country’s flag, of striking down those who have committed similar crimes, and showing a barbarian Government that the innocent blood of the children of France is forever sacred. So I am leading you to the shores of Korea. We will make our utmost efforts to reach the heart of this country and avenge the good men who have been put to death by those to whom they came to teach charity and truth. I have no need to appeal to your courage and dedication; I know them already; but in our just vengeance we will not confuse those who ordered the murder of our fellow citizens with the peaceful inhabitants who ask only to hold out a hand. We will prove ourselves worthy of France and our great sovereign whose magnanimous heart watches over her children wherever they are and drawing our inspiration from memories of the homeland we will march to the cry a thousand times repeated: Vive l'Empereur “

On his return, the Admiral issued a second order:

“The Rear-Admiral, Commander in Chief, hastens to express his appreciation to the Commanders, Officers and Crew of the “Primauguet”, the “Tardif” and the “Déroulède” as well as the officers of the General Staff who accompanied him.

“In the difficult exploration we have just undertaken, each of us has displayed the zeal, the intelligence and those higher feelings of duty which are the best guarantees for success. Thanks to you, Korea is now open and you can be proud of the success you have achieved.

“This order will be read to the Crew and displayed at the foot of the mainmast.

Signed Roze
Chefoo October 3

On the day of his return the Admiral, after some hesitation, decided that he would gather the rest of the squadron in Chefoo before starting a serious attack.

We have just learned from two Korean Christians that the crew of an American schooner, wrecked on the coast of Korea, was ruthlessly massacred. This story has reconciled me with our expedition, the official reason for which continues to seem to me no less iniquitous.

October 13 - Mooring off Woody Island

Tomorrow is the day when our military operations against Korea begin by the attack against the forts of Kangoa. Before I launch into
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new adventures I will give you an account of what has happened since I last wrote to you.

On October 10, the day before we left, the Admiral wished to undertake a final review of the expeditionary force. Consequently, at 6 am, landing companies, with all their equipment, were put ashore at the Island of Kung-Tung. The night before, an English vessel, flying the flag of a Rear Admiral, had anchored in the harbor. We were therefore not surprised to see Admiral King land on the same beach as us. Admiral Roze hastened to invite his English colleague to undertake the review of the sailors already in battle order. The presence of the Duke of Alençon, who sails aboard British ships as an amateur, lent to the visit a particular interest. This young prince, grandson of a French sovereign, must have felt strange emotions at the sight of these ranks from which he was forever excluded. Among the superior officers of the squadron many had known his father, whose name will always be well received in the French Navy, and were it not for their sense of duty, I do not know if they would have resisted the desire to give an expression of their sympathy to the innocent exile.

In the morning of the 11th, the whole squadron set sail and at 12 at night we anchored near Eugénie Island. This morning we crossed the few miles that separated us from Woody Island and at present we are making our final preparations for tomorrow’s affair. The four small boats, “Tardif”, “Déroulède”, “Kien-Chan” and “Le Breton” will sail up to Kangoa in the order I have indicated. The first has to protect the next two as they tow the small boats “La Guerrière,” “Le Primauguet” and the “Laplace.” “Le Breton’s” mission is to protect our rear. Once they arrive before Kangoa, the boats will drop their tows and row to shore to unload the landing parties. There is no denying that the plan is extremely bold, too bold if we were dealing with a serious enemy, because we have to pass through the fire of ten forts before arriving at our destination, but with people as unskilled as the Koreans, it is in my opinion by far the best.

On October 14, at 6 in the morning, everything being ready, our four small ships advanced, following the agreed plan. They were in full battle order, ready to cover with shrapnel both banks of the river at the first shot of the enemy. As for me, I commanded one of the boats towed by the “Déroulède.” We expected to hear a hail of bullets and balls come whistling over our heads. Imagine our surprise at finding all the forts quiet! The enemy was taken by surprise, fooled by our pretended flight. We saw many men dressed in white running about busily on shore, but no bullet, no arrow came through the air. So we arrived safely before
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Kangoa; there a few brave men tried to point the guns of a fort at us, but the number of attackers inspired in them a salutary terror and they abandoned their bloody project to find a more assured salvation in flight.

Soon there was nobody left on the bank but a mandarin who tried to soften us by salaams and multiple prostrations and thereby avert the storm about to fall on his homeland. His entreaties were in vain. The 600 men of the expedition soon set foot on the soil of the island of Kangoa and captured without resistance positions that a more vigilant enemy would have been able to defend for a long time. We settled immediately on the fortified hills at the foot of which extends the village that serves as the port to the city.

(Here a description of the cantonment taken on shore by the troops).

From Zuber’s article in *Le Tour du Monde* of 1872

But I nearly forgot to mention a characteristic adventure: at the height of the rain, a palanquin escorted by a dozen satellites, wearing huge cones of oiled paper, presented itself to our outpost. We immediately took the palanquin and its entourage to Commander Bochet, who could not restrain a burst of laughter at the sight of the singular outfit, of which the attached sketch will give you an idea. The Koreans were not disconcerted; they laid down their burden with care and there emerged an old man who
began to gesticulate while articulating some raucous sounds. Since it was impossible for us to understand the mandarin, we brought him to the Admiral who, thanks to Father Ridel, was more fortunate than us. The old man in question told our leader such things and reasoned so tightly on the causes of our expedition, that we soon found ourselves with no answer. The Admiral then became angry and threatened the mandarin, but the latter, always keeping calm, replied that he knew well enough the European laws, to know that a negociator is always respected. He withdrew freely.

The next day, the sun rising in an opal sky, found me perched on top of the hill. I was waiting impatiently for the moment when the fresh morning light would light up the landscape that stretched at my feet ....

There was near me a pine forest so similar to that of Ferrette (*an estate belonging to the Zuber family since 1838 until 2011, where they spent the summers) that tears came to my eyes. I went and sat down there and spent an hour recalling memories that date back at least two years.

First survey of Kanghwa City

During the day, the third column undertook a reconnoiter to the south, where they discovered a huge stock of gunpowder and a considerable stock of weapons, but no enemies. The first column was sent to Kangoa; they were welcomed near the walls by a relatively intense burst of gunfire, and not having the order to attack, fell back to the encampment that had been guarded by the second column in the absence
of the others.

On October 16 the entire expedition, with the exception of two platoons, headed for Kangoa, which was taken without serious resistance. Some inhabitants, braver than the others, got themselves killed trying to defend a gate that was soon broken down, allowing the three columns to pass. The town was completely deserted; seeing so many enemies coming, the Koreans, who already knew the dreadful effect of our weapons, had fled, carrying whatever was most valuable and closing the doors of their homes. The second column occupied a large mandarin’s dwelling, located on a hill to the south of the city. The third column was placed in the center of Kangoa, finally the first settled in the official neighborhood. As the Admiral had not taken any measure to prevent looting, indiscipline soon broke out everywhere ... Then I remembered a German saying, “Welch eine Bestie liegt doch in uns” which I found singularly true.

*(Description of the city of Kangoa).*

The womens’ quarters are always well cared for; one can see silk cloths, tresses of hair, pots of rouge and ointments, and a thousand small items proving that female coquetry is exercised in Korea as elsewhere. Some specific indices, such as the shape of the clothes, and the shoes, seem even to reveal a great knowledge of the art of pleasing; for my part, I was struck by the charm of these small rooms which, without being luxurious, indicate elegant habits.

It goes without saying that the mandarins’ homes do not leave much to be desired in terms of comfort. First they are built of stone. In the Japanese manner, the floors are covered with fine mats and the walls with wallpaper. Light wood or paper partitions separate the apartments from one another. They are richly furnished. There are lacquers, bronzes, porcelains and silks galore.

October 22

I was forced to interrupt my letter to undertake a survey that I have just finished. We received news this evening from Kangoa by the “Kien-Chan” come to pick up our landing party. It seems that after we left Kangoa on the 18th, a senior military mandarin from Seoul asked to see the Admiral. The interview seems not to have been very peaceful and the mandarin threatened to send against us an army of 13,000 men. We are ready and waiting, it goes without saying, and it is likely that 13,000 Koreans will not have much success with us. . . .

October 23
Instead of starting out on my surveying, I have come back to Kangoa with my section. I prefer this and I am eager to fire some good boxes of grape-shot at the 13,000 Koreans who are coming to us.

(Henri Zuber here stopped writing but seems to have continued to keep a day-by-day diary which he tells us he later copied to form the continuation of the letter, once everything was over)

November 20, 1866 At anchor off Fernande Island (Zuber waits until the expedition is over and the ships are sheltering from a storm off Incheon before writing what happened at the end of the expedition, including a brief mention of his near-escape at Cheondeung-sa)

I am neither dead nor injured, although I have received such a baptism of fire as I shall remember all my life, as what I am going to write will prove. As for the emotions so often described that are supposed to invade one on such an occasion, I must admit that I have not felt them. At the moment when, not 30 feet away, I saw the enemy guns being aimed at me, my heart tightened, it is true, as I sent you a mental farewell, but as soon as the first shot was fired, the most complete composure came over me and I enjoyed perfect freedom of mind for the 5 or 6 minutes I remained alone exposed to the shots of a hundred enemies. Thanks to the wonderful shooting accuracy of the Korean gentlemen, not one of the 200 or 300 bullets that were intended for me served its purpose.

Our expedition is over and sadly over. At this point all the ships are still together but as soon as the bad weather that has kept them anchored for two days has passed, they will disperse to regain their former stations. I will copy out for you verbatim the journal that I have been keeping since October 23.

October 23
We sail up the river without difficulty. On arriving at the port of Kangoa the landing party from the “Primauguet” return to their former camp, but the artillery section that accompanies it and to which I am attached remains at the beach. My companion Chevalier and I install ourselves in a filthy room that does not bode well at first sight

October 24
The day is spent doing a complete clean out of our hut and getting a table, chairs, mats and paper to cover the walls blackened by
smoke.

October 25

In a pagoda (temple) already devastated by the sailors we found a large painting representing a Buddha surrounded by allegorical figures of incredible ugliness, but among these tormented faces some are so funny that we do not hesitate to decorate a wall with our booty. In actual fact, the oriental people abuse the facility they have to depict expressions: they sacrifice everything to it and Art falls into caricature. Their gods alone, by a privilege of which it is easy to guess the range, possess traits of an unchanging stillness.

We can still see nothing of the enemy’s army which will soon, I think, appear. We are firmly expecting it, but there is no longer any question of taking the offensive and that is right. It is not with 500 men (the “Laplace” removed 100 men from our total force) that we are going to conquer 8 or 10 million people. After taking Kangoa, the enemy being taken by surprise, an attack on Seoul, though excessively bold, would not have been too much of a risk. The Admiral missed an opportunity that will never come again. It is to be deplored, as there is now no serious outcome to be hoped for. On reflection, we are even in a situation that leaves much to be desired. A flash of intelligence among the Koreans can destroy us. For example they would only have to block the river by sinking some junks and despatch an army to the island of Kangoa, something very easy to do since our means do not allow us to monitor a large tract of country, and we would undergo an inevitable disaster.
October 26

Sad day. This morning as I was finishing my toilet, a sound of lively shooting drew me to the beach. Three of our small boats, carrying a division of 60 men, who were to undertake a reconnaissance on the other shore, had come under the fire of about 200 Koreans hidden in ambush behind a fortified gate and a few surrounding houses. In an instant five men, three mortally wounded, fell into the bottom of the boat. Meanwhile, the largest boat had landed. The men it was carrying rushed ashore and charged with bayonets fixed; soon twenty of the enemy were lying lifeless on the ground, the others fled in all directions, abandoning their weapons. We pursued them in vain, they ran like hares. The reconnaissance party continued to advance and came back to camp after having burned down the scene of the struggle. I cannot describe the emotion that seized me on seeing brought to land the dead and wounded. I will remember all my life long this sad spectacle, cursing war and its horrors.

We had just won a success but a useless success, even a fatal one, for twenty Koreans killed were not from a military point of view a sufficient compensation for our losses. It has at least been recognized that the Koreans are not as harmless as we thought. The soldiers of the regular army showed great bravery and almost all were killed at their posts.

Around 3 in the afternoon a strong enemy column under the command of a mandarin on horseback advanced in good order from inside
a gorge toward the beach located directly opposite us. My guns were immediately made ready and all steps were taken to receive in a suitable manner the enemies full of candor who were coming of their own free will to put themselves in our reach. We allowed them to come within 1000 meters then a fine burst of cannon-fire threw terror into their ranks. They fled, but not without leaving several of their number on the ground. My last shell was fortunate enough to reach the mandarin, who pitifully tumbled from his horse.

October 27
We buried this morning the three victims of yesterday’s confrontation. The sad ceremony caused a general emotion.

In the afternoon we blew up a huge stock of gunpowder south of Kangoa. Nothing could be more imposing than such an explosion, that shook the ground for more than four leagues around. . .

A Korean vanguard of about 150 men showed up in the morning on the other side of the river about a league from us. A shell from the “Tardif” exploded right in the middle of those poor people, who certainly did not suspect that at that distance they were still within our range.

Many men are harvesting their rice but we have not yet seen any woman. We have to beware of these peasants with their more or less false facial expressions; one of them tried to set fire to our camp: he was shot, it goes without saying, but the example may not be enough.

October 28
We continue to blow up powder magazines and burn the estates of the kingdom; a dark cloud of smoke has gathered above us and explosions follow one another relentlessly.

5000 Koreans are camping in a town 7 or 8 km from the river.

The local Christians tell us that in Seoul people are preparing 200 fire ships and a large number of junks destined to ferry troops to our island. These reports, of uncertain accuracy, deserve, however, to be taken into consideration . . . .

While awaiting developments, the “Tardif” and “Le Breton” have been sent further upriver to intercept any movement of junks.

October 29
Tonight our enemies devised a small “chinoiserie” doubtless intended to fill us with terror; the shore facing us was suddenly illuminated over a length of 2 or 300 meters. This show entertained us considerably and has not, I think, fulfilled the mission entrusted to it.

October 30
Distractions are not numerous and are reduced to hunting and
archery. While hunting I made some very pretty walks. . .

I collected some observations about the lifestyle of the inhabitants. The Korean people seem to be exclusively farmers . . .

(Here considerations about Korea).

What proves best the primitive state of Korea is that in a town of from 20 to 30,000 inhabitants there is not one store or at least not a single store-front display. This fact, combined with the uniformity of houses and costumes (all Koreans who are not noble or mandarins, wear uniformly white clothes), singularly diminishes the interest of a country, which is otherwise very pretty. Education seems fairly widespread because it is rare to find a hut devoid of books.

November 6

During the last few days we have had weather here that reminds me very much of autumn back in my beloved home country. The temperature is reduced by a strong southerly wind that chases violently across the sky big round clouds and blows away the last leaves. . . .

If the Koreans do not consider us beaten, they are truly very modest. Since the events of October 26 we have not set foot on the other bank; with impunity we allowed the construction of defense works a few miles from us. It is now almost decided that we are leaving after the arrival of the “Laplace,” which will take place on the 15 or 16. We will all leave with very mixed feelings this ground that we were the first Europeans to tread, and which we will leave with only bad memories.

November 10th

On the 8th in the evening we received a report that 300 Korean soldiers had come from the mainland and were entrenched in a strong position 5 miles to the south of Kangoa. It was decided that a column would go the next day to attack this enemy. The landing company from the “Primauguet” and a division of the third column were designated and made their preparations accordingly.

Under the command of M. de Lassalle, lieutenant, I had to accompany the expedition as an artillery officer, the artillery not being used that day. We set off, numbering 150 men with little ammunition. On the 9th at noon we found ourselves in front of the designated area. We could see no one behind the walls and the gates were open; so we might have thought there was a complete absence of enemies, if the case of October 26 had not been there to make us suspect a trick. The position is a hill whose average height is 400 meters, topped by four peaks connected
by crenellated walls about 3 meters high. With even a little defense this position, which is a veritable fortress, would be impregnable for as small a force as ours, especially without artillery. Once the pack animals were concealed in a hut, Mr. Lassalle and I were sent with one section to attack a bastion located on one of the peaks, while the rest of the column entered a sloping ravine facing the gate. So I walked with Mr. Lassalle, followed at some distance by our section. We were walking in silence. Thirty paces from the bastion one of our men shouted to us: “Beware Gentlemen, you are being aimed at.” We raised our heads and saw twenty guns leveled at us. We barely had time to take cover before shots rang out and bullets whistled around us. At the same time the walls were suddenly covered with people and a terrible burst of shooting surrounded them with a belt of white smoke. We beat a hasty retreat and returned down the hill under a hail of bullets and shot that produced in the air a far from harmonious whistling sound and sent earth flying around us. My poor chief received four injuries, including two very serious ones; as for me, not even my clothes were touched. After rejoining my section, I ordered them to fight back but it was a waste of cartridges and meant unnecessarily exposing ourselves, for what could we do against an enemy ten times more numerous and protected by thick walls? I soon understood that and I continued to retreat, protecting the animals, that I had summoned, and joined the main column which, having advanced to within 50 paces from the gate, without seeing anyone, had suddenly been horribly strafed and were retreating like us, withdrawing slowly and answering fire with fire.

When the Koreans saw our retreat clearly under way, they climbed onto the parapets and gave a loud shout of triumph. Tears came to my eyes in rage. And without thinking I looked angrily at those 1500 enemies, so proud of their victory. Yet they had done their duty, and why blame them? Had our aggression been so right? Had the population of the area been wrong to join the 300 soldiers to defend their property? Certainly not. They attempted a sortie. That was all we needed in order to take our revenge. But they did not dare compete with us at such close quarters.

As soon as we were out of range of their bullets, a roll-call was made. 38 men, including five officers, were injured. One of those unfortunate fellows had received 11 bullets, many of them had their clothes riddled, but we had no deaths and not one weapon, other than a Defaucheux gun lost by chance by the train, fell into the hands of the enemy. There could be no question of renewing the attack and with our troops weakened by the obligation to divert 80 men to carry the wounded,
simply regaining Kanghoa was a risky undertaking. Yet that was what we were forced to decide and we set off sadly, with only 30 men to protect the retreat, which fortunately was not troubled.

We had undergone a defeat, honorable to tell the truth, but disastrous in every respect. Indeed, the enemy was going to be emboldened to the point of troubling us, maybe seriously; then the population of the island, seeing that we were not invincible, would become a new force to be counted with; finally, our sailors would grow somewhat discouraged.

We cannot praise too highly the bravery of our sailors; they conducted themselves like old soldiers, and I could cite many who, though seriously injured, nonetheless continued to wield their weapons until the complete exhaustion of their strength. For sailors, unaccustomed to marching, to cover ten leagues in a day, fight, and then carry the injured for five hours without a single one falling behind, is a beautiful thing and shows great energy.

The sun had set when we arrived. It would be impossible to tell the impression our return produced; they had expected to find us all or nearly all healthy and happy with success; instead, a quarter of the men and half of the officers returned wounded, the others were full of sorrow. Now the evacuation will begin without delay

December 11th

At 2 am we started the embarkation in the deepest silence; the night was superb; not a cloud veiled the sky bright with myriads of stars, while the evening wind had completely fallen, leaving the water’s surface as polished as a mirror. A fire, no doubt started by chance, threw intermittent gleams on the beach and gave our movements a sinister air corresponding perfectly to our feelings. At half past five there was nothing left on the shore, the signal was given to set off and the four ships moved off just when the first gleam of daylight drew the abandoned village from the shadows.

The enemy had not yet entered the forts nearest to Kanghoa but two leagues below the balls and bullets began their music. This time the Koreans did not have the advantage; disconcerted by the firing of our guns and our rifles, they shot quite badly and hit nobody; good luck also had something to do with it, because a lot of projectiles landed on board.

December 13th

During the night, five Korean Christians came aboard “La Guerrière” seeking refuge from the persecution to which they are subject. They announced that by order of King Toulipatou XXVII, people were
massacring mercilessly all the Christians, men, women and children. This news should not surprise us: it was to be expected as the inevitable consequence of our intervention.

The outcome of our enterprise is a sad one; here it is: the death of 3 brave sailors, the mutilation of twenty others, the deaths of sixty Koreans, the total ruin of populations that were very peaceful until we came, a Korean St. Bartholomew’s Day, and finally the engagement of the French flag in a cause from which it did not emerge intact.

November 16th

The “Laplace” has just arrived and brought me three letters, what joy! The two missionaries that were believed lost were on board. After many vicissitudes they had managed to escape and gain the Chinese coast.

We will leave tomorrow or the day after tomorrow for Shanghai. So farewell, land of Korea: I do not regret you!

The Buddhist painting Zuber found

What follows is the description of the Buddhist painting from the article in *Le Tour du Monde*. It is very likely that the temple filled with military supplies in which it was found was that known at the time as Jinhae-sa, located in Gapgot-ri where the French were mainly camped. It was founded in 1691 and housed a group of *seung-gun*, martial monks, charged with protecting the nation. It seems to have continued to exist after the French expedition but there are indications that it burned down in about 1900, after which it ceased to exist until 1963, when the temple now known as Haeun-sa was built there. Stones from the foundations of the old temple litter the site. The painting seems to have been one depicting the “Yeongsan (Vulture Peak) Assembly.” The amount of detailed information that Zuber was able to give in 1873, compared to the very general (and negative) description in the 1866 text, suggests that he might have taken the painting back to France with him.

The village of Kak-Kodji occupies the base of a small cluster of hills, of which the side facing the river is covered with a very beautiful pine forest. At the very foot of the forest, in a most picturesque situation, rises a pagoda surrounded by warehouses that at the time of our arrival, contained powder and a large quantity of weapons. The pagoda was unremarkable externally and within no different from what we see in China: the same statue of Buddha in gilded wood, the same altar overloaded with ornaments.
of questionable taste, the same vases filled with huge artificial flowers, in a word, no clues that would suggest essential differences in worship. I found, however, in the temple an interesting object: it was a large painting on silk measuring about two meters fifty centimeters on each side. In the center, a seated Buddha was represented seated in oriental style on a lotus flower, with a nimbus round his head, of a very pure type, a large circle framed the body, which was tastefully draped in a red robe exposing a part of the chest and all the right arm. Around this main figure were grouped symbolically the busts of some forty characters, also adorned with a nimbus and probably famous in the annals of Buddhism. The heads, some of which wore a kind of miter-shaped headdress, were painted with meticulous care and did not lack character. Their expressions were very varied, from extreme ferocity to extreme softness. In sum, this painting was one of the finest I have seen in the Far East. It would have been interesting to have some certain information about its provenance, for the scarcity and the coarseness of paintings and sculptures in Korea leads one to believe that art here is far from having reached the level of relative perfection found in the neighboring countries.

Zuber’s conclusion in 1872
The final lines of the article published in *Le Tour du Monde* are as follows:

On November 22nd, the squadron of China and Japan finally left the coast of Korea and each ship returned to its particular station. The result we had hoped for the expedition had not been achieved, and a renewal of persecution against the Christians coincided with the departure of the squadron, and the Korean government broadcast a declaration rejecting and cursing any attempt to compromise with the European invasion. We could see that we had not been fortunate enough to make ourselves loved during our stay. Too often Europe shows itself for the first time to foreign nations with a character of violence and despotic pretensions. So long as a country has not been blessed with electric telegraphs, and the principles of its civilization differ from ours, we feel authorized to violate at its expense all the rules of human rights. It is especially painful to be brought to shed blood in the name of pure and lofty doctrines which, by their nature, should never require the use of that sad and questionable means of persuasion known as "force."

Come what may, in the present state of affairs Korea cannot long delay opening, voluntarily or under duress, to Western trade. Its position between two countries whose relations extend further every day and that seem to have finally abandoned the system of exclusion, make it almost a necessity. It is difficult for those of delicate feelings with a taste for art and variety, not to experience first and foremost, before any other reflection, a
certain regret on seeing European influences of every kind penetrating everywhere. Surely civilization and science have everything to gain, but at the same time the character of the people disappears and their originality is lost. Are not Japanese nobles already dressing up in trousers and coats!

There is, no doubt, still a long way to go before uniformity reigns on earth, and unexplored lands are still numerous enough to fulfill all the desires of travelers. So let us leave aside these vain regrets of men of imagination and express a hope that France, renouncing too disinterested a role, will take a larger share of the European commercial movement which tends every day to spread further over the world.

Brother Anthony is the current President of the RAS Korea. He has lived in Korea since 1980.
The Korean painter Pae Un-sŏng (Unsoung Pai) and his 1936 Exhibitions in Czechoslovakia

Jaroslav Olša, jr.

The history of early modern painting in Korea is full of intriguing artistic and personal stories intertwined with the tumultuous history of the Korean Peninsula in the 20th century. One of the most interesting protagonists was undoubtedly Pae Un-sŏng, the very first Korean who studied art in Europe and made his living there as an artist. Though it is well-known that he held many exhibitions around Europe, his two solo exhibitions in Czechoslovakia in 1936 are virtually forgotten. Korean art historians usually only mention the one held in Prague in passing, while the Brno one goes unnoticed. Given the fact that these were the very first Korean art exhibitions in then-Czechoslovakia, it is quite surprising that they were not mentioned in the history of the Czech-Korean ties until recently.

In the early 20th century, modern Western-style art methods were adopted by the first Korean artists. But as there was no formal modern art education of note on the Korean peninsula until after World War II, those who were seeking to learn more had to travel abroad. Following the occupation of Korea by Japan in 1910, the easiest destination to reach was

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1 Pae Un-sŏng (裵雲成 / 배운성, 1900-1978) is also known as Unsoung Pai, the romanization of his name he was using while studying and working in Europe.
2 Some art historians claim that the first Korean to study art in Europe was in fact I Chŏng-u (Yi Jong-wu), but he only left Korea in 1925, after already attending art school in Tokyo.
3 Not a single mention of Pae Un-sŏng is found in any Czech work on Czech-Korean relations (e.g. the most thorough one by Klöslová 2009 and previous) since a short note on Pae’s Prague exhibition by Hilská (1945).
Tokyo. The first Korean artists who got such a chance were Ko Hŭi-dong, Kim Kwan-ho, Kim Ch’an-yŏng and Na Hye-sŏk, who graduated from the Tokyo Academy of Art already during World War I (see Kim Yŏng-na 2005b:11). By imposing the Western style also in art education, Japanese authorities intended to show that the modernization of Korea was the work of Japan. But as art historian Kim Yŏng-na noted, “although modernization was unavoidable, it took a peculiar form in Korea, because most Korean intellectuals studied in Japan rather than in the West and learned about Western culture from Japanese books” (Kim Youngna 2005a:16).

One of the few exceptions among Korean artists was thus Pae Un-sŏng, who did not study art in Japan. He left Asia for Europe already in 1922, after studying economics at Waseda University, Tokyo. As Pae’s family was not wealthy, he could only further pursue his studies by being sent to Europe to accompany his friend, whose father was wealthy enough to pay for an expensive trip and studies. But soon after Pae arrived in France he became interested in art rather than economics, history and
politics and, though with difficulties, he pursued his dream. While in Japan, art students from Korea benefited from special entrance requirements, which made it far easier for them to be accepted for art studies. In Europe Pae had to fulfill all the necessary requirements without exceptions, and with no success at first. He had to study art in a private art school first, and only after two years of struggles was he able to enroll in the newly established Vereinigte Staatsschulen für freie und angewandte Kunst (Unified State Schools for Fine and Applied Arts) in Berlin, which was, apart from the Bauhaus, the most important modernist art school in Germany between the wars (for a detailed account of Pae’s struggles and successes see Hoffmann 2015).

During the following two decades, Pae studied and worked in Germany and though a part of an extremely small and select group of Korean students in Europe, which numbered not more than a few hundred, he became well-known both among them and also in the local art community. Soon his experimentation in using both Eastern motifs in Western oil painting and drawing Western landscapes as Asian watercolours brought him some success. In the early 1930s Pae got his own studio and also painted many portraits of well-known personalities of the cultural life of Berlin, among them the actor Gustav Fröhlich, and the fiancée of a famous film star from Prague, Lída Baarová (another possible Czechoslovak connection).

He was active in self-promotion and seeking as much visibility as possible; according to his friend Kurt Runge, he was “mostly preoccupied with his personal success and fame” (Hoffmann 2010 [2011]: 156-7). He succeeded as his works started being published in contemporary German magazines, and he began to be exhibited around the country. Later he also had a solo exhibition in the famous Gallery Gurlitt in Berlin. His success continued as he was accustomed to take full advantage of his unique “exotic” background, though his contemporary, the well-known Jewish German art critic Max Osborn, noted that he was “a Korean turned

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4 When the situation in Nazi Germany got difficult for a foreigner, Pae moved to France in 1937 before leaving Europe for Korea in 1940. He spent the 1940s in Seoul, where he was appointed the first dean of Hongik University’s art department in 1948. He voluntarily moved to North Korea in 1950 and he died there in 1978 after working as an artist.

5 In 1925, there were 258 registered Korean students in the whole of Europe (Schirmer 2011) and only a dozen of them successfully finished their education between the mid-1920s and mid-1930s (see Chung 2004).
Soon he started traveling and exhibiting around Central Europe; we can trace his exhibitions in Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, Poland, Austria and most probably even Estonia. His first known contact with Czechoslovakia is dated 1934, when Pae won an award at a woodcut exhibition held in Prague in 1934 (Jung and Oh 2002:103), but it was his two solo exhibitions held in Prague and Brno in 1936 which made him known to Czech and Moravian art connoisseurs.

Czechs had traditionally a real interest in the world outside of Europe. A significant number of Czech travelers had visited the Far East and written about their experiences, and about the people and their culture. Collecting Far Eastern art became a kind of fashion in the first half of the 20th century, and the number of Czechs who had a good knowledge and collected Japanese and Chinese art increased. After the independence of Czechoslovakia following the end of World War I, interest in the Far East also received institutional support with the creation of the Orientální ústav

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The Korean painter Pae Un-sŏng (Oriental Institute), a state institution for the support of “cultural and trade relations with the Orient”, which was predominantly understood as being the Middle East, India, and the Far East. Though established after a direct instruction by Czechoslovak president Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk in 1922, it opened its doors only in March 1928 under the leadership of former Czechoslovak Minister of Industry, Trade and Small Enterprises Rudolf Hotowetz. Among its members were also the leading experts on the Far East, both Czech and German, such as traveler and writer Josef Kořenský, who visited the Far East on repeated occasions, Sinologist Jaroslav Průšek and his wife, the leading Czech Japanologist Vlasta Hilská, and many others. The Oriental Institute also had specialized sections, and one of the most active was the Japanese, cooperating closely with the Japanese legation in Prague, which was established in the 1920s.

The main organizer of Pae’s Prague exhibition was thus the Japonské sdružení (Japanese Society) of the Oriental Institute, led by an important Czechoslovak personality Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi in cooperation with the Krasoumná jednota pro Čechy (Bohemian Art Union), an association of Czech-speaking visual artists, which operated a gallery in the heart of Prague at Pštrossova street No. 12. Though the Bohemian Art Union was intended to support Czech art, since the 1910s an increasing number of foreign exhibitions were held in their premises, the most important of them being the exhibition of contemporary French artists, such as Matisse, Picasso, and Rodin, which was held in 1929 (see Hladká 2010). Pae Un-sŏng was thus in good company.

As many Korean newspapers in the 1930s had their regular art and

7 Richard von Coudenhove-Kalergi (1894-1972) was a leading promotor of Japan in then Czechoslovakia, whose father Heinrich was high-ranking Austro-Hungarian diplomat, and his mother Mitsuko Aoyama, a daughter of a wealthy Japanese land-owner. He lived in the family castle of Poběžovice in Southern Bohemia between 1919 and 1939. He was a pioneer of European integration, author of a book Pan-Europa (1923), which gave rise to the same-named movement between the World Wars. His book influenced also a number of Japanese politicians and thinkers, as it was translated into Japanese by diplomat and MP Morinosuka Kajima in 1927.

8 Established already in 1835, the Bohemian Art Union was one of a number of Czech nationalist organizations supporting the Czech cause during the times of Austrian occupation of the historical Czech lands, Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia. It organized yearly art exhibitions, supported the artists by buying their works and using sponsors to commission nationalist artworks for public spaces. During the late 19th century, it became open for foreign artists.
culture columns and Pae was sending them his own reports, the daily *Tonga Ilbo* announced his Prague exhibition already on January 28, 1936, stating that it was to be opened on February 10 (personal communication by Frank Hoffmann; Ch’ui and Ryu 2001:25), but the vernissage was only held nine days later with the main guest being Jan Krčmář, Czechoslovak Minister of Education and National Enlightenment, who also served as President of the Bohemian Art Union. Another speaker was Noboru Ogawa⁹, the chargé d’affaires of the Japanese legation in Prague, who welcomed “*his compatriot from Korea, (...) a distinctive representative of one of the Japanese art schools.*” A contemporary press article in the 3rd printing of *Národní listy* of February 20, 1936 also notes that Ogawa “presented (Pae’s) studies and successes in Tokyo, Paris and Berlin and added that the works of this artist very much show the soul of Japanese art, though having strong influences from European Western art.”

The uniqueness of this occasion was marked with a line-up of important guests at the official opening. Honored guests included the Swedish envoy and the chargé d’affaires of Denmark and Finland, and also high ranking Czechoslovak diplomats such as Jan Hájek, one of the most influential persons in the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who spent the whole period between the wars as head of the information section of the ministry, the mouthpiece of Czechoslovak propaganda aimed at foreign countries, and Augustin Lafar, one of the few Czechoslovak diplomats then who had a wider experience in Asia, as he had served as deputy consul in Bombay and as a consul in Shanghai. Chancellor Přemysl Šámal represented the Office of the President and also some former Czechoslovak ministers, such as Rudolf Hotowetz, the Chairman of Oriental Institute. There were also artists present, but only one name emerged in contemporary press reports, that of Viktor Streitti, painter and lithographer (the most complete list of attendees was published in the daily *Slovenský stred*, February 20, 1936).

A few days later, on February 25 (*Legie*, March 5, 1936), Pae Un-sŏng also delivered a lecture on Far Eastern brush painting¹⁰, which was,

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⁹ Noboru Ogawa (1891-?), a career diplomat, well-known in Czechoslovakia also as an active supporter of early local judokas and jiu-jitsu enthusiasts.

¹⁰ Pae delivered the same lecture, in fact written by his friend Kurt Runge (see Hoffmann 1991, 2015), on numerous occasions previously (Frank Hoffmann, personal communication, May 3, 2014). It has also been published in the original German version in Czechoslovakia (*Pai* 1936) accompanied by reproductions of some now lost art works by Pae.
The Korean painter Pae Un-sŏng according to the press, very well received. But not everybody in Prague liked his exhibited works. One of these people was the influential expert on Asian art in Czechoslovakia, Joe Hloucha\(^{11}\). He kept detailed diaries, and thus we know what he thought about this unique exhibition. The assessment was not favourable, and his entry for February 22, 1936 merely states: “I have visited the exhibition of Korean artist in Krasoumná jednota, but I was quite disenchanted. His art is so very European.”\(^{12}\)

Three probably lost paintings reproduced in the contemporary Czechoslovak press

\[\text{“Die Prager Karlsbrücke” (Charles Bridge in Prague) Die internationale Kunstwelt, 3, 1936}\]

\(^{11}\) Joe Hloucha (1881-1957), traveler, prolific writer of dozens of books, many of them set in the Far East and the Pacific islands, and an avid collector of Japanese and Chinese art. Hloucha also organized two important exhibitions of non-European and Japanese art in 1929 and 1935 in Prague. See Kraemerová and Šejbl (2007).

\(^{12}\) The author wants to thank Alice Kraemerová of the National Museum, the Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Cultures (Prague), who located the quote and shared it with the author.
“Motiv z Harzu” (Motif from Harz Mountains) *Pestrý týden*, March 21, 1936

“Landschaft” (Landscape) *Die internationale Kunstwelt*, 3, 1936
While the contemporary Korean press was presenting to its readership stories of Pae Un-sŏng’s successes abroad based on his own letters, Czechoslovak art critics were quite harsh. An overview of German-language reviews was published by Frank Hoffmann, who rightly pointed out that “the art critics in the many German language presses in a still independent and democratic Czechoslovakia (were) less interested in giving Pae any special credit for just being East Asian” (Hoffmann 2015:99) and quoted some of them: “Unsoung Pai has lost at least as much through European painting as he has won” (Die Zeit, February 20, 1936), “We have to judge a Korean artist who paints in a European style according to European standards; it would be inappropriate and insulting to want to admire him for having learned these European skills. (...) In the exhibition one gets handed a printed essay about the painter. There is ___________

13 The author wants to thank Tomáš Sekyrka of the archive of the National Gallery (Prague), who located a set of press clippings covering Pae’s exhibitions and shared it with the author. These were later shared with Franz Hoffmann, whose intensive email exchanges with the author, comments and sharing of information and sources, were reciprocated - though not adequately - at least by sharing this information.

14 There is no trace of any catalogue produced for Pae’s exhibition in Prague. But the mentioned essay is most probably the same text (Donath 1936) used in a simple catalogue for Pae’s exhibition in Brno later that year.
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talk of a lightness à la Frans Hals and Unsoung Pai’s gracefulness. Such bon mots are better left unsaid, as this cannot be meant to be serious.” (Prager Presse, morning ed., February 29, 1936) and even: “If Pai might be seeking a fusion of the artistic traditions of his homeland with European artistic life, then that has not been achieved in any of his works.” (Sozialdemokrat, March 4, 1936) (quoted after Hoffmann 2015:99).

The Czech-language press was just as unimpressed. For example Polední list (Feb. 21, 1936) asks: “Is he European by his culture and Japanese with his art techniques, or the opposite, Japanese by culture and European by technique?” and the unidentified author signed Kr immediately answers: “In his case, it merges into a kind of artistic conjuring trick without any character.” Another critic (-jč.15) notes: “We would wish this exhibition to bring not only an exotic name, but also a bit more of mysterious artistic exoticism. Yet, we see so much into the artist’s studio, we could easily dub the exhibition: it is either way. Both the European way as well as the Korean way. The European way, more precisely his French-Berlin training, (is) exceedingly visible. He is a good, and even an excellent disciple, but not a real personality: his art is not deeply rooted.” And he goes on: “Korean (artistic) tradition (...) which sometimes refines (the artist) by its style, sensitivity and subtlety, is corrupted by the European devil straight to cheap knock-offs (...) It feels so much like imitation, though successful, though skillful.” (Lidové noviny)

The authors of these reviews were not just critical of Pae’s work in a very convincing way, but they also mirrored the exoticism of the Czechoslovak audience and their expectations of a “mysterious East” as they were most critical of Pae’s European style: “this Korean artist is too much susceptible to European painting and most probably consumed and dazzled by it... These are nice, tasteful and noble paintings, but they are mediocre as they are more European,” wrote J. R. Marek in his longer review Korejec evropského střihu (Korean of European Style) (Národní listy, 3rd edition, March 10, 1936), and another anonymous critic adds: “The exhibition (...) is an eloquent example of an unsuccessful effort to engraft European art techniques onto traditional Far Eastern painting.... Pai’s works show the artist as skillful, but nothing more than an average European artist” (Lidové noviny, June 6, 1936).

Pae’s exhibition in Prague was thus not a real artistic success, but

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15 Most probably the leading Czech visual artist Josef Čapek (1887-1945).
still he had strong supporters. Views other than those of contemporary Czech critics were expressed by the man who had brought Pae Un-sŏng to Czechoslovakia, the influential art critic and historian Adolph Donath, who had only recently settled in Prague after leaving Berlin due to the rise of Adolf Hitler. Prague was a place where anti-fascist refugees were quite considerable in number and above all they were not merely tolerated but received with open arms. The fact that then Czechoslovakia had a strong German-speaking minority, and that very close ties existed also between writers and artists, gave Donath the chance to follow up with his art activities which were quite wideranging while in Germany. While in Prague he started an art magazine, *Die Internationale Kunstwelt*, in November 1934, a large, fully illustrated periodical published on slick paper. Here, a series of articles on Pae Un-sŏng, whom he most probably had already met previously in Berlin, and his artwork, have been published (see bibliography).

Adolph Donath also introduced Pae to the art connoisseurs in the second biggest Czechoslovak city, Brno. While there are plenty of

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16 Adolph Donath (1876-1937). Born to a German-speaking Jewish family in the city of Kroměříž in the Moravian part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he enrolled at the University of Vienna in 1895, and soon became the cultural correspondent for the daily *Neue Freie Presse*. In 1905 he left Vienna for Berlin and started contributing art criticism to local periodicals. After World War I Donath became an influential person in Berlin art circles, he started a magazine *Die Kunstranderer* in 1919, followed by a yearbook aimed at art collectors, *Jahrbuch für Kunstsammler*. His interests were not aimed only at German art, but he was covering worldwide art. During 14 years on some 6,000+ pages he published texts on art from many countries in the world, and fairly often also wrote about the art and artists from his newly independent homeland, Czechoslovakia, the country which he often visited. When the ascent of Adolf Hitler to power was inevitable, Donath stopped publishing his magazine as of December 1932 and left Berlin to settle in Prague, where he went on with his writing and publishing until his sudden death. His sudden death was recorded with numerous obituaries in leading Czechoslovak dailies, both German- (Bohemia, Prager Tagblatt) and Czech-language (Národní listy, Lidové noviny) as well as in the main art magazine *Umění* (Art). For more about Donath’s life see Bensimon (2000), Bensimon-Donath (2002) and Svátek (1990).

The author wants to thank Markéta Mercová, deputy director of the Museum of the Kroměříž Region for sharing publications on A. Donath.

17 The author wants to thank Františka Vrbenská, formerly with the National Library (Prague), for locating copies of rare issues of Donath’s magazines.

18 There was a quite active group of artists and art lovers in the city of Brno, who
articles on Pae’s exhibition in Prague, virtually nothing was found in the archive of the National Gallery in Prague about the show which ran from July 11 to 25, 1936 in the Künstlerhaus (House of Artists), the gallery of the Mährischer Kunstverein (Moravian Art Union)\textsuperscript{19}. But, on the contrary, the Brno organizers published a small six-page catalogue/leaflet Ausstellung des koreanischen Malers Unsong Pai, Japan. Kunsthandwerk des XIX. Jahrhunderts aus mähr. Privatbesitz \textsuperscript{20} (Exhibition of Korean Painter Unsong Pai, Japanese Artworks from the 19th Cent. from Moravian Private Collections)\textsuperscript{21} for the exhibition with a short biography of Pae (written by Adolph Donath) and the list of all the presented pieces with their possible selling prices. We thus know that Pae exhibited a total of 107 pieces, of which 27 were oil paintings, 50 watercolors, 19 ink drawings, 2 pencil drawings and 1 pen and ink drawing, and 6 woodprints. Those who wanted to see something exotic were most probably disappointed upon seeing the list, as the huge majority of the works had European motifs, often landscapes and cityscapes from Germany (Harz, Hamburg, Lübeck, Holstein etc.), the Netherlands (Amsterdam), France (Saint-Cloud, suburb of Paris), and Austria (Salzburg).

The prices were also quite high, ranging from 4,000 to 6,500 Czechoslovak Crowns for oil paintings, the majority of watercolors for

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\textsuperscript{19} The Moravian Art Union was established in 1882 and during its six decades of existence it organized almost 200 exhibitions with participation of 600+ artists. Exhibitions were mostly collective, solo ones (such as Pae’s) were quite unique. It ceased operations in 1945, when their gallery, Künstler Haus (House of Artists), was destroyed by bombing.

\textsuperscript{20} The author wants to thank Hana Karkanová, librarian of the Moravian Gallery (Brno) for locating the catalogue in their archive.

\textsuperscript{21} For unknown reasons a large number of Pae’s works were accompanied by a tiny selection of 20 pieces of 19th century Japanese artworks from the private collections of a few local collectors, such as Viktor Oppenheimer (see note 18).
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1,200 Crowns and the great majority of drawings for 800 Crowns. Of those artworks which still exist nowadays, e. g. the price of Koreanisches Kind im Festkleid (see Ch’ui and Ryu 2001:36) was stated as 5,500 Crowns and the well-known print Weltreise cost 800 Crowns.22

Pae’s exhibitions in Czechoslovakia might not have been as artistically successful as he hoped, but in any case we can add some more details to the history of early modern Korean art thanks to the information still available today in the Czech Republic. Until two decades ago, the majority of Pae Un-sŏng’s works from his European period were assumed to be lost, and the location of only a few was known. The discovery of a large number of them by a Korean doctoral student in France, Chŏn Ch’ang-gon in 1999, gave the first chance to learn more about Pae’s art, and the result was a series of exhibitions held around the Republic of Korea at the turn of the 21st century. But even the biggest of these, held at the National Museum of Contemporary Art in Seoul in 2001, showed how much is still not known about Pae’s art from the European period of his life.

That starts with the titles of the various paintings, which, in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition in Seoul, are often nothing more than descriptive, as the curators had no idea about the original titles. For this, the existing catalogue of the Brno exhibition is of the utmost help, as we can quite easily find which title is connected with some of the known

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22 The prices were most probably quite high as a majority of the members of Vereinigung deutscher bildender Künstler Mährrens und Schlesiens (Association of German Visual Artists of Moravia and Silesia), whose works were a mainstay at House of Artists’ exhibitions, “could have proposed prices at 5,000 Crowns maximum” and “standard paintings of some thirty better, academically educated German-Czech artists, ranged usually between 1,500 to 3,000 Crowns (...) the best paintings could reach up to 10,000 Crowns, but such high prices could be proposed by only a few artists, and there were usually only one or two such paintings in their exhibitions.” (Habán 2010).

Pae most probably set the same prices also at his Prague exhibition; here we can compare his prices with the prices of art by famous French artists whose exhibition was held at the Bohemian Art Union only seven years earlier. Picasso’s lithograph Tête went for 560 Crowns, Léger’s watercolour Composition (2,800 Crowns), drawings (700 Crowns each) and lithograph Les trois modèles (1,000 Crowns), while the most expensive piece at the show was Femme assise by Rodin for 4,650 Crowns (quoted after Hladká 2010). Although art prices are not a standard commodity, it is important to note that in between 1926 and 1936 the price index of goods in Czechoslovakia according to statistical yearbook fell by some 20 per cent (Statistická ročenka Republiky ěskoslovenské 1938, p. 149).
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surviving paintings. And aside from this, quite a number of articles published in Czechoslovakia show Pae’s exhibited works which still exist (e. g. Ch’ui and Ryo 2001:36, 41, 44, 45). Thanks to the activities of journalists we can now also see a few more pieces by Pae Un-sŏng, though of a quite low quality, which are most probably now lost (see the list and reproductions in this text). Of interest is also an older version of Pae’s painting, now in private hands, which was, the only one in the contemporary Czechoslovak press, reproduced in colour in the popular weekly List paní a dívek (Miss and Mrs. Magazine) on March 14, 1936, though unfortunately the colours are not accurately alligned. But there is still more, as we can most probably find some of Pae’s works around today’s Czech Republic.

As we know, Pae used one of his prints, Weltreise (World Travel, often known also as World Map, title written on it in Chinese characters) as a gift, therefore this one is quite available across Europe and even in the United States (information courtesy Frank Hoffmann May 3, 2014). Pae gave one of them also to his promoter Adolph Donath and by good luck, it survived unnoticed almost three quarters of a century in his estate, which became part of the property of the Czechoslovak and then the Czech state. The author of this article located it in the depository of the collection of the state-owned Hrubý Rohozec castle in the Northern part of the Czech Republic. The piece is not only signed by Pae Un-sŏng but also has a pencil dedication to Adolph Donath.

23 The widely reproduced and still existing painting Japanese Woman in Kimono (see e.g. Ch’ui and Ryu 2001: 45) is in fact Porträtt der Frau Prof. Hama (Portrait of Mrs. Professor Hama), see e. g. reproduction in Prager Presse (March 1, 1936). The catalogue produced for the Brno exhibition states its price as 6,000 Crowns.

24 Existing reproductions were shown to Chi-yŏn Ryu, curator of the National Museum of Contemporary Art (Sŏul), publisher of Wŏlgan misul magazine Kim Bok-ki, and Frank Hoffmann, who also mentioned the existence of other of Pae’s art works with Czechoslovak motifs. Thus Pae’s Die Prager Karlsbrücke (Charles Bridge in Prague) might be the same or similar to one reproduced in a magazine either in North Korea or East Germany (Frank Hoffmann, personal communication May 2014).


26 The author wants to thank Petr Janák of Národní památkový ústav (Sychrov) who located Pae’s woodcut in their collections, and Jiří Holub of castle Hrubý Rohozec for allowing me to see the original piece.
Another piece which remained in Prague at least temporarily was another quite well-known print: a pro-Japanese woodcut of the German educated Japanese industrialist Mitsui Takaharu, who was at the time also the chairman of the Japanese–German Society (for more about this print, see Hoffmann 2015:96). As a majority of Pae’s exhibitions around Europe were supported and co-organized by the Japanese diplomatic service, Pae gave a copy of this woodcut to the Japanese Legation in Prague as well. We know neither the circumstances of the donation nor its whereabouts today, but by a lucky coincidence, the author of this article located a photo dated 1941, which shows the interior of the then Japanese consulate in Prague with Pae’s print in the background.

There is, maybe, still more to come. In a catalogue accompanying one of his exhibitions held in Seoul during the 1940s, Pae Un-sŏng listed the European institutions which were given his art pieces. He also mentions Czechoslovakia, where two of his works (a figure painting and a landscape) should be in the “Prague Museum” (quoted after Ch’ui and Ryu 2001:26). The author of this article asked the curators of the most important Czech collections, the National Gallery, National Museum - Náprstek Museum of Asian, African and American Art, Museum of the City of Prague, and the Moravian Gallery, but none of these institutions have found any trace of
such a donation. But there is still hope.\textsuperscript{27}

President of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia Emil Hácha with the guests at a tea party at the chancery of Japanese Consulate in Prague (1941) – in the backdrop a woodcut by Pae Un-sŏng depicting Baron Mitsui (photo from the archive of Uměleckoprůmyslové muzeum /Museum of Applied Arts/ in Prague)

\textsuperscript{27} Helena Čapková, a Czech art historian based at Waseda University, recently claimed in a personal communication with the author that she has located an unknown work by Pae in the Czech Republic.
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Contemporary Czechoslovak press comments on Pae Un-sŏng’s exhibitions
(if not stated otherwise, the periodical was published in Prague)

Articles
Anon.: Der Koreaner Pai im Kunstverein (Korean Pai in Krasoumná jednota). *Die internationale Kunstwelt*, 3, 1936, p. 44.
ad. [Adolph Donath?): Unsoung Pai. *Prager Tagblatt*, February 20, 1936
J. P.: Der Koreaner Unsoung Pai (Korean Unsoung Pai). *Prager Presse*, February 29, 1936
Kr: Malíř dvou kultur (Painter of Two Cultures). *Polední list*, February 21 (3rd edition).

Anonymous short notes in Czechoslovak dailies:
Feb 12, 1936    Deutsche Presse
Feb 13, 1936    Die Zeit
Feb 14, 1936    Die Zeit
Feb 20, 1936    Bohemia, České slovo, Deutsche Presse,
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Národní politika, Prager Abendblatt, Prager Presse, Slovenský stred
Feb 21, 1936  Národní listy
Feb 22, 1936  Bohemia
Feb 25, 1936  Lidové noviny (Brno), Polední lidové listy
Feb 26, 1936  Bohemia
Mar 1, 1936 Prager Presse
Mar 5, 1936  Domov našich žen, Lada (Mladá Boleslav)
Mar 10, 1936 Večerní české slovo
Mar 14, 1936 List paní a dívek
Mar 21, 1936 Pestrý týden
Aug 10, 1936 Národní osvobození (countryside edition)

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Jaroslav Olša, jr. (b. 1964) served as Czech Ambassador to the Republic of Korea from 2008 till 2014, when he was assigned to the Philippines. He graduated in Asian and African studies from Charles University in Prague and has worked in the diplomatic service for more than two decades. He dealt with Sub-Saharan Africa and served as his country’s Ambassador to Zimbabwe and five neighbouring countries (2000-2006). He has published on African history, literature and art, one of his books was published also in English and Korean as “Modern Art of Zimbabwe, 짐바브웨 현대 미술전” (Korea Foundation Cultural Center 2010).

He is primarily interested in the history of Czech interactions with Asia and Africa and has written and edited books also on Czech-Korean ties: “1901 photographs of Seoul by Enrique Stanko Vráz and other early Czech travellers’ views of Korea, 1901년 체코인 브라즈의 서울 방문. 체코 여행기들의 서울 이야기” (Seoul Museum of History 2011), “Czech-Korean film encounters. History of interaction between the two cinematographies from the 1930’s to today. 양국간의 영화 상호작용 역사 1930년대부터 현재까지” (Korean Film Archive 2013), “The Korean Peninsula after the armistice as seen by Czechoslovak delegates to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission 1953-1956. - 정전 후 남과 북. 체코슬로바키아 중립국감독위원단이 본” (Seoul Museum of History 2013), and “Han Hŭng-su – Father of Czechoslovak Korean studies. Korean historian in Central Europe of the 1930s and 1940s” (in Czech, with Miriam Löwensteinová) (Nová vlna 2013).
For his activities in promoting the cultural ties he was awarded the Honorary Citizenship of the City of Seoul by the Mayor Park Won-soon in 2012.
The Boats of the Han River

Robert Neff

In the late 19th century, traveling between Chemulpo (modern Inchon) and Seoul was not an easy task. Depending on the season, one could go overland or by river. Options for 26-mile overland trip were appalling: walk, ride in a rickshaw, in a chair or palanquin (borne by 2-4 bearers), on a bicycle (popular with foreigners residing in Korea in the mid 1890s) or on a Korean pony which was famed for its strength and surefootedness but was equally notorious for its ferocious attacks upon its companions, handlers and riders. Many people chose the perceived easier course – traveling by river.

1 Earlier versions of this article were published in: Robert Neff, “Navigating the Heart of Seoul”, Oh My News, March 25, 2008; Sung-hwa Cheong and Robert D. Neff, 서양인의 조선살이(Seoul, South Korea: Purun Yoksa, 2008), 320-332.
The Boats of the Han River

Junks and Riverboats
There were many types of vessels that traveled up and down the Han River. Some of these vessels were Korean coastal junks that occasionally ventured away from, but more often hugged, the relative shelter of Korea’s coastline. Others were seafaring junks including Chinese and Japanese that traveled from their own shores bringing goods to Seoul. And to a greater extent, the smaller Korean river vessels that remained within the confines of the Han River. Captain Fritz W. Schulze, a German employed by the Korean Customs Department, wrote in August 1884: “Native junks from about 10 to upwards of 100 tons constantly navigate the river in perfect safety; also several foreign-built vessels under the Korean flag, officered and manned by natives. The Chinese and Japanese junks, as well as other sailing ships trading to this port, almost invariably obtain permission to proceed up river, as far as Song Gai, or Yong San (Mapo)...”

The Korean riverboats, depending on their purpose, were often altered to optimize their cargo capacity. Horace Underwood wrote: “An immense amount of brushwood is consumed as fuel in the city of Seoul and boats bringing this up the river in the fall have on either side a built out framework approximately equal to the beam of the boat, thus enabling

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them to carry three times the normal deckload of this light but bulky freight.”

The boats were not built for comfort: “None of these river boats are decked or have enclosed cabins. A small section is used for galley where the crew cook the rice. This contains a place for a jar of the Korean pickle or ‘kimchi’; a moderate sized water jar; a small supply of fuel, and space for the few dishes required ... Rolls of a kind of thatched-matting called ‘dheum’ are spread as a shelter against the weather and when loaded the cargo is often stacked to provide a sort of cabin.”

There was really no need for cabins because, for the most part, the ships did not travel at night, except in safer sections of the river and only when the moon was very bright. Most of the time the boats were brought close to a riverbank at dusk and tied to trees or large rocks until morning. The small crews were forced to find whatever shelter was available or slept amongst the cargo.

A sailor's life is inherently dangerous so it is with little wonder that many sailors find solace in religious beliefs, even today. The Korean sailors of the past were no exception but unfortunately many of their beliefs have been lost through the passage of time, or through people's unwillingness to divulge them. Horace Underwood, who wrote a book about Korean boats and ships, expressed his frustration in obtaining information when he wrote:

“Nor is it easy to get information from Korean sailors. Some have a superstitious objection to talking to a Christian about such things and others are half-ashamed of these old beliefs and fear that what they say will be used to ridicule the Korean people.”

While there is a little information concerning the superstitions of sea-going vessels, there is less concerning the riverboats. It is very likely that river sailors made sacrifices of food and alcohol to local deities at sections of the river that were considered the abodes of dragons and spirits. Sacrifices were also made at places thought to be haunted by ghosts. One such place on the Han River was Son Dol Mok where lurked “the spirit of the boatman Sondol who was unjustly beheaded by the King.”

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4 Ibid. pp. 11-12.
5 Ibid. p. 29.
Dogs were considered bad luck aboard ships. If a dog jumped aboard a ship it had to be captured and sacrificed as an appeasement to the gods, even if the sailors were required to pay an exorbitant amount of money to the dog's owner. Women passengers, at least on sea-faring vessels, were considered bad luck and were not transported during the first month of the year.

Despite the precautions taken by the superstitious sailors and Captain Schulze’s insistence that during his survey of the Han River not a single accident occurred to any of the junks, accidents did happen. The swift currents, fogs and shifting sandbanks of the river often claimed vessels, stranding them upon the sandbanks. In 1886, a young American woman and group of westerners departed Chemulpo on rickshaws and ponies carrying their light luggage, and had their heavy luggage shipped to Seoul aboard a junk. She recalled, “We did not see these heavy boxes for three months, as they were stuck on a sand bank during the rainy season!”

Ferryboats
Because the Han River was often too deep to ford and possessed no bridges, ferryboats were an essential part of transportation. There were eleven ferry crossings, but the most important were Gwang, Hangang,

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Yanghwa, Mapo and Yongsan. The ferryboats were “of very heavy construction, very broad in the beam, low in the bow to allow loaded ponies or oxen to come on and off; with relatively high poop to allow the use of the huge sweep required to handle so heavy a load.”

One early western visitor to Seoul in 1885 wrote: “Arrived at the river, we found a large ferry-boat all ready to receive us. It already contained some two dozen Coreans, mostly with heavy packs on their backs, and a fine large bull; but we managed to find space for our three ponies, our mafoos [horse handlers], and ourselves, and the whole miscellaneous cargo was soon yulched across a somewhat novel sight.” And while this all impressed the visitor, it was the Korean passenger with a pig on his back that seems to have dominated his attention.

Isabella Bird Bishop in her travels in Korea in 1894 and 1897 wrote: “Ferries are free. The government provides the broad, strong boats which are used for ferrying cattle as well as people, and the villages provide the ferrymen with food. Passengers who are not poor usually give a small douceur.” Evidently westerners were exempt from the free passage. Richard Wolfe, an English missionary visiting from China in the fall of 1884, noted in his travelogue: “About six o'clock I arrived at the river, which I crossed, pony and all, in a boat; fare, two cents.”

“A man named Hong Chong-sun secured the right to manage all the ferries across the Han in the vicinity of Seoul. He immediately raised the tariff a hundred percent and made the ferry-men do the work at bottom prices. Therefore the ferrymen made a violent demonstration with clubs and stones with the result that the obnoxious Hong was driven out and things resumed their former status.”

“The Department of Agriculture Commerce and Industry sent an order to the Governor of Seoul stating that the city authority must warn

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the ferry men at the river towns not to delay the progress of the mail carriers who are going South every day. These boatmen will not take over the carriers immediately when they arrive at the ferry, because they do not pay handsome toll like other passengers. This causes great delay in delivering mail, and the Governor must order the boatmen to take the carriers over as soon as they get to the ferry.”

Despite the ferryboats' strength, they were weakened by the inadequate ribbing and crossbeam support in an effort to make loading ponies and bulls easier. According to Horace H. Underwood, “after some years of use these boats loosen up in an alarming fashion.” There were other problems as well. During the monsoon season in 1897, The Independent reported: “One of the ferryboats at King’s Ferry capsized two days ago with thirty passengers and two oxen, including two boatmen and they were all drowned. The police Dep't ordered the ferrymen not to carry such a large number of passengers in their boats during the rainy season.”

Chemulpo

Steamships
In September 1884, Captain Fritz W. Shulze presented his opinion on the feasibility of steamboat navigation on the Han River to his superior, P. G. von Mollendorff. In it he wrote, “I am glad to report that of the many

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14 The Independent, January 19, 1897.
16 The Independent, July 22, 1897.
Chinese and Japanese junks which obtained permission to proceed up river, none have met with any accidents, which favorable results naturally lead to the inference that steam navigation can be carried on still more successfully.”\textsuperscript{17} It was his opinion that as long as “foreign navigators with foreign-built vessels, especially with steamers” used “common nautical skill and ordinary caution” they had “no reason to hesitate to participate in the navigation of this river, where the natives with their clumsy and frail boats have hitherto carried on the trade quite successfully.”\textsuperscript{18} His smug comments probably haunted him in later years but there were many who shared his opinions.

![Chemulpo](image)

In October 1886 a group of Korean merchants pooled their money together and formed the Corean Merchants’ Steamship Company [CMSC] with the intent of establishing steamship transportation along Korea’s

\textsuperscript{17} Fritz W. Schulze to P.G. von Mollendorff, September 29, 1884, cited in Fritz W. Schulze, \textit{The Navigation of the Soul River}, a series of dispatches from Captain Fritz W. Schulze to von Mollendorff and given as a lecture to the Royal Asiatic Society, China Branch, December 15, 1884.

\textsuperscript{18} Fritz W. Schulze to A. B. Stripling, August 21, 1884, cited in Fritz W. Schulze, \textit{The Navigation of the Soul River}, a series of dispatches from Captain Fritz W. Schulze to von Mollendorff and given as a lecture to the Royal Asiatic Society, China Branch, December 15, 1884.
coast and on the Han River.\textsuperscript{19} The company’s first effort to obtain a steamship ended in failure after its Korean agent lost 1,200 dollars in Nagasaki to a Japanese swindler who sold him a ship that he did not own. \textsuperscript{20} The company did, eventually, manage to buy at least two steamers – and a photograph of the larger one was shown to King Gojong who allegedly “expressed himself highly pleased with it.”\textsuperscript{21}

The company had great expectations for these steamers. A coal field near Pyongyang had been recently investigated by Alfred B. Stripling – a former member of the Korean Customs Department – and it was the intention of the company to use this coal to cheaply convey the “tribute rice” from the coast to the capital.\textsuperscript{22}

The establishment of this company angered many Chinese and Japanese junk owners because prior to the company’s establishment, they had been allowed to freely proceed up the river to Mapo. Now they were denied access.\textsuperscript{23}

Despite the promise of success, the company soon found itself in financial trouble. In October, a Chinese newspaper reported that the company’s two vessels were running regularly but noted: “It appears that the vendors of these steamers are experiencing a difficulty in obtaining the balance of the purchase money, which, so far as at least one of them is concerned, is not to be wondered at!”\textsuperscript{24}

It was generally believed that the company had overpaid for the ships and many felt the Americans were to blame. In June 1886, Horace N. Allen wrote to the American Trading Company in Japan informing the company that the Korean company wished to purchase a small steamer to

\textsuperscript{19} This company has also been referred to as the Daeheung Trading Company. According to a regional directory for 1887: E. Pyung Sun (Yi Byeong-seon) was the manager, Kim Tong Hun (Kim Dong-heon) the accountant, Yi Hak Kiun was the secretary, Chesney Duncan was the foreign secretary, and Captain J. A. Koch commanded the coastal steamer. Captain Ferdinand Meyers may have commanded the river boat. Choi Wan Gee, \textit{The Traditional Ships of Korea} (Seoul, South Korea: Ehwa Womans University Press, 2006), p. 34; Jae-Seung Kim, \textit{The Facts of Korean Classic Stamps} (Kimhae, South Korea: Inje University Press, 1998), pp. 178-186.


\textsuperscript{21} \textit{The North China Herald}, August 27, 1886.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{The Japanese Gazette}, August 26 1886.

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{The North China Herald}, October 27, 1886.
operate between Seoul and Chemulpo. Allen stated that the Korean company had a capital of about $7,500 and did not care to exceed $15,000 in the purchase of the vessel. He hoped that the American Trading could send the particulars of two or three vessels within the price range of $5,000-10,000. Allen was convinced that the Korean company would buy whatever ship the American firm suggested as long as they were able to afford it.25 But in November, after the ship had been purchased, rumors circulated (allegedly started by a Japanese man) that the American Trading Company and its representative in Chemulpo and George C. Foulk, the acting American Charge d’affairs, had conspired together and purchased a ship for $10,000 and then resold it to the Korean company for $28,000.26 It seems to have been a misunderstanding as the ship was purchased for $10,000 or roughly 28,000 yen.27

Another American firm, this one in Nagasaki, George Lake & Co., also sold a ship (Taehan) to the Korean company. However, the Korean company was unable to make their promissory note’s payment of $1,132 on December 15, 1886. Within days, Edward Lake (who was running the company in his brother’s absence28) immediately contacted Foulk at the American Legation in Seoul and demanded foreclosure on the ship.29

Troubles continued to plague the company. In February 1887 the Taehan was reported to be missing. It was bound for Mokpo and had left the previous month; fortunately it soon made it to its destination but it was not long before it had a new owner.

25 Allen wasn’t the only one trying to find a ship for the CMCS. Chesney Duncan, a former employee of the Korean Customs Department, was hired as the foreign secretary and tried to not only find a steamship but also to raise capital for the company. Horace N. Allen to J. R. Morse, June 11, 1886, Allen Archives; Wayne Patterson, In the Service of His Korean Majesty (Berkeley, CA: Institute of Asian Studies, University of California, 2012), p. 124; The North China Herald, August 27, 1886.
28 For George Lake’s sordid affairs see Robert D. Neff and Sunghwa Cheong, Korea Through Western Eyes (Seoul, South Korea: SNU Press, 2009), pp. 321-350.
29 Edward Lake to George C. Foulk, December ?, 1886, enclosed in John M. B. Sill to Secretary of State, No. 228, Diplomatic Series, July 22, 1896, American Diplomatic Despatches.
In October 1887, the steamer the Taehan was sold at an auction in Chemulpo in order to pay off its debt. The buyer was, unsurprisingly, Edward Lake who soon afterwards had the ship steam back to Nagasaki flying the American flag. Lake had managed to purchase it back for only an eighth of the $9,000 dollars the Koreans had paid for it. The American minister to Korea, Dinsmore, reported to the Secretary of State on October 10, 1887 that Lake “sold the ship for an enormous price” then “bought her at a forced sale at far less than her value. The Koreans are sore naturally.”

The CMCS continued to operate for several years – mainly along the coast – and suffered a couple of shipwrecks and financial difficulty. According to one writer, “these steamers were managed by government officers, but the shipping business was not successful due to [the] lack of efficient shipping management.” In 1892, the Korean government established a national shipping company and transferred the CMCS’s ships into it.

While the lack of efficient shipping management may have crippled the CMCS, it did not deter other entrepreneurs from establishing their own companies. In 1888, Friedrich Gorschalki, a German businessman with properties in Chemulpo and Seoul, began operating a

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30 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, October 26, 1887.
small steamer that charged foreigners $1.00 and was said to “answer its purpose exceedingly well”.  

What became of this little steamer is unknown for it is only mentioned once in a newspaper and does not appear in any of the trade reports.

In June 1888, another Korean company, Samho Hwaesa, was established and purchased two small wooden steam launches from Osaka and renamed them Yongsan (16 tons) and Samho (13 tons). It isn’t clear when the Samho arrived in Korea but we know that the Yongsan sailed from Osaka and arrived in Nagasaki on August 3, 1888 with the Korean flag at its mast. By the end of August, the two ships were in Korea and began passenger service between Chemulpo and the river ports: Hangang, Yongsan, Seogang, Yanghwa and Mapo (Samho). But like its predecessors, the Samho Hwaesa soon experienced the wrath of the river. Within days of operation, one of the steamers ended up stranded halfway between Seoul and Chemulpo “putting her passengers to great inconvenience.” The company was lucky for the steamer apparently did not suffer much damage but a couple of months later a newspaper reported that one of the small steamers had been sunk in the river.

Despite these early difficulties, the company purchased another steamboat in December – an iron river steamer imported from Germany and put together in Japan. It was declared “a good sea boat” and named the Chai-kang. While it may have been a “good sea boat” it was not a match for the Han River. In April 1889, Captain Fritz W. Schultz, took command of the Chai-kang. It is ironic that he was considered to be the leading foreign expert of the Han River because after making only a few trips on the river he struck a submerged rock, breaking both her screws and doing damage to the bottom of the ship. A correspondent in Seoul reported that “two spare screws had been sent with the vessel, so the

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32 London and China Telegraph, December 1, 1888.
33 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, August 15, 1888.
35 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, December 25, 1888.
36 The ship is often claimed to be owned and operated by E. Meyer & Co. a German firm in Chemulpo. This may be because the company ordered and purchased the ship for the Korean government.
37 The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, December 5 and 25, 1888.
detention will not be very long. It is understood that no blame is attached to the captain.” 38

Then on September 15, at 4 a.m., the steamer ran onto another rock in the river and “the whole of the passengers (including two ladies) and the crew were rescued by a native junk. Hope of getting her afloat again at an early date were entertained.” 39 Apparently the ship was refloated, but not for long. On the night of September 30, the ship again struck a rock. 40 Once again, fortune was with the captain and the company and no lives were lost. However, the company was unable to refloat the ship on its own so in November, an Englishman named Walters, who worked for the Korean government, approached Captain Dryer, commander of the American warship USS Marion, and asked if he could obtain some chains and cables to help raise the Chai-kang. Unfortunately the USS Marion had no chains and cables to loan the Korean government and the steamer was declared a complete loss. 41

It is unclear how long the Samho Hwaesa remained in operation but apparently it did so up until at least 1893. In May of that year, a Japanese newspaper reported that the small 30–40 ton side-wheeled steamer Toki Maru had been purchased by the Korean government and rechristened the Kei-lee. It was to be “used for river service in the neighbourhood of Seoul.” 42

The Chinese were also involved in steamboat operations on the river. Through the efforts of Yuan Shih Kai, the Chinese Resident Minister to Korea, a Chinese Shipping Company was established in 1892. 43 But it wasn’t until August 1893 that The North China
Herald announced the “trial trip of the Hanyang, a vessel which has been constructed by the Fauchong and Co. for a Chinese syndicate, to ply between Chemulpo and Mapo, Corea, a distance of about sixty miles on the river Han. The boat, which is commanded by Capt. Morsel,\(^{44}\) indicates a very creditable spirit of enterprise on the part of some Chinese capitalists, who if the present venture is successful – and the prospects are unusually promising – will soon put other vessels on the line. Being only intended for river service the Hanyang is a small and handy craft. She is capable of carrying some 60 tons of cargo, and about 140 passengers … She has been built to steam 10 knots an hour … The fare for Asiatic passengers from Chemulpo to Mapo will be 75 cents and for foreigners $1.50. The main source of cargo receipts is expected to be from rice, the syndicate having also acquired a monopoly of the tribute rice carrying along the district they serve.”\(^{45}\)

As the Chinese newspaper noted, the prospects were very promising but unfortunately those expectations fell through. The company enjoyed a subsidy of 5,000 dollars from the Chinese government and had a contract with the Korean government to transport 100,000 bales of rice from Chemulpo to Seoul. But the steamer – the only one the company possessed\(^{46}\) – cost nearly $120,000 and was huge – especially compared to its Japanese competitors who had only six small boats and that it “could have taken all the little Japanese craft into its hold without difficulty.”\(^{47}\) A Japanese newspaper smugly remarked that because of its huge size many

\(^{44}\) Ferdinand H. Morsel came to Korea in 1883 as an employee of the Korean Customs Department as Harbor Master up until 1891 when he established his own company. The Japan Weekly Mail reported him working as a Han River steamship captain in 1891 but on what ship and for which company is unclear. Japan Weekly Mail, September 16, 1899.

\(^{45}\) The North China Herald, August 18, 1893; The Rising Sun & Nagasaki Express, August 23, 1893.

\(^{46}\) The Japan Weekly Mail claimed that it was the only steamship the company owned but George Curzon claimed the company had two ships – one of which Sir Nicholas O’Conor used to travel to Seoul in May 1893. Curzon’s accounts are suspect as he mistakenly claimed that the Korean government began operating two steamships running between Seoul and Chemulpo in 1880. “Failure of a Chinese Steamship Company in Korea”, The Japan Weekly Mail, February 3, 1894; George Nathaniel Curzon, Problems of the Far East (London, UK: Longmans, Green and Co., 1894 ), pp. 182-183.

believed that it would monopolize the river trade “but in point of fact its size proved its ruin, for in the first place it required a large crew and in the second it drew too much water when filled with cargo to navigate the river conveniently.”

After only six months of operations, the company lost $5,000 and, according to the Japanese paper, “the company was ignominiously wound-up and the steamer sold for 30,000 yen. Henceforth she is to have a Japanese crew and will carry tribute rice on the Chinese coast.”

Perhaps it was fortunate for the company. During the summer of 1894, war broke out between China and Japan (Sino-Japanese War, 1894-95) and undoubtedly the ship would have been seized by the Japanese military.

Following the defeat of the Chinese by the Japanese, the lucrative steamboat operation remained firmly and uncontested in the hands of the Japanese, specifically the Shoji River Steamer Company. By 1898, the company operated at least four steamships (Sebi Maru, Yaski Maru, Amakusa Maru, and Suminoye Maru) and were frequently mentioned in the English-language newspaper printed in Seoul, The Independent.

48 Ibid.
49 This seems like a remarkably low price – around $15,000.
51 The Independent, 1897-1898.
The Japanese steamship company experienced the same problems its predecessors and competitors faced – frequent groundings due to shifting sandbanks. The frustration this caused amongst the passengers was frequently described in contemporary books and newspapers.

Isabella Bird Bishop caustically described steamship travel on the Han River in 1894: “Nearly every passenger who has entrusted himself to the river has a tale to tell of the boat being deposited on a sandbank, and of futile endeavors to get off, of fretting and fuming, usually ending in hailing a passing sampan and getting up to Mapo many hours behind time, tired, hungry, and disgusted. For the steam launches are only half powered for their work, the tides are strong, the river shallows often, and its sandbanks shift almost from tide to tide. Hence this natural highway is not much patronized by people who respect themselves …”

Dr. Clarence F. Reid described his and Bishop Eugene R. Hendrix's 1895 Han River trip as being unforgettable. He wrote that “after puffing away for about seven hours our little craft ran on a mud-bank and our captain informed us that there was no hope proceeding further for at least eight hours (until the next high tide). As we were looking about for some protection from the piercing wind which swept the deck a fellow passenger told us of a good road to Seoul only six miles away.’ Determined to ‘show how Occidental pluck and energy could overcome Oriental inertia’ the party left the boat about 5 p.m. Soon they learned that the good road was a myth and that it was twenty miles to Seoul instead of six! But they had started out to demonstrate and they did, reaching Seoul at half past one the following morning …”

Yun Chi-ho, who went out to meet Dr. Reid and Bishop Hendrix, wrote in his diary: “At 1 p.m. went to Riongsan with Mr. Appenzeller to meet Bishop Hendrix and Dr. Reid. The river steamer did not come in until 5 a.m. but the parties we waited for were not on board. Learned that the Bishop's party, on the boat's being stuck on the sand bar down the river, took to their feet and made for Seoul overland. Felt very sorry for them.”

Travel on the river was considered so haphazard that many – including Koreans – were wary of using it to transport expensive property. When Muriel Armstrong Jaisohn had her Steck piano transported from

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52 Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbours*, p. 35.
54 October 13, 1895, *Yun Chi-ho’s Diary*, Vol. 4, p. 73.
Chemulpo to Seoul, she requested that the movers use a steamboat but her request was ignored by the forwarding agent and instead it was sent overland. “[T]wenty-one coolies brought the Piano to my house by oxcart, ropes and poles, making short cuts over frozen rice fields to save time and expenditure of energy.”\(^{55}\) She gushed to the manufacture that even after receiving “such rough treatment” her piano remained in perfect tune and was “possible proof of its magnificent construction.”\(^{56}\)

But in August 1897, *The Independent*, acknowledged that in the early days of steamship travel on the Han River “it was very much of a lottery if you caught the steamer at all, and then the odds were even as to reaching your destination. The steamers generally walked the distance, feeling their way along with poles on each side and making it in anywhere from twelve to thirty-six hours. The channel was a mystery and you always counted on resting on a mudbank to eat your lunch. There is not a mud bank between Chemulpo and Seoul I have not eaten a lunch on, at some time or other. Those days are no more. A race of pilots have sprung up who know the old river like a book, and the trip on the Han has become a pleasure trip through Aradian scenery instead of a plunge into the unknown.” \(^{57}\)

Despite the newspaper’s assurances, misfortune continued to plague the Han River steamers. A couple of months later, the Shoji River Steamer Company’s vessel, the *Yasuki*, had a near-explosion when some of the plate on the boiler dangerously bulged out and would have burst, possibly destroying the ship, but fortunately the engineer shut it down before this could happen. \(^{58}\) And a year later, the *Independent* reported another incident involving the Shoji River Steamer Company: “The new river steamer ‘Sebi Maru’ recently put on the run between Chemulpo and Seoul foundered on the evening of the 14th at a place some 15 miles below Yongsan, and is now quite covered up by sand. Out of some 23 people on board 17 were lost. The cargo is a total loss.” \(^{59}\)

**Pirates**

Dangers to river navigation were not confined only to natural events – there were also incidences of piracy and armed robberies. Although

\(^{55}\) “The ‘Steck’ a Winner”, *The Music Trade Review*, April 22, 1899, p. 17.


\(^{57}\) *The Independent*, August 3, 1897.

\(^{58}\) *The Independent*, October 26, 1897.

\(^{59}\) *Ibid.* December 20, 1898.
steamships were exempt from the ravages of the pirates, native and foreign junks were not. *The Korean Repository* noted that on May 19, 1892, a number of Chinese merchants left Chemulpo “on a junk for Seoul with a ‘general’ Chinese cargo. The following day at 4 p.m. about two miles below Mapo a Korean junk hove in sight and hailed the Chinese to stop. The latter refusing to lower their sails the Koreans fired on them wounding three. Matters were beginning to look serious for the Chinese when another Korean junk came in sight and the would-be pirate made his escape. The Chinese then returned to Chemulpo and were placed under the doctor's care. The slugs having been extracted, all are doing well.”

60 The writer went on to note that “piracy on the rivers and high seas had not been heard of for centuries,” but observed that “this kind of work seems to be reviving as of old.” Indeed it had. Over the next decade or two, piracy sporadically posed a threat to small-vessel shipping in the Chemulpo and Han River region. According to the author of an article published in *The Independent* in 1898, “piracy is rife in the waters adjacent to the port [Chemulpo] and several cases have been called to my attention.”

62 It wasn’t just along the Han River. Kim Chua-pil, a merchant, lost $260 worth of merchandise to pirates off the coast of Hongju in late 1896. Later that year, a pirate ship with 40 pirates armed with guns and swords, plundered a Korean junk and severely wounded crewmember and injuring several others. In 1902, the *Korea Review* reported: “The districts of Nam-yang, Su-won, Chin-wi and Inchun are infested with bands of robbers many of whom seem to have a rendezvous or a retreat on the island Ta-bu-do about thirty miles south of Chemulpo. They have a black boat in which they ply between the mainland and their island. The government has placed officers with boats to intercept and capture them.”


Even under the iron-fist of the Japanese there was piracy. In June 1907, Police Inspector Iwai and a sergeant and constable aboard the *Sakurai Maru* patrolled the waters off Chemulpo in an effort to suppress the rampant pirate attacks. There efforts seem to have failed for in January 1910, a Korean merchant named Kim Kwang-syun and his vessel were attacked by pirates off Namyang Island near Chemulpo. Half of merchant ship’s rice cargo was taken. Three months later, another merchant was robbed by pirates – this time near Pilyok Island, South Cholla Province. The authorities immediately dispatched two coastguard vessels in an attempt to apprehend them. *The Seoul Press*, June 13, 1907, January 14 and April 14, 1910.
But piracy was not only limited to Koreans. Even though the foreigners did not rob from the Korean junks, they did illegally commandeering them. In August 1891, a small number of foreigners, including a couple of English officers, took a steam launch operated by Japanese from Chemulpo to Seoul. After several hours of travel the steam launch became lodged upon a sandbar and the Japanese decided to take measures to lighten the load:

“The Japanese in charge of the launch, seeing some Koreans in a small boat towing a junk down-stream, put off in their skiff and seized the boat, not without a lengthy altercation with the owners and some blows with a bamboo. Returning in triumph, they made some of our Korean passengers get into the boat, with the object of lightening the launch, but she had so much cargo on board that this was in vain.” 63

When it became apparent that they would be stranded for the night, the western passengers followed the example given to them by the Japanese “… as there was no accommodation of any kind and we wanted our dinner, we prevailed on a Korean junk, which was gaily sailing up the river, to take us on board; but no sooner had we boarded her, than the owners said the current was too strong and they must anchor. We would not allow this, and took charge of the junk; but we were not enough to hoist and work the huge unwieldy sail and likewise steer, so we put the master of the junk to do the latter while we did the former.” 64 Eventually they were forced to spend the night along the river and did not arrive in Seoul until the following day.

Other dangers lay upon the banks themselves. In November 1892, a Chinese merchant from Chefoo, China, was attacked and killed by a gang of Korean thieves on the sand near the ferry crossing on the road to Chemulpo. The Chinese Minister to Korea, Yuan Shi-Kai, offered a reward of 500,000 cash [about 155 yen] for the apprehension of the gang. 65 In December 1897, another incident took place after two Chinese merchants stopped their boat at ferry station to spend the night. “One of the Chinamen went on shore for refreshments while the other was...

64 Ibid.
65 There was so much banditry in Seoul and its vicinity that King Gojong threatened “to punish the respective officers severely unless they [succeeded] in capturing the miscreants at once.” The Korean Repository Vol. I (1892), pp. 348-349.
The Boats of the Han River

sleeping in the boat with a Korean ferryman. A number of robbers boarded the junk and carried away the goods and threw the sleeping Chinaman overboard after inflicting fatal injuries upon him. The Korean ferryman gave an alarm and the men from other junks came to the rescue, but it was too late to capture the robbers.” 66

But not all crimes committed were against foreigners. In 1898, according to the Korea Repository, “‘Sweatless gangs’ otherwise known as land pirates” had moved from the districts beyond the capital and had “begun their deeds of blood and violence in and about the capital.”67 One of their victims was a young widow who ran a pawn shop at one of the river ports. She was brutally murdered and everything stolen from her shop. In May of the same year, The Independent reported:

“In the three villages of Tongmak, Mapo and of Riongsan along the river there are four or five thousand house. Of late, thieves and robbers, armed with swords and guns, break into the buildings and, after tying and beating the inmates, help themselves to whatever they may find. Sometimes, they write notes to well-to-do folks telling them to bring so much money to a certain out-of-the-way place or take the consequences. Thus the people of these villages are disturbed and worried. For their protection there are only two chief constables and eight policemen. The chief of the Western Station, within whose district the villages are located, has asked the Central Department to increase the police force for these places and for ten firearms with 300 cartridges.”68

Even though the police force was increased, it wasn’t able to completely squash the rampant crime wave. In 1902, robbers entered a home near the river and murdered the occupants and then calmly loaded up all their goods. The Korean government threatened the local police authorities with severe punishment if the thieves were not quickly apprehended.69 The following year a “band of robbers looted a village in No-yang and another in Kimpo and loaded their booty on twelve boats on the river and sailed away with it.”70

Apparently Mapo Ferry landing was a bed of woe for many traveling merchants. According to City History Compilation Committee of Seoul: “brokers, peddlers and hustlers, and the crowds of 'shrewd

66 The Independent, December 23, 1897.
68 The Independent, May 31, 1898
70 The Korea Review, Vol. III. (1903), p. 506
people' (gangsters), would take by force the goods of naive traders coming up from the countryside or take advantage of them, buying their goods at dirt cheap prices.” 71

The Railroad and Modernization

In late 1896 negotiations between American businessmen and the Korean government for the construction of a railroad from Seoul to Chemulpo were completed. The news was received with great pleasure and anticipation by travelers between the two cities.

“Some gentlemen started last Saturday at 12 o'clock, noon, from Chemulpo and came up the river on a Japanese steamer arriving in Seoul at seven o'clock Sunday morning. It will be a glad day when a man can go by rail between these points instead of being at the mercy of these poor crafts,” wrote The Independent. 72

Construction of the railroad began on March 22, 1897, just outside of Chemulpo. A ceremony was held to honor the beginnings of the railroad's construction and was attended by a great number of Korean officials, western diplomats and leading businessmen, along with the western employees of the railroad. The atmosphere was exuberant in anticipation that the capital would soon be linked to the crucial port of Chemulpo, and no longer would travelers be at the fickle mercy of the river steamers, or forced to endure the thirteen or fourteen hour journey on foot.

Some feared that the railroad's introduction would destroy traffic along the river, but a report by the British legation in Korea expressed the opinion that the profitable river trade would continue: “The opening of the railway may possibly interfere with this traffic, but the number of passengers who travel between Soul and different points on the river will probably be sufficient to justify its continuance even should it lose the carriage of cargo from Chemulpo.” 73

His assessment was correct. After the completion of the Seoul-Chemulpo Railroad and the subsequent lines that linked not only distant parts of Korea with the capital, but with Russia and China as well, transport on the Han River was admittedly affected, but not eliminated.

72 The Independent, May 14, 1896.
When the Hangang Railroad Bridge was built in 1900 it seriously affected the ferry service in that immediate area. In 1910, a boat bridge was built at Mapo ferry crossing by Ueda, a Japanese businessman. This threatened the livelihood of the ferrymen in the area and more than 10,000 people were said to have taken part in the riot.

Despite the damage done to the river ferry industry, vessels continued to ply the river and, as evidenced by Horace H. Underwood's claim of having “counted [along the Han River] 200 boats aground till the spring tides should float them,” fall victims to its treacherously shifting sandbanks.

The Han River Today
A lot has changed on the Han River since the 19th century. The river no longer plays a key role in transporting goods from Chemulpo (Incheon) to Seoul – that role is firmly held by the railroad and trucking industries. But it has taken on a new role – one of entertainment and leisure. Yachts of all descriptions sail lazily up and down the river flaunting their owners’ wealth and status while speedboats, jet skis, and water-skiers race by, symbols of youth and daring. But not all the thrills take place on the river – sometimes over the river! In 2007 and 2008, there were tight-wire walking competitions across the Han River.

Along the banks of the river are myriads of people fishing. No longer is this the sport of elderly men for the banks are lined with the young – males and females – all trying their luck at catching a fish. Few, if any, of the younger generation probably eat their catch.

There have been elaborate plans in the recent past to make the Han River and Seoul the “maritime tourism hub of Northeast Asia.”

In November 2009, Oh Se-hoon, the mayor of Seoul, announced that a river passenger terminal would be built in Yeouido by 2011 and the following year a 5,000-ton international cruise ship carrying 160 passengers complete with duty-free shops, theater, gym and swimming pool would begin operation cruising between Seoul and Chinese coastal cities. In addition, there would be at least one 2-3,000 ton domestic

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75 The City History Compilation Committee of Seoul, *The Modernization of Seoul and its Trials*, p. 188.
passenger ship operating from the Yeouido terminal. While these plans have apparently stalled or have been forgotten there is a relatively vibrant riverboat tourism industry. Several riverboats offer tours along the river and appear to be fairly popular with Chinese tourists. There are also several restaurants on old ships anchored or grounded near the banks of the river. There are even water taxis but I have rarely seen anyone use them.

The Han River is the heart of Seoul.

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.

78 Ibid.
Windows to the Past

A new model of archaeological preservation in downtown Seoul

Jon Dunbar

In recent years, downtown Seoul has taken on a new character that has come on so slowly that most people not using the buildings daily rarely notice. The city still puts up skyscrapers higher, faster, but new buildings opened this decade have interesting new features intended to preserve and present archaeological ruins to the public. Though coming in many forms, the most prominent is a type of glass floor, either inviting pedestrians to walk overtop or not, which looks down into what appears to be an archaeological pit filled with Joseon relics dating as far back as the 15th century. Most are outdoors and some are exposed to the elements where users can touch them, but an increasing number are being built in interiors. Paired with these are also cross-sections of archaeological (as opposed to geographical) strata that are arranged vertically in walls and protected behind glass. Another technique is represented by a modest outline in floor surfaces, purporting to show the former locations of wholly removed relics. I will discuss these and also the preservation of passages, both roadways and water bodies, as their inclusion must be tied together with other such preservation installations.

A city official told me these archaeological installations are called 이전복원유적, which translates too literally to “previous restored ruins.” I’ve taken to referring to them as “glass floors” after the most prevalent feature, though not all are protected by glass and not all are in floors.

These installations have been appearing mainly across Jongno District, as a new form of archaeological preservation. There has been little to no public discussion of them, likely due to the mundane history of the relics themselves as well as the seeming corporate nature of their inclusion in downtown Seoul’s most modern highrises. But they are worth examining, less so for their historic value and more to question how Korean heritage is being not just preserved but reconfigured and
recontextualised, and how users of the city coexist with them.

A tour of the preservation sites
For the purpose of studying this process, a handful of sites were visited over time. Tours offered through the RAS were operated to collect more opinions on these locations. Along the former location of Pimatgol are (from east) Gran Seoul, Tower 8, Le Meilleur, and D Tower, three of which have glass floor sites. Other buildings in the area have similar setups, including The-K Twin Towers, Seoul Global Center, Seoul City Hall, Four Seasons, and Pagoda Academy. Likely more exist and even more will open soon, but it should be already clear that these places are numerous.

Counted were three exterior locations protected by glass, one protected by a traditional-style wood structure, one by a glass floor and a traditional-style wood structure, five protected by glass and sheltered at least partially by the larger building structures, four installed outside with no protection from the elements (two can be physically touched by people), four housed indoors and covered by glass, five wall installations covered by glass, two simple outlines in floor surfaces, and two larger-scale passages preserved which both span multiple properties. These range from barely noticeable to everyday users to somewhat modest museum
displays. A quick rundown of these locations and their historic assets will outline what we're dealing with, but may get a bit dry.

**Gran Seoul**

Completed in December 2013, Gran Seoul is a 24-storey office building in Cheongjin-dong with 175,536.70 square meters of floor space, but on the grounds outside its doors, it boasts of six zones of archaeological remains. These zones differ greatly in scale, relevance, and style, ranging from elaborate installations sheltered under glass to mere outlines in the pavement.

“Welcome to Unjongga, the heart of Hanyang,” says a sign in the southeast corner of the property. It lists the six zones, marking itself and an adjacent electronic kiosk as zone 1. Signage in most surveyed locations was mostly bilingual, though English translation was usually either poorly done or very dry. The electronic kiosks such as the one here, while helpful, also serve to multiply available information, which may not be what the casual user wants.

Zone 2 is a prominent raised platform standing between the building’s entrance and the sidewalk in front of Jongno. It is surrounded mostly by a black siding that prevents free movement, with a few steps offering a way up. As well, there is a T-shaped path that suggests pedestrians should only walk here, avoiding the glass surface.

![The glass floor in zone 4 of Gran Seoul provides a spectacular accent to the building.](image-url)
Under the glass floor, there are ruins, charred in appearance, representing “a huge market with 1,400 stores.” Signage identifies these ruins as “Yukuijeon, which is the six central stores, in Unjongga.” Another plaque confusingly brings up Yukjo Street, the modern-day street in front of Gwanghwamun, which is nowhere near here. A third plaque introduces Cheongjin-dong, which it says developed commercial business “earlier than in other places.” I am confused by the signage's overlapping descriptions of Cheongjin-dong and Unjongga; a more casual visitor might also confuse these with Yukuijeon and Yukjo Street.

On our first RAS tour here, in which heavy rain chased most of the group away, those of us who came this far found that the rain made it impossible to see what was under the glass.

The third zone, labeled “an alley for the people,” cuts through the building parallel to Jongno, tracing the original route of Pimatgol. This stretch of the rebuilt Pimatgol, cutting right through the building itself, is quiet, sterile, and suggests no historic value beyond the signage. Signage refers to Pimatgil instead of Pimatgol, and tells a familiar version of Pimatgol's history, with some additional historic background. According to the plaque, the space was first constructed as drainage for the market in 1412. Initially it was six meters wide, but that decreased to between 2.5 and 3.8 meters as the drainage function diminished and buildings encroached on it little by little, starting in the 17th century.

The whole story about how Pimatgol became a shortcut for commoners is introduced, in one of at least four different signs found between Gwanghwamun and Tapgol Park. Basically Pimatgol runs parallel to Jongno, the main thoroughfare of Joseon Seoul, where travel was slow due to elites traveling through by horse. Commoners, who had to stop what they were doing and prostrate themselves before their social superiors, developed the habit of ducking back into Pimatgol to pass through the city unimpeded. Businesses formed back there catered to their tastes, offering lowbrow, low-cost fare with a hearty atmosphere. It was honestly a lot more exciting to get to know back when you could still visit authentic sections of the alley. The centuries-old route has roughly maintained its original path, until the row of highrises along the northern side of Jongno popped up throughout the past two decades causing major changes.

On the western end of the new Pimatgol tunnel through the building, there is a plaque that is more substantial than what it describes: cornerstones that had been used in government-leased shops. For my first several visits, I could not locate the cornerstones, until finally realising the
sign referred to two dark tiles on the walkway that contained their loose outline. I get the impression that this site was hastily added or changes were made to reduce its profile late in the construction process. The text of the sign is identical to that used in zone 6.

The fourth zone is most spectacular, occupying a large portion of the area sheltered dual lobbies of the twin towers. Unlike zone 2, this one is impossible to miss, as the installation is at ground level with pedestrians, and due to the darker environ it is easier to see under the glass without as many reflections caused by the bright sky. The signage claims this preserved site is a firearms workshop, thought to date back to the Imjin War of 1592 and Manchu invasion of 1636. Visitors to the building must walk to the left or right of it, though there is a single walkway right through the middle for those who would like a closer look at the ruins and don’t care for the shortest path to their destination. The exhibit is clearly marked with (removable) signs warning not to walk on the glass.

Not far from here is zone 5, which claims to show a more residential side to Cheongjin-dong. It is shielded by glass but lies right outside the protective overhang of the building lobby, making it harder to view in sunlight. One part of it facing the lobby entrance has the outline of several stones traced into the floor surface, perhaps suggesting a wall or a road, without explanation. It backs onto the building and is easy to bypass.

North of here is another section also labeled as part of zone 5, this one just a bunch of cornerstones suggesting the shape of an old house, surrounded by grass with no protection from the elements. Signage here talks about how houses were required to dig wells or drainage for fire protection. It’s also mentioned that an early fuel source for heating homes in ondol under-floor heater systems was dried horse manure.

A man leans on a cornerstone at zone 6 at Gran Seoul and watches girls going by.
Zone 6 is clearly similar to the outline in zone 3, a roped off little lawn with stone tiles laid down and about a dozen large cornerstones jutting out of the grass like troll teeth. They are surrounded by a small rope fence, which doesn’t so much prohibit throughtraffic as restrict possible routes. On one visit, I caught a guy leaning on one of the stones watching girls. At night, I discovered there are LEDs around the stones marking the way to step over them safely. Absolutely inappropriate for anything of historic value, but adding to the user experience by actually interacting with passersby.

Last, around the corner on the northern side of the building, there are several displays built into the wall under an overhang, clearly an area intended for smokers to hang out rather than pedestrians to pass or history buffs and tourists to discover. This display introduces the whole archaeological excavation process. Behind glass, many artifacts themselves are on display, including pottery, porcelain dolls, and bronze mirrors. There is also a scale model reconstruction of Joseon buildings arranged vertically, which defies spatial comprehension but certainly saves space.

This section, unlike any of the others observed, feels the most like a real museum display. Items are nicely arranged and presented, rather than laid out on the ground in full scale. The text here is informative and lucidly written, intent on giving archaeological data without the hand-wringing self-consciousness of the others. There is also an interactive kiosk providing more information about the artifacts uncovered here. It also has the only signage that spells Pompeii correctly.

“These materials allow us to draw a cadastral map depicting change through the early, middle, and late Joseon,” one sign says. “They provide important clues for research into the development[sic] Korea’s urban architecture and the everyday lives of people in the past.”

The signage indicates the survey period took place between April 2009 and February 2011. Remains of structures were found in strata down to 4.5 to 5.5 meters below the present-day asphalt surface, said to be 30.3 meters above sea level. The survey uncovered 253 building sites, 53 wells, and seven roads. Artifacts are divided across “six strata of culture,” “each of which took 100 years to form,” sitting atop a natural stratum (자연층) located below the 15th century.

Another sign specifies 51 of these building sites date to the mid/late 16th century. “Four important historic sites from among them have been restored in another location,” it mentions. There's an interesting
implication to that, reminding us that we are looking at a previous era’s trash, only what was considered worthless enough to leave behind, and after unearthing, to have little enough historic value to not be reconstructed at another location.

Okay...now, it's time to move on to building 2.

Tower 8
Tower 8, another office building with restaurants on the lower levels, is a flashy building, all reflective surfaces unlike the busy clash of earth tones in Gran Seoul next door. It was completed in December 2014, meaning it blocked passage between Gran Seoul and Le Meilleur on either side for some time, holding pedestrians back from the full New Pimatgol experience.

Coming from the east, before we enter Tower 8's stretch of the reconstructed Pimatgol, we are greeted by another sign and a nice little wooden structure.

The sign itself is translated into English awkwardly but with a level of enthusiasm not found elsewhere, not even the all-business signage of zone 6 at Gran Seoul. “Seoul, we're putting our feet on her,” it boasts amid awkward flourishes. We can encounter, under her earth, the intact vestiges of Joseon Dynasty's living history which lasts 600 years.” This particular site, though, we aren’t allowed to put our feet on her. And it, like nearly every other historic site, is certainly not “living.”

The wooden structure shelters a pile of unearthed stones we are told was a well. It is impossible to see into the well unless one hops over the glass barrier, which shows that the well doesn't extend below the surface and there are what appear to be bags of concrete stored in there. The signage here mentions the well was for firefighting and drinking, and that in 1426 King Sejong ordered that all administrative offices in the capital dig two wells. The construction methodology and materials of the well are “evaluated to be superb ones,” the sign boasts.

Moving into the Pimatgol recreation, which is characterised by dark stonework broken up by bright primary colour flourishes of food pictures, we might miss this if we walk too fast: on the brick walkway beneath our feet, there is the outline of several stones, marking the original location of the well, maybe only 10 meters away from its preserved location outside. I can’t help but feel this is a missed opportunity, as perhaps it may have been nicer to recreate a fountain with running water on this location, rather than have an outline in the floor here and a bunch of stones piled up outside.
And behind glass on the wall here is a cross section of the strata that were unearthed, a full two storeys tall with stones and chips of manmade artifacts sticking out here and there in bands. Its strata are divided similarly to the others, except that the top stratum is labeled “liberation - future” (광복 - 현대), oddly.

Le Meilleur Jongno Town
Le Meilleur was opened in 2007, the earliest of all buildings surveyed for this study, which is both a pro and con. It was built before these fancy preservation techniques popped up in the surrounding newer buildings. Apparently, the excavation uncovered a wealth of historical artifacts, but as laws were not set in place, no preservation was done. The missed opportunity certainly seems to have spurred local regulations that saw other developers in the area take more care.

This was the first building to incorporate its own Pimatgol passage. The building planners had been urged to preserve the centuries-old pathway. What we ended up with was a dull, nondiscreet corridor cutting through the highrise at street level, resembling a mall food court more than a working-class alley. The passage is dull with worn colours, and the doors here all seem more like employee entrances than places for customers to enter. When the building opened, this Pimatgol was considered a missed opportunity and a failure, just a dinky little artificial space with no charm of its own.

This underwhelming way of preserving history, by removing everything but the original empty space of the passage, was widely derided as underwhelming. But perhaps it showed planners that no site is too insignificant for consideration in the design of a new building, that the bare minimum isn’t good enough.

Now that there are four adjacent buildings contributing to this recreated Pimatgol, it actually is taking on its own life now. This section is the least inspired among the four, but it has the advantage of being the most lived in already. The lower five levels of the building, plus two basement levels, mainly offer restaurants, including a couple that were part of the previous community that was demolished to make way for this building.

Crassly, there is a statue out front of the building that depicts a bug-eyed, shirtless youth gymnastically bareback riding a horse. It seems to have no historic basis, and worse, contradicts the spirit of the “horse-avoiding” alley.

Kind of behind the building, there is currently a solitary Hanok
under construction. It looks like they'll put in some park space, and as the Hanok front door is currently alarmed, I’m guessing it’ll run some kind of business. But it strikes me as a better subject than ruins behind glass, giving people something to see from many angles, walk around, and stop inside. This sort of development suggests more of a hybridity between two eras, unlike the glass floors which seem to put history under a glass slide.

**D Tower**

Built by Daelim Industrial, D Tower was completed in October 2014. It resembles silver, gold, and bronze toy blocks stacked atop one another, sitting on a blue glass base. Its recreated Pimatgol section seems livelier and more chic than the other three.

At the far end, on the western side facing the back of Kyobo Building, there are a few more archaeological recreations.

There is a substantial pavilion right down at the sidewalk facing Jongno, with a glass floor overlooking a fairly deep archaeological pit with the usual relics at the bottom. On the wall adjacent to the building is a glass cover protecting another cross section of archaeological strata going back to the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries.

This structure at D Tower sheltering an extensive glass floor attracts more attention than the glass floor itself.

It is an impressive structure and the relics are well-lit and substantial, but the execution is a letdown. A tall rail is placed along one side, and it is constructed to not afford walking on the glass or closer
examination. Pedestrians mainly walk around it, perhaps admiring the sheltering structure but paying less attention to the glass floor and what lies beneath.

A sign in Korean only outlines the findings in the unearthed strata. I swear I remember there being more signage on the glass wall in the back of the structure, even as most recently as the last RAS tour run March 27, less than a month before my latest visit. The writing was hard to see due to the limited perspective and pillars standing in the way, so it may have been removed for that reason. Some text remains, Korean only, and very difficult to view.

The whole installation is spectacularly user unfriendly, fighting for space with pedestrians rather than in harmony or even forcing people to admire it. I suspect it was originally intended to allow public access, but redesigns or perhaps safety concerns forced this change and ruined what could have been engaging architecture, rather than just a nice architectural feature best viewed from afar. This glass floor, substantial in installation including glass wall and wooden shelter, best demonstrates how many such sites force building users to compete for space with the installations, rather than share in a meaningful way.

Just west of here is a long shallow trench, a couple meters wide, filled with stones and vegetation, spanned by several pedestrian bridges along its course. Presumably at a later date it will be filled with water, as this is a recreation of Junghakcheon, one of the original streams feeding Cheonggyecheon from the mountains to the north. Signage identifying the dry stream is well hidden behind an awkward wooden fence, but there is no doubt this is the stream’s original course, within a few meters. The road running north here is admirably straight and open, affording an impressive view of Bugaksan. The stream itself continues north a decent ways, and must have been made with the cooperation of multiple construction projects. Unfortunately it remains dry and is overgrown enough that I doubt it will carry water in the near future without some serious maintenance.

Oddly, between the recreated stream and the building, there's an active pond that is supplied with water and is quite nice, albeit lacking the historic relevance of Junghakcheon. The two water bodies side by side highlight the different approaches of the examined style of preservation versus a user-oriented design intended to add value to the experience rather than the historic relevance.

One passage into D Tower from the west side has another cross section of the excavated geological strata protected behind glass. This
passage runs parallel to the Pimatgol recreation and seems more aimed at building tenants than casual pedestrians. The installation is well lit in a dark-walled passage, so users must appreciate the added visibility it provides. The strata are divided into six, stretching from Japanese occupation at the top down to a layer of nature below the 15th century.

Around the north side of D Tower is another couple of preservation sites. One is a set of ruins protected under glass dating to the 16th century, placed fairly deep underground in a well-lit chamber that can be hard to observe. The other is a stone well dated to the 19th century, set out in the open, its stones unprotected from the elements. Identifying numbers written in white are visible on the stones. The two face installations each other, as if to help visitors see them both at once and quickly move on.

**KT Gwanghwamun Building East**

Following Junghakcheon north, we reach KT Gwanghwamun Building East, a corporate office for KT opened in January 2015, which is easy to mistake as part of the D Tower complex. The building is entirely glass, perhaps to symbolise KT's transparency, though while I was here, a security guard watched me closely to make sure I didn't get any pictures of the building's entrance. The extensive landscaping outside the building, which itself occupies a small footprint, would be pleasant if not for security.

There is a peculiar glass installation huddled under the overhang of the office building, but not sheltered enough to protect the glass from rain which was pooled on it at one visit. From the sidewalk it looks like a skylight for a basement level or some other mundane feature not worth examining, but there's a stone pathway leading up through glass to where you can get a better look. Underneath is, you guessed it, more relics, less elaborate than most other such installations to the point where it looks like it’s been left empty. It is simply a nice corner of the property to get away from the crowds, and would be a nice place to sit if there were a bench.

After repeated visits, I finally discovered the signage, located on a transparent stand and difficult to read. It was all in Korean, and indicated there were three individual sites up here, but also a fourth in the building’s basement.

The basement itself was more elaborate, with a raised glass floor and ruins underneath, displays all around the walls, and another cross-section of strata arranged in six layers, from 15th century to liberation/future. This part was more museum-like, generous in
information and having an extensive presence, easily viewable as you take the elevator down to B1. It is in its own section of the basement, so you won’t get casual passersby going over it without noticing, rather inviting the fewer in for a closer look. When I went, though, the lights were off due to the late time and it was hard to see the ruins.

The-K Twin Towers
The-K Twin Towers were completed in 2012, but the commercial property was acquired in 2014 by KKR, a global investment firm, and LIM Advisors, a strategy investment group. The complex is farther from the Pimatgol axis detailed above, but it possesses a prime example of an archaeological preservation site under glass. This site preserves Chungbu Hakdang, an education institution from Joseon that was part of a network called Ohbu Hakdang, literally five schools. Chungbu Hakdang was the central location, though it appears there was never a northern Bukbu Hakdang. We get to see 18 foundational bases representing a reinforcing method in construction called Jeokshimseok Jijeong, in which the ground is dug up to place rubble, which will offer a sturdier foundation for a basestone that will support a building.

What we end up with are 18 piles of rocks, protected under glass. The glass here though is more welcoming to pedestrians, there really isn’t another way around, especially to access a staircase leading down to the basement level. Some parts of the glass are marked with a kind of gritty tape to afford walking without slipping, but pedestrians seem willing to walk over any part of the surface, which always directs the eyes downward.

Interestingly, by taking the stairs down beneath the installation, it immediately becomes clear that this ground is not the original site of the ruins, that they may have been removed for excavation, and only more recently placed there again with no connection to the new ground artificially placed there. This significantly underlines the artificiality of the glass floor, as you’re not actually looking down into the natural ground, but rather on an installation that was placed here sometime after everything was excavated. So, the location can’t possibly be authentic, and you get a peek under the hood to understand the why and how.

Seoul Global Center
On the opposite side of Jongno, outside the entrance to Seoul Global Center (opened June 2013) is a little area filled with foundation stones for a residential building of Seorin-dong dating to the 16th century. Signage
indicates the excavation was carried out from July 15, 2010 to December 28, 2010 by Hanggang [sic] Institute of Cultural Heritage. The building discovered here was determined to have good condition and academic value, so parts of it were moved to another location for posterity. As mentioned above while discussing Gran Seoul, this just highlights that archaeologically significant relics are too valuable to use in such installations.

**Pagoda**
This building, which seems to have opened in 2011, belongs to the language academy Pagoda, and while access was not restricted during open hours, it is not a place to be visited by the general public. Adjacent to Cheonggyecheon, it starts to smell damp when taking the stairs down to the basement levels. Down on B2, there is a sizeable study room that had a dozen or so people reading quietly while I visited. The surface under their feet, even down here, was glass showing 16th century ruins. The studiers didn't seem to appreciate it, and I left quickly before my presence could cause trouble.

**Four Seasons**
Opened October 2015, Four Seasons contains a small glass floor installation down in the basement. It is hard to spot within The Market Kitchen restaurant, partly because the depth of the artifacts means you have to be right over them, partly because of the placement of restaurant tables over top of them, and partly because it’s not totally open to the public.

I accessed it for a brief look by telling the maitre d’ I was looking for “Mike Park, but his reservation would be under his Korean name which I don’t know.” This was in line with the expression “it’s better to beg for forgiveness than ask for permission”; I simply wasn’t willing to take the risk of asking only to be denied, which would effectively shut off all methods of visiting this location short of staying for a meal. I probably could have received permission but this isn’t the same as open to the public, rendering this site effectively behind a pay wall. Plus my UE-y sense told me that this business might not appreciate non-customers here coming to see their archaeological assets without buying anything. The number of people they would tolerate would certainly reach a limit, somewhere well prior to the arrival of Chinese tour buses.

I had enough time to glance at the site and note it had bilingual signage within the installation, but I didn’t have time to read it or get
pictures. It was a pretty bizarre place for such an installation; while the restaurant staff seemed proud of it, it didn’t serve any real purpose there.

**Seoul City Hall**
The basement level of City Hall, coined Citizens’ Hall and made into a vibrant public space by the current mayor, holds the most sizeable archaeological preservation site by area, the Gungisi Relics Exhibition Hall. Visitors walk in on a glass platform where they can see under the floor beneath their feet, but much of the area is open air and comfortable to walk through on a network of platforms.

The glass floor inside City Hall

Signage says that 590 items were uncovered during excavation for the new City Hall building, including a breech-loading gun and objects from Joseon and the early modern period. There are also many building sites preserved down here, as well as a type of stone embankment called Hoanseokchuk that was built to protect the stream bank of Jeongneungdongcheon, a stream originating in Jeongdong that fed Cheonggyecheon. Despite the installation's large size, it seems sparsely inhabited with actual relics. Of all the installations surveyed, this one makes the top three. It is the only site among all surveyed that people would actually think to visit.

**How is all this made possible?**
This particular style of archaeological preservation is made possible by a confluence of centuries-old history, modern-day law, and changing urban
renewal practices. We can learn a fair amount about this process simply by walking around downtown, visiting newly opened sites as outlined above, and maybe a few clandestine visits to archaeological excavations, a new pastime I've taken to calling anarchaeology. It's another take on urban exploration, itself a productive hobby for those attracted to endangered architecture, but the anarchaeologist is concerned with more historically relevant sites (while also following the same ethics of non-interference).

Several sites in the new buildings (Citizens' Hall, D Tower, Tower 8, KT) show a cross-section of the geological layers. Although impressive installations, they hardly paint an illustrative picture for the layperson. What they attempt to show is the many overlapping layers of city grids stacked up on top of each other.

Throughout Joseon, it seems that urban renewal often consisted of throwing dirt on top of whatever ruins were already there and building on top of that. Old foundations, as well as pottery, broken tools, food waste, basically whatever garbage the earlier generation didn't bother to clean up, remained there, buried and built over. Anything deemed of value or significance in those days would have been cleaned up or moved.

It should be clear that, then just as now, this is not a natural geological process, especially considering the Joseon-era strata are called “culture strata” that sit atop a “natural stratum.” If you were to observe a Joseon house, it would not slowly sink into the ground and be buried over time. This was a very manmade process, with previous structures either being intentionally knocked down and built over, or development coming in after city-scale catastrophes such as fires, floods, or invasions. What we end up with is an information-rich record of the city's history, built on the discarded buildings and trash pickings of previous generations, compressed into layers under the pavement of the downtown area.

This process continued up until the early modern era, when construction stopped being about building on top of older ruins and excavation became part of the process. When the first basements were dug, the first foundations poured, workers must have noticed they were digging up shards of ancient artifacts. Did they look on such objects as evidence of older, foolish days when this land was ruled by kings? Or did they feel like they were stirring the bones of their ancestors? Much of this happened under the Japanese occupation, but unsentimental urban renewal continued and accelerated throughout the latter half of the 20th century.

That is, until about a decade ago when the district government mandated full archaeological surveys prior to any new construction projects. A newly affluent nation, now afforded the luxury of intellectual
curiosity ahead of the bulldozers, started to trace its roots wherever the ground was opened. This wasn’t just a good practice, it reflected positively on the nation, fitting in with the narrative of the country that sprang back from total devastation with shocking speed. Whenever the buildings of the modern era were wiped out, careful archaeological surveys were carried out under the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) to catalogue every single ondol stone, roof tile, and animal bone along the way down through each layer of history.

Some prominent discoveries across the city stimulated the public imagination as to what else could be buried down there. The daylighting of Cheonggyecheon uncovered the previously lost Gwangtong Bridge, constructed with the stones of Queen Sindeok's tomb. Further east, the demolition of two Dongdaemun stadiums led to the uncovering of a section of city wall previously thought lost that included Igansumun, a sluice gate for leaving the city. Both structures were dutifully restored and incorporated into existing designs.

Around when Igansumun was being unearthed, Jongno had a similar opportunity with the destruction of sections of Pimatgol, in particular at the location of Le Meilleur Jongno Town. Although I won’t call that the final missed opportunity, it does seem to be the tidal change point. The tamed version of Pimatgol presented here has been derided, but also the fact that a proper archaeological survey wasn’t carried out here means that we missed out on much more than a narrow alley lined with working-class restaurants -- we lost a great deal of archaeological data.

So, archaeological surveys are now conducted in the downtown core, within the original city walls, delaying construction several months. The two most prominent recent examples include the section of land just north of Jongno Tower and the so-called “golden plot” of Sogong-dong, across the street from the Westin Chosun Hotel.

The 1.73-acre site by Jongno Tower previously bore several humble working-class buildings, mainly restaurants, saunas, and bars, but after all buildings were removed, large windows were installed in the construction fence so citizens could observe the archaeological dig. *Archaeology Magazine* shared images of the dig, on April 3, 2015 describing the “37 residences, large and small, constructed during the early part of Korea's Joseon Dynasty.” By the time the pictures were published, the excavation was wrapping up and the pictured relics were being removed from the site.
The “golden plot” of Sogong-dong served as a parking lot for years. Last year it was dug up and archaeological ruins were exposed. Some ancient relics were removed but modern-era structures remain.

Meanwhile, a dig across downtown in Sogong-dong was uncovering a variety of ancient to early modern relics. The dig was visible from the street, but security kept a close watch for intruders. This spot had previously been used as a parking lot, and it still sits disused today with no clear plans for reconstruction due to the complicated legal status of the area. Some of the uncovered ruins remain in place, but the older stuff has been removed. All these removed artifacts at both sites, as well as likely many others, may be sitting in a warehouse somewhere and could reappear on the sites at a later date.

So then how did these archaeological records make their way into the glass floors? Did the archaeologists uncover these relics, forcing architects to construct new buildings around them? Hardly.

In every major modern construction project, tall fences are erected around the site as excavation is carried out. It was a rare exception next to Jongno Tower that windows were installed in the construction wall, but once the archaeologists left, the windows were covered up. The fences may ostensibly be for security, but they aren’t so effective and I think the main reason they’re put up is construction companies don’t want you to see as they basically perform open-heart surgery on the city. If you knew just how deep they were digging, right on the other side of that wall along the sidewalk, it might give you vertigo at ground level. So, better to blind the public and cope with the occasional sinkhole that swallows a couple pedestrians on a case-to-case basis.
Only when the new building is being constructed are the relics returned to the site, installed in their new home under glass floors or what have you. The artificiality of their locations is abundantly clear upon viewing the glass floor at The-K Twin Towers, where you can take stairs down underneath the display, as well as at Tower 8 where the “original” location of a preserved well is marked inconspicuously on the ground. I have no evidence that any of the glass floors reflect original locations, and most were likely just installed where building plans afforded the space. They’ve been moved, pushed around, brought back not on the exact spot they were unearthed, diminishing their authenticity.

Junghakcheon, one of the original sources for Cheonggyecheon, follows the road east of D Tower, poorly marked and empty of water.

Construction companies seem to receive incentives for installing glass floors and other sites. I’d suspected monetary subsidies were given out, but have heard that loosened zoning rules may also be promised in exchange for installing glass floors, such as permission to build a little higher. I’ve been unable to get answers, but I’d like to know who covers maintenance and upkeep costs, as this could be problematic if building owners are left to the task alone, as they may not be motivated to take good care of the installations.

**Conclusions**

On the surface – that glass-covered, impermeable surface – we can see the value in investigating, recovering, and preserving archaeological heritage. It is easy to praise these new architectural flourishes – and not entirely
wrong, seeing how if they hadn't been included, none of these buildings would be worthy of a piece in Transactions. Echoed on signage throughout downtown is the sentiment that we are viewing a “Pompeii of Seoul” seen through these glass floors. The windows afford this underground view here and there, which can lead to the notion that everywhere, we are treading upon layers of history yet to be similarly uncovered. And yes, below our feet are centuries of the Joseon equivalent to corner stores, warehouses, schools, and homes for commoners and nobility. It's simultaneously pretty cool and kind of mundane.

For centuries Seoul was an ancient capital city with a distinct lowrise character. Then we had the modern era of the 20th century which saw development, destruction, and rapid growth with the unsentimental removal of the old and erecting of new, impermanent buildings. This new era that started in the 21st century seeks to distance itself from that intermediary style of development, seeking an attachment to the past and overcoming the sense of being trapped in a cycle of destroy-rebuild.

The glass floors, while ostensibly part of heritage preservation, also serve to realise this new paradigm by overcoming the old one. Vertically arranged, we now have a progression from the ruins under our feet up to the glistening skyscrapers of 21st-century Korea high above, an architectural enactment of the narrative of the period of history we find ourselves in. These glass floors are a performance of a kind, but with the buildings as actors and the grounds as a stage, and the performance itself is the modern narrative of how history is remembered: history as an architectural performance. A state of finality is presented in this journey, suggesting the firmness of the present built on the shoulders of ancient times. Despite the good intentions of heritage-preserving governmental organs and whatever incentives builders may receive, these sites aren’t installed to stimulate intellectual curiosity or encourage young Seouilites to major in archaeology. Rather, they may push us toward bigger, taller projects, where history is preserved in a museum setting rather than hybridised as a living culture together with the new. This type of preservation seems to have more to say about the present and future than the past which is depicted.

The ubiquitous glass floors have us looking not only backwards in time and also downwards beneath our feet. But the direction they really make us look is not back or down, but upward. We should examine the legacy-building carried out by such projects, which impart centuries of meaning on newly opened buildings that haven't even seen half a decade of use. Nations frequently use ancient imagery to secure their legitimacy.
That is why Goryeo King Hyeonjong in 1023 declared Choi Chi-won a great figure, why Jongmyo and Munmyo honour historic figures from long before the dawn of Joseon, why the Republic of Korea’s first president Rhee Syngman claimed to be a descendant of the Yi Dynasty. And it may be why not just modern-day downtown highrises but also local governments are rushing to install these glass floors. Modern Korea is coming into its own using the legacy of Joseon in its own nation-building activities. This compressed history frozen and presented under glass is part of a national narrative of a once-great kingdom that grew into a prosperous modern nation, with only a few bumps along the way caused mainly by foreign interference. Wiping away the buildings of the 20th century, Korea rebuilds itself as a nation of continuous forward momentum, whitewashing the Joseon era and totally cutting out the 20th century, fraught with Japanese occupation, devastating civil war, dictatorship, and the soullessness of modernisation. What we are left with is the greatest hits of Korean history, only the parts that are chosen for remembrance.

As a fan of the 20th century, I’m not happy with its omission. The relics from Joseon are no more than bones, whereas we had actual living communities with generations of history only a few years ago. In the late 20th century, Pimatgol was a humble place with low prices, popular with the working class and poor students. Unlike somewhere like Hongdae, it was one linear long alley, where you could enter at one end and walk until you found your friends. It was hidden from view, with many dark corners where a young couple could duck away for some privacy. It was a lot of fun, but it wasn’t the stuff of a global capital city, instead an era of transition. Pimatgol has been a victim of redevelopment in the 21st century, removed without sentiment just as how developers have always buried the past. In ancient times, the city rebuilt anew on top of the ruins of what came before, and the same thing is effectively still done, or at least the illusion of doing so has been propagated through these glass floors.

The proliferation of glass floors bring up several implications for the future. Pulling these artifacts out of the earth and restoring them gives the onus that we have to care for them.

First, over the coming decades, more archaeological surveys will be carried out as developers cannibalise the land, but how much land should be set aside for architectural preservation? Somewhere between turning the downtown core into one big glass floor, and not preserving anything at all, there must be a sweet spot that allows citizens to move
about freely while also reminding them of the enormity of history. Seriously, how many such sites do we need to get the job done? Having visited all such sites I could locate, I've formed the impression that quantity diminishes the effect, and likely so will time. The more there are, the easier they become to ignore and the less meaning they carry. At some point, it just feels like placeholder, like these spaces are set aside for the sake of the relics themselves rather than our appreciation of them and history. It reminds me of how classrooms in Danwon Middle School, Ansan, have been set aside for two years as a memorial to the students who died in the April 2014 Sewol sinking, competing for space with incoming living students. Every space on the surface of this planet has witnessed death and history, but we can't preserve it all, or there'd be no room left for the living.

Second, certainly these new buildings replacing them will meet the same fate; they will likewise be torn down decades from now. When these buildings are ready to be brought down, as they will be, what's next? What could possibly replace such a building that purports to encompass Seoul's urban history? Will future construction projects discard the modern-day buildings and preserve the glass floors? Perhaps by then, the relics will revert to being considered trash. Maybe future people will be more interested in the lost modern era, or the skyscrapers that replaced them, or the dynamism that spurred such thorough changes. And maybe future technology will make it possible to experience all three eras, perhaps through virtual reality or some other unimaginable advancement. For now we can watch these developments with interest, anticipating the next advances that will bring to life the rich heritage of this city. But for now, it is doubtful that any more attention has been given to the long term today than ever was in the past.

New tall buildings will be built downtown no matter what, and while the motivations and implications behind installing glass floors may be troubling, we're certainly better off with them than without. Gradually more of these sites will pop up without much notice, until someday they receive wide attention for transforming the downtown core into a living museum. Visitors may very well then call it the “Pompeii of Seoul.”

Jon Dunbar, a council member of the RAS, is an urban explorer who has been documenting urban renewal in Seoul and around Korea since 2007. He curates a database of 300 various abandoned and forgotten areas around Korea. He works as an editor for The Korea Times.
A Tour of the Buddha’s Dragons

Fred Jeremy Seligson

Young nun ~
As you

Pound your
Dragon’s drum

I swim
Only to

Drown
In those

Charming
Sounds

Rolling off
Your tongue

One scene of the Buddha’s life depicted on temple walls is of nine dragons (representing the sons of the Dragon King) shooting water from their mouths over the standing baby Buddha. Meanwhile, he points one forefinger toward the sky and the other the earth, declaring the Oneness of all things.

Now, on Buddha’s Birthday, Baby Buddha stands in a fountain in the temple courtyard waiting for us to fill a bamboo ladle with spring water and spill it thrice over his head. Doing so, we purify our own minds, re-enacting the legend of the Buddha’s birth when he was bathed in a warm and a cool stream by two nagas (serpent deities). 33 years later,
while the aspirant was seated in meditation under the Bodhi Tree, the enormous Naga king Mucalinda coiled around it and, with seven-hooded heads, sheltered him for seven days during a rainstorm. After the Buddha’s Enlightenment, the Naga king invited him into his underworld palace and became his disciple.

Clifton Mabery, an Australian anthropologist, addressed our tour: “One day, a naga, a super snake, who longed to become a monk, shape-shifted into a human body. Carrying a begging bowl, he stood in a line of monks in order to receive the Buddha’s blessings. When his turn came, the Buddha said, ‘I can see that you are not a monk, but rather a naga in disguise. Sorry, but an animal cannot be ordained. However, since your longing is genuine, you can guard my temples. In a future life, you’ll be reborn as a human being.’ The Buddha decreed that from then on a monk candidate would be called a “naga.””

In Women of the Way (2006) Sallie Tisdale says, “The great Lotus Sutra was spoken by the Buddha but he knew the people weren’t ready to understand it. Much maturing was required, and so the Nagas, the beautiful dragon people who live beneath the sea, took the Lotus and other sutras under their protection until it was time.”

In a popular story, 2nd century, Indian scholar Nagarjuna (Dragon Tree Bodhisattva) mystically transported himself down to the Dragon King’s undersea palace. In the royal library, he memorized the Avatamsaka Sutra and emerged to share it with humanity. Over time, others, including Korean monks, would visit the Dragon King’s palace to receive teachings. That’s why the full Buddhist canon is called “The Dragon Treasury (Yong Chang).”

In China, nagas transmogrified into dragons as the guardians of Buddhism and accompanied Chinese missionaries to Korean kingdoms in the 4th century.

My neighbor Professor Ryu Tong-shik says in The History and Structure of Korean Shamanism (1975) that during Korea’s Three Kingdoms Period (42BC-918) the Buddhist Lotus Lantern Festival (Yeon-deung-hoe) and folk religion’s worship of dragons and light merged into one celebration on Buddha’s Birthday. “… the belief in Yeon-deung was readily accepted by the ancient beliefs of worshiping the dragon god and the bright light …”

One reason, Ryu points out, is that the words, Yeon-deung “Lotus
Lantern,” sound like Yong-dong “Dragon East.” This refers to the Dragon King who dwells East of China; that is, in the Yellow Sea which laps against Korea’s west coast.

Professor Michael Seth, my colleague at HUFS, says in the *History of Korea from Antiquity to the Present* (2010) that the sounding of the Korean name for the future Buddha Maitreya, Mi-ruk and the one for dragon, Mi-leu were “the same.” He guesses, “The popularity of the cult of Maitreya (Korea: Mi-ruk) Buddha, the Messiah, may be linked to dragon worship ….”

Professor Lewis Lancaster in “Maitreya in Korea” (*Korean Journal* 1989) paints a picture of Mi-ruk waiting in Tushita Paradise under the jewel-like “Dragon Flower Tree.” After descending to earth, devotees from Silla times up until the present have been anticipating that he will preside over “The Dragon Flower Realm” and the “Dragon Flower Assembly.”

The Buddha’s Birthday tour bus brings us to Bongwon-sa (Adorn Greatness Temple) my neighborhood temple, where it is evident that the dragon is also “the Spirit of Buddhism.” Inside an open-air pavilion, old dragon heads, on opposite ends of a firm body, support a great bell. They are called “Dragon Hooks (Yong Nyu).” The two heads belong to one dragon, named Poroe, the 1st son of the Dragon King.” Poroe abhors whales. When the monk swings the whale-shaped log, suspended from a chain, and hits the bell surface Por-oe moans. At dawn and dusk he cries throughout our village.

Entering the 1,000 Buddhas Hall (*CheonBulJeon*) we are inspected by blue and yellow tongue-thrusting dragons. They fly about a flaming Yeouiju above the giant gold statue of Amita, the Buddha of Wisdom. Mouthing pearls of spiritual power, other dragons revolve among the rafters and clutch candelabra lights in their claws, or else hang by strong tails from beams, eager to scoop up evil-doers.

Gray-robed monks are chanting. Blue and yellow dragons glare from the sides of a big drum, booming for terrestrial creatures. Metallic dragons float on a cloudy copper plate (*Un-pan*) clanging for birds. A huge blue wooden fish dragon (*Mogeo*) mouths a red Yeouiju, clicking for fish. Another Poroe bites the top of a cast-iron bell, crying out for us to awaken our Buddha Nature. Up front, four dragon heads cap a miniature
A Tour of the Buddha’s Dragons

sedan chair’s poles, ready for pallbearers to grasp when the hour comes for escorting a soul to Amita’s “Pure Land.”

Glancing around, the left side of the 10,000 Buddhas’ Hall is crowded with conservatively dressed women and a few men wearing black suits, standing and bowing repeatedly. It is a “49 days” ritual for a deceased relative or friend who is on the way to a new life. On the right side, three hoary musicians garbed in gold-color costumes and broad-rimmed pheasant-feathered hats are standing in a row. The 1st plays mournfully on a short double-reed oboe (Taepyeongso, Great Peace Bowl) that squeaks crackles and cuts into our hearts. The 2nd blows on a conch shell, sounds of wind and sea. The 3rd beats steadily on a blue and yellow dragon painted drum. Up front, four monks chant along with the vigorous beating of a young nun on a big blue and yellow dragon-decorated drum, enrapturing us. Clifton asks, “How would you like to die and ride to the “other world” upon the beats of that young nun’s drum?”
“‘I’d like nothing better.”

Dragons frolic along outer wall panels illustrating Buddhist legends. On one mural, a bearded open-chested monk lounges on the rocky shore conversing with a green dragon who has looped out of the sea. Curious, Maria asks a small, elderly monk standing nearby, “What is your name?”

“YongDam Seunim (Dragon Pond Monk).”
“Who is that person in the painting?”
He replies, “That’s Gwanseum Bosal (The Bodhisattva of Mercy).”

“But isn’t Gwanseum Bosal a woman?”
“Can be a man, too!”
“What is the dragon doing?”
“Saying ‘Thank you!”

YongDam sparks the memory of another monk bearing the same name, met over 30 years ago in a hermitage behind Hwaem-sa (Flower Garland Temple). Sitting cross-legged on the floor beside an alarm clock, he told me, “Most monks my age have given up on reaching Enlightenment and have resigned themselves to just eating and sleeping in the temple. I have been meditating daily for 35 years and shall keep on until I die.” This “Dragon Pond” lived up to the promise of his name.
The temple’s roof is called “the Dragon Ridge (Yong Maru)” since it slopes gracefully like a dragon’s spine. On either end, an open mouth, deer-horned “Dragon head (Yong Mori)” watches vigilantly; one up mountain and the other down valley. Overlapping tiles shape dragon scales. The whole 1,000 Buddhas Hall is called a “Dragon Boat (Yong Pae).” Clifton says, “I wouldn’t be surprised if it sails off on an errand of mercy while the monks are sleeping!”

Upstairs to the left, Clifton steps gingerly into the Judgment Hall (Myong Bu Jeon). Gold and blue dragons guard the chair-backs and phoenixes the arm-rests for green-haired Jijang Bosal (Ksitigarbha, Earth Womb Bodhisattva) and the ten white-bearded judges of the deceased who sit around three walls. Nervously, he asks permission to take photographs. Granted, he tiptoes by a goateed giant who grasps a dragon-headed pole ax, sensing that our day, too, will come.

On the outer side of the Judgment Hall, Clifton admires a mural of the Wisdom Dragon Ship (Prajna Yong Bae). Guide King Bodhisattva (In Loh Wang Bo-sal) is invoked along with Earth Womb Bodhisattva (Jijang Bosal) to pilot it, with a dragon-head prow and dragon-tail stern, carrying souls across “the Sea of Suffering” to Amita ’s Paradise.

By the path, a granite dragon mouths a Yeo-ui-ju while coiling around a wheel of life (Sam-sar-a). Betty, one of our tour members, traces its outline with her hand. Beyond stands the small Medicine Buddha Hall (Yaksa Yeore Jeon). Wearing curly blue hair, a white body and smiling red-lips, Medicine Buddha (Yaksa Yeore Bul) cups a ball of red herbs in his palms. Just below, dragon-shaped fumes carry up prayers from green incense sticks poked in a bronze urn’s sand, supported by four claws grasping Yeouijus. On either flank of the urn, another crouching dragon’s claw grips a Yeouiju.

Outdoors, on down the staircase, a white dragon curls under, carrying a surfing, white-robed Gwan-seum Bosal (Bodhisattva of Compassion) across the “Sea of Suffering.” To his/her right, stands the Great Hero’s Hall (Dae Un Jeon) named after Sakya-muni Buddha, a hero for conquering his worldly attachments. Out front, glares an orange and a blue dragon, on either side of a gold dragon plaque, each gripping a Yeouiju in its toothy mouth. Scrutinizing us, their scaly necks curve on through the woodwork, looping tails inside.
A Tour of the Buddha’s Dragons

On a side wall, hangs a Spirit Guardian Painting (Shinjung-taengwha) of the “104 Guardians of the Faith.” Among them, Clifton points at a fierce-looking, white mustachioed, bearded fellow, with a burning Yeouiju on his cap and a gold coin which is giving off rose-pink flames in his left hand, and says, “The Dragon King (Yong Wang).”

A stone dragon’s jaws are funneling mountain water into a cistern, providing cool refreshment on a hot day. Why not a sip a drop of love and life from the dragon’s lips? Cupped in hands and swallowed, the sparkling water cleases the body, mind and soul of defilements, including temptations of evil spirits. Golden dragons growl from the corners of another temple roof. Shutting my eyes, I see a golden glow. Concentrating on it, a dragon rushes out furiously. Open for it, I wait. Striking me, it splatters into gold globs.

Down to the right and up, a stairway leads to the green folding doors of Dragon Rock Temple (YongAm-sa). Near the ceiling, a blue Yin and a yellow Yang dragon engage in a tug of war with a blazing Yeouiju, the yellow turning clockwise and the blue counterclockwise. Hovering in space, they spin our life into being. Underneath, a young woman weeps and prays quietly for her dead husband’s soul. Leaving shoes outdoors, I step in and bow down to the golden Buddha, not the one on the altar, but the one in my soul, three times, as she’s doing, giving her company. When she’s gone, I sit quietly on a mediation cushion. Nothing disturbs me, save for an ear-singing mosquito.

Fred Jeremy Seligson is a councilor of the RAS and an Adjunct Professor at Yonsei University, where he is currently teaching Travel Writing: Life as a Journey.
Chŏn Chaekyŏng’s Butterfly

“Vestiges of old consciousness, transformed in the great kiln of the Cooperative” – a literary window into ideas of criminal justice and rehabilitation in 1950s DPRK.

Tristan Webb

Introduction
Butterfly is a short story written by Chŏn Chaekyŏng and published in 1956 in the DPRK’s literary journal Chosŏn Munhak. Written for a domestic audience, the story glorifies the passion and motivation of agricultural workers whose individual plots of land have recently been merged into one of the country’s new Agricultural Cooperatives, and praises the guiding role of the Party. But all is far from ideal in the Cooperative, not least because of an “impure element” called Ko Yŏngsu who is selfish, lazy, criminally deceitful, and the story’s protagonist.

Butterfly touches on several interesting areas. It is quite candid about rural poverty, describing agricultural workers as having just 600 grammes of rice a day, little or no meat in their diet, and where some evidently still question the very system of collectivisation. It also offers a perspective on gender relations: women participate fully and with confidence in public meetings, yet all managerial positions appear to be held by men. The proper attitude of Party officials toward workers is woven throughout the text, emphasising that they should use “humble and well-reasoned logic” to win over the views of the workers, and to lead by example. And surprising emphasis is placed on the role of competition between agricultural workers and teams in improving mutual motivation and production.

But the focus of this short essay is Butterfly’s exploration through protagonist Yŏngsu of ideas about rehabilitation and personhood. How should the Cooperative react to those who repeatedly offend, and show no inclination to change? This is the narrow focus of the story, and its handling of the question – and subsequent critical reception of the story
Chŏn Chaekyŏng’s *Butterfly* reveals insights into official narratives of criminal justice and rehabilitation in 1950s DPRK. More broadly, the story underlines the ambition of the DPRK authorities in transforming social and individual consciousness away from the selfishness of days gone past, and towards a cooperative attitude befitting socialism.

This essay uses long quotes from the story’s English translation to explore its ideas of rehabilitation and transformation: the full translation is available at http://yonsei.academia.edu/tristanwebb.

‘Butterfly’ – A Plot Synopsis
The story starts in late May, 1956, amidst workers weeding a field of corn in the newly created Cooperative farm. One worker shrieks at the sight of a large grub; whereupon another worker slices the grub, and mashes it, comparing it to their lazy and deceitful peer Ko Yŏngsu. We learn that Yŏngsu, this “impure element” within the Cooperative, was exposed recently for stealing 411kg of rice. Accordingly, a Cooperative-wide general assembly was especially convened so that all Cooperative members could gather and decide what to do with Yŏngsu.

In Part II of the story, we are taken back in time and shown the history of Ko Yŏngsu, the crimes he committed against the Cooperative, and the subsequent discussion at the general assembly. Yŏngsu had initially been well received by the Cooperative as an educated patriot, but this soon soured. His corrupt book-keeping at the Cooperative’s rice mill attracted a State audit and an order to pay compensation, he then mercilessly exploited his two adopted daughters by hiding them at home and having them make rope which he passed off as his own work, and he forever shirked physical work in the fields with the other Cooperative members, no matter how busy they were. The tipping point against him came when he was exposed for having stolen 411 kg of rice from the Cooperative.

The discussion at the general assembly about what to do with Yŏngsu is extremely heated. Despite much initial opposition, the Cooperative’s political officer, Chang Dalhyŏn, manages to persuade the workers that rather than punish or expel Yŏngsu, it is their patriotic and socialist duty to reform him. Yŏngsu reluctantly agrees to stop shirking and start doing tough manual labour in the fields: this, Dalhyŏn argues, will “cleanse the crimes” Yŏngsu has committed, and “correct the flawed attitude” he has displayed so far. Despite the apparent agreement, most remain sceptical.

Part III brings us to the present. It is now June, and the whole
Cooperative is racing against time to plant out all the rice seedlings in the paddy fields. Yŏngsu, after intense anguish, emotional resistance, and delay, accepts that he should carry out the decision of the assembly and turns up for work, to the great joy of the rest of the Cooperative. Dalhyŏn is delighted to have set Ko Yŏngsu on the right path, and is confident the Cooperative members will keep him on that path as they collectively struggle for the 3rd Congress’s declared revolution: construction of socialism in the northern half of the peninsula, and the peaceful reunification of the fatherland.

The Cooperative’s Debate on Rehabilitation
In developing its argument for the rehabilitation of repeat offenders, Chŏn Chaekyŏng’s Butterfly starts by presenting the “entirely natural” but unpersuasive views of angry members as they debate what to do with Yŏngsu at the general assembly. The mood is electric: Yŏngsu’s peers are fed up with his deceit, idleness, and thieving, and want him expelled from the Cooperative at the very least. A young female worker called T’ansil gains the enthusiastic support of the crowd with her speech of moral outrage:

“This isn’t his first time. He said he paid us back after his fraud last year at the rice mill, but I knew then it wouldn’t be the end of it. Here we all are: hungry, tightening our belts and working till bones break. And there he is: loafing about and living well off the back of exploiting kids so young they’ve still got runny noses. He says he was short on rice so tricked us and took half a tonne of it. But whose rice was that? It was rice given by the State to provide relief to all members of the Cooperative members! And Ko Yŏngsu ate it all by himself! He used us. I say we stop going on about it any more; let’s make Ko Yŏngsu give back all the rice he took, and chase him out of here.”

Then another voice – this time, a young man insisting that Yŏngsu is incapable of rehabilitation and ought to be criminally punished as a traitor:

“Cooperative member Ko Yŏngsu’s criminal actions are very serious. Before the ink had dried on the State’s investigation report into the rice mill fraud last winter he was doing the
same sort of thing again. Why was he doing it again? I think it’s because the very essence of his character is opposed to working. It’s said he would sooner die than do hard work, and would rather take the opportunity to trick others.

“Ko Yŏngsu didn’t like the idea of a Cooperative from the start. He would prefer it fell apart, and that we all went back to farming our own individual lots. I suspect that to achieve this goal, he has been secretly trying to undermine the Cooperative. I therefore propose we expel Ko Yŏngsu from the Cooperative, but that we also apply Clause 31 of the Cooperative’s Regulations.”

“What’s Clause 31?” asked another member.

At the table at the head of the hall, the Chair of the Management Committee rifled through the ‘Management Committee Head notebook’ and found the regulation.

“I will read it out. “Standard Regulations Clause 31. The theft or waste of resources of the Cooperative or of the State, or damages to State agricultural machinery is treasonous to the public works of the Cooperative, and as an act that abets the enemy of the people must be punished according to the law.” In other words, we have to punish him by law.”

“Good!”

“That’s great!”

“Let’s apply Clause 31!”

The hall erupted in noise.

An elder woman had previously used traditional rhetoric to express a similar sentiment:

“Do you reckon you could fix Ko Yŏngsu’s bad streak then, even if you had a hundred years? No, you can’t learn manners to a dog!”

Finally, a father takes the floor to argue that selfish behaviour such as Yŏngsu’s is inherently inimical to social order in the Cooperative, and that Yŏngsu must be punished to deter others from following his example:

“I have seven children. If it’s not a crime to steal grain from the Cooperative well then, I will quit tomorrow and I too will find ways to start tucking into 400kg of the Cooperative’s
grain. If I’m lucky, no one will catch me. And if I’m unlucky? What, I keep the 400kg and leave the Cooperative and nothing more?! No, I say we can’t just send out Yŏngsu without making him pay us back.”

“Yes, what he said is right!” the Cooperative members laughed and shouted out, united in voice.

But then the meeting’s mood is changed by the “humble and well reasoned logic” of the political official, Dalhyŏn. Dalhyŏn argues that it is the patriotic, social, and glorious duty of the Cooperative to try and change Yŏngsu’s selfish way of thinking, to reform him:

“Comrades, tonight we have heard the Chair’s report about comrade Ko Yŏngsu’s theft, and we have had plenty of debate about it. [...] Reflecting on everyone’s opinions expressed tonight, there seems general agreement we should make him repay the rice he took and throw him out of the Cooperative; there is also the opinion that we should send him out of the area entirely, and the view that we should refer the matter to the police. I empathise entirely with these views: there is no place for someone like Ko Yŏngsu in our Cooperative, nor really in our society.

“But I think we have to ask ourselves this: if we throw him out, where will he go and what will he do? Let’s say he leaves the area and finds another Cooperative. Or let’s imagine he goes to the city, and looks for work. Won’t the same thing happen all over again wherever he goes? A person like Ko Yŏngsu simply has no place in the villages and towns of our country as it heads for socialism.

“Here is what I think about it. I think we have a duty to not send him out of the Cooperative, and to instead keep him here with us and for us to educate him, to reform him into a new person, an earnestly-working person. Is this not the goal for which Cooperatives were organised?”

Dalhyŏn finished speaking and searched the crowd for its response. Some people were expressing empathy by nodding their heads, but most people still seemed uncomfortable. He continued.

“Suppose we assign him our most difficult work: physical labour, whether digging mud for irrigation banks or shifting
rocks. Someone here said ‘he would sooner die’ than do that sort of work. Well, let’s give him some of that work as if we had chased him out of the Cooperative. If he puts up with it, endures it, and gets on with it then we will be able to say that his consciousness seems to have been transformed. The vestiges of old consciousness cannot fail to be transformed in the heart of the big kiln we call the Cooperative! Or, let’s say we present the matter to the prosecutor’s office and they send him off to the re-education centre. Of course, the re-education centre is different from the prisons we used to have, and will make him a new person through education. But why should we deliberately yield such a glorious task to anyone else? Our country’s revolution was explicitly stated in that historical 3rd Congress of the Korea Workers Party – a struggle for building socialism in the northern half of the peninsula, and for peaceful reunification of the fatherland. The Party urged us to combine our entire patriotic capabilities for the peaceful reunification of the fatherland. In other words, it teaches us to join hands in power against Rhee Syngman and the US imperialists, their National Assembly, and even the military personnel of that puppet army. Yes, Comrade Ko Yŏngsu is a person with some kind of fault. But we all know that he hates the US imperialists and their accomplice Rhee Syngman. If he renounces his past and joins together with us, then our strength will grow by the same amount. Taking this sort of approach is part of our task for constructing socialism in the village, and is a way to help achieve reunification of the fatherland. So what I suggest is this: I think Ko Yŏngsu should return by June 15th whatever is left of the 411kg and pay back in cash for the grain he has already eaten, and that we should give him a severe warning, and make him take part in physical labour.”

Here, Dalhyŏn insists on rehabilitation so that their society is stronger, but also because it is the morally right course of action. The key difference between his suggestion and those he persuades, is Dalhyŏn’s argument contains the assumption that a person’s character is capable of changing, and that it is society’s duty to try and reform them, to give criminals a second chance. This is the narrow focus of the story Butterfly.
The Wider View of Personhood and Society

The broader assumptions underlying Dalhyŏn’s argument for rehabilitation, and the broader focus of the story as a whole, are threefold. Firstly, that one’s essential character is not fixed, but can be changed. This is the nub of the story, and is reflected in its title *Butterfly*. At the start of the story, Yŏngsu’s peers compared him to a selfish grub, which unthinkingly eats the corn so earnestly grown by the sweat of the agricultural workers. But when these same workers see how Yŏngsu’s attitude to working with them has changed, they compare him to a butterfly: the change is one of metamorphosis, and Dalhyŏn’s approach is vindicated. In a close parallel, the essence of the Cooperative has metamorphosed too: last year the members suffered from “child-like consciousness” and were ill motivated in the fields, suffering a poor harvest as a result. But in one year the efforts of the Party official transformed morale and the Cooperative into a cheerful, productive, and motivated social group.

Secondly, that the turning point in changing individual and social character is a question of resolve. Just as the dramatic change in productivity of the Cooperative was ascribed to the change in worker’s attitudes and motivation, so too Yongsu’s personal salvation is explicitly ascribed to his resolve: to his desire to want to do the labour. The key section is where Dalhyŏn exhorts Yŏngsu to properly understand the decision of the general assembly:

> “Mister, you still don’t see it. You have to do hard, physical work. It must be this way to cleanse the crimes you have committed against the Cooperative members up till now, and to gain your dignity. You need to do hard, physical work to correct the flawed attitude you’ve had up till now. It is only through hard work that your mind can change. [...] Look, we’re not going to order you to be killed and thrown away. If working hard really does make you collapse, then we will find something else for you to do. What really matters is that you are willing, and that you have the determination and resolve to work even to the point of fainting. Do you understand what I mean?”

Upon reading this I had thought first of George Orwell’s 1984, written just eight years before *Butterfly*, and the scene where O’Brien interrogates Wilson in room 101:
“We are not interested in those stupid crimes that you have committed. The Party is not interested in the overt act: the thought is all we care about. We do not merely destroy our enemies, we change them. Do you understand what I mean by that?”

In both cases, O’Brien and Dalhyŏn are concerned with changing the individual’s consciousness, much more so than seeking compensation for damage incurred, or punishment for a crime committed. Though there are differences between the two, those differences might perhaps be fairly reduced to nothing more than the difference between the authors’ optimism and cynicism respectively.

Finally, that the goal of transformation is the full socialisation of the individual and of the group. This is portrayed not just to support the Party and nation, although these are aspects which are emphasised. Rather, this goal is presented as leading to individual and social fulfillment of potential, as a “dirty, horrible” grub becomes a butterfly. Thus once Yongsu has shed off his selfish, egotistical consciousness and adopted a caring, sympathetic view to his peers, he becomes a physically transformed character that for the first time smiles, and even laughs. The agricultural workers too, having moved from a system of individual farm plots into a collectivised model, are portrayed as delighting in their collective work, whether competing against other teams or bursting into impromptu songs in their teams in the field. This is a hallmark of Socialist Realism, that portrays the workers delighting in the new socialist order. But the idea of an ideal person being social and caring for others appears to have been already present in Korea: Chongko Choi, former President of the Korean Association of Legal History, describing the first of three key Korean legal thoughts wrote: “The ideal type of Korean existence is to be beneficial toward others as opposed to egoistic. […] the idea of Hongik Ingan, which means the man who gives benefit to human kind.”

We might therefore be careful to not dismiss this last aspect as something no more than the wholesale import of a Soviet literary ideal, but rather something which possibly interplayed to an indeterminate degree with existing ideals of personality and society.

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Critical Reception of ‘Butterfly’
Shin Hyungki et al note in their 2007 collection of DPRK literature, from which this story was selected, that at the time of Butterfly’s publication:

“it was praised by literary figures such as Ŭm Hosŏk for its critical portrayal of schematicism, but in the 1959 ‘Struggle against Vestiges of the Bourgeoisie’ it was criticised by Han Chŏngmo, Han Sŏlya, and other literary figures for idealising negative characters. After this criticism, Chŏn Chaekyŏng disappeared from the literary scene.”

Writing in 1957, writer Kim Hyŏngkyo praised the story for its nuanced handling of the negative protagonist Ko Yŏngsu:

“The author applies a psychological examination and critical stance to his negative protagonist Ko Yŏngsu, sometimes calculating the weight of the man, at times standing on his head, and at other times elevating him as high as the roof, all the while peering inside at the dark innards of the man. The approach does not lampoon, yet drives the reader to disdain Ko Yŏngsu, and with no exaggerated caricaturisations of the protagonist’s mean and hypocritical character, the reader considers him with both contempt and empathy.”

A little later in 1958 Ŭm Hosŏk agreed, and praised the work for its literary technique in triumphantising the socialist achievements made in rural villages:

“The literary contribution of Butterfly is the astuteness in which it describes Ko Yŏngsu’s deepening internal conflict and subsequent reformation, achieved through vivid accounts of his character development, of his fate, and dramatic exposure of his tendencies. The author seeks to

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2 신형기 et al., op cit. p.463.
demonstrate that the superiority of Agricultural Cooperatives and strength of efforts for socialism are now so well established in the countryside, that there is nothing to stop even those with flaws as severe as Ko Yŏngsu’s individualism and selfishness from fixing themselves and joining the Cooperative. Therefore, even though the story is devoted to criticism of Ko Yŏngsu, this criticism’s message is a positive one. Put another way, hidden within the author’s whip of criticism against Ko Yŏngsu is none other than the new capabilities of our rural villages.”

But then the reaction of Chŏn Chaekyŏng’s peers turned for the worse. Writing in 1959, Han Sŏlya and Han Chŭngmo fiercely criticised the story and made personal attacks against its author. Han Sŏlya wrote:

“Chun Jaekyong uses the mouth of Ko Yŏngsu to pour slanderous and malignant words against our party and our system but, what is worse, even more than the anger and alarm this causes, is that such a character is personalised, and portrayed as a success, even celebrated.”

Han Chŭngmo added:

“In the short story Butterfly Chun Chaekyong consistently gives a distorted description of the lives of the north Korean people after liberation, and aims to corrode the hearts of the people with a lack of confidence in the party’s policies and the socialist system.”

After this criticism from Han Sŏlya and Han Chŭngmo, Chŏn Chaekyŏng did not reappear in the literary field. As Shin Hyungki notes, Chŏn Chaekyŏng’s portrayal of his negative protagonist had crossed a line, the crimes he commits in the story came to be regarded as too severe, too

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dangerous to be responded to by such a generous approach toward rehabilitation as Chang Dalhyŏn’s.

Chŏn Chaekyŏng’s disappearance points to the political and ideological role ascribed to literature in the DPRK, and its consequent sensitivity to shifting political analysis and critique. Marshal Pihl describes the climate at this time as becoming increasingly politicised, where the Chosŏn Munhak journal’s authors came to “write less for the reader and other writers than for the eyes of the party hierarchy.”

The irony is indeed a sad one, that for portraying a debate on how peers should deal with a perceived impure element like Ko Yŏngsu, Chŏn Chaekyŏng should himself end up soon after embroiled as the subject of just such a debate about his own actions.

I would like to express sincere thanks to Professor Shin Hyungki of the Department of Literature at Yonsei University for his patient guidance, support, and instruction to me on this and other works from DPRK. All errors remain my own.

Tristan Webb studied modern and pre-modern Korean literature at SOAS, and later served at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as Senior Research Analyst on the Korean Peninsula. He is currently on a Korean government scholarship pursuing studies at Yonsei University in comparative and international law, and serves as a council member of British Association for Korean Studies.

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Recently Published Books about Korea

For the benefit of readers, here is a list of recently published books in Korean Studies and of English translations of Korean literature.

Early 2016


Recently Published Books


2015


Recently Published Books


Recently Published Books

Korean Literature in Translation

Fiction

*The Girl Who Wrote Loneliness*
Kyung-Sook Shin
Translated by Ha-Yun Jung
Pegasus 2015

*The Investigation*
J. M. Lee
Translated by Chi-Young Kim
Pegasus 2015

*Princess Bari*
Hwang Sok-Yong
Translated by Sora Kim-Russell
Periscope 2015

*Nowhere to Be Found*
Bae Suah
Translated by Sora Kim-Russell
Amazon Crossing 2015

*The Salmon Who Dared to Leap Higher*
Ahn Do-hyeon
Translated by Deborah Smith
PanMacmillan 2015

*The Vegetarian*
Han Kang
Translated by Deborah Smith
Portobello Books 2015

*Modern Family*
Myeong-kwan Cheon
Translated by Kyoung-lee Park
White Pine 2015

*Human Acts*
Han Kang
Translated by Deborah Smith
Portobello Books 2015
Recently Published Books

*The Future of Silence: Fiction by Korean Women*
9 authors
Translated by Ju-Chan Fulton / Bruce Fulton
Zephyr 2015

**Poetry**

*Beating on Iron*
Kim Soo-Bok
Translated by Brother Anthony
Green Integer 2015

*Maninbo: Peace & War*
Ko Un
Translated by Brother Anthony / Lee Sang-Wha
Bloodaxe 2015

*Patterns*
Lee Si-Young
Translated by Brother Anthony / Yoo Hui-Sok
Green Integer 2015

*Wild Apple*
Heeduk Ra
Translated by Daniel Parker etc
White Pine 2015

*I Am a Season That Does Not Exist in the World*
Kim Kyung Ju
Translated by Jake Levine
Black Ocean 2015

*Portrait of a Suburbanite*
Choi Seung-ja
Translated by Eunjoo Kim
Cornell EAS 2015

*Request Line at Noon*
Lee Jangwook
Translated by Sun Kim
Codhill 2016
Recently Published Books

The Colors of Dawn: Twentieth-Century Korean Poetry
An anthology edited by Brother Anthony, Chung Eun-Gwi,
Manoa (University of Hawai’i Press)  2016

Cheer Up Femme Fatale
Kim Yideum
Translated by Ji yoon Lee, Don Mee Choi, Johannes Goransson
Action Books 2016

No Flower Blooms Without Waveriing
Do Jong-Hwan
Translated by Brother Anthony / Jinna Park
Seoul Selection, 2016

Night-Sky Checkerboard
Oh Sae-Young
Translated by Brother Anthony
Phoneme Media  2016
President’s Report for 2015

At the end of 2014, I was asked to serve as RAS President for another two years and agreed since I enjoy the support of a dynamic Council and since all the real work is done by our outstanding Office Manager, Yonjoo Hong. I am most grateful to them. Our basic program of lectures and excursions has continued, and has been enriched by a number of smaller special study groups and special visits to museums etc. Our lectures, especially, continue to draw good audiences despite the fact that everyone living in Seoul seems to be under increasing pressure at work, and despite the many rival attractions that today’s Seoul has to offer.

We were very grateful to the American Ambassador for allowing us to hold our annual Garden Party in his beautiful garden in June. It was especially well-attended.

We are very grateful to our sponsors, some of whom make a financial contribution while others provide material support in the form of donated drinks at the Garden Party. We were extremely grateful for a very generous two-year-long sponsorship by Seoul Cyber University. Unfortunately, they were unable to continue to support us beyond the end of that period. One constant theme therefore in my messages in our monthly emailed newsletters is the wish that we could find more sponsors. We need to pay a monthly rent for our office as well as a monthly salary for our Manager and our only regular source of income is the membership fee paid by our members, either annually or as a single life-membership.

One important innovation in 2015 was the organization of a visit to Myanmar during the lunar New Year by our previous Vice-President, Tom Coyner. This was a great success and was followed by an equally successful repeat early in 2016.

We continue to face the challenge of replacing those members
who leave the RAS on leaving Korea. It is not always easy to make our existence known to new arrivals, and we are also always hoping to discover new members who have been in Korea long enough to offer new and interesting excursions. Nowadays we see that shorter walking tours inside of Seoul are very appealing, especially because of the heavy traffic leaving and returning to Seoul at weekends. We offer less overnight tours than in the past on that account.

I was touched and honoured in December 2015 to receive an honorary MBE from the hands of the British Ambassador, Charles Hay, in a ceremony at the British Embassy attended by the RAS Council and a few other friends. As the award was in recognition of contributions to deepening Korean-British relations, I said in my little speech that I reckoned the honor should go to all of us in the RAS. We exist only to help people deepen their knowledge and (hopefully) strengthen their affection for this country. I hope that we can continue to perform that service together in the coming time.

Thank you.

Brother Anthony
President, RAS Korea

2015 RAS lectures

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### 2015 RAS Excursions

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<td>The Natural History Museum of Kyunghee University (Jon Dunbar)</td>
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<td>Lives of Girls and Women in Old Korea: Sookmyung Women’s University Museums (David Gemeinhardt)</td>
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<td>Sunday Feb 15</td>
<td>Cheorwon: DMZ, Korean War, migrant birds (Robert Koehler)</td>
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<td>Myanmar (Tom Coyner)</td>
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<td>Sunday May 17</td>
<td>Seoul City Wall (Robert Fouser)</td>
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### 2015 RAS Special Groups

**Reading Club**
*Meeting each month in the library of Jongno District Office to talk about a Korean short story read in advance in English translation.*
- **January 5**  *Into the Light*  by Kim Sa-ryang
- **February 2**  *Poverty*  by Baek Sin-ae
- **March 2**  *Mountains, Streams, Plants, Trees*  by Yi Hae-Jo
April 6  Knife Marks  by Kim Aeran
May 4  My Clint Eastwood  by Oh Han-ki
June 1  Dinner with Buffett  by Park Min-gyu
July 6  Arpan  by Park Hyoun-su
August 3  The Elephant  by Kim Jae-young
September 7  Raising Swallows  by Yun Dae-nyeong.
October 5  Broken Strings  by Gang Gyeong-ae.
November 2  Convalescence  by Han Kang
November 30  Blue Crab Grave  by Kwon Ji-ye.

Business & Culture Club
The Business & Culture Club meeting is held at midday every 3rd Tuesday of the month for people with little spare time.
January 13 Money Museum of BOK
February 10  Street Food Tour at Namdaemun Market
March 17  The Subtle Triangle, at Seoul Museum of Art
April 21  Imperial Temple & Altar of Heaven(Wongudan)
May 19  Jogyesa temple
June 16  Jeongdong's Past and Present
July 21  "Esprit Dior" Exhibition
September 15  Seoul Anglican Church
October 20  National Museum of Art Deoksugung.
November 17  Seoul History Museum
December 15  Sogong-dong and Hoihyeon Underground arcades.

Cinema Club
Together with the Seoul Film Society. Showings of great Korean movies with English subtitles, and classic western movies, with an introduction and free-wheeling discussion after, in the Haechi Hall, Seoul Global Cultural Center in Myeongdong
January 10 Madame Freedom (1956) Director: Han Hyeong-Mo.
February 7 Chil-su and Man-su (1988) Director: Park Kwang-Su
March 7 Take Care of My Cat (2001) Director Jeong Jae-eun
May 2  The Harmonium in My Memory (1999)
28th November  How To Use Guys With Secret Tips (2013) Director: Lee Wonsuk

**Tom Coyner Photo Workshop**  
*Designed to help members produce better photographs.*  
January 31    Photographing Dramatic Portraits  
February 20   Street Photography – In Yangon, Myanmar  
March 14      Photographing Festivals  
April 18      “Magnum’s First” Photographic Exhibition Visit  
May 23        Photographing Animals

**National Museum of Korea**  
*A series of lecture-visits guided by members of the Museum’s staff.*  
April 1        Western Influence on Korean Painting  
June 17       The Reassessment of Seobongchong Tomb of the Silla Period  
October 7     The Korean Neolithic Culture  
November 4    Masterpieces of Early Buddhist Sculpture

**The Colloquium in Korean Studies**  
*Designed for Korean Studies students and scholars as a forum for sharing work in progress.*  
March 21      Agnes Murr: Policy or Ideology? On Some Conflict Points in the Interpretation of Anti-Communism in the Park Chung Hee Era  
              Boudewijn Walraven: The anti-smoking sutra  
              Brother Anthony: Some questions regarding Hong Jong-u

April 18  
1. Robert Neff: The gold mines of Korea  
2. Tristan Webb: North Korea's electricity sector

May 16  
June 20
1. Benjamin Joinau: Regimes of visibility in Pyongyang
2. Sandip Kumar Mishra (Assistant Professor of Korean Studies, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Delhi): North Korea-India Relations during the Cold War Era
3. Frederic Barthassat: Korean communists in China from 1931 to 1950

October 17
1. John A. Johnson: From Technique to Way: The Pedagogical Hierarchy of Taekwondo

November 21
1. Sandy Oh: South Korean International Schools: The "Last" Frontier of Private Education?
Thanks are due to our sponsors
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 Joseon 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

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