Korean HISTORIES

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Gari Ledyard

Remembering JaHyun Kim Haboush

AN OBITUARY

The death of JaHyun Kim Haboush on 30 January at the end of a long battle with cancer, which she faced with great courage and stoicism, has been a great shock for her many friends all over the world, not least in Europe, where she often attended workshops and the AKSE conferences. She also was a member of the Editorial Board of *Korean Histories*. JaHyun has made great contributions to Korean Studies, both through her own work and as an organizer of workshops and conferences and as an editor. Her scholarly gifts were matched by her personal qualities. She will be very much missed and remembered with gratitude and affection.

We are grateful to Professor Gari Ledyard for permission to reprint the obituary he originally wrote for the Korean Studies Discussion List.

I've been very moved during this past week by the remembrances of Ja Haboush posted by her friends and colleagues on the Korean Studies Discussion List. As my early student, and later colleague, as well as my own replacement as King Sejong Professor at Columbia, I will miss her very, very much. Although we had been in communication with each other, I had not actually seen her since the spring of 2010. So when I called her sometime in November to arrange a lunch, and was told that she could not come to the phone at the moment but would call me back, I suspected nothing. But no call came. And early in December, when I was with one of her close friends and colleagues and heard that she was not looking well, and then early in January learned that she had taken a medical leave for the Spring Semester, I knew that the situation was serious. Still, her final day, the 30th of January last, after what I now know was a long struggle with cancer, came all too quickly. Shortly afterward, Bill Haboush, her husband of 45 years, announced a small and simple funeral for family and close friends, followed by a memorial service within perhaps 60 days. I hope to be able to post the details of this later occasion as soon as they are announced.

Needless to say, everything that has been said on this List (*editor*: Korean Studies Discussion List) regarding her work and her many contributions to the field of Korean Studies rings true with me. Her passing after a long struggle with cancer is something that was unexpected by most of us, including myself.

I first met JaHyun Kim Haboush in 1969 or 1970, when

she appeared at my office door and inquired about the possibility of admission to the graduate program at Columbia. It became quickly apparent that she would be an ideal student. She had graduated from Ewha University in 1962, majoring in English literature. In 1970, she earned an M.A. at the University of Michigan in Chinese literature, with her M.A. thesis on Yuan Dynasty theater. Her abilities in Chinese were already outstanding. At Columbia she discovered King Yŏngjo, a monarch with issues if ever there was one, and she was off and running on her PhD topic, which led to her second book, *A Heritage of Kings*. From that time on, she was never without a project. She loved talking about her work and the discoveries she made. A lunch with her was always fun and full of back-and-forth on her current interests and the state of the Korean history field. She enjoyed every minute she could spend in the *sillok* and in the numerous other Chosŏn dynasty sources that she marched through. Most of them were in Chinese—and this was before many of those sources had been translated into Korean. There could hardly be a better role model for today's younger scholars working in the Chosŏn period, or a better inspiration for other scholars to seriously consider the premodern periods for their life's work. Such a career is not for everyone, but as Ja has shown, there was a lot of interesting Korean life long before modernity.

Ja's work was mainly devoted to the Chosŏn dynasty, and particularly the second half of it for which materials on popular culture were more numerous. She also made many contributions on Confucianism in the Chosŏn period. She saw Confucianism as a major institution that provided both background and foil for the understanding of Chosŏn's rich and varied cultural levels. Her writings offered many different approaches to these subjects, as is evident in her books, articles, and reviews. Her career was also marked by energetic activity in organizing conferences and cooperative volumes. It seemed that the more people she brought together for joint efforts, the happier she was. She played a major role in establishing Korean Studies on a sound basis at the University of Illinois (Champaign), and made equally important contributions to the Columbia program after my retirement in 2000. She was a superb translator, from major projects such as *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyŏng* to short articles for encyclopedias and textbooks. For *Hyegyŏng* she received the Grand Prize in Literature Translation from the Korean Culture and Arts Foundation in 1997. Her books and articles appear on syllabuses in Asian Studies all over the world. A book that to our great loss we will never see is *The Great East Asian War and the Birth of the Korean Nation*, which Ja mentioned as the tentative title of a book she was writing in her activity report in the Spring of 2010. She never mentioned this project to me, but I feel confident that the title must reflect the Imjin Wars of 1592-1598, involving Korea, China, and Japan, and the resulting consolidation of a more integrated Korean society that produced a multi-leveled Korean culture, unlike the exclusively aristocratic, China-driven culture that had driven Korea's historiography prior to Imjin. I know that she often spoke of the broad use of the written Korean vernacular during that period, and had done much research along those lines. Her latest book, *Epistolary Korea*, has many Imjin references.

Ja was also known for the help and encouragement she gave to her students. Recent communications from some of them provide heartfelt testimony to this. One, from a young woman specializing in Chinese literature but who wished to broaden her perspective by exploring Korean Studies, expressed her grief over the news, saying, "I have no doubt that her many other students will also feel their sense of loss while remembering her as an enduring inspiration. My heart goes to her family, friends, colleagues, and other students." Another, who was a Columbia student and later a collaborator in some of Ja's projects, writes, "I thought of calling her when I was in New York to use the library, but did not. I never expressed my thanks to her, and I regret that." Indeed, Ja left too quickly and we are all too late.

Through the cooperation of the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures at Columbia University, I am able to add to these thoughts a complete list of her writings as of last year, which in speaking for themselves will obviate any need to characterize her entire oeuvre. An updated listing of her published writings was submitted to the Department sometime during 2010. That list is reproduced below.

First posted on the Korean Studies Discussion List 5 February 2011
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PUBLICATIONS OF JAHYUN KIM HABOUSH

Books:

1985 *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea.* Coeditor. New York: Columbia University Press.

1988 *A Heritage of Kings: One Man's Monarchy in the Confucian World.* New York: Columbia University Press.

1996 *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyŏng: The Autobiographical Writings of A Crown Princess of Eighteenth-Century Korea.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

1999 *Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea.* Co-editor. Asia Center, Harvard University.

2001 *The Confucian Kingship in Korea* (a paper edition of *A Heritage of Kings* with an added preface). New York: Columbia University Press.

2003 *Women and Confucian Cultures in Pre-modern China, Korea, and Japan.* Co-editor. Berkeley: University of California Press.

2009 *Epistolary Korea: Letters from the Communicative Space of the Chosôn, 1392-1910.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Articles:

1985 "The Education of the Yi Crown Prince: A Study in Confucian Pedagogy." In Wm. Theodore Bary and Haboush, eds. *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea.* pp. 161-222.

1985 "Confucian Rhetoric and Ritual as Techniques of Political Dominance: Yŏngjo's Use of the Royal Lecture."*The Journal of Korean Studies* 5:39-61.

1987 "The *Sirhak* Movement of the Late Yi Dynasty." *Korean Culture* 8.2: 20-27.

1987 "Confucianism in Korea." In Mircea Eliade ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion.* 16 Vols. New York: MacMillan and Free Press. 4:10-15.

1987 "Song Siyŏl," "Yi T'oegye," "Yi Yulgok," "Yun Hyu." In Mircea Eliade ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion.* 13;415-16; 15:517-18; 15:518-19; 15:543-44.

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1991 "Women in Traditional Korea." In Helen Tierney ed. *Women's Studies Encyclopedia.* 3 Vols. New York: Greenwood.

1992 "Dual Nature of Cultural Discourse in Chosŏn Korea." In Bernard Hung-Kay Luk, ed., *Contact between Cultures, East Asia: History and Social Science.* Lampeter, Dyfed, UK: Edwin Mellen Press. Vol. 4, pp. 194-96.

1992 "The Text of *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyŏng*: The Problem of Authenticity." *Gest Library Journal* 5.2: 29-48.

1993 "Perceptions of Korean Culture in the United States." *Korea Focus* 1.2: 72-86. Translated as:

1993 "미국내의 한국 문화: 그 존재와 인식. (Representation and Perception of Korean Culture in the United States). *Kyegan Sasang.* March. pp. 149-175.

1993 "Public and Private in the Court Art of Eighteenth-Century Korea." *Korean Culture* 14.2: 14-21.

1993 "Rescoring the Universal in a Korean Mode: Eighteenth Century Korean Culture." *Korean Arts of the Eighteenth Century: Splendor and Simplicity.*New York: The Asia Society Galleries. pp. 23-33.

1993 "The Censorial Voice in Chosŏn Korea: A Tradition of Institutionalized Dissent." *Han-kuo hsueh-bao* 12:11-19.

1994 "Academies and Civil Society in Chosŏn Korea." In Léon Vandermeersch ed. *La société civile face à l'État: dans les traditions chinoise, japonaise, coréenne et vietnamienne.* Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient. pp. 383-392.

1995 "Dreamland: Korean Dreamscapes as an Alternative Confucian Space." In Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer ed. *Das Andere China.* Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz. pp. 659-70.

1995 "Filial Emotions and Filial Values: Changing Patterns in the Discourse of Filiality in Late Chosŏn Korea." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 55.1: 129-177.

1997 "시공을 넘나든 만남" (Encounter beyond space and time) in *Readers' Today* (Dec 1997): 22-25.

1999 "Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea," in JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler, eds., *Culture and the State in Late Chosôn Korea.* Cambridge: Asia Center, Harvard University, pp. 46-90, 240-49.

2001 "In Search of HISTORY in Democratic Korea: The Discourse of Modernity in Contemporary Historical Fiction." In *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, Kai-wing Chow, Kevin Doak, Poshek Fu, ed. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 189-214.

2002 "Gender and the Politics of Language in Korea" in

Rethinking Confucianism: Past & Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, John Duncan, Benjamin Elman and Herman Ooms, ed. Asian Pacific Monograph Series, UCLA, pp. 220-257.

2003 "Versions and Subversions: Patriarchy and Polygamy in the Vernacular Narratives of Chosŏn Korea." In *Women and Confucian Cultures in Pre-Modern China, Korea, and Japan.* Dorothy Ko, JaHyun Kim Haboush, Joan Piggot, ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 279-312.

2003 "Dead Bodies in the Postwar Discourse of Identity in Seventeenth-Century Korea: Subversion and Literary Production in the Private Sector." *The Journal of Asian Studies.* 62.2 (May 2003): 415-442. "Private Memory and Public History." In *Creative Women of Korea.* Young-Key Kim-Renaud ed. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, pp. 122-141.

2003 "Conference on Historiography of Korea—Methodologies and Strategies" in 한국사학회 ed., 한국사 연구 방법의 새로운 모색. Seoul: Kyôngin munhwasa,2003, 1-8.

"조선시대 문화사를 어떻게 쓸 것인가 – 자료와 접근 방법에 대하여" (How to write the cultural history of Chosŏn Korea— sources and approaches) in Han'guksa sahakhoe ed., Han'guksa yŏn'gu pangbŏp ŭi saeroun mosaek. Seoul: Kyŏngin munhwasa, 2003, 173-196.

2004 "Filial Emotions and Filial Values: Changing Patterns in the Discourse of Filiality in Late Chosŏn Korea." Reprinted in John Corrigan ed., *Religion and Emotion: Approaches and Interpretations.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 75-113.

2005 "Contesting Chinese Time, Nationalizing Temporal Space: Temporal Inscription in Late Chosŏn Korea." In Lynn Struve, ed., *Time, Temporality, and Imperial Transition* . Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 115-141.

2005 "효의 감성과 효의 가치: 조선 후기 효 담논의 변화" (Discourse on Filiality during late Chosŏn Korea), *Kungmunhak yŏn'gu* (June, 2005): 155-203.

2006 "Introduction," in Hahn Moo-Sook, *And so flows History*, Young-Key Kim-Renaud, tr., Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006, pp/1-7

2007 "우리는 왜 임진왜란을 연구합니까?" (Why do we study the Imjin Wars?) 임진왜란: 동아세아 삼국 전쟁」 Seoul: Humanist Books, 2007, pp. 23-39.

2008 "The Vanished Women of Korea: The Anonymity of Texts and the Historicity of Subjects." In Anne Walthall ed., *Servants of the Dynasty.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

2010 "Yun Hyu and the Search for Dominance: A Seventeenth-Century Korean Reading of the *Offices of Zhou* and the *Rituals of Zhou.*" In Benjamin Elman and Martin Kern, eds, Statecraft and Classical Learning: *The Rituals of Zhou and East Asian History*. Leiden: Brill, 2010. 309-329.

Scholarly Translations:

1996 "King Yŏngjo: Eliminating Factions," "Lady Hyegyŏng: Two New Factions," "Literature, Music, Song," "Chŏng Naegyo: Preface to *Ch'ŏnggu yŏngŏn*— The emergence of the *chungin* patronage of art." In Peter Lee, ed. *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization: From the Seventeenth Century to the Present.* New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 39-43, 240-42.

2001 Chapter on Education in *Sources of Korean Tradition.* Vol. 2. New York: Columbia University Press. pp. 34-69.

Reviews:

1988 Review of *Unforgettable Things: Poems by Sŏ Chŏngju.* Translated by David McCann. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 47.3: 667-68.

1989 Review of *Tongsŏ munhwa kyoryusa yŏn'gu—Myŏng Ch'ŏng sidae sŏhak suyong* (A study of East-West cultural contact: The reception of Western Learning in the Ming-Qing period). By Ch'oe Soja. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 48: 130-31.

1989 Review of *The Life and Hard Times of a Korean Shaman: Of Tales and the Telling of Tales.* By Laurel Kendall. *Korean Studies.* 13: 146-50.

1991 Review of *Modern Korean Literature: An Anthology.* Edited by Peter H. Lee. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 50.3.

1991 Review of *Pine River and Lone Peak: An Anthology of Three Chosŏn Dynasty Poets.* Translated, with an introduction, by Peter H. Lee. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 50.4

1994 Review of *Sourcebook of Korean Civilization: Early Times to the Sixteenth Century.* Vol. 1. Edited by Peter H. Lee. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 53.1: 242-44.

1995 Review of Briefing 1993, Briefing 1994. Edited by Donald N. Clark. *Korean Studies* 19: 183-86.

2001 Review of *My very last possession and Other Stories* by Pak Wansŏ *The Journal of Asian Studies.*

Andre Schmid

Two Americans in Seoul

EVALUATING AN ORIENTAL EMPIRE, 1905-1910

INTRODUCTION

Visitors to Korea in the first decade of the twentieth century were regularly confronted with the political question of the day in East Asia – did Korea deserve to be colonized by Japan? This was more than a question of regional politics, since, as one commentator spelled out, "Never before in the history of the world has one oriental nation assumed a protectorate over another."[1] Underlying such comments was the assumption that Japan, as a non-white, non-Christian, non-Western nation, did not quite fit the criteria for inclusion in the colonizers' camp.[2] As a result, in the outpouring of media coverage and books that followed Japan's establishment of a protectorate over Korea in 1905, American pundits of various political stripes struggled to come to terms with Japan's ascent to imperial power.[3]

George Trumbull Ladd

Homer Hulbert

This article focuses on two prominent American writers who, during the Protectorate Era (1905-1910), came to very different positions on the question of Korea's future. One of these authors, George Trumbull Ladd, is renowned, even notorious, for his book *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, as well as for several articles and letters in the New York Times, in which he offers arguably the least nuanced support of any of his contemporaries for Japanese actions on the peninsula. The ambivalence that underlay the views of many of his compatriots writing about the rise of the Japanese empire found no place in Ladd's unrestrained and enthusiastic approval.[4] At the other end of the political spectrum lay Homer Hulbert, a long-time resident of Seoul, who, in his major work of the era, *The Passing of Korea*, explicitly presented himself as an expert with extensive experience inside the country, in order to justify his argument against Japanese rule and his criticism of the representations of Korea offered by many contemporary travellers.[5]

1 Edwin Maxey, "The Reconstruction of Korea," *Political Science Quarterly*, 10 December 1910.

2 For another piece claiming the uniqueness of Japan's annexation of Korea, and the worldwide interest in the subject, see W.E. Griffis, "Japan's Absorption of Korea," *North American Review*, October 1910. See also Lancelot Lawton, "Korea Under the Japanese," *Living Age*, 4 May 1912.

3 On the expatriate community, see Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience, 1900-1950* (Norwalk: Eastbridge, 2003).

4 George T. Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1908). See also his "The Annexation of Korea: An Essay in 'Benevolent Assimilation'," *Yale Review*, July 1912; and his letters in the *New York Times* (5 April, 13 May, and 2 November 1908). For an approving book review, see *The Nation* 86 (18 June 1908).

The following is perhaps an obvious point but one that cannot be repeated enough: the colonization of the peninsula deeply shaped early American impressions of Korean culture and history. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to remark that the cultural politics of colonialism framed American understandings of Korea just at the time that Korea, in an ironic twist of fate, was gaining more attention in the United States precisely because of Japan's colonizing presence. Foreign visitors and travel writers were intrigued to observe and report on Japan's colonization of the peninsula. In their writing, they include many examples of cross-cultural tropes that have long been understood as serving to legitimate and maintain colonial rule in Western colonial settings. The interplay between these common forms of colonial discourse and the observations of these two authors, in what they saw as a highly unusual colonial setting that often did not match the assumptions of the standard colonial discourse, is the subject of this essay.

In this article, I have chosen two vastly different authors and examined their works for what might be assumed, given their reputations, to be *absent* in their books. For Ladd, "the friend of Japan", as he so often referred to himself, a close reading of his text reveals those instances when his screed against Korea is opened up and his strongly pro-colonial position falters. As adamant as Ladd was that Korea could not manage its own affairs, his lectures to Korean audiences offer moments in his confident narrative that unsettle what he otherwise sought to represent as a matter-of-fact case for colonial rule. For Hulbert, who is famously remembered for his request to be buried in Korea, this approach shall involve examining his pro-independence position for those instances when his arguments actually function to support colonial ideologies. As seen in his writings on the racial character of Koreans, his pro-Korean stance was not anti-colonial in principle. Rather, his political position on the question of the day rested on a vision of Koreans as ethnically best suited for conversion to Christianity – a potential threatened by the rise of Japanese power on the peninsula.

IN KOREA WITH G.T. LADD

As the predominance of Japan in East Asia began to be acknowledged after its defeat of the Qing Empire in 1895, travel writing on Korea gradually began to be shaped by the ascendance of the new empire. The standard questions of any traveller at that time – What was the political future of the land? What were the potential and nature of the people? What possibilities were there for development of resources? What were the prospects for Christianity? – became inseparable from a general acknowledgement that Japan would play a role in answering these questions in the case of Korea. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the fact that neither the US nor the UK government opposed the imposition of a protectorate, reports in the English-language media after 1905 varied from glowing praise to restrained approval of Japan's presence on the peninsula, as almost all writers welcomed the parvenu colonizer. With titles such as "The Korean People: Product of a Decayed Civilization"[6] and "The Moral Purpose of Japan",[7] most major American media outlets wrote positively of Japan's ascendance. In this crucial five-year period, the media largely presented the peninsula's slide into colonialism as an event justified by the social Darwinian laws of history, by the unsustainable level of the peninsula's 'backward' culture, and by the requirements of realpolitik. There were also suggestions that Japanese control of Korea would provide a new outlet for Japanese emigration – "an indirect solution", in the words of *The Nation*, to "our Pacific coast problem"[8] – since the racist treatment of Japanese immigrants, mainly to California, remained a simmering issue.[9] By 1910, public opinion had largely acquiesced to the fate of Korea and, despite some later criticisms on issues of policy and administrative tactics, the legitimacy of Japan's rule over Korea was seldom raised again until the early 1940s.[10] The president of Stanford University, who visited Korea two years after annexation, wrote a brief account of his travels and, unusually for the author of a post-annexation essay, explicitly raised the morality of annexation, though only so as to discount the question: "Whether the blotting out of Korea

5 Homer B. Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea* (New York: Doubleday Page, 1906). This volume was reprinted by Yonsei University Press in 1969.

6 George Kennan, "The Korean People: The Product of a Decayed Civilization," *Outlook*, 21 October 1905.

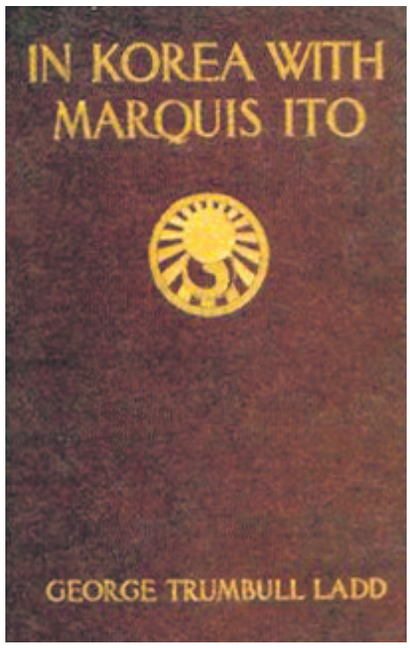
7 Dr H.H. De Forest, "The Moral Purpose of Japan," *The Independent*, January 1911.

8 The relationship of Japanese immigration issues to US decisions vis-à-vis the rise of Japanese power in the Asian continent has been largely underplayed in historical literature. "Japan as Colonial Administrator," *The Nation*, 24 June 1915.

9 For another example, see Charles H. Sherill, "Korea and Shantung Versus the White Peril," *Scribner's Magazine*, March 1920.

10 Here it is important to note that at times, such as in the year immediately after the March First Movement, there was intense criticism of Japanese policies, but these criticisms generally urged improvements in colonial rule rather than an end to it. For two examples see, "American Missions Imperiled in Korea," *Outlook*, 9 November 1912 and W.E. Griffis, "An American View," *The Nation*, 24 May 1919.

be right or wrong, an inevitable step of manifest destiny or a needless suppression of a unique national life, it is not necessary for us to decide. The occupation of Chosen is an accomplished fact. It is part of the future of Japan."[11] Two years after annexation, the president of Stanford had no hesitation in pushing aside the moral question, which only a few years earlier had animated so many reports from the peninsula.



That George Trumbull Ladd found himself contributing to these debates is somewhat surprising. He did not make his name through his travel writing, nor was he an expert on contemporary Asian affairs. Rather, as a member of a prominent New England family that could trace its ancestry back to the Mayflower, Ladd had made his reputation in the academic world as a philosopher or, more precisely, what at the end of the nineteenth century was called 'a mental and moral philosopher'. After receiving degrees from Western Reserve College and Andover Theological Seminary, he took up his first post as a professor at Bowdoin College in 1879. Two years later, he moved on to a professorship at Yale University where he remained for the rest of his career. By 1893 his academic reputation had him elected as president of the American Psychological Association. He also published widely, writing books, primers and essays on topics as varied as the Bible, philosophy (including epistemology), psychology, and education. His book about Korea, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, stands out in his oeuvre as an atypical work, one that had little direct connection to his professional writing. It was the only travel book he produced, despite the fact that he gave lecture tours in Japan (where he was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun by the emperor in 1899), India, and Ceylon.

Published in 1908, *In Korea with Marquis Ito* conforms to the pro-Japanese tendencies of contemporary American media. Ladd's strongly pro-colonial position, articulated at a time when officially only a protectorate had been imposed on the peninsula, came with a full awareness of Korean antagonism to Japan and resistance to Japan's colonial policies. His commitment to reform and enlightened education overrode such concerns and, with the national character of Koreans cast as "rather more despicable than that of any people whom I have come to know",[12] Ladd saw the redemption of Korea as possible "but certainly never without help from outside."[13] He writes about his hope for the future:

> *One may reasonably hope that the time is not far distant when both rulers and people will be consciously the happier and more prosperous, because they have been compelled by a foreign and hated neighbor to submit to a reformation imposed from without. That they would ever have reformed themselves is not to be believed by those who know intimately the mental and moral history and characteristics of the Koreans.*[14]

This, then, was the conclusion Ladd reached after three months in Korea. It was a conclusion supported by the full range of cultural characterizations that in Korean scholarship is usually referred to as the colonial view of history (*singminji sagwan* 植民地史觀), and involved the type of ethnographic and landscape tropes that writers as varied as Mary Louise Pratt and David Spurr have seen as underwriting Western colonial empires.[15] *In Korea with Marquis Ito* even included comments equating Korea with the colonized countries of Egypt and India.[16] Here I am less interested in analysing the assumptions behind these thematic treatments of Korea and Japan. Ladd por-

11 David Starr Jordan, "Japan's Task in Korea," *The American Review of Reviews* (July 1912).

12 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 164.

13 Ibid., p. 296.

14 Ibid., p. 299.

15 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992); and David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1993).

16 These comments could be rather absurd, as can be seen in the following passage : "And then, as though to emphasize the beauty and brightness of nature as contrasted with the unseemly and dark condition of man, we came out under a sky as clear and alight with scintillating stars as I have ever seen in India or in Egypt." Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p.110.

trays Koreans in the streets of Seoul as a "slow-moving, stubborn, and stupid crowd";[17] he regularly emasculates Korean men for their lack of manly virtues;[18] in addition to highlighting its devil-worship and other superstitions, he characterizes Korea as "old in its enforced ignorance, sloth, and corruption"[19] – all these and many more of Ladd's assessments are examples of tropes that much post-colonial work has shown to be supportive of empire. Yet within this panoply of representations, presented by the author in terms more ardent and more unsavoury than those of his contemporaries, there are a number of points where a certain unease can be detected. These moments in Ladd's argument – and it must always be remembered that Ladd's travelogue is presented as an argument for colonial rule prior to annexation – undermines the colonial reasoning that the author works so hard to justify. In these moments, which occur on the few occasions when Ladd actually comes face to face with Koreans, the author is unable to summon the effort needed to rationalize his colonial discourse, enabling the rise, in what was otherwise one of the strongest pro-colonial voices of the era, of a certain uneasiness with the very incompleteness of that project.

To trace this unease and tension we shall begin with the choice Ladd makes to place himself at the centre of his account. *In Korea with Marquis Ito* is not a work with an inconspicuous narrator. Nor is it the type of work in which the author uses rhetorical devices to give the impression of a direct representation of reality without authorial mediation. Instead, Ladd is his own protagonist. His account of his trip gains its authority through his direct experience. His experiences, observations, and discussions in the country – all rendered in the first person – are used to garner a sense of authenticity and immediacy that verifies his claims to truth and accuracy.

The positioning of the author at the centre of the narrative begins in the first chapter, where Ladd explains the reason for his journey. The thought of visiting Korea had occurred to him before leaving the United States, he explains, "only as a somewhat remote possibility", but during his third lecture tour of Japan in 1906, Ladd received an invitation from the resident general of Korea, Ito Hirobumi (Itō Hirobumi, 伊藤博文) . "I expect to see you in my own land, which is now Korea", he was told by Ito during an informal Tokyo garden party.[20] The author goes to great lengths – a fourteen-page chapter – to explain what was for him a rather unusual venture. Ladd wanted to trumpet his association with the figure of Ito Hirobumi (though the pair only met briefly on two occasions), who had acquired a favourable reputation in almost every country but Korea,[21] yet he also needed to protect himself from charges that his association with Japanese officials tainted and biased his account. Ito's brief invitation is, therefore, followed by several exchanges with various Japanese officials, who explain that there had been many "exaggerations and falsehoods" spread abroad about individual Japanese and the colonial administration itself. They hoped that Ladd would offer a counter to these accusations.[22] Japanese colonial authorities had by this time already expended considerable energy on a type of cultural "soft diplomacy" aimed at gaining acceptance of their new imperial status. They were especially sensitive to any criticism that attracted public notice in Europe or the United States.[23] Ito's invitation to Ladd was part of this broader diplomatic initiative.

The opening four pages describing Ladd's travels, as he approaches Korean shores and spends his first hours in Fusan [*sic*] on 26 March 1907, establish many of his narrative tendencies, while also foreshadowing many of his subjects of concern. The moment when travellers first lay eyes on their destination is always telling; it is notable, therefore, that when writing of his first impression Ladd focuses primarily on the Japanese in Korea. Looking at Fusan from his steamer, he comments on the Japanese

17 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 26.

18 For example, "What could be done by others for a country where the men who should be leaders behaved habitually in a so unmanly way?" Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 105. See also references on pages 53, 60 and 66, to name just a few.

19 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 281.

20 Ibid., p. 4.

21 For a few accounts that show his reputation vis-à-vis his deeds in Korea, see George Kennan, "Prince Ito and Korea," *Outlook*, 27 November 1909, and "The Assassination of Ito," *Current Literature*, December 1909; F.T. Piggot, "The Ito Legend: Personal Recollections of Prince Ito," *The Nineteenth Century and After* 67, January 1910. Ito was commonly compared to the British colonial official Lord Cromer (1841-1917); see E. Alexander Powell, "Japan's Policy in Korea," *Atlantic Monthly*, 22 March 192,) and Edwin Maxey, "Korea – An Example of National Suicide," *The Forum*, October 1907.

22 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, pp. 4-5.

23 On Japanese propaganda efforts in the United States, see Andre Schmid, "*Singminji sigi ilbon-ŭi migungnae sŏnjŏn hwaltong*" 식민지 시기 일본의 미국 내 선전활동 [Japanese Propaganda Activities in the United States], in Kim Tongno (김동노) ed., *Ilche singminji sigi- ŭi t'ongch'i ch'eje hyŏngsŏng* 일제 식민지 시기의 통치체제 형성[The Formation of the Ruling System in the Japanese Colonial Period] (Seoul: Hyean, 2006), pp. 313-355.

character of the port city, observing its "comfortable look, with its Japanese buildings."[24] He goes on to write about the public park created by Japanese residents, a park that he notes is full of pine trees, in contrast to the denuded and unsightly mountains surrounding the city.[25] There is no trace of Koreans, as Ladd describes this space only in relation to the Japanese residential community – a point that he reinforces three months later when, during his departure, he notes that returning to Fusan from Seoul is like moving from Korea to Japan.[26] In Ladd's eyes, Fusan is already Japanese.

After depicting the physical presence of Japan, Ladd proceeds to outline the country's historical presence, shifting into an account of the Hideyoshi invasion. He moves into the imaginary by pointing out the spot where three centuries earlier a Korean governor – the first Korean he mentions – looked out to the sea while hunting, only to spot the invading Japanese forces. Sitting on a ship himself and approaching the same shores, Ladd recounts the invasion from the physical perspective of the conqueror. The first historical allusion of the book is one of Japanese conquest, a pre-colonial moment providing context for the colonial question he had come to probe. But his perspective is similar not only in spatial terms to that of the invaders. In his account of the Japanese attack, Ladd's sympathies clearly lie with the invading nation, as he goes on to make the comment – which resonates with the contemporary situation – that even then the Koreans despised the Japanese "with a hatred which is the legacy of centuries." Yet, with a hint at what is to come in his subsequent arguments, he points out that the Koreans "could not allege anything against [the Japanese], admitting that they paid for all they got, molested no one, and were seldom seen outside the *yamen* gates."[27] Arriving in Korea from Japan to observe Japanese colonial practices, Ladd launches his inquiry before he even lands on Korea's shores, with ruminations about a centuries-old invasion, in which he sympathizes with the invaders.

With these historical wanderings complete, Ladd disembarks to be welcomed by various local Japanese officials, including the manager of the railway. With time to spare before his train departs for Seoul, he visits a local school, typical, he asserts, of the Korean school system as fostered by Japan. But there are no students. This most modern of institutions, which for a teacher and education specialist like Ladd was so important, was not just literally, but symbolically, empty. Ladd approvingly appraises the 'modern' curriculum before returning to the station, where he encounters the students who had been taken out of school. Wearing their holiday garments and in a festive mood but unable, he notes, to stand in neat, straight rows, they had come to the station to send off the Prince. The prince may have projected to Ladd "a languid and somewhat *blasé* air", but at least knew when passing by to bow politely and remove his hat for an instant.[28] Looking at the Korean men gathered for the occasion, "some in clean and some in dirty-white clothing", Ladd makes his first of many direct comparative ethnographic comments highlighting differences between the Japanese and Koreans: "The difference between the mildly disorderly and unenthusiastic behavior of the Korean crowd and the precise and alert enthusiasm of the Japanese on similar occasions was significant."[29] Just what was significant about this comparison, Ladd does not say, yet together with his desultory treatment of the prince, the students out of school, who could not form lines, imply the lack of discipline, both mental and physical, that Ladd sees as Korea's failure and as the ultimate reason for its deserved loss of sovereignty. With these observations, he readies himself for departure, sent off, not by school children and Korean men, but by local Japanese civil officials. He remarks contentedly: "And so we entered Korea as we had left Japan, reminded that we were among friends and should feel at home."[30]

That Ladd writes he *should* feel at home presages the unease he would often feel while travelling on the peninsula. This hint of discomfort does not appear in his depiction of his first glimpses of the country. On the contrary, his early experiences on the shores of Korea reflect the self-assurance, almost swagger, with which the author moves through and experiences the peninsula. But the home within which he believes he should feel comfort-

24 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 15.

25 The comment on the treeless hills of Korea became a standard traveller's trope for the undeveloped state of the peninsula's resources.

26 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, pp. 139-140.

27 Ibid., p. 16. Only two pages later, he makes a related comment about the treatment of a crowd of Koreans by Japanese police, "who treated all the people, especially the children, with conspicuous gentleness" (p. 18).

28 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 18.

29 Ibid., p. 18.

30 Ibid., p. 18.

able is the home that, like in the *sarang-bang* of a Korean home, serves to segregate; in Ladd's case, not men from women but Japanese from Korean. For though *In Korea with Marquis Ito* does not erase Koreans from the landscape, it certainly keeps them at a safe distance, always on the outside. Only rarely does Ladd engage with them.

Indeed, Ladd's interlocutors are almost exclusively Japanese and other foreign residents. From his conversation with Ito to his final meetings in Pusan before his return to Japan, Ladd is in constant dialogue with Japanese during his travels. He also goes on a number of jaunts with Euro-American missionaries and diplomats. It is through these non-natives that Ladd learns about the peninsula, its history, and its people. Yet in this dialogue-rich book, Ladd records the words of only one conversation with a Korean, a conversation during his audience with the emperor, who is rather peremptorily dismissed by Ladd's comment about the less than opulent state rooms – "far enough from anything approaching royal magnificence" – and his offhand observation of the emperor's "bad set of teeth."[31] Whereas the Japanese who Ladd meets are regularly mentioned by name, the Koreans are not given this courtesy. Thus, Ito's secretary, who escorts Ladd to the palace, is Mr. Kurachi, but the Korean prime minister, master of ceremonies and high-ranking military officials he encounters in the meeting room are listed only by their titles.[32] He mentions meeting the Catholic archbishop, but the conversation is not recorded, nor is his name provided.[33] Virtually no Korean he meets is named.[34] Whereas the Japanese are rendered as close equals of the author, and dialogue with them seen as worth reporting, Koreans are seen not as individuals but only as worthy of ethnographic treatment. The Koreans are observed and assessed. They do not talk. Their potential as future labourers and obedient colonial subjects is noted: "the lower classes make good workmen, when well taught and properly bossed [...] When well treated they are generally good-natured and docile – easy to control under even a tolerably just administration."[35] They are the objects, not the subjects of conversations. The effect of this disassociative understanding is to offer a distinctly Japanese voice to *In Korea with Marquis Ito* and to leave the Koreans to appear as a voiceless people without subjectivity, unable to express their own interests.

But, as already mentioned, Ladd's self-assured colonial logic and even his own authority is, at certain moments, thrown off-kilter. This is in part because, despite his desire to treat Koreans as merely an object of his gaze, his role as an educator necessitates that he speaks to them when giving lectures. As cocooned as he was during his travels, he could not avoid confronting Koreans in the highly mediated setting of the classroom: Ladd as teacher with a roomful of students attentive to the wisdom he had to proffer – or at least so he expected. Throughout the travelogue Ladd presents himself as little more than a spectator and reporter. As he moves through the various landscapes and offers his ethnographic remarks, he separates himself from the scenes as though he is a bystander whose very presence, let alone his activities, has no relation whatsoever to the processes of colonization he is so intent on recording. So long as he remains within the realms of the Japanese officials and Euro-American residents, he is able to present his presence as benign. His activities, he is keen to assert, are apolitical. His ruminations about Korean character are merely a product of a universal knowledge of personal comportment and national behaviour that, in his unspoken claim, have no direct bearing on Japanese rule, thus preserving his innocence and supporting his claims of objectivity.[36] Such claims would be accepted by Koreans – or so, at least, Ladd presumed. Yet it is precisely at the moments when he meets Koreans that the innocence so central to his narrative is called into question. Indeed, these lectures are the most unsettling episodes in Ladd's narrative, moments where his confident voice falters as the reach of his all-embracing colonial logic meets its limits.

In April, while in Pyongyang, Ladd is approached by three unnamed Korean students who tell him that their country is much misunderstood and request his sympathy. In this telling anecdote, the students' concerns are not elucidated in Ladd's text. Rather, the occasion is an opportunity for Ladd to lecture about his goals and

31 Ibid., pp. 44-47.

32 Ibid., p. 44.

33 Ibid., p. 54.

34 The one exception to this, besides the members of the imperial family, is Yun Ch'i-ho 尹致昊, who receives a less than flattering assessment; Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 39. Also, Korean ministers are sometimes referred to by their position and surname when Ladd is recounting an anecdote read in a newspaper.

35 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 292.

36 On this notion of innocence, see Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, Chapter 1.

expound his views on what is good for the students in a detailed response to their supplication. He assures the students of his desire to be sympathetic, but comments that "when the request seemed to be taking a more political turn, I replied that my interests, influence, and work, were all directed along the lines of morals, education, and religion." Citing his role as an educator, Ladd tells them he is doing exactly what they request of him, though in somewhat tentative tones, given his difficulty in arranging lectures: "As a teacher, it was only as my teaching *could* get a hearing and have an influence on life, that my stay in Korea *could* benefit the Koreans themselves" (my italics). Yet in the very next breath, Ladd, consciously or not, makes the political connection he otherwise seeks to avoid when he assures the students of his "confidence in Marquis Ito's intention to administer his office in the interests of their countrymen."[37] In this particular setting where three students approach him in the privacy of his office, Ladd contains the tension between his role as a teacher and his function as an invitee of the lead official of Japanese rule. Politics are not allowed to encroach on his claim to innocence – and the students are brushed aside with instructions on how to behave.

But Ladd could not always control the settings of these meetings and the behaviour of the Koreans. As in many colonial travelogues, there is an underlying sense of danger in Ladd's account. The Koreans he observes, always on the outside, are a foreboding presence: "The foreign visitor or resident need have little fear within the city walls, so long as the mob is not aroused and in control."[38] Likewise, at his lectures there was no underlying physical peril, but the control he cites as necessary was not so absolute, and the activities of the audience could disrupt Ladd's otherwise smooth and powerful argument for the colonization of Korea. When Ladd first arrives in Seoul, he quickly sets about soliciting invitations for lectures. As an educator, Ladd saw this as one of his primary duties in Korea, beyond his mission for Ito, and still in keeping with their presumably shared goal of uplifting Koreans and helping in what he typically calls their 'redemption'.[39] The problem, however, was quite simple: it was not at all clear that Koreans wanted to be redeemed by Ladd.

Ladd figured this out soon after arriving in Seoul, when he had trouble arranging lectures. In one of the more consistent strains of comparative ethnography that runs through the book, Ladd complains that in Japan he was overwhelmed by invitations from officials and private institutions to address public audiences, but in Korea, by contrast, his attempts to do so were met with "indifference, deficiencies, hindrances, if not active opposition, as far as the native attitude was concerned."[40] He could not, in fact, arrange a lecture on his own. Straining not to take this personally, Ladd asks: "Through what organ, then, could a stranger help the Resident-General in his benevolent plans for the welfare of the people of Korea?" Eventually, Japanese contacts stepped in, arranging a lecture at the YMCA.[41]

In the end these contacts arranged lectures for Ladd in Seoul, Pyongyang, and Inch'ŏn, sometimes for Japanese expatriate audiences and at other times for Koreans. His Japanese audiences caused no problems for, as Ladd describes, "In addressing audiences in Seoul, as elsewhere in Korea and all over Japan, I felt entirely at home. It was characteristic of them in this foreign land [...] that they were, above all, desirous to hear the subjects discussed about which I most desired to speak."[42] But this congruency of interests between Ladd and the Japanese community did not spill over into his lectures for Korean audiences, which he had trouble getting widely advertised. He notes that in some cases people did not attend unless they were commanded to do so, and to his great annoyance, his Korean audiences did not sit in rapt attention but often spoke and wandered in and out during the address. As he sums up, "The unregenerate native manners in public meetings are most abominable."[43] As uncomfortable as these experiences were for Ladd, they could still be rationalized as reflecting not on the speaker himself but on the Koreans: so ignorant, the author suggests, that they do not appreciate the opportunities being offered to them to become educated. In Kaesŏng, where he did not manage to arrange a single lecture, the city's *yangban* are dismissed as too conservative.[44] Later, in

37 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 102.
38 Ibid., 85.
39 For just one example of Ladd writing of the redemption of the country, see *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 58.
40 Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, p. 37.
41 Ibid., p. 40.
42 Ibid., p. 55.
43 Ibid., p. 51.
44 Ibid., p. 112.

Inch'ŏn, he gains an appreciative Japanese audience for his remarks, but no such appreciation from the Koreans, who "as a people, have still to awake to the impression that either science or morality has any important bearing on the material and social welfare of the nation's life."[45]

Yet as much as Ladd seeks to contain these responses so that they do not reflect on him personally, he has difficulty doing so. His choice to foreground himself as a protagonist in the travelogue comes back to haunt him. Even in a book that is full of superlative praise for the Japanese efforts to reform Korea, Ladd seems a little too eager to show that his lectures, despite the reluctance on the part of Koreans, had a positive, even ameliorative, effect on his audiences. His tone becomes strained in these passages and, unlike in any other parts of the book, this strain is compounded by a distinct note of frustration that creeps into the author's voice when his efforts are not greeted by the type of eager reception he was accustomed to receiving from Japanese audiences. What Ladd perceives as the active avoidance and even undermining of his intended message proves especially galling to him and less easy to fit into his mode of cultural ethnography. Here Ladd cannot help but confront his association with Ito Hirobumi, which despite all his assurances of objectivity in the opening of the book, is clearly an issue for his Korean audiences, one that he cannot sweep aside as he did in the case of the students seeking his assistance. He admits that being "a friend of Japan" was an "almost insuperable obstacle in the way of reaching the ears of the Korean upper and middle classes, to say nothing of convincing their minds or touching their hearts."[46] These supposedly passive subjects were not quite as passive as he expected them to be.

Ladd's suppositions are based, in part, on his inability to countenance a history of change in Korea. History serves one purpose in his analysis: to lock Koreans in the past. He demonstrates little knowledge of recent changes, whether these be the surge in educational associations, the growth of newspapers, or the activities of the *ŭibyŏng* 義兵. Just as there is no place for Korean voices in his narrative, there is little room for Korean subjectivity, such that he makes the comment: "Korea has not yet been awakened to any definite form of intelligent, national self-consciousness."[47] He also writes of "a misguided patriotism, with a large mixture of hypocritical sentimentality."[48] On students, such as those that came into his office, he writes: "in Korea, as in India (…) the students from these schools have sometimes become rather more practically worthless for the service of their nation, or even positively mischievous, than they could have been if left uneducated."[49] Yet the students did come to his office and did make their request before Ladd dismissed them. In other cases, such moments of Korean 'mischievousness' were not so easy to dismiss.

This is especially evident during one of his first lectures in Seoul. Speaking again on the issue of individual moral conduct, Ladd could not control his audience, which strategically interrupted his talk with what he deemed as inappropriate applause. For Ladd, these spectators constituted little more than a claque who, through their actions, were effectively undermining and changing his intended message:

> *On the one hand there was a lack of that intelligent and serious interest in the discussion of questions of education, morals, and religion which one meets everywhere in Japan; while, on the other hand, there was response by clapping of hands to any remarks which touched one's hearers on the side of sentiment in an appeal to their personal or national experiences of injustice, pride, and weakness mingled with a certain form of ambition.*[50]

His frustration is apparent: the professional educator who wrote about colonialism as necessary to raise the level of a culture that could not reform itself of its own accord could not get his message across to a group of Koreans in the setting that for Ladd was virtually the paradigmatic model of an educating colonialism: the classroom.

Indeed, Ladd cannot but admit that his efforts vis-à-vis Koreans were anything but fruitful. At the end of the travel section of his book, as he casts back to survey the results of his weeks of meetings and visits, he confesses his failure. The trip had been a "busy period of work

45 Ibid., p. 115.
46 Ibid., p. 38.
47 Ibid., p. 281.
48 Ibid., p. 69.
49 Ibid., p. 125.
50 Ibid., p. 48.

and of observation which had resulted in making more friends, Japanese and foreign, in Korea itself." Yet his experiences on the peninsula, in particular his practice of viewing Koreans from a distance, finally leaves him wondering: "But how about the Koreans themselves: had we won, even to the beginnings of real and constant friendly feeling, any among their number?" His answer offers a partial admission: "I was unable confidently to say."[51] Ladd's obvious discomfort with this admission is rooted in his inability to affirm that his own interactions with Koreans helped promote the seamless colonial rhetoric that he weaves through the work. For an author who regularly writes about redemption, he is unable to redeem his own three-month-long effort on the peninsula. He is confident in the worthiness and prospects of Japanese colonialism, yet in those moments where the otherwise voiceless Koreans peek through the colonial rhetoric of the author's narrative, there is a suggestion of a very different future for Japanese colonialism than the one the author argues for, a suggestion that perhaps, even in a book like *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, presages the ultimate bankruptcy of the attempt at colonization.

THE PASSING OF KOREA

Unlike Ladd, whose output on Korea reflected but a temporary interest, Homer Hulbert made a lifelong commitment to writing about and advocating for Korea. First known to the missionary and expatriate community in East Asia as the editor of a Seoul-based publication, the *Korea Review*, and as author of what was to become the classic, two-volume *History of Korea*, Hulbert also ventured into the mainstream American media with a series of articles on Korea in the early twentieth century. His work as an emissary of the Korean emperor to Washington in 1905 and 1906 and later to the Peace Conference in The Hague in 1906 and 1907 earned Hulbert, both inside and outside the peninsula, a reputation as the paramount foreign champion of Korean independence. This reputation was to be further entrenched with the publication of his 1906 book, *The Passing of Korea*.[52] There has been much research conducted on Hulbert's political, scholarly, and religious activities, though less examining the reasons for his anti-Japanese stance.[53]

For an American writing in the first decade of the century, Hulbert's critique of Japan's rise to empire was most unusual. Criticism of Japanese colonial efforts on the peninsula was itself rare, but Hulbert's particular style of dissent offered an idiosyncratic rendering of contemporary American concerns about religion, race, and civilization across the globe. The advent of an Oriental colonialism that claimed a status on par with that of its Western counterparts provoked in Hulbert a reaction that sought to affirm the seemingly self-evident connection between civilization and Christianity that, for him, had underpinned colonialism in the rest of the world. Hulbert sought to contain the threat he perceived in the Japanese colonization of Korea. This meant a politics that opposed Japanese colonialism while resting on a conservative position that sought not only to protect the Korean people, but also to preserve the prospects for what he deemed an authentic civilization in Asia. Ultimately his oppositional politics used Japanese colonization to articulate a deeper position against secular definitions of civilization and colonialism.

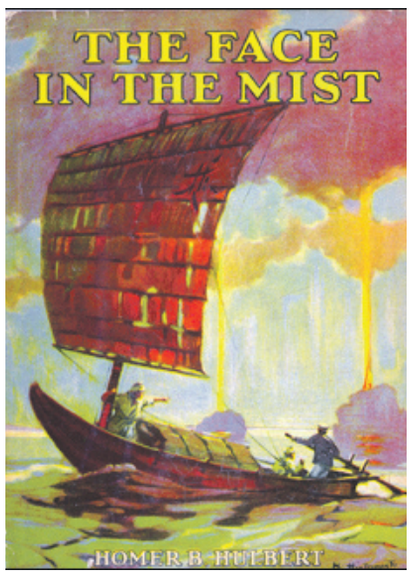
Hulbert had not always opposed Japanese advances in Korea. Despite his later reputation, his pre-1905 writings reveal a more generous assessment of the potential for Japanese rule. To be sure, he had long been sympathetic to the cause of Korean independence, suggesting before 1905 that Koreans wanted nothing more than to be left alone, that because of the dishonesty and rapacity of foreign businesses trade had not aided their cause, and that Korea had gained little in its historical relations with outside countries. But in a number of articles published in a variety of mainstream American magazines before the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese war, Hulbert, like

51 Ibid., p. 144.

52 Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*.

53 Yi Kwangnin (李光麟), "Hanmal sunan-ŭi chŭngin Hŏlbŏt'ŭ" 韓末受難의 證人 헐버트 (Hulbert, witness to the ordeals of the Taehan Empire), *Han'gug-ŭi in'gansang* 6, kŭndae sŏn'gakcha p'yŏn韓國의 人間像 6, 近代先覺者 篇 (The image of man in Korea. Volume 6: Modern pioneers), edited by Sin'gu munhwasa 新丘文化社 (Seoul: Sin'gu munhwasa, 1965); Yi Kwangnin (李光麟), "Hŏlbŏt'ŭ-ŭi Han'gukkwan," 헐버트의 한국관 (Hulbert's perception of Korea), *Han'guk kŭnhyŏndaesa yŏn'gu* 한국 근현대사 연구 (1998.9): pp. 5-21; Son Chŏngsuk 손정숙, "Ku Hanmal Hŏlbŏt'ŭ (Homer B. Hulbert)-ŭi taeHan insik kwa hwaltong" 구한말 헐버트의 대한 인식과 활동 (Hulbert's understanding of an acticities in the latter years of the Taehan Empire) *Ihwa sahak yŏn'gu* 이화사학연구 (1995) 22: pp. 127-48; Kim Hŭngsu 김흥수 "Sakŏn-ŭro pon Han'guk kidokkyosa: kyohoe-wa kukka kwangye-e taehan mi bukchangnogyo sŏn'gyobu-wa Hŏlbŏt'ŭ –wa-ŭi kaltŭng" 사건으로 본 한국기독교사: 교회와 국가 관계에 대한 북장로교 선교부와 헐버트외의 갈등 (A history of Korean Christianity as seen through incidents: conflict between Hulbert and the Northern Presbyterian Mission Board over church-state relations), *Han'guk kidokkyosa yŏn'guhoe sosik* (1988.22): pp. 21-24; Kim Sŏnp'ung 김선풍, "Homer B. Hulbert-ŭi Han'guk sŏrhwa pullyugwan – 1893 nyŏn kukche minsokhak taehoe palp'yobun-ŭl chungshim-ŭro" Homer B. Hulbert의 韓國說話分類觀 – 1893년 國際民俗學大會發表分을 中心으로 *Kugŏ kungmunhak* 국어국문학 91.1 (1984); Clarence N. Weems (ed.), *Hulbert's History of Korea* (New York: Hillary House Publishers, 1962), volume 1.

almost all American writers prior to the imposition of the protectorate, and particularly during the war, shows he was favourably disposed to seeing a more active Japanese hand on the peninsula. "The matter is summed up", he writes, revealing his wartime sympathies, "in the one statement that Japanese demands in Korea lie parallel with the interests of the Korean people, while Russian aspirations are directly opposed to them."[54] This was more than just anti-Russian antipathy rooted in the Anglo-Saxonism prevalent in the era. By the end of the war, he went so far as to suggest that a protectorate might best suit Korea: "Since Koreans are not ready to provide new bottles for the new wine of progress and enlightenment", he concludes, "someone else has to supply them."[55] Throughout these earlier writings, the colonial tropes common to writers justifying Japanese rule – "little advanced in the arts of civilization",[56] "apathy",[57] "complete lack of leadership"[58] – feature prominently in his descriptions of Koreans. In a piece in *Current Literature*, a popular monthly digest of lengthy articles on contemporary topics, Hulbert uncritically paraphrases some of the more scurrilous writing about Korea – the very type of literature that he was later to disown as misrepresenting the country and deceiving the American public.[59] His work during this early period was sufficiently negative that it could be cited by proponents of Japanese rule as evidence that the "Korean's mental equipment [was] somewhat contemptible."[60] In this early support for Japan, Hulbert's view that colonialism was an acceptable form of administration – an understanding that he was never to shake fully – is clearly apparent.



As he began to observe the consequences of the Japanese presence at the local level, however, Hulbert's position shifted. Now his writings began to appear anomalous amid the prevalent impressions of a Japan that had deservingly taken on a civilizing role on the peninsula. In staking out his critical position, Hulbert found himself disputing with his contemporaries on the colonial question, again not so much to argue against colonialism per se, but to question, in particular, its Japanese forms. In so doing, he called into question the negative cultural portraits of Korea that were circulating and began to offer alternatives to the dominant social Darwinian interpretations of Japan's rise.

This criticism of Japanese colonialism became most obvious in his treatment of the practice common to many writers of drawing comparisons between the American acquisition of the Philippines and the Japanese annexation of Korea, two concurrent events that stimulated a line of comparative colonial inquiry that has largely faded from scholarship on colonialism today. American supporters of a growing Japanese empire readily drew parallels between Korea and the Philippines. In their hands, the Philippines served as a useful comparative example for making a positive assessment of the 1905 protectorate over the peninsula – and, of course, such comparisons also worked to the opposite effect. What Japan was doing in Korea, the logic went, was little different from what the United States was doing in the Philippines. Moreover, the two governments had an understanding to respect each other's colonial interests as agreed in the 1905 Taft-Katsura Memorandum. The unquestioned legitimacy of American efforts was thus extended to Japanese endeavours, with writers only quibbling about such matters as divergent administrative techniques, usually only so as to affirm proudly the superiority of American forms of colonialism. As the overseer of the Presbyterian missions in Asia, Arthur Judson Brown wrote extensively about both Korea and the Philippines, supporting the colonization of both countries. While he admits there were

54 Homer B. Hulbert, "Korea, The Bone of Contention," *Current Literature* (February 1904): pp. 158-163. He also offered this position in his Seoul-based writings; see Weems, *Hulbert's History of Korea*, vol 1, p. 40.
55 Homer B. Hulbert, "Opening Korea By Rail," *World's Work* (November 1905): p. 6849.
56 Hulbert, "Korea, The Bone of Contention," p. 162.
57 Homer B. Hulbert, "Opening Korea By Rail," p. 6849.
58 Ibid., p. 6849.
59 See his summary of Reginald Farrer's work in Homer B. Hulbert, "Korea, The Bone of Contention," *Century Magazine* (May 1904):, pp. 151-54.
60 "Korean Characteristics," *Review of Reviews* (October 1904): p. 477.

problems in the Japanese administration of Korea, he endeavours to downplay these incidents by invoking the counter example of US rule in the Philippines, where, he points out, Americans had experienced similar, if somewhat less serious, problems.[61] For Brown, the comparative approach went beyond simply legitimizing Korea's colonization, to excuse Japan for what appeared to be the incidental problems of an inexperienced colonizer. As he argues, "Can we reasonably expect Japan to do better by Korea than many Western nations have done by their conquered peoples?"[62] This rhetorical question at once reveals the hierarchy underlying Brown's vision of global colonialism, differentiating the Japanese from more superior colonizers, while still accepting Japan's new role in Korea. Such comparative colonial examples emerged as a common and powerful way to frame the Japanese takeover of Korea.

For Hulbert to maintain his critical position, therefore, he needed to counter the logic of this style of comparative colonialism. He could not allow the United States' colonization of the Philippines, which had strong public approval at home, to be equated with and thus legitimize the Japanese position on the peninsula. One option was a radically anti-colonial stance, one that rejected the logic of empire and the legitimacy of *both* of the new imperial acquisitions in Asia. Yet Hulbert was no anti-imperialist.

The American suppression of the Filipino independence movement of the nineteenth century and subsequent colonization of the Pacific archipelago in the early years of the twentieth century led to the launch of a vocal anti-imperialism movement within the United States. Hulbert, in distant Korea, appears to have had no connections with this movement. Nor did his critique of Japanese colonialism resonate with the style of arguments offered by the likes of Mark Twain, Grover Cleveland and others who joined the opposition to America's first overseas imperial acquisition. This is not surprising. Resting on a kaleidoscope of beliefs and attitudes that arose in debates on the nature of the American Union – the incompatibility of American Republican traditions with colonialism, a desire to avoid the entanglements and commitments of empire, as well as the unease involved in annexing a nation of non-whites – the anti-imperialism movement offered little ammunition for Hulbert's salvos against Japan's ascendancy.[63] This was a style of anti-imperialism that did not travel to other colonial settings since it had less to do with debates about colonialism itself than with the role of colonialism in the American sense of self, embroiled as always in notions of US exceptionalism.

Instead, Hulbert chooses a different path, one that seeks to dismiss the comparative parallel drawn by other pundits. In so doing, he separates his disapprobation of Japanese colonialism from American policies in the Philippines, which, like the targets of his criticism, he endorses. For Hulbert, such comparisons served to show difference, not similarity in the two colonialisms – a contrast that affirmed the integrity of the American endeavours and the self-interestedness of the Japanese efforts. As Hulbert expounds, the American colonial government, unlike the Japanese Protectorate General, protected the rights of its new colonial subjects, always working for the benefit of the Filipinos.[64] In this classic statement of colonial paternalism, the United States had fulfilled the promise of a civilizing colonialism whereas Japan had failed. Hulbert's opposition to Japan was hardly a form of principled anti-imperialism. He was not against colonialism per se, but only dismissive of its specifically Japanese form as manifest in Korea.[65]

Consequently, his critique focuses on the policies pursued by Japan and the threat posed by its ascension to imperial status. This conservative, even defensive, position received its most extensive exposition in *The Passing of Korea*, the work he published immediately after the protectorate was imposed on Korea. This book, Hulbert explains, aimed to correct the many misperceptions about Korea circulating in English-language treatments of East

61 Arthur Judson Brown, *Mastery of the Far East: The Story of Korea's Transformation and Japan's Rise to Supremacy in the Orient* (New York: Scribner's, 1919), pp. 342-343 and 584.

62 Ibid., p. 370. For his major work on the Philippines, see *The New Era in the Philippines* (New York and Toronto: F.H. Revell Co., 1903).

63 There were of course many other arguments against war, including some offered by white supremacists. Daniel Schirmer *Republic or Empire: American Resistance to the Philippine War* (Morristown, N.J.: Schenkman, 1972); Robert L. Beisner, *Twelve Against Empire: The Anti*-Imperialists*, 1898-1900* New York: McGraw-HillI, 1968); E. Berkeley Tompkins, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States: The Great Debate, 1890-1920* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970).

64 "The Alleged 'Looting' of Korea," *The American Review of Reviews* (Oct. 1907): pp. 502-503. A similar argument was used in Henry Chung, "Korea Today: A Korean's View of Japan's Colonial Policy," *Asia* (May 1919).

65 This style of argument was often used to criticize specific Japanese policies for their inferiority to American colonial policies without going so far as to question, as Hulbert did, the legitimacy of Japan's rule. See, Walter E. Weyl, "Korea – An Experiment in Denationalization," *Harper's Magazine* (March 1919); W.E. Griffis, "An American View," *The Nation* (24 May 1919); Powell, "Japan's Policy in Korea".

Asia. Hulbert was well aware that Americans had been reading less than flattering accounts of Korea, accounts that he blames in part on Japanese attempts to "hoodwink" the American public[66] and in part on the inaccurate accounts published by casual American travellers. He is unequivocal about the power of these widely disseminated negative images: they had convinced Americans that Korea would "be better off under Japanese rule than independent."[67] His book aimed to counter these negative representations, to offer a more flattering version of the Korean past, and to suggest the potential for a more salutary Korean future – all with the understanding that this battle over representations was deeply connected with the struggle to rescue Korean autonomy. To do this, he presents his book as an anti-traveller account, one that possesses greater knowledge than that of the casual tourist, who Hulbert felt had distorted understanding of Korea.

The Passing of Korea marked a departure from his more ambivalent writings of the pre-war years. It was a shift – one never explicitly explained in any of his writings – that seems to have resulted from his observations and experience of early Japanese interference on the peninsula, a change that a number of his contemporary foreign residents also experienced.[68] But, for Hulbert, this disassociation served a rhetorical purpose that garnered a stronger authority for him to speak both about and for Korea. In a passage early in the book, he asserts this claim with a clever manipulation of the commanding or possessing gaze of the colonizer. In this passage, however, Hulbert makes the colonizer's gaze part of the colonial landscape, as he himself observes that gaze. The passage begins with a common landscape trope. "The scenery of Korea as witnessed from the deck of a steamer is very uninviting", he writes. Using an observation about the barrenness of the land as a metonym for the culture, he continues "and it is this which has sent so many travellers home to assert that this country is a barren, treeless waste."[69] Hulbert distinguishes himself from these "many travelers" by quickly establishing a narrative that moves off the steamer, away from the distant, external vantage point, to venture into the Korean interior, offering detailed descriptions of the rich landscape – hardly "uninviting" – and the lush – not "barren" – natural life of the peninsula. The traveller's gaze from the deck of the steamer that revealed an emptiness is juxtaposed with Hulbert's observations rendered in the rest of the chapter in loving detail: accounts of mountains, fruit such as the persimmon "that grows to perfection in this country",[70] the many spectacular flowers of which the Koreans are "great lovers",[71] the "unique" Korean pony,[72] and the birdlife for which Korea is "deservedly famous."[73] In this way, Hulbert admonishes the casual gaze of the traveller. In inviting and escorting the reader away from the coast, he garners authority to speak with the knowledge of, both literally and metaphorically, the insider – what in his preface he describes as "a more intimate standpoint than that of the casual tourist." His gaze is that of the self-proclaimed expert, a gaze that, by penetrating deeper into the interior of Korea, can claim a deeper truth than the more superficial gaze of the traveller.

On the basis of this authority, Hulbert moves to point out popular American misconceptions about Korea. He regularly defends Koreans against a wide variety of charges, often adding to his critique more flattering alternatives. As a result, *The Passing of Korea* is one of the most affectionate accounts of the Korean people published in English during these years, offering a stark contrast to the many negative portraits of Korea published in the same period.[74] This sympathetic approach nevertheless remains riddled with the tropes prevalent in early twentieth-century cross-cultural representations: it is a historical account that emphasizes decline from past greatness, and contains titillating glances into the forbidden women's quarters, assessments of social phenomena that rest on a sense of 'lack' as defined through the absence of Western equivalents (for example, a social system that had crushed individualism), and detailed yet derisive

66 Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, p. 462.

67 Ibid., p. 9.

68 Ernest Bethell, the English publisher of the Seoul-based newspaper *Korea Daily News*, is another example of a resident whose initial pro-Japanese sympathies were severely tested by his witnessing of Japanese policies, even though in his case his criticism of Japan was more tempered than Hulbert's.

69 Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, p. 12.

70 Ibid., p. 14.

71 Ibid., p. 14.

72 Ibid., p. 19.

73 Ibid., p. 23.

74 For two early examples see Reginald J. Farrer, *"Impressions of Korea," Nineteenth Century* (December 1903) and A.J Brown, "Unhappy Korea," *Century* (May 1904).

attention to superstitions – to name just a few instances. Hulbert shared with his contemporaries the tendency to establish various hierarchies that demeaned the object of his study and demoted it to an inferior status while maintaining the position of the West as a standard against which to measure all cultures. Despite his unusual sympathy for Korea, Hulbert remained deeply embedded in the colonial discourse of his age. Hulbert's antagonism towards the Japanese rise to empire stemmed partly from the threat this parvenu posed to Western standards. *The Passing of Korea* can be seen as an attempt to contain the threat posed by the Japanese parvenu, as Hulbert interprets the situation in Korea as an affirmation of his understanding of the relationship between colonialism, civilization, and religion.

To contain the threat posed by the parvenu colonizer, *The Passing of Korea* employs a comparative approach that contrasts Korea not just with the West, but also with China and Japan. Distancing himself from most contemporary accounts that name Korea – either on its own or together with China – as the most degenerate state and/or culture of the Far East, Hulbert emphasizes the peninsula's potential. Most remarkably, in the years when Japan was in the process of colonizing the peninsula – an indication to most Western observers of Japan's success and Korea's failure – Hulbert sought to affirm the latent capabilities of the Korean people, proposing that it was the Koreans, not the Japanese, who might have a salutary impact on the region. Korea, for Hulbert, represented the ideal future for the region.

Hulbert's argument rests on a direct comparison with what he clearly disdains as a corrupt China. In general, he tends to group China and Korea together – they are "one in general temper", and "thoroughly conservative";[75] they are seen as sharing a "materialistic bent";[76] and Korea's literary tradition is intertwined with China's. However, Korea is ultimately redeemed by Hulbert's belief that these cultural characteristics conceal a deeper Korean essence. Taking a page from Korean nationalist writing on the problem of Korea's historical subservience to China – what in Korean was termed *sadaejuŭi* (事大主義) – Hulbert emphasizes the alien nature of Confucian thought. "The Korean belongs to a different intellectual and temperamental species", he writes, arguing that there is a fundamental Korean character which is incongruent with the imported Chinese knowledge. What was the "bone of China's bone and flesh of her flesh was less than a foster-child in Korea."[77] With a logic and vocabulary reminiscent of Korean nationalists, Hulbert bemoans the adoption of Chinese learning in the sixth and seventh centuries. Just when Korea "was ready to enter upon a career of independent thought and achievement, the ponderous load of Chinese civilisation was laid upon her like an incubus", thus making Koreans "the slave[s] of Chinese thought."[78] This history of foreign importation was also the source of Korean salvation, however, since Chinese culture as a foreign influence could be abandoned as easily as it had been adopted. As Hulbert maintains:

> *Intrinsically and potentially the Korean is a man of high intellectual possibilities, but he is, superficially, what he is by virtue of his training and education. Take him out of this environment, and give him a chance to develop independently and naturally, and you would have as good a brain as the Far East has to offer.*[79]

The notion of the shedding of Chinese influence to reveal a true Korean potential was an analysis that functioned at two levels: the potential of Korea was at once hailed and circumscribed. Judged in relation to the Far East, the possibilities were exceptional – an unusual conclusion for a writer working in a period when it was common among Anglo-Americans to write of the hopelessness of the Korean peninsula. Nonetheless, this potential still has limits for Hulbert, as its exceptionality remains qualified to that region: "as good a brain as the Far East has to offer."

Yet, at key moments, Hulbert's analysis depends on drawing certain parallels between the West and Korea. Such a strategy enables Hulbert to separate Korea from its two neighbours by claiming that the Korean essence, however deeply buried under Chinese influence, is in fact

75 Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, p. 7.
76 Ibid., p. 8.
77 Ibid., p. 32.
78 Ibid., p. 33.
79 Ibid. This was not an uncommon style of comment; here is another telling example: "In the matter of truthfulness the Korean measures well up to the best standards of the Orient, which at best are none too high" Ibid., p. 40.

"closely allied to that of the Anglo-Saxon."[80] His remarkable appeal to Anglo-Saxonism reflects Hulbert's familiarity with this racial doctrine, which in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had been used by the elite on both sides of the Atlantic to try to forge a common purpose between the old British Empire and growing American power. Often pitted against the Slavic peoples, Anglo-Saxonism claimed for the British and Americans a special mission in world history, serving as a rationale for the United States to share with Britain its colonial responsibilities of spreading its self-proclaimed civilization around the globe. By 1905, however, mutual tensions over the Boer War, the British alliance with Japan, and the defeat of the Russians by Japan had cooled the eagerness of many to appeal to Anglo-Saxonism.[81] Yet despite the downturn in its popularity, Hulbert still finds a use for this style of racial positioning in his writing on Korea.

In articulating his racial argument, Hulbert identifies two key elements in the Korean temperament: rationality and emotionalism. These were the "same combination", he asserts, "that has made the Anglo-Saxon what he is." Indeed, it "is the welding of two different but not contrary characteristics that makes the power of the Anglo-Saxon peoples."[82] With shared emotional traits eliding into racial similarity, Hulbert comes close to dismissing cultural differences in a racial argument that stresses the similarities between Koreans and Anglo-Saxons. Able to appeal to a humanist impulse that recognizes the commonality of all people and downplays the disparities between them, Hulbert asserts a greater affinity between the West and Korea than between the West and Korea's two neighbours. He reduces such racial categories to the level of individual relationships, explaining that it is easier to get to know a Korean than either a Chinese or a Japanese – since "he is much more like ourselves" – to the extent that one could forget the very foreignness of Koreans. He writes: "You lose the sense of difference very readily, and forget that he is a Korean and not a member of your own race."[83] In this innovative handling of difference, Hulbert in effect asserts the superiority of Korea in the East not because of any special Korean features, but because in the end the Koreans are not so different, not so 'Korean' at all.

Hulberts grave

While most other foreign commentators invoked Korean cultural differences as part of the rationale for acceding to Japanese colonialism, Hulbert downplays these traits, citing similarities to bolster his argument that Korea deserves a different future.

The problem such an argument faced was how to explain the current predicament of the peninsula. If Hulbert's emphasis on the emotional make-up of Koreans enabled the elision upon which his claims of racial similarity stood, what caused these Anglo-Saxon-like Koreans to degenerate to "the present state of intellectual and moral stagnation"?[84] Such a question immediately places a limit on mutual similarities by quickly reasserting difference, suggesting the possibility of a contradiction in Hulbert's own standards of evaluation. But these contradictions are themselves contained by the author's return to the baleful influence of Chinese culture. Similarities, Hulbert believes, are at the most fundamental level of race, yet the more explicit cultural manifestations

80 Ibid., p. 33.

81 Paul J. Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910," *The Journal of American History* (March 2002): pp. 1315-1352; Reginald Horseman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

82 Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, p. 31.

83 Ibid., p. 31

84 Ibid., p. 33.

of day-to-day life tend to reflect the accretions of Chinese culture, overshadowing the similarities. Other commentators, in Hulbert's view, had mistakenly concentrated on this less fundamental level. These pundits had focused on the superficial features of Koreans, rather than delving into the fundamental nature of the people – which Hulbert reveals in the pages of *The Passing of Korea* – just as they had labelled the scenery of the coastline barren, based on their perspective from the deck of a steamer, while Hulbert moves beyond this restricted view. The task for Koreans, Hulbert reckons, in a reflection of his contempt for Chinese culture, is simple: Koreans need to shed Chinese influence. Only this would enable them to reveal their essence and achieve the potential he believed Koreans harboured.

In the early twentieth century, when the Qing dynasty was in obvious decline, it was not so difficult for Hulbert to denigrate China as a means of extolling the superiority of Koreans. His task was much more difficult for a Japan that had dazzled the world with its rapid transformation. Yet Hulbert is undeterred, seeing the Meiji era transformation not for its achievements but for its hollowness. In his damning assessment, Hulbert displays his missionary colours by evaluating Japan as an imitative – and secular – civilization. Despite the fact that his contemporaries, much to Hulbert's chagrin, were "entranced" by the military and naval victories, leading to a number of "exaggerations"[85] about Japanese achievements, he believes the reforms to be incomplete. Again, Hulbert is distancing himself from the mainstream of commentaries about East Asia. Indeed, he has little positive to say about Japan.

Hulbert's critique is historical, focusing like so many critics of Japanese modernity on the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Interpreting these events from a class-based perspective, Hulbert believes the restoration resulted from a scramble by the old elite to find positions in the new style of government so as to preserve, in a new form, their perquisites at the top of the social ladder. It has nothing to do with the world historical purpose of civilization, but rather is a "purely selfish movement", he concludes, "conceived in the interests of caste distinction and propagated in anything but an altruistic spirit."[86] This transference of the old elite to the new government, Hulbert believes, had a number of negative consequences. His argument is similar in style to what later historians would posit as the restoration's insufficient elimination of feudal elements. For Hulbert, this is especially pertinent in relation to Japanese nationalism. He notes that the conception of loyalty developed by samurai towards their "overlords" had been transferred to the nation. It was a "species of national pride", he derisively notes, "which, in the absence of the finer quality, constitutes the Japanese form of patriotism." In short, it was inauthentic, lacking certain unspecified yet central qualities that had been experienced in the West. The logic of this argument carries over into what, for Hulbert, is an even more central issue: the Western-inspired reforms of the Meiji period.

Taking up a line of reasoning that was not unknown in missionary circles, yet rarely so forcefully argued, Hulbert dismisses Japanese efforts at reform as superficial precisely because they were not based on the principles of "our civilization." Hulbert's earlier use of the distant gaze from a ship to represent superficial understanding now becomes a metaphor of clothing. Japan's success at civilizing reform is depicted as the "donning of the habiliments of the West" without "attention to the forces by which those habiliments were shaped and fitted."[87] He writes that Japan, "instead of digging until she struck the spring of Western culture, merely built a cistern in which she stored up some of its more obvious and tangible results."[88] It is at this point that Hulbert's otherwise hidden missionary background rises to the fore. Any accusation that a people gave "no thought to the principles on which our civilisation is based" was, for a missionary, a coded allusion to Christianity, used in this case to snub Japanese achievements because of their secular nature. Without embracing Christianity, a reformed Japan had little hope of receiving the approval of a missionary who sought to maintain a religious definition of civilization.

This had special relevance for Hulbert's support of Korean independence. By the time *The Passing of Korea* was published in 1906, missionaries in Korea had already been reporting some of the most astounding successes in the world. Three years later, reports from mission investigators claimed that the rate of conversion was so high that

85 Ibid., p. 4.
86 Ibid., p. 5.
87 Ibid., p. 6.
88 Ibid., p. 6.

"Korea would be the first of the non-Christian nations to be evangelized."[89] These successes reinforced Hulbert's racial argument. The wide acceptance of Christianity was, in Hulbert's eyes, not only a testament to the character of the Korean people, but also a result of their Anglo-Saxon temperament. The argument ran both ways: the acceptance of Christianity enabled him to read onto Koreans an emotional and racial similarity, while these shared features also served to explain the successes of the missions. Whichever approach he pursued, the fundamental nature of Koreans, however deep it lay beneath a learned Chinese culture, led them to embrace the religion that most suited their nature:

> *I make bold to say that the Christian religion, shorn of all trappings and embellishments of man's making, appeals perfectly to the rationally emotional temperament of the Korean. And it is to some extent this perfect adaptability which has won for Christianity such a speedy and enthusiastic hearing in this country. Christianity is at once the most rational and the most mystical of religions, and as such is best fitted, humanly speaking, to appeal to this people.*[90]

Thus, in Hulbert's estimation, the potential of Korea was to combine this innate propensity for the Christian principles of Western civilization, which had escaped Japan, with a reform programme. His priorities between principles and "habiliments" are clear, serving as the basis for his critique of Japan and hope for Korea. That Koreans had begun adopting Christianity without the external trappings of Western life served as evidence that confirmed Hulbert's own beliefs.

Hulbert's position on the relationship between civilization and religion reflected a longstanding debate within American missionary circles in Japan. The Meiji government had from its earliest stages been hostile to Christianity, only relaxing its ban in 1873 under pressure from foreign governments. Yet the early success of missionaries in converting Japanese in the 1880s did not continue in the following decades, as an increasing number of Japanese, supported by secular foreign experts, separated religion from their understanding of the reforms necessary for the civilizing process. Back in the United States, the tension created by the growing advocacy of scientific theories of evolution began to be extended to Japan. For secularists, the island nation served as a useful example to show that there was indeed a way to civilization that circumvented Christianity – a form of praise not endearing to a missionary community increasingly frustrated by their lack of success in a rapidly changing country.[91] These debates had obvious links to social Darwinism, one of the pre-eminent doctrines used by Anglo-American observers to rationalize the conquest of Korea, but one that, by focusing on race and religion, Hulbert downplays in his analysis.

Hulbert's fear was that the failure of Japan would be extended to Korea, where hope still existed. Showing that he continued to locate historical agency in the West, he speaks of how "giving them the secret of Western culture" might make it possible for Koreans "to evolve a new civilisation embodying all the culture of the West, but expressed in terms of Oriental life and habit." He continues tellingly: "Here would be an achievement to be proud of, for it would prove that our culture *is* fundamental, and that it does not depend for its vindication upon the mere vestments of Western life."[92]

In this single statement Hulbert discloses his fear of the material successes of Japan as well as his sense of purpose for being involved in East Asia. In a sense, it was a test for his vision of civilization, to show that it *was* fundamental, that the way in which he connected religion with reform truly lay at the core of culture. There could hardly be a starker statement of both his anxieties and his hopes.

Korea, then, represented for Hulbert a place where this "achievement" was already beginning to play itself out. Here was a place "where the transforming power of Christianity has done a fundamental work without touching a single one of the time-honored customs of the land."[93] Taking another comparative swipe at Japan, Hulbert argues that this was the "only genuine way to develop the culture of the West", a "way that evinces itself in its ultimate forms of honesty, sympathy and unselfishness,

89 A.J. Brown, as quoted in L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1980), p. 366.

90 Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, p. 33.

91 Joseph Henning, *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American-Japanese Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), Chapter 3.

92 Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, p. 8.

93 Ibid., p. 1.

and not in the use of a swallow-tail coat and silk hat."[94]

This set of assumptions – a definition of civilization that was Christian, a racial understanding that linked Koreans to Anglo-Saxons, and a belief that racial character facilitated the acceptance of Christian civilization – underlay Hulbert's worries about Japan's colonization of Korea. The irony in his position, however, was that very similar arguments, in particular the appeal to Anglo-Saxonism, had been offered as a rationale in the United States for the colonization of the Philippines. It had been on the basis of this Anglo-Saxonism that the paradigmatic supporter of the British Empire, Rudyard Kipling, had penned his famous verse "The White Man's Burden" as encouragement to the American president to take on the imperial responsibility of the pacific archipelago. The transatlantic use of Anglo-Saxonism had proved a powerful ideological impulse in the early twentieth century to forge a bond between the British and the Americans, yet here Hulbert appeals to these ideological strands defensively, using what in one setting had been offered as a rationale for colonialism in order to counter a different version of imperialism.

This strategy does not focus on the Korean past and present alone, but views Korea in relation to its promise in becoming a civilized Christian nation – and is one that sees Korea as a potential entry point in an evangelical strategy for all of Asia. But, in Hulbert's estimation, colonization by Japan threatens this potential: "Herein lies the pathos of Korea's position; for lying as she does in the grip of Japan, she cannot gain from that power more than that power is capable of giving – nothing more than the garments of the West."[95]

In short, Korea could only gain the type of superficial reform achieved in the islands, which Hulbert viewed so critically, not the fundamental civilization he desired for the country. For these reasons, Japanese colonial policy threatened to undermine the stirring Korean interest in Christianity and destabilize its role in what Hulbert saw as the "proper way to go about the rehabilitation of the East":[96] "There are traits of mind and heart in the Korean which the Far East can ill afford to spare; and if Japan should allow the nation to be overrun by, and crushed beneath, the wheels of a selfish policy, she would be guilty of an international mistake of the first magnitude."[97]

Japan's colonization of the peninsula, then, threatened to undermine the achievements already made in Korea, and Korea's special role in Asia. It was the religious fermentation started by Christianity that, in Hulbert's eyes, best suited the Korean character. Its success promised not only to create a brighter future for Korea but to move beyond the peninsula to lead the "rehabilitation of the East." In a period when the ascendancy of Japan called into question the relationship between civilization, race, and Christianity, Korea could prove in Hulbert's idiosyncratic rendering that the connections between these three elements remained essential and that a social Darwinian vision of world history was not the only way of understanding the rise of Japan. This affirmation, for Hulbert, was good enough reason for adamantly opposing the Japanese colonization of Korea.

94 Ibid., p. 9.
95 Ibid., p. 8.
96 Ibid., p. 9.
97 Ibid., p. 44.

Jerôme de Wit

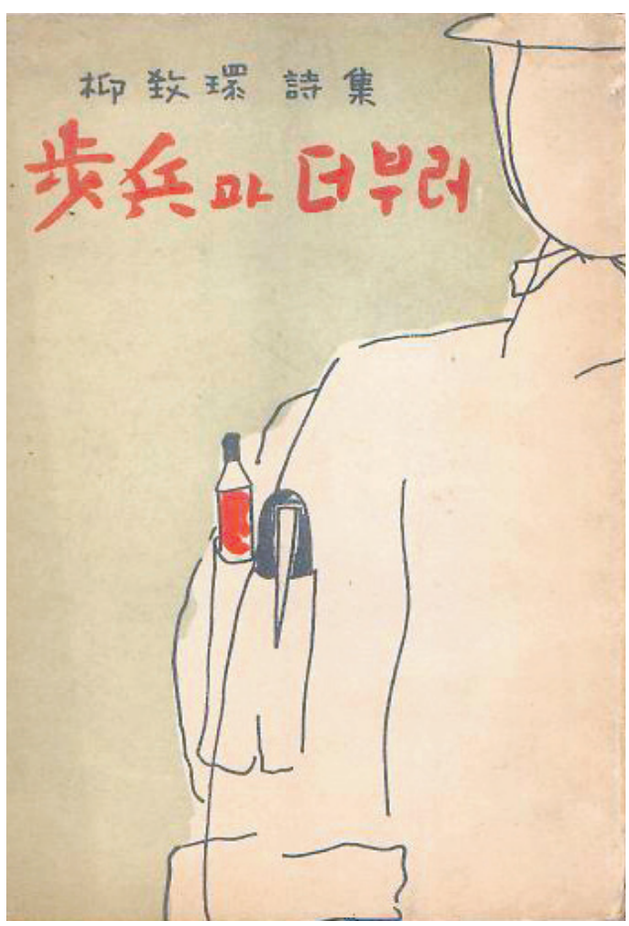
The Dilemmas of Nationalism during Civil War

IN KIM SONG'S LIVING FOREVER

INTRODUCTION

The concept of the Korean nation (*minjok* 民族) has, from its inception, always been obscure. One reason for its obscurity lies in the etymological formation of the term itself. The separate appearance and use of the two words *min*, for 'people', and *jok*, for 'family', can be found stretching far back into the classical age. Having these two venerable characters forming the term helped to obscure its modern origins and gave it an aura of naturalness, making it possible for nationalist intellectuals to claim that it had long existed, and had only to be discovered.[1]

The term *minjok* has never been defined, and therefore approximations of what the term means can only be derived from the context in which it is used, and its associations with other entities in the text. This context dependence of meaning can be seen in one of the first instances in which the term appears, an editorial from the *Hwangsŏng shinmun* 皇城 新聞 newspaper, dated 12 January 1900. The term is used here in combination with the words 'eastern' (tongbang 東方) and 'white' (paegin 白人), to designate a racial unit transcending Korea.[2] Furthermore, with its connection to race, the term hints at a social-Darwinist scheme of competing races, in which the eastern *minjok* is pitted against the onslaught of the white *minjok*.



Cover of the first edition of the famous war poem collection Together with the Foot Soldiers 步兵과 더부러 by Yu Ch'ihwan (1951)

1 Henry Em cites two such assertions, one made by Son Chint'ae손진태 who claimed in 1948 that "although the word '*minjok*' was not used in the past – because it was the quintessential character of Korea's court-centered, aristocratic states to obstruct the development of such [national] consciousness (*sasang*) and concepts – the [Korean] *minjok* certainly did exist even if the word did not." Henry Em, "*Minjok* as a Modern and Democratic Construct: Sin Ch'aeho's Historiography," in *Colonial Modernity in Korea*, ed. by Gi-Wook Shin and Michael Robinson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 337.

2 Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895-1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 173. This newspaper article can be seen at http://gonews.kinds.or.kr/OLD_NEWS_IMG3/HSS/HSS19000112u00_02.pdf (last visited on 17 January 2011)

3 Ibid., p. 173.

Since the exact meaning of *minjok* is never defined, the term becomes an empty signifier, though a very powerful one. When Shin Ch'aeho 신채호 (1880-1936) used the term in his essay of 1908, "A New Way of Reading History" (Toksa sillon 讀史新論), to give an alternative reading of Korean history, the term applied only to the inhabitants of the Korean peninsula.[4] Shin uses the social-Darwinist overtones that accompanied the term, by connecting both race and nation in his definition of *minjok*, to create a new history that could strengthen national identity. The bloodline of the ethnic nation was now associated with the term *minjok*, and Shin used this association as his main narrative to trace the *minjok*'s survival amid constant threats of extinction.[5] This link to a traceable bloodline also implied that the nation had an identifiable spiritual essence that had remained intact through the ages. As Jager explains:

> *Locating the core identity in an unchanging, unique racial essence allowed for an idealized reading of Korean culture and history as a seamless narrative of continuity and cohesion. […] To be assured of the ethnic uniqueness of the Korean people provided a past that was ageless and secure; it also served as a basis for an autonomous national identity that had to be maintained through constant struggle.*[6]

Shin's definition of the *minjok* proved to be very effective in countering the ideological strategies of the colonial power and has become one of the most influential ways of thinking about the concept of *minjok* up to the present day.[7]

With the political and ideological power struggle emerging after libertion in 1945 and the establishment of two separate states, however, the concept of *minjok*, with its perceived aura of cohesion and unbroken continuity, lost a lot of its persuasive power. This loss was further aggravated when the Korean War broke out on 25 June 1950, as is shown in an article by Kim Chuin 김주인 (1916-?) written during the war:

> *Because of the political strife after liberation, the parties tried to convince people with terms like the 'minjok front line' and the 'minjok camp', without looking at each citizen's ideological differences, and contrary to party interests and political strategy. Because this has led to the division of the minjok, the confused people probably feel disappointed and bewildered about the significance of the minjok.*[8]

This article gives the impression that there was not much confidence among the people in the South Korean state. The political parties (in both North and South Korea) were even blamed for dividing the *minjok*. Also, the term *minjok* itself became problematic and a topic for debate during this period. For who in Korean society was in possession of the unique essence of the *minjok* now? Could every South Korean be considered to be part of the *minjok*? And was North Korea still part of the *minjok* even though that country was now the enemy?

With the lack of trust in politicians among the population, it was up to the intellectuals to rise to the task and provide meaningful solutions to these important questions. In this article I will examine how these dilemmas related to the *minjok* appear in the novel, and how writers positioned themselves in regard to such dilemmas in wartime Korea. I will examine these issues through an analysis of the novel *Living Forever* (Yŏngwŏnhi sanŭn kŏt 영원히 사는 것), written by Kim Song 김송 (1909-1988) in 1952.

WRITERS AND WAR

Only a few hours after the Korean War broke out, a group of writers, members of the National Association of Cultural Organizations (Chŏn'guk munhwa tanch'e ch'ong-yŏnhaphoe 전국문화단체총연합회), gathered to establish

4 One year earlier one of the first articles focusing on the conceptualization of the term *minjok* appeared in the *Hwangsŏng shinmun* of June 20-21, 1907 with a two-part editorial entitled "Minjok-ism 民族主義" (*Minjokchuŭi*). Here it can be derived from the context that the community designated by the term *minjok* had changed to encompass only the people living on the peninsula. The editorial can be viewed at http://gonews.kinds.or.kr/OLD_NEWS_IMG3/HSS/HSS19070620u00_02.pdf (last visited on 17 January 2011) and http://gonews.kinds.or.kr/OLD_NEWS_IMG3/HSS/HSS19070621u00_02.pdf (last visited on 17 January 2011).

5 Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Narratives of Nation Building in Korea: A Genealogy of Patriotism* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2003), p. 71.

6 Ibid., p. 71.

7 Gi-Wook Shin cites a poll conducted in 1999 in which 68.2% consider 'blood' to be the most important criterion defining the Korean nation. Gi-Wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 2.

8 Kim Chuin, "Minjok, minjokchuŭi susang 民族, 民族主義 隨想" [Some Thoughts on Minjok and Minjok-ism], Hyŏptong 協同 [Cooperation] 32 (November 1951): p. 43. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are mine.

the Emergency Civilian Propaganda Unit (Pisang kungmin sŏnjŏndae 비상국민선전대).[9] The members of this unit immediately set to work, writing pamphlets, reading poetry on radio broadcasts, and undertaking other literary endeavours related to the war effort. Because of the rapid advance of the North Korean army, the writers had to flee the capital and the unit soon dissolved. Many writers sought refuge in Taejeon 대전, where on 28 June a new organization was established, the Group of Combined Artists to Save the Nation (Munch'ong kuguktae 문총구국대), to coordinate all artistic efforts for the war.[10] After two days the organization fled to Taegu 대구 and not long after that to Pusan 부산. From there it set out to support the friendly troops by broadcasting, publishing newspapers, making propaganda leaflets, giving lectures, and so on. After the Chinese army entered the war and the front had stabilized in the spring of 1951, the separate branches of the military started to support the writers' activities and three war writers' organizations were established.[11]

The swiftness with which the writers acted to support the war effort and the lead they took herein are surprising.[12] It is clear from their actions that the South Korean writers already had a strong conviction of the wartime role of the writer. These ideas came from the writers' previous experiences of war at the end of the colonial period.

After the outbreak of hostilities between China and Japan in 1937, several Korean writers had voiced their wish to set up their own war writers' group.[13] Inspired by the popular novel *Barley and Soldiers* (Mugi to heitai 麦と兵隊) by the Japanese novelist Hino Ashihei 火野 葦平 (1907-1960), the Korean writers wanted to gather eyewitness material at the front in order to be able to present the war to a Korean audience. In March 1939 this led to the establishment of the Writers' Group to Support the Imperial Army (Hwanggun wimun chakkadan 황군위문작가단), from which Kim Tongin 김동인 (1900-1951), Pak Yŏnghŭi (1901-?) and Im Haksu 임학수 (1911-1982) were chosen to visit the front line.[14] A larger organization of writers was formed in October of the same year with the founding of the Chosŏn Writers' Association (Chosŏn munin hyŏphoe 조선문인협회), for which numerous writers were active.[15]

Their view of the role of the writer during war was defined in connection with the then dominant ideology of total war. As an editorial of December 1939 in the magazine *Liberal Arts Review* (Inmun pyŏngnon 人文評論) explained:

> *Since modern wars are so-called total wars, the ultimate defeat or victory is decided by the potential energy of the citizens at the home front. Therefore duties regarding the war are also placed on those in the field of culture, but what is expected from them is that they deal with war directly. As a person in the field of culture, one must feel it is one's greatest responsibility not to be passively confronted with war's destructive powers, but to actively create an autonomous culture that will completely eradicate anti-national thoughts.*[16]

9 The National Association of Cultural Organizations was established on 12 February 1947, in large part to act as a counter-movement to the left-wing Chosŏn Federation of Cultural Organizations (Chosŏn munhwa tanch'e ch'ong yŏnmaeng 조선문화단체총연맹) established on 24 February 1946. Its activities before the war consisted of organizing a "Rally of All Intellectuals to Promote the *Minjok* Spirit" (Minjok angyang chŏn'guk munhwain ch'ong kwŏlgi taehoe민족앙양전국문화인총궐기대회), held on 27 and 28 December 1948, and the publication of the magazine *Minjok Culture* (Minjok munhwa 민족문화).

10 Prominent writers such as Kim Kwangsŏp 김광섭, Yi Hŏn'gu 이헌구, Sŏ Chŏngju 서정주, Kim Song, Cho Chihun 조지훈, Pak Mogwŏl 박목월, Cho Yŏngam 조영암 and Ku Sang 구상 were present at the inauguration of the organization.

11 These three groups were the Blue Sky Group (Ch'anggong kurakbu 창공구락부), the Army War Writers' Group (Yukkun chonggun chakkadan 육군종군작가단) and the Navy War Writers' Group (Hae'gun chonggun chakkadan 해군종군작가단). They were established on 9 March 1951, 26 May 1951, and in June 1951 respectively.

12 Although individual authors sometimes decide to write for the war effort, it is not common for writers to organize themselves without an impetus from the state. British, French and German writers in the First World War and American, British, Japanese, German and Russian writers in the Second World War were all organized into propaganda war writers' groups by the state. See for example Wolfgang Mommsen ed.), *Kultur und Krieg: Die Rolle der Intellektuellen, Künstler und Schriftsteller im Ersten Weltkrieg* (München: Oldenbourg, 1996); Christophe Prochasson and Anne Rasmussen, *Au Nom de la Patrie: Les Intellectuels et la Première Guerre Mondiale (1910-1919)* (Paris: La Découverte, 1996).

13 The first step in setting up such a war writers' group was with a panel discussion between Kim Tonghwan 김동환, Kim P'albong 김팔봉 and Pak Yŏnghŭi 박영희 which was published in the January 1939 issue of *Samch'ŏlli* 三千里 [Three thousand Li] magazine.

14 The literary fruits of this first trip were the publications of Kim Tongin's *A Narrative Non-Fiction Novel* (Monogatariteki na hōkoku shōsetsu 物語的な報告小説); Pak Yŏnghŭi's *Comprehending the Holy War through Literature* (Seisen no bungakuteki haaku 聖戦の文學的把握), *A Trip to North China* (Hokushi ryokōki北支旅行記), and *A Trip to the Front* (Sensenkikō 戦線紀行); and Im Haksu's *Romanticism at the Front Line* (Romanchishizumu senchi 戦地へのロマンチシズム), *Report from the Pen Corps* (Pen-butai hōkokuペン部隊報告), and *Poems from the Front Line* (Sensen shishū 戦線詩集).

15 Involved in this organization were, among others, Yi T'aejun 이태준, Yi Kwangsu 이광수, Kim Ŏk 김억, Yu Chino 유진오, Chŏng Insŏp 정인섭, Yi Kiyŏng 이기영, Pak Yŏnghui, Kim Tonghwan, Chu Yohan 주요한, Yu Ch'ijin 유치진 and Ch'oe Chaesŏ 최재서. Later, in April 1943, this organization would merge with others into the Chosŏn Writers Association to Save the Nation (Chosŏn munin pogukhoe 조선문인보국회).

16 Anon., "Munhwain-ŭi ch'aengmu 文化人의 責務," [The Duties of People in the Cultural Field], *Inmun py'ŏngnon* [Liberal Arts Review] 2 (December 1939): p. 2.

This editorial regards the potential power of civilians as a crucial factor in winning a modern war and argues for the active participation of those in the cultural field, because their efforts create an autonomous culture and remove any "anti-national" tendencies that may arise in society.[17]

When the Korean War broke out, the South Korean writers once more described the war in terms of total war, as can be seen in "Soldiers and Politics" (Kunin-gwa chŏngch'i 軍人과 政治) by Pak Yŏngjun 박영준 (1911-1976): "Modern war is total war and although in this kind of war there are many front lines, such as those of military strength, ideology, spying, diplomacy, communications, etc., the most important are those of military strength and ideology."[18] Pak places the importance of ideological warfare on an equal footing with the actual combat of war. In his view it is necessary to maintain strong ideological support for a war among the general population, since without such support a war could be lost, as was the case for Germany during the First World War. Pak describes Germany's defeat as follows: "During the First World War the German army was not inferior to the Allied Powers in terms of military strength, but lost because of the political and ideological breakdown of the home front."[19]

The writers considered their own role to be vitally important in keeping up the morale of the population. Ch'oe Sangdŏk 최상덕 (1901-1971) depicted the importance of the writer's role in war through the following metaphor: "The pen which we carry to fight should, like grenades, field artillery, flame throwers and the atomic bomb, [...] become a new weapon."[20] Expounding further on this topic, Ch'oe stresses that writers are ideally suited to boosting both the morale of the soldiers and the fighting spirit of the people: "By taking up our pens we can withstand the enemy and span the divide between the front and the rear by increasing the morale of front-line soldiers and increasing the fighting spirit of the civilians at the rear."[21]

It goes without saying that in order to play such an important role in wartime society, writers would have to concentrate all their efforts on writing for their country and write their works, therefore, in a nationalistic tone. The poet Ku Sang (1919-2004) did not believe this had a negative effect on the aesthetic aspects of a writer's work and was of the opinion that during wartime, writers should first and foremost "serve the freedom of the fatherland before the freedom of their 'pens' and... find the glory of their 'brush' in the face of the glory of humanity and the fatherland".[22] The writer Yi Muyŏng 이무영 (1908-1960) was of the same opinion. For him it would be absurd if writers kept "writing their romantic love stories" while they were surrounded by war. The most important thing for him was for the war to be won, and victory required sacrifices from everybody in society.[23] According to Yi these sacrifices were necessary, because "the situation into which our *minjok* is thrown today is that of a front-line belligerent. This war is not fought by front-line soldiers alone. This is a war fought by our whole *minjok*."[24]

From the above quotes we can see that South Korean writers had a unified view of the writer's role in wartime, and that this view was influenced by the ideology of total war.[25] The idea that ideological war is as important as the military aspects of war was particularly emphasized by the writers. Their literature, they believed, should have the effect of connecting the front and the rear, while raising the morale of both soldiers and the general population.

17 This opinion resembles that of Erich Ludendorff in his influential treatise Der Totale Krieg of 1935, in which he blames the collapse of the fighting spirit of the home front for Germany's defeat in the First World War; this became the so-called *Dolchstoss* [stab-in-the-back] legend. Ludendorff argues that in future wars keeping morale high among the population is of vital importance for victory. Erich Ludendorff, *Der Totale Krieg*, (München, 1935).

18 Pak Yŏngjun, "Kunin-gwa chŏngch'i 軍人과 政治," [Soldiers and Politics] *Chŏnsŏn munhak* 戰線文學 [Frontline Literature] 2 (December 1952): p. 19.

19 Ibid., p. 20. This echoes Ludendorff's *Dolchstoss* legend. Nowadays, however, historians are of the opinion that the Allied naval blockade had a far greater impact on Germany's defeat. See for example Christopher Birrer, "A Critical Analysis of the Allied Blockade of Germany, 1914-1918," *Journal of the Center of First World War Studies* 1.2 (November 2004), pp. 35-67. Pak Yŏngjun had previously expressed this same view in condensed form in another essay titled "Chayu segye isang ŏpta 自由世界 異狀없다," [There is Nothing Wrong with the Free World] *Shinch'ŏnji* 新天地 [New World] 7.3 (May 1952), p.67.

20 Ch'oe Sangdŏk, "Ch'anggansa 創刊辭," [Foreword to the First Issue], *Chŏnsŏn munhak* 1 (April 1952): p. 9.

21 Ibid., p. 9.

22 Ku Sang, "Chonggun chakkadan 2-nyŏn 從軍作家團 2年," [Two Years of War Writers' Groups], *Chŏnsŏn munhak* 5 (May 1953): p. 59.

23 Yi Muyŏng, "Chŏnjaeng-gwa munhak 戰爭과 文學," [War and Literature] *Chŏnsŏn munhak* 5 (May 1953): p. 7.

24 Ibid., p.7.

25 It is interesting to note that for the South Korean writers during the Korean War, the ideology of total war did not carry negative connotations, as it did in many Western countries after the Second World War, where total war came to be associated with the indiscriminate bombing of innocent civilians. For the general public's change in opinion on total war ideology in the West, see Roger Chickering and Stig Forster, "Are We There Yet? World War II and the Theory of Total War," in *A World at Total War: Global Conflict and the Politics of Destruction, 1937-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. pp. 1-16.

LIVING FOREVER

Kim Song was another author who believed that the writer should be an active participant in war and loathed, in a similar way to Yi Muyŏng above, those who continued with their literary output as if the war did not exist: "There are those who smell the gunpowder and hear the gunshots, but still keep on dreaming inside their artistic ivory towers as if the historical present, politics, or society were not important. These self-proclaimed art-for-art's-sake writers are immersed in their comfortable narcissism where literature has nothing to do with politics, society and war."[26] Kim Song pleaded for a functional literature during war, a literature that could serve the *minjok*. According to Kim, the character of this literature should be anti-communist:

> *We are now living among the billows of war. We are breathing among those billows. Therefore how can our minjok live in this tempest of war? How should we fight for the complete survival of the minjok? What is asked of us is to take the direction of democracy and anti-communism, and thus the goal of writers and [other] people in the field of culture is [to write] anti-communist literature.*[27]

Kim Song was very active during the Korean War. When war broke out he was editor of the cultural section in the *Seoul shinmun* 서울 신문 newspaper. In order to report on the war he made several trips to the front, witnessing the amphibious landings at Incheon 인천and the recapturing of Seoul first-hand. Meanwhile he had co-founded the aforementioned Group of Combined Artists to Save the Nation and was involved in the Pusan Writers' Association (Chaebu munin yŏnhaphoe 재부문인연합회). After the front had stabilized, he became vice-president of the Army War Writers' Group and was also involved in the publication of the magazines *Trends* (Sacho 思潮) and *New Trends* (Shinsacho 新思潮). During the war he wrote a total of three novels, eleven short stories, and five essays.

One of the novels he wrote in this period was *Living Forever*, which was written and published in separate parts before it was later published as a whole.[28] The first chapter was, bar a few details, identical to his story "Seoul Tragedy" (Sŏur-ŭi pigŭk 서울의 悲劇) which had been published in 1951.[29] The ten chapters that followed had also been previously published elsewhere as *In Muddy Currents* (T'angnyu sog-esŏ 濁流 속에서) in 1950.[30] In the afterword to this novel Kim Song states that he intends to add a sequel to the story: "In this novel I have tried to depict the hardships of the entire *minjok* as it experienced the three-month period from the outbreak of the Korean War until the recapture of Seoul on 28 September of the same year. However, this is not where this story ends. I tell you in advance that I will add a sequel."[31] This sequel would be the additional eleven-chapter novel titled *Living Forever*, which was serialized in the *Taegu Maeil Shinmun* 대구매일신문 and published in book format in 1952.[32] He considered this work to be complementing *Seoul Tragedy* and *In Muddy Currents* and expressed his wish to combine all three stories to form a single novel.[33]

In *Living Forever* the viewpoint switches between Yi Hyŏngch'il 이형칠and his fiancée Ch'oe Nami 최나미. The story begins in Seoul on 25 June 1950, when Hyŏngch'il witnesses a stream of refugees passing by as the North Korean communist army moves southwards. The refugees tell of an invasion from the North, but Hyŏngch'il finds this hard to believe. When a North Korean aeroplane flies audaciously low over Seoul, Hyŏngch'il finally realizes the urgency of the situation. Since he had moved from the North to Seoul himself during the Liberation Period, he is convinced that if the communists get their hands on him, he will surely be seen as a traitor and summarily executed. Consequently, he buys some potassium cyanide, so that he can commit suicide if things come to the worst. His sister manages to talk him out of suicide, and suggests that he should flee south instead. This he does, leaving his fiancée Nami to fend for herself.[34]

26 Kim Song, "Minju munhwa-ŭi panghyang – Chŏnjaeng-gwa munhak-ŭi sŏngkyŏk 民主文化의 方向 – 戰爭과 文學의 性格," [The Direction of Democratic Culture: War and the Character of Literature], *Chayu yesul* 自由藝術 [The Liberal Arts] 1 (November 1952), p. 33.

27 Ibid., p. 35.

28 The novel was published as a whole for the first time in 1959, as volume 26 of the *Han'guk munhak chŏnjip* 韓國 文學全集 [Complete Works of Korean Literature] series, by the publisher Minjung sŏ'gwan 民衆書館. I will be making use of the 1976 edition, where only the grammar has been adjusted.

29 This story was included in his *Chŏnjaeng-gwa sosŏl* 戰爭과 小說 [War and the Novel] published by Kyemongsa 啓蒙社. The only differences from the first chapter of *Living Forever* are the names of the main characters and the ending.

30 Published by Shinjosa (新潮社), the novel was later reprinted in 1953 by Ilmunsa (一文社) under the title of *T'angnyu* 濁流 (Muddy Currents).

31 Kim Song, *T'angnyu sog-esŏ* [In Muddy Currents] (Shinjosa, 1951), p. 293.

32 Published by Paekyŏngsa 白映社.

33 Kim Song, *Yŏngwŏnhi sanŭn kŏt* 永遠히 사는 것 [Living Forever] (Baekyŏngsa, 1952), p. 250.

KIM SONG

Kim Song was born in 1908 in the province of Hamgyŏngnam-do as the eldest son of an oriental doctor. His father sent him to Japan hoping that his son would follow in his footsteps. The young Kim Song, however, showed more interest in the arts and started to study Theater Studies. This led to a difficult relationship with his father, which aggravated after Kim was forced to marry. His relationship became the subject of his most well known novels, *Tonggyŏng* 憧憬 (Longing) and *Namsadang* 男寺黨 (The Roaming Actors). After returning to Korea in 1930 he set up a theater society together with Shin Kosong 申鼓頌 (1907-?) and Yu Chino 兪鎭午 (1906-1987), but this effort would turn out to be short-lived when Kim Song's play *Hell* 지옥 was deemed offensive to the colonial police and the theater was closed down.

Caricature of Kim Song drawn by Kim Sŏnghwan and published in Shint'aeyang, May 1954.

He tried hard to make a name as a playwright, but because of the severe repression from the colonial police, which also landed him in jail, he gave up. In 1932 he befriended Han Sŏr'ya 韓雪野 (1900-1976) who encouraged him to become a writer. Not until 1941 would this lead to his first published story "Sŏnggnyŏg-ŭi yurae" 석력의 유래 (The Origins of the Cobblestone). In this period he became friends with other writers such as Yi T'aejun 李泰俊 (1904-?), Yi Kiyŏng 이기영 (1895-1984), Song Yŏng 宋影 (1903-1978) and Pak Seyŏng 朴世永 (1902-1989). It is an irony of fate that all these writers would later become active literary figures in North Korea during the Korean War.

After liberation he was the owner of the influential *Paengmin* 백민 magazine which was published from November 1945 until March 1950 when it was forced to shut down due to financial problems. From July 1949 he became the editor of the cultural section of the Seoul *Shinmun* 서울신문. Soon after the Korean War broke out he fled to Taejŏn, while he sent his family directly to Pusan. In Taejŏn he co-founded the Group of Combined Artists to Save the Nation. He was involved in propaganda work for this organization, but was forced to flee to Pusan after ten days. In this city he was involved with both the Pusan Writers' Association 在釜文人의 聯合會 and, after the front stabilized in spring 1951, with the Army War Writer Group of which he was vice-chairman. During the war he also worked as a journalist for magazines such as *Sajo* 思潮 (Trends) and *Shinsajo* 新思潮 (New Trends) a magazine where young modernist poets could publish their works. After the war he remained very active both with writing and working as a publisher for the magazine Ch'ŏngch'un 青春 (Youth, 1954) and as editor of the magazine Chayu munhak 自由文學 (Free Literature). From 1965 he was a board member of the Korean Writer's Association 韓國文人協會. He died in 1988.

On his way south, he witnesses the many hardships of refugee life and also meets Kim Chŏngnan 김정란, a young woman who has reluctantly married U Sŭngjin 우승진. Her husband has sent her ahead of him and therefore she is alone with her child. Hyŏngch'il helps her by carrying the child, who dies not long afterwards. Chŏngnan soon falls in love with Hyŏngch'il, but he does not return her feelings.

Together, though, they flee to Pusan where Hyŏngch'il finds a job in a refugee aid centre, and Chŏngnan at an American PX. After Hyŏngch'il has a fight with his boss about the latter withholding aid to the refugees, he decides to join the army. He loses a leg in battle after volunteering to crawl to the enemy lines to give away their position by lighting a flare. In order to get penicillin to treat Hyŏngch'il's wounded leg, Chŏngnan has sex with an American from the PX named John, thereby becoming a *yangkalbo* 양갈보, a woman who prostitutes her-

34 Up to here the story is similar to "Seoul Tragedy". However, in "Seoul Tragedy" the story ends with Hyŏngch'il committing suicide by drinking the cyanide, and him singing the national anthem, while watching Seoul fall into the hands of the communists.

self to American soldiers. After recuperating, Hyŏngch'il boards an LST to Incheon and witnesses the recapture of Seoul first-hand.[35] Here he is reunited with his mother and Nami.[36]

Soon after, in January 1951, while fleeing to Taegu, Hyŏngch'il falls ill and ends up in hospital. In Taegu he meets a friend, as well as running into Chŏngnan again, whom he reluctantly moves in with for a short time. He also finds a teaching job at a refugee school, where once again he witnesses the tragic life of the displaced.

Nami also has a hard time. While Seoul is being occupied by the communists, her younger brother is abducted to fight for the North Korean army and her father, who is a clergyman, is executed. Near the end of this three-month occupation period, she is raped by a North Korean officer named Chu Mongil 주몽일. After fleeing to Taegu, she finds a job as a war correspondent, and becomes famous for her reports on the Territorial Army Incident. Here she meets U Sŭngjin, who had been collaborating with the communists during the occupation, but somehow got released from prison. He takes her to an office building, where, to her shock, she meets Chu Mongil and discovers that the two men are part of a fifth column within South Korean territory. She refuses their requests to join them and consequently is held prisoner and is raped again by Mongil. Only after several weeks is she freed, due to the efforts of an investigative officer, but she is already pregnant with Mongil's child. This shocking discovery causes her to flee to the coast, where she contemplates committing suicide. Hyŏngch'il hears of Nami's whereabouts and tries to find her. He discovers her diary, and learns of all that has happened to her.[37] He promises to always stand by her and they marry. They live together for some time, but when, around February 1952, Hyŏngch'il receives news of his mother's death, they try to enter Seoul illegally by using oil drums to float across the Han River. The drums, however, do not float well and they drown.

APPRECIATING THE PROPAGANDA NOVEL

Most of the works from the Korean War are written in the realist mode.[38] Besides being in fashion, realism was closely related to the role writers saw for themselves in wartime society. On the one hand, they were, as has been outlined above, ideologues, in that they could boost the morale and fighting spirit among soldiers and civilians; that is, they could impart the 'correct' mindset to the reader. On the other hand, they were also 'historians' in that they were writing down and giving voice to the experience of the *minjok*.[39] Literary realism was suited to both these roles. In the portrayal of the subjective experience of history, the realist mode gives an aura of objective truth, in the form of the omniscient narrator who shapes and gives meaning to the thoughts and feelings of the characters of a story. Furthermore, the technique of endowing the main character with specific qualities to represent an unambiguous ideology can be used in realist fiction. The characters in the stories stand for the community and, by extrapolation, for the nation, hereby implying a democratic assumption that the figures are interchangeable social actors. To reduce the ambiguity for the reader as to the character's ideological stance, a few literary tricks are used. Firstly, it is the hero who organizes the moral space. In *Living Forever* commentaries on events driving the story are presented as the thoughts or utterances of either Hyŏngch'il or Nami. The reader is only able to look into the minds of these two, even when the narrative involves other characters. The North Korean character Chu Mongil has been endowed with direct speech, but we are never allowed, as readers, to see into his thoughts. Furthermore, everything he says is filtered by the comments or thoughts of Nami, as can be seen in the following passage when Nami is asked to work for Mongil's 'company':

35 This part is based on Kim Song's own experiences as a war correspondent when he reported on the amphibious assault at Incheon and the subsequent battle for Seoul. An article about these experiences appeared in *Munye* 文藝 [Literature] (December 1950) titled "Kun-gwa hamkke 軍과 함께" [Together with the Army].

36 This is where the previously published *In Muddy Currents* ends. An LST stands for 'Landing Ship, Tank'. Ships like the LST were used especially during World War II to support amphibious operations by carrying landing troops, cargo or vehicles directly on shore.

37 The passage in which Hyŏngch'il stumbles on in Nami's diary is a reference by Kim Song to the suicide note of the young writer Chŏn Bongrae 전봉래 (1923-1951), who took cyanide while sitting in Café Star. Later during the war another promising young writer, Chŏng Unsam 정운삼 (1925-1953), also committed suicide in a Pusan café.

38 I understand the term 'realism' in its broadest sense, as a technique that plays a role, in various ways, in most narratives.

39 This opinion can, for example, be found in Yi Hŏn'gu's essay "Munhwa chŏnsŏn-ŭn hyŏngsŏng toeŏnnŭnga? 文化戰線은 形成되었는가?" [Has a Cultural Front Line Been Established?], *Chŏnsŏn Munhak* 2 (December 1952), pp. 4-7, or in Kim Kiwŏn's "Chŏnjaeng-gwa munhak 戰爭과 文學," [War and Literature], *Munye* 12 (December 1950), pp.18-19.

> *"What does the Samyuk Company do?"*
> *"It is working for the benefit of the fatherland."*
> *"The fatherland?"*
> *Nami gave a suspicious look.*
> *"With 'my fatherland' I mean our land…"*
> *Chu Mongil was using the term 'fatherland' repeatedly, but Nami didn't understand. Because the term is being abused by the communists. They are saying to 'fight for the fatherland', to 'unify the fatherland', to 'defend the fatherland', to 'love the fatherland', but they want to make the fatherland into a state of the USSR and continue the war. South Korean patriots also use the slogans to 'fight for the fatherland', to 'unify the fatherland', to 'defend the fatherland', etc. That is because by fighting communism you can unify and defend the fatherland. This is why the term fatherland can be used by both the communist party and Korean patriots depending on the circumstances.*[40]

Secondly, the way in which the writer describes the characters further reduces the ambiguity. For instance, in ideological literature the hero will often be explicitly called a hero, a traitor will be called a traitor, and so on.[41] Such obvious characterization can also be found in *Living Forever*, for example when Nami contrasts Mongil to Hyŏngch'il:

> *Chu Mongil is a human being, just like Hyŏngch'il. As a person Chu Mongil is a devil, while Hyŏngch'il is a good man. However, Chu Mongil could not become a good person because he lost his humanity by becoming an ideological tool. By nature man is good, but the human Chu Mongil ended up becoming a slave to ideology.*[42]

Because of the obvious message that the writer wants to convey in ideological works, and the methods used in such fiction, the characters are often judged to be no more than one-dimensional literary types serving a transparent propagandist purpose. This is one of the reasons why literary critics have usually neglected Korea's wartime 'propaganda' literature: they believe it to be "of little literary value", and therefore wartime works are generally not included in the literary canon.[43]

In addition to the one-dimensionality of the characters, the endings of propaganda stories, which tend to be open-ended or abrupt, also leave much to be desired. In *Living Forever*, the deaths of all the main characters (Chŏngnan also dies just before the end of the novel, from an unspecified illness) occur suddenly. There is no build-up during which the reader can anticipate the glorious or tragic death of each character. However, in my opinion, the poor quality of the endings of stories written during war is inherent to the fact that the author is situated in history. Since the author does not know how or when the war will end, he cannot maintain the omniscience of the storyteller, and therefore has to resort to abrupt and open-ended endings. The writer cannot conclude the story with the closure that is so important in making the realist novel a coherent whole.

Leaving judgement of the literary qualities of the novel aside, the analysis of propaganda literature does give rise to several interesting insights. The technique of presenting the reader with 'representative' figures to promulgate a certain ideological or nationalistic idea, for example, cannot consist of a monological utterance that organizes and arranges events into a meaningful and unproblematic whole.[44] If the writer's aim is to make the soldiers (or citizens) of their own country look good, they can only achieve this in comparative terms, and hence they will have to depict the enemy as well. Even if one denounces the enemy, he must still be allowed to speak (or be spoken of). Therefore one can find politically sensitive terms in *Living Forever*, for example instances where the North Korean army is called the "People's Army" (Inmin'gun 인민군) instead of the usual "North Korean Puppet Army" (Pukhan koeroegun 북한괴뢰군), or where the abbreviated official name for the North Korean state (In'gong 인공) appears.[45] By allowing a representation of the enemy

40 Kim Song, *Yŏngwŏnhi sanŭn kŏt* [Living Forever], *Han'guk munhakchŏnjip* 26 (Minjung sŏ'gwan, 1976), pp. 173-174.

41 Lilian Furst (ed.), *Realism* (New York: Longman, 1992), p. 176.

42 Kim Song, *Living Forever*, p. 255.

43 This is how Kim Yunshik 김윤식and Chŏng Ho-ung 정호웅 judge the literature from the Korean War period in their *Han'guk sosŏlsa* 한국 소설사 [History of the Korean Novel] (Munhak Tongne, 2000). Except for Yŏm Sangsŏp's 염상섭 *Shower* (Ch'wiu취우, 1953), Hwang Sun-wŏn's 황순원 *Rainburst* (Sonagi 소나기, 1953) and *Cranes* (Hak 학, 1953) and Kim Tongni's 김동리 *The Returning Conscripts* (Kwihwan changjŏng 귀환장정, 1951), wartime works have not received much attention. It is more common to find the war period being brushed aside in a few paragraphs, as in *Sae minjok munhaksa kangjwa* 새 민족 문학사 강좌 [New Lectures on the Literary History of the Minjok], published by the Institute for the Literary History of the Minjok (Minjok munhaksa yŏnguso 민족문학사연구소), or being completely neglected, as in, for instance, Peter Lee's *A History of Korean Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

44 This issue is also raised by Martin Hurcombe in *Novelists in Conflict: Ideology and the Absurd in the French Combat Novel of the Great War* (New York: Rodopi, 2004), p. 143.

45 *Living Forever*, pages 126 and 15 respectively.

and by using the enemy's terminology, the novel does not create a unified ideology, but rather creates a double meaning, that in turn allows a double reading.[46]

Also the writer of propaganda literature is constrained by the fact that the novel should not stray too far from reality, so that the reader will accept the events described as true. The author, therefore, needs to address politically and socially sensitive issues in society. Condemnation of these issues in itself is not enough: to make an ideological claim the issue needs to be addressed, and the author must give a satisfactory interpretation of this issue. One example of this in *Living Forever* is the flight of the South Korean government after the Korean War broke out, which appears in the conversation between employees of the engineering company that Hyŏngch'il works for:

Propaganda poster from the war depicting a North Korean soldier as an unwilling puppet of Kim Il Sung.

> *"How could the government leave the people and move the capital?" [...]*
> *"If the government moves, who can the 1.5 million citizens believe? Can a child without a father survive?" [...]*
> *"I think the story of the government moving is just a rumour. I heard that it was discussed in parliament, but to ease the citizens' minds the plan was abandoned."*
> *[…]*
> *(Taehanminguk has been accepted as a democratic nation. Isn't the UN Commission on Korea still working hard for the unification of north and south as we speak? But if the capital is given up so easily, it will surely be a disgrace to all!)*[47]

A close reading of the propaganda novel thus raises interesting questions on issues that were deemed important during the war, but afterwards were silenced or 'forgotten'. Far from portraying a unified and logical ideology, the text is filled with contradictions.

EXCLUDING THE ENEMY FROM THE MINJOK

In *Living Forever* it is easy for the reader to see which characters are good and which are bad. The North Koreans are generally depicted as cruel, murderous and inhuman, and are frequently associated with creatures that have negative connotations, such as devils (pp. 67, 174 and 255), wolves (p. 174) and vermin (p. 210). Indeed, Chu Mongil is described as having the "face of a savage, while his voice is like the howl of a bloodsucking vampire from hell".[48] Thus throughout the novel, North Koreans are systematically shown in a bad light and denied any human characteristics. Similar depictions of the enemy can be found in wartime propaganda literature wherever it is written. However, since North Koreans are seen as part of the same *minjok*, the writer must also include a specific reason as to why they should be regarded as the enemy. In *Living Forever* there are several passages that explain to the reader why North Koreans should be regarded as the enemy. For example, when Nami finds out that Chu Mongil's company is a cover for fifth-column activities, she reflects as follows: "Chu Mongil's fifth-column activities are disturbing and destroying South Korea. If so, he is a secret agent for the Soviet Far Eastern Spy Headquarters. He is not defending, unifying, or liberating the fatherland; he is a traitor selling the fatherland to Russia."[49]

In Kim Song's view North Korea has squandered any

46 This is what Pierre Macherey argues in his analysis of the realist novel in *A Theory of Literary Production* (New York: Routledge, 2006).
47 Kim Song, *Living Forever*, pp. 13-14.
48 Ibid., p. 172.
49 Ibid., p. 177.

right to be part of the Korean nation, because the North Koreans are selling the country to foreigners, specifically to the USSR. He goes further by claiming that North Korea has lost its legitimacy to represent the nation, because, by selling the country to foreigners, the North Koreans lose their inherent ethnicity. For example, Chu Mongil is described as "eradicating his own ethnicity (*minjoksŏng* 민족성) and… becoming a lackey of the USSR".[50] The struggle against North Korea, and specifically against communism, thus seems to be a fight to keep the Korean *minjok* 'pure'. This is further stressed when Hyŏngch'il laments, at the beginning of the novel: "If Korea also becomes communist like China, our ethnicity will be eradicated bit by bit and we will turn into ideological slaves."[51] Therefore Kim Song contrasts both North Korea's adherence to communism and the country becoming a slave to the USSR with the democracy of South Korea, which remains free and 'pure'. The 'purity' of the south is casually implied throughout the novel by, for example, descriptions of Seoul as the "heart of the *minjok*" and the South Korean army as the "descendants of the *hwarang* 화랑", hereby making it clear to the reader where the legitimacy of the nation resides.[52]

Kim Song's use of the term *minjok* is never explained in detail and it is therefore taken for granted that the reader knows what the term means. Although we do not ascertain exactly what Kim Song means by *minjok*, he relates the term to a type of purity that can be lost, since a person's ethnicity is eradicated if they adhere to the foreign communist ideology. This association brings to mind the idea of the *minjok* possessing a pure bloodline, which is how Sin Ch'aeho constructed Korea's history and identity. It is this principle of 'the pure bloodline' that defines who is part of the Korean nation, and it appears that this is what motivates Kim Song's argument of why North Koreans should be seen as the enemy.

Adherence to the idea of the *minjok* possessing a pure bloodline also determines the social issues that Kim Song brings up in the novel, one of which is the problem of prostitutes who sleep with members of the American military. Chŏngnan, who sleeps with the American soldier John in order to obtain medicine for Hyŏngch'il's leg, considers the status of these prostitutes and their children in Korean society and wonders what role they could now play in the Korean nation.

> *"Whether you call us yangkalbo or UN madams, if more women become like me, where will we be able to find the pure blood of our ancestors? Isn't ethnicity also mixed in this?"*
> *It was surprising to hear this come out of Chŏngnan's mouth. Hyŏngch'il was lost for words for a moment and stared vaguely at the sea.*
> *Ethnicity – The blood of one's ancestors.*
> *Like the bottom of the ocean this mystical problem that haunted his mind could not be seen clearly. If Chŏngnan gets pregnant with John's baby and gives birth to it, it will obviously be a child of mixed blood. Whether we can expect this child to have the ethnicity and pure bloodline of its ancestors is the problem […]*
> *"We cannot draw a hasty conclusion regarding this problem. Maybe when the war comes to an end it will be solved," he said.*
> *What's the use of finding such purity or bloodline if our country perishes and the minjok is eradicated? Since we are at war now, winning is the only duty of our minjok, so whatever the sacrifice we should win this fight. That is not only what Chŏngnan and Hyŏngch'il wished for, but was desired by the whole minjok…*
> *During war discussing problems like women's chastity or livelihood was nothing more than silly talk. If it was discussed there would be no end to it.*[53]

Although Kim Song raises the issue of women who fall into prostitution because of the war, he admits that it is not an easy problem to solve. He justifies his unwillingness to go deeper into the matter by saying that winning the war is the most important task of the *minjok*, and that the issue of prostitution can be resolved after the war ends. Kim Song does, however, make his own views on these women apparent in the novel. In the first part of the book, Hyŏngch'il is quite sympathetic to the reasons why Chŏngnan becomes a prostitute (out of love for him), and sees it as one of the sad but unavoidable side effects of war. In the second part of the novel, however, this sympathy has gone and Hyŏngch'il is now disgusted by

50 Ibid., p. 221.
51 Ibid., p. 16.
52 Ibid., p. 13 and p. 14 respectively.
53 Ibid., p. 121.

her social status, refusing to drink the coffee Chŏngnan offers him.[54] Indeed, the inconsistency in Kim Song's depiction of Chŏngnan is another feature that contributes to the novel's failure to form a coherent and logical whole. The second part of the novel reads more like a love story, in which Nami's ordeals and her unfailing devotion to Hyŏngch'il contrast sharply with the loose morals of Chŏngnan while the two women vie for Hyŏngch'il's heart.[55]

Hyŏngch'il's questioning of whether children of mixed blood are still part of the *minjok* should be considered more as a comment in the spirit of the ideology of total war, than as a real concern for the social stigma mixed race brings upon the children and their mothers. Since in total war every person is of vital importance to victory, the loss of these women and their children to foreigners weakens the strength of the nation. This aspect of total war ideology is exemplified by Hyŏngch'il's view of the children he teaches at a refugee school as a "source for cultivating the nation's [future] fighting strength".[56] Hyŏngch'il's teaching can therefore be seen as a deeply nationalistic activity, since it helps strengthen the nation's future power, especially when this strength is diminishing every day with young men dying at the front line.

Closely related to the *yangkalbo* problem was the American military presence within Korea, which raised questions over whether South Korea was its own autonomous state. Kim Song was wary of this presence and comments on it in the novel:

> *Unification is the wish of all 30 million of us, but since this basically Korean problem has developed into a world war, we cannot know what the future holds [...] It is a sad fact that there are both those that have been fooled by the Far Eastern policy of the Soviet Union, but also those sycophants who completely believe and trust the US.*[57]

Kim Song laments the fact that Korea has no say in its own future and warns of the people who blindly follow America. But, as with the *yangkalbo* issue, he is unable to give the reader an answer, thereby weakening his criticism of North Korea. It is ironic that his portrayal of the North Koreans as traitors selling the nation to foreigners and thereby losing their legitimacy to represent the *minjok* can be inverted and used to judge South Korea as well.[58]

KEEPING THE ENEMY INCLUDED

Even though Kim Song intends the reader to regard North Korea and communism as the enemy, not all North Koreans are excluded from the *minjok*. Although the precise group that should be regarded as the enemy is not explicitly defined in the novel, the impression given is that it must be those in power in North Korean society. The North Korean antagonist Chu Mongil, for example, is an officer in the North Korean army and it is in this role that he commits all his crimes, including raping Nami and plotting a fifth column within South Korean territory. At several points in the text, the common North Korean soldier or civilian is portrayed as the victim of North Korea's army officers and politicians. For instance, a North Korean soldier who is captured while Hyŏngch'il follows the South Korean army during the liberation of Seoul is deliberately shot in the leg by his own military police:

> *It looks like the enemy's military police tied his feet, so that he couldn't retreat at all, and was forced to fight to the death. But in the face of our marines' relentless attack, the enemy's defensive lines broke down completely and their military police shot him, so that he couldn't flee.*
> *"I wanted to run away and surrender, but because of the military police's supervision I ended up like this," said the boy, who dropped down on the ground and started to cry loudly. Even though he was an enemy, from a human perspective Hyŏngch'il felt pity for him.*[59]

By trying to create a clear division between, on the one hand, North Korean officers and politicians and, on the other hand, the general North Korean populace, Kim Song

54 Ibid., p. 186.

55 It is interesting to note that the issue of *yangkalbo* resurfaced in the 1980s, when it was used in a nationalist narrative by protesters against the US presence in Korea. As Jager points out, the idea that those women who engaged with Americans had loose morals had not changed. See Jager, *Narratives of Nation Building in Korea*, Chapter 4.

56 Kim Song, *Living Forever*, p. 205.

57 Ibid., p. 147.

58 Criticism of Koreans who sell the nation to Americans is particularly strong in Yi Muyŏng's short story "A Type Zero Human" (0-Hyŏng-ŭi in'gan 0형의 인간), published in *Shinch'ŏnji* 8.2 (June 1953), pp. 274-286, and can also be found in Yu Chuhyŏn's 유주현 "A Weather Chart" (Kisangdo 기상도), which appeared in *Chŏnsŏn munhak* 4 (April 1953), pp. 90-100.

59 Kim Song, *Living Forever*, p. 137.

attempts to resolve the contradictory elements inherent in propaganda literature. This contradiction stems from the fact that the enemy cannot possess any positive traits, for these might confuse the reader into believing that the enemy should be regarded as good. Since North Korea is part of the same *minjok*, however, Kim Song tries to create a paradigm in which North Korea can be seen both as evil (those in power in North Korea), and as part of the same nation (the oppressed population and the common soldier). It is clear from another fragment in the story, when a fellow teacher talks to Hyŏngch'il about his reasons for coming to the south, that Kim Song intends to create such a dichotomy:

> *I don't have to tell you that the communist party is bad […] I really couldn't live under such government. Even when you look at the curriculum they teach more hours of the Russian language than Korean. Communism is a more important subject than civics. They are painting the North all red in the style of the USSR. The people are of the same minjok, but they are forced to wear Russian clothes and eat Russian food. If you do not eat, you are deemed to be a traitor and are in danger.*[60]

Thus the general populace of North Korea is depicted as a group of innocent victims who are forced by the communists in power to eat Russian food, an obvious allegory for Russian communist thought.

We can also see from Kim Song's novel that the ambiguity over whether the North Koreans are to be viewed negatively is not easy to resolve. When Nami's father is taken away, the people who come to the house are described at first as "shadows", but as they leave they are identified as the North Korean army. It is the common soldier who shows no remorse, even when Nami pleads: "If you are of the same *minjok* and can understand my words, I beg you not to take my innocent father away."[61]

Furthermore, it will not be lost on the reader that Chŏngnan's husband, U Sŭngjin, is a South Korean intellectual who used to work for a newspaper before joining the communist North out of his own free will.

This strategy of depicting the North Korean politicians and army officers as evil, while portraying the general populace of the country sympathetically, can also be found in the wartime works of other writers, such as Pak Yŏngjun's *Partisans* (Ppalch'isan 빨치산, 1952), Yŏm Sangsŏp's (1897-1963) *The Morning of Liberation* (Haebang-ŭi ach'im 解放의 아침, 1951) and Chŏng Pisŏk's 정비석 (1911-1991) *Endless Love* (Aejŏng muhan 愛情無限, 1951). However, even these authors focus more on excluding North Korea from the *minjok*. In Pak Yŏngjun's *A Dark Night* (Am'ya 暗夜, 1952), for example, it is the protagonist's own brother that commits atrocities against the South Korean army. In Chŏng Pisŏk's *Eight War Tales* (Chŏnjaeng k'ongt'ŭ p'alpy'ŏn 戰爭콩트八篇, 1969[62]), all the North Korean characters are depicted negatively.

By putting the stress on the depiction of virtually all members of North Korean society as committing acts of evil against the South, it remains ambiguous in the propaganda novels of the Korean War whether the general population should be regarded sympathetically by the reader.

CONTESTING VERSIONS OF NATIONALISM

An incident from the Korean War that shook the young and fragile South Korean state, and caused quite an uproar in South Korean society, appears in *Living Forever*. The so-called Territorial Army Incident (Kungmin pangwigun sakkŏn 국민방위군사건) occurred right after a law was promulgated on 21 December 1950 to establish a volunteer reserve corps consisting of men from 17 to 40 years old. When the UN army was pushed back at the beginning of 1951, this corps also had to retreat. Several executives of the national defence used the ensuing confusion to pocket an incredible amount of money intended for this militia. As a result, thousands of young men died from starvation, while countless others fell ill. Following a parliamentary inquiry it was established that 2.4 billion wŏn and more than 9 million kilos of grain had been embezzled. Four people were put to death for these crimes.[63]

The importance of this incident is reflected in *Living Forever*, in which several paragraphs are devoted to the description of the patriotism and love for the fatherland

60 Ibid., p. 215.

61 Ibid., p. 76.

62 Although written during the war, these stories were not published until 1969 in the *Hanguk Jŏnchaeng munhak chŏnjip* 韓國戰爭文學全集1 [Complete Works of Korean War Literature] (Seoul: Hwimunchulp'ansa), pp. 173-192.

63 Yi Hongjik 이홍직 (ed.), *Kuksa taesajŏn* 국사 대사전 [Dictionary of National History] (Samyŏngsa, 1984), p. 184. The amount of money embezzled would have been around US$1 million at the time, so would now be valued at approximately US$9 million.

of the soldiers of this volunteer corps, and are followed by a contrasting description of the evil committed by their own superiors:

> *It is deplorable that there are those among the so-called politicians who train young men, tell them to go to the front line of the fatherland, but are only dreaming of their own prosperity. Those people are only paying lip service to loving their own country, for in fact they are twentieth-century satans who embezzle billions of state funds and drink the blood of thousands of young men… When thinking of the future of our country, those evil traitors should all be purged.*[64]

Although it does not appear that the incident had a lasting impact on Korean society or politics after the war, the shock it initially caused can be clearly discerned from the literature of the war period. Commentaries on the incident can be found in Ch'oe T'aeŭng's 최태응 (1917-1998) *The Postwar Group* (Chŏnhup'a 戰後派, 1953) and Ch'oe Inuk's 최인욱 (1920-1972) *Undercurrent* (Chŏryu 低流, 1952). Most notable among the works dealing with the incident, however, is Kim Dongni's 김동리 (1913-1995) *The Returning Conscripts* (Kwihwan changjŏng 歸還壯丁, 1951) about two returnees from the volunteer corps, one of whom dies of starvation. The acute need the writers felt to deal with the incident is alluded to when Kim Dongni's explains his motivation for writing *The Returning Conscripts*: "First I was planning to write about army life, but when it was not yet clear who was responsible for this incident, and the situation was getting delicate, I decided to change my perspective to the social and political instead of the humanistic."[65]

People within South Korean society who enrich themselves at the cost of others are excluded from the *minjok*. Another instance where such exclusion appears in *Living Forever* is when Hyŏngch'il finds out, while working for a refugee relief centre, that his boss is systematically keeping goods that are meant for the displaced:

> *People like Chief Oh, who just hang a sign above the door reading 'Refugee Relief Centre' and then keep four or five percent themselves. The hatred that this aroused in Hyŏngch'il towards these worm-eaten beings was the same as his hatred towards the communist party. When thinking of the next generation and the future of the minjok it was a deeply deplorable insult to the minjok.*[66]

Cover of the first edition of Kim Dongni's The Returning Conscripts 歸還壯丁 (1951), which offered criticism of the Territorial Army Incident .

Hyŏngch'il also laments elsewhere that there are people who profit from the misery of others: "We are all in hardship because of the war, this is our common fate, but can you imagine people living like aristocrats without fighting? They made millions thanks to the war. Can you imagine such rich people among the merchants, politicians and bureaucrats?"[67] The people criticized here are those who selfishly try to amass wealth for themselves, even at the cost of other people's lives.

It may seem strange to find such a critical view of people who, in political terms, belong to the writer's own *minjok* in a propaganda novel like *Living Forever*. The reason this is possible, though, has its roots in the very

64 Kim Song, *Living Forever*, p. 164.
65 Kim Tongni, *Kwihwan changjŏng* [The Returning Conscripts] (Sudo munhwasa, 1951), p. 184.
66 Kim Song, *Living Forever*, p. 90.
67 Ibid., p. 183.

concept of the nation itself. Since the term *minjok* has never been defined, and is an empty signifier of sorts, it can be wielded at will by the writer to achieve his own ideological aims. In *Living Forever* the main character Hyŏngch'il is, therefore, the embodiment of the nation. This personification is explicitly mentioned when Nami talks of her love for him: "He is a patriot. He never stopped fighting after liberation. He then applied for the army and even lost a leg for the nation. This is why I think that loving him is the same as loving South Korea."[68] However, on closer inspection one sees that even Hyŏngch'il, the character representing the nation, is subjected many times to feelings of pain and despair, which implies that he does not feel he is a part of his own society. For example, Hyŏngch'il is described as feeling like "waste that has been defeated by life".[69]

Although the writer can appropriate the term *minjok* and use it to stress his own ideas and ideals, its fluidity can also have the (unwanted) effect of changing the boundaries of the political community the term is supposed to incorporate. The term *minjok* is what Foucault would call a discursive formation that shapes our consciousness, but at the same time is problematic and ongoing, that is, the notion of the nation is in a perpetual dynamic process of contestation, negotiation, reformulation and reconstruction.

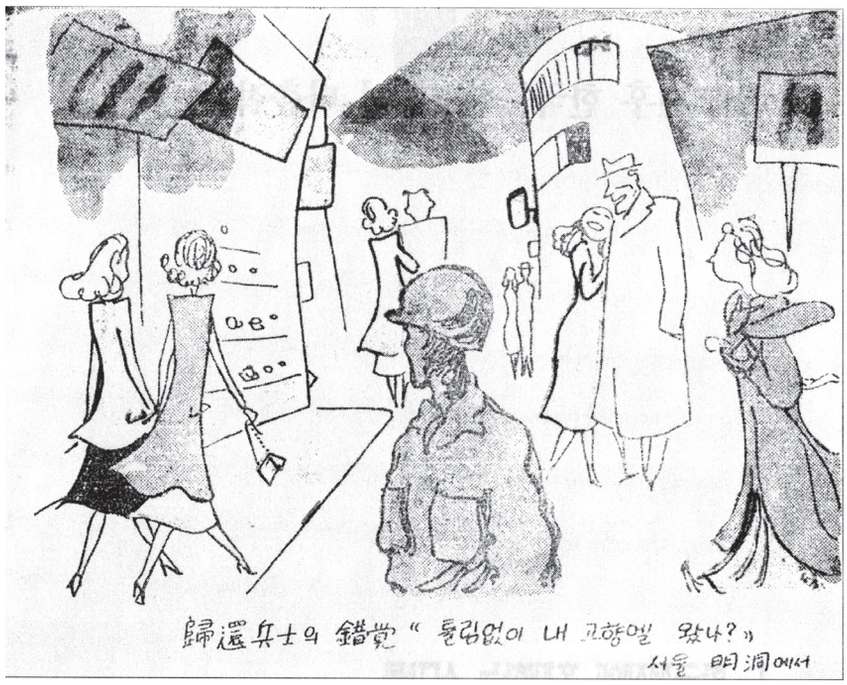
That the boundaries of who represents the *minjok* change according to the context and historical circumstance in which the term is used, can be seen in the stories from the final year of the war. In Kim Song's short story *The Immortal* (Pulsashin 不死神, 1953) we follow a soldier, Yi Yŏngch'ŏl 이형철, who is on leave and on his way to Pusan where he plans to visit his family. On the train he meets a writer who warns him not to have too many expectations of the civilians at the rear, because they are not interested in the war: "It doesn't matter how much we writers fight with our pens. To be more specific, even if we plead for an attitude of *minjok* consciousness it falls on deaf ears. It's because they are all extremely egoistical."[70] After meeting with his family Yŏngch'ŏl discovers that his brother is having an extramarital affair with his fiancée, Ch'ohŭi 초희, and that his sister has become a *yangkalbo*, lives a Western lifestyle and even only speaks in English. After he meets Ch'ohŭi the next morning and finds out that she is not willing to change her behaviour, he goes back to the front, disillusioned, even though he still has one week of leave. On the train back he happens to meet the same writer again and tells him about his disappointment:

> *I have been on the verge of death three times. And I will keep on fighting. But I am disappointed by the home front. They are not interested in us. At the front young men are one by one dying and becoming shining examples for the fatherland, but just look at the attitude of the home front. They don't show any emotion, any compassion, nothing.*[71]

The Immortal was written in 1953 at a time when the armistice talks were nearing their final stage. The South Korean government at that time was against signing the armistice and many writers joined the government in its protest.[72] Ch'oe Sangdŏk, for example, thought that the armistice would not solve anything and merely lead to "a continuation of the war by other means."[73] In the story, it is clear that Kim Song tries to exhort the home front to be more resilient and supportive of the war, and show that they should follow the example of the soldiers at the front line who show unwavering love for the country. At the same time his story also attempts (unsurprisingly since the story was published in a magazine for soldiers) to boost the fighting spirit of the soldiers, by showing that they are the vanguard of the nation. To create such an effect, praise for the soldier for his active participation in the war effort is contrasted with criticism of the passive civilian population. By depicting the nationalist character's sense of alienation from and disappointment in civilian society, the story gives an alternate view of nationalism, implying that the true nationalists are those who have direct experience of the war.

This different view on nationalism also appears in another short story, this one written by Ch'oe Inuk 최인욱 (1920-1972). In *The Sergeant I Saw One Day* (Ŏnŭ nar-ŭi iltŭng sangsa 어느 날의 一等上士, 1953) a peasant rides the crowded bus from Taegu to Kyŏngju 경주. There is a sergeant on the bus, who bosses his subordinates around

68 Ibid., p. 203.
69 Ibid., p. 168.
70 Kim Song, "Pulsashin 不死神," [The Immortal], *Chŏnsŏn munhak* 5 (May 1953): p. 76.
71 Ibid., p. 87.
72 In the end, the South Korean government did not sign the treaty, leading to ongoing difficulties for South Korea in its diplomatic relations with North Korea.



War cartoon depicting the chasm between the home front and the actual front during the war.

and is rude to the driver and the other passengers. Seeing this soldier, the peasant thinks of his nephew, who is also a sergeant, and who has received two medals for his courage at the front. It is obvious to him that the sergeant on the bus is serving far behind the front line since he is wearing golden rings and has a suitcase filled with records. Two days later the peasant sees a man on the street who looks exactly like the soldier from the bus, but this one is wearing the badges of a second lieutenant. The peasant thinks the soldier must be a fraud and wants to turn him in to the military police. Then his thoughts go out to soldiers like his nephew who fight at the front for the *minjok*. Thinking of these soldiers serving the nation, he refrains from raising an accusation against the man with the second-lieutenant badges, since he is not completely certain he was the same soldier and would dishonour the spirit of the soldiers at the front line if he was wrong.[74] Ch'oe Inuk is also critical, in this story, of those who enrich themselves through the war. The character of the sergeant in the bus is depicted as 'unpatriotic' through such details as him smoking western cigarettes and reading a Japanese magazine. The author juxtaposes the sergeant with the peasant's nephew at the front.

The short stories of Kim Song and Ch'oe Inuk suggest a growing chasm between the military reality at the front and civilian life at the rear. So, whilst the intention of the writers, as we have seen in their essays on the function of literature in wartime, was to try to bridge this chasm, they merely draw further attention to the disparity between the soldier and society. By criticizing the defeatist attitude and egoism of those outside the military, the writers deny that civilians are representative of the *minjok*. Consequently, the spirit of the *minjok* is embodied almost entirely in the soldiers, who have the true fighting spirit that is so lacking in the self-centered civilian population for whom they sacrifice themselves. The problematic nature of nationalism, therefore, becomes the very subject of these stories, since the groups in society that are being included when the term *minjok* is invoked changes.

It is clear in *The Immortal* that this criticism of the general population near the end of the Korean War relates to the armistice, since the climactic scene of the story, the meeting between the soldier and his fiancée, revolves around this issue:

> *"The people do not look like they are of a country at war. They all look like they hate war."*
> *"That is because we all long for peace. It is human nature to search for peace."*
> *"To not fight a war and long for peace is a mentality which loses wars […] Even now you believe in the talks at P'anmunjŏm* 판문점*? Those armistice talks that are only an attractive display for those favouring peace […] Winning by fighting is the only road that leads to peace."*[75]

73 Ch'oe Sangdŏk, "Sŏnjŏnchŏn-gwa munhwain-ŭi immu 宣傳戰과 文化人의 任務," [Propaganda Warfare and the Responsibility of the Intelligentsia], *Shinch'ŏnji* 8.3 (July 1953), pp. 70-75.

74 Ch'oe Inuk, "Ŏnŭ nar-ŭi iltŭngsangsa 어느 날의 一等上士," [The Sergeant I Saw One Day], *Chŏnsŏn munhak* 6 (August 1953): pp. 4-10. Although the story was not published until after the signing of the armistice, it was written in June 1953.

75 Kim Song, *Pulsashin*, p. 83. Criticism of the armistice talks can also be found in *Living Forever* (p. 260), although elsewhere it is Nami who is more positive and says that she hopes the armistice agreement will be signed (p. 231).

Yŏngch'ŏl tries to explain to Ch'ohŭi why peace at P'anmunjŏm is not the right way forward, but she does not listen to him.

It is interesting that this argument is not only seen in the writers' fiction but also, with the signing of the armistice seemingly imminent, in their essays. Kim P'albong (1903-1985), for example, writes in his article "The Direction of War Literature" (Chŏnjaeng munhag-ŭi panghyang 戰爭文學의 方向):

> *As war gets more and more prolonged, there is this unchangeable bestial phenomenon that the common citizens become more outspoken in their attachment to their physical lives. I believe, however, that writers should and do have more wisdom than them. Therefore you will not find any writers who are similar to the public and approve of the shallowness of the masses. It is the common citizen's instinct and behaviour, but instead of flattering them, the writers should criticize and expose them.*[76]

This sentiment is echoed in an article written by Ku Sang, entitled "Two Years of War Writers' Groups" in which he declares that "amidst the decadence and defeatism about the present situation that is shown at the present moment in our country, only war writers have the spiritual alertness and resolution to serve as the flag bearers of the nation".[77] Even though these remarks can be read simply as laudatory comments on the efforts of the writers during the war, they can also be read in another way: as the Korean War was nearing its end, the gap between the front and the rear was as wide as ever, with the one difference that now the writer included himself as part of the front line, and claimed that he, along with the fighting soldier, was the true representative voice of the *minjok*.

CONCLUSION

Through analysing Kim Song's novel *Living Forever* we can see that the concept of the *minjok* plays an important role in giving meaning to many issues that were felt to be acutely important to South Korean wartime society.

The term *minjok* is used by Kim Song as a persuasive tool to strengthen his ideological argument of why North Korea should be considered as the enemy. According to him, North Korea is eradicating its own ethnicity by selling itself to the USSR and believing in the foreign communist ideology. This possibility in Kim Song's view to 'eradicate one's own ethnicity' brings to mind the term's connection with Shin Ch'aeho's idea of the Korean nation possessing a 'pure' bloodline. This 'pure' bloodline is considered by Kim Song to be important with regard to social issues like the *yangkalbo* and their children. However, the argument he presents for excluding North Korea from the *minjok* is somewhat weakened, since he admits that South Korea is not free from foreign influences either.

Although they are viewed as the enemy, North Koreans are also seen as part of the same *minjok*. In *Living Forever*, Kim Song paints a picture where those in power in North Korea are the real evil that must be fought, and are contrasted with the general populace of the country, which suffers great hardship. However, this argument is not emphasized enough to be convincing, since there are also instances in the novel where North Korean civilians commit acts of evil.

The term *minjok* not only appears in the context of North Korea, but is also used to denounce North Koreans in South Korea. These are usually shown to be profiteers who are only interested in enriching themselves. With the definition of the *minjok* remaining ambiguous, the term can be wielded by the author at will to decide who is represented and incorporated whenever the term is invoked. As an empty signifier, *minjok* can therefore be a powerful concept invoking and instilling a sense of national unity, especially in times of war. However, its boundaries are never fixed; they change according to the context in which the term is used. Therefore, instead of being a binding force, the term *minjok* can create an (imagined) disparity in society, highlighting the problematic notion of the nation and its perpetual dynamic process of contestation, negotiation, reformulation, and reconstruction.

76 Kim P'albong, "Chŏnjaengmunhag-ŭi panghyang 戰爭文學의 方向," [The Direction of War Literature], *Chŏnsŏn munhak* 3 (February 1953), p. 61.
77 Ku Sang, "Chonggun chakkadan 2 nyŏn," p. 57.

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Boudewijn Walraven

Divine Territory

SHAMAN SONGS, ELITE CULTURE AND THE NATION

The Kunung [deities] all assemble:
Spurning the examinations in horsemanship
they go to take the literary examinations!
Clutching their books against their chests,
They hasten to Hanyang, the capital.

(From a shaman song[1])

How deeply rooted is the contemporary sense of nationhood in Korea? Is it an entirely modern phenomenon, or have more recent articulations and imaginings of the nation been grafted onto older visions of a community that could potentially unite the people of states such as Koryŏ or Chosŏn? If such visions existed (which, as John Duncan has suggested, is quite likely[2]), to what extent did they permeate society? Were they exclusively elitist, or shared by other layers of the population, and if so, which layers? This article aims to demonstrate that the songs sung by Chosŏn-period shamans deserve to be considered as sources that suggest answers to these questions.

At first glance this enterprise may seem unlikely to succeed. What role could the oral songs of supposedly illiterate shamans play in the process of nation formation in which, in the formulation of Benedict Anderson, "print-capitalism" is deemed to be essential? Doubts will be reinforced if we take into consideration Anderson's list of the fundamental conceptions that should lose their axiomatic grip on men's minds to enable them to imagine the nation: 1. the idea that there is a particular script-language that offers privileged access to ontological truth; 2. the belief that society is naturally organized under monarchs who rule by some form of cosmological or divine dispensation; and 3. a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history are indistinguisha-

Shaman painting of Zhu Geliang 諸葛亮 (181-234)

1 Pak Kyŏngsin 朴敬伸, Tonghaean Pyŏlsin kut muga 東海岸 별신굿 巫歌 (Seoul: Kukhak charyowŏn, 1993) vol. 1, pp. 292-293.

2 John Duncan, "Proto-nationalism in Premodern Korea," in *Perspectives on Korea*, ed. by Sang-Oak Lee and Duk-soo Park (Sydney: Wild Peony, 1998), pp. 198-221.

ble.[3] Arguably, Chosŏn Korea was still under the sway of concepts of this kind. Yet, it will be more illuminating to consider the case of Korea on its own merits, rather than to take such a checklist as our point of departure.

ORAL LITERATURE IN A LITERATE SOCIETY

Considering the importance of print capitalism in Anderson's model of nation formation and the oral nature of the shaman songs, the first step to be taken is to reflect on the relationship between written and oral literature in Chosŏn Korea. The supposedly cosmopolitan culture of the Confucian literati, with its almost total dependence on knowledge of the Chinese written language, and the traditional oral culture of the shamans, most of whom were illiterate, are commonly represented as two radically opposed aspects of Chosŏn society. Yet, even if they constituted different discourses, these two cultures were, in numerous and subtle ways, connected.[4] This connection was also true at the level of language, however unlikely it may seem at first glance that shamans would in some way gain access to the contents of a culture that appears to be almost impenetrable because of the difficult foreign language and complicated script it was couched in. It is easy to imagine that members of the elite, when they wanted to, would be able to comprehend the vernacular linguistic productions of the shamans, even though the ritual language of the shaman is not without its obscurities.[5] That, however, the bearers of the oral culture of shamanism, whose social status was extremely low and who were excluded from the educational system of Chosŏn, would be capable of absorbing elements of the language of the high culture of the elite (together with the concepts conveyed in it) seems much less likely. Nevertheless, that is exactly what happened. The wall between the written and the oral, and between literary Chinese and the vernacular, turns out to have been quite porous. Through a kind of osmotic process literate culture penetrated the *muga* 巫歌, the orally produced and transmitted songs of the shamans, who represented popular culture. This is not merely a matter of literary history; because *muga* had the potential to reach all echelons of society, even the very lowest where no degree of literacy can be assumed, the songs have implications which are relevant to contemporary debates about national consciousness and the formation of a nation-state.

Shaman songs have been characterized above as an oral genre, but one might question this assumption. Does it not reflect a bias influenced by the tendency to identify 'shamanism' with the primitive and archaic, denying its dynamic character? Actually, the possibility cannot be entirely excluded that before 1900 some *muga* were written down by shamans literate in *han'gŭl* in order to facilitate the learning of the songs. There undoubtedly were a number of such *muga* written down in the early twentieth century.[6] However, because early *muga* manuscripts predating 1900 are no longer extant or cannot be dated with certainty to the Chosŏn period, and because it is highly unlikely that such manuscripts were used by a majority of shamans (who even in the early twentieth century were mostly illiterate), it is reasonable to regard shaman songs up to the second half of the twentieth century as a predominantly oral genre.

As premodern oral literature was generally not written down, most of it is forever lost to us, but from the moment writing became available it could survive in some form, being recorded in Chinese characters used for both their meaning and their pronunciation to render the vernacular, or – after 1444 – in *han'gŭl*. Some of the content of early oral literature, moreover, is still available to us in the form of translations or paraphrases in Chinese. However, all this applies to a mere fraction of the total production of oral literature. One example of the rare specimens that have survived is "P'ungyo" 風謠, a *hyangga* 鄕歌 (vernacular song), from the *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事. The *hyangga* are very diverse in character, and some are quite literate, but "P'ungyo" is a work song that was originally sung by workers building a temple and later by women pounding rice. Much later, the poet Im Che 林悌 (1549-1587) reworked popular songs in his own poetry in Chinese.[7] Oral genres might also find their way into liter-

3 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (revised ed.; London: Verso, 1991), p. 36.

4 Cf. Boudewijn Walraven, "Confucians and Shamans," *Cahiers d'Extrême Asie* 6 (1991-1992): pp. 21-44, and "Popular Religion in a Confucianized Society" in Jahyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (eds.), *Culture and the State in Late Chosŏn Korea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), pp. 160-198.

5 Part of the shamanic vocabulary diverges so much from ordinary speech that it is difficult for outsiders to understand. Cf. Antonetta L. Bruno, *The Gate of Words: Language in the Rituals of Korean Shamans* (Leiden: CNWS, 2002). Also see Ch'oe Kilsŏng 崔吉城, *Han'guk musok ŭi yŏn'gu*韓國 巫俗의 硏究 (Seoul: Asea munhwasa, 1978), Chapter 3.

6 Boudewijn Walraven, *Songs of the Shaman: The Ritual Chants of the Korean Mudang* (London: Kegan Paul Int., 1994), p. 31.

7 Cho Dong-il & Daniel Bouchez, *Histoire de la Littérature Coréenne des Origines à 1919* (Paris: Fayard, 2002), p. 192.

Shaman paintings of historical generals

ature written in the vernacular. A *shijo* 時調 by the eighteenth-century singer Yi Chŏngjin 李廷진 incorporated a children's song of which an oral version was recorded in southwest Korea in the twentieth century.[8] Almost none of the *muga*, however, were recorded. The only source that contains a number of complete songs, all of them quite brief, is *Shiyong hyangakpo* 時用鄕樂譜 (*Scores for local music to be performed periodically*), which is of uncertain date but most likely goes back to the early sixteenth century. Interestingly, the songs contained in it share some stylistic characteristics with more recently recorded *muga*, in contrast to the four-line *hyangga* "Ch'ŏyongga" 處容歌 (Song of Ch'ŏyong), which is regarded by some scholars as a shaman song.[9] In the nineteenth century, Shin Chaehyo 申在孝 (1812-1884), the patron and librettist of *p'ansori*, recorded a song for the god of the house the shamans worshipped, "Syŏngjyoga" 셩죠가, and a song describing the auspicious geomantic location of Seoul and the Kyŏngbok Palace, entitled "Kosă" 고사 (the name of a kind of small ritual, in many cases performed by shamans).[10] Presumably these texts are neither exact recordings of ritual songs actually sung by religious specialists, nor completely original creations, but adaptations, like most of Sin Chaehyo's other writings. The relationship between "Syŏngjyoga" and "Kosă" and the *muga* sung by shamans will be discussed below. There are also a few snippets of *muga* in the *p'ansori* libretti of Sin Chaehyo.

The poet and official Yi Kŏnch'ang 李建昌 (1852-98) was also inspired by the shamans in the nineteenth century, and wrote two poems in Chinese that are in some way related to shamanic rituals. In "Yŏnp'yŏng haeng" 延坪行 he incorporates the oral legend of a historical figure, General Im Kyŏngŏp 林慶業 (1594-1646), whom the fishermen and shamans of the West Coast worshipped as a tutelary deity (as they still do today).[11] The other poem, "Words of a god during a boat ritual at Kwangsŏngjin" 廣城津, written in 1890, incorporates part of the verbal exchange of a shamanic ritual, including the oracle (*kongsu* 공수) presented by the deity.[12] Describing a scene from the life of ordinary people the performance of a ritual held aboard a fishing boat in order to obtain the blessing of a good catch, Yi Kŏnch'ang's poem obliquely comments on the abuse of power by local government clerks. A god gratefully accepts the ritual and through the mouth of the shaman promises the fishermen an abundant catch. This will allow them not only to recoup their investments, but also to become rich enough to each

8 Chŏng Pyŏnguk 鄭炳昱 (comp.), *Shijo munhak sajŏn* 時調文學事典 (Seoul: Sin'gu munhwasa, 1972), nr. 857.

9 When Ch'ŏyong, the son of a Dragon King who, following the orders of his father, serves the king of Shilla, comes home and finds his beautiful wife in bed with a pest demon, he sings a song that moves the demon to retreat.

10 "Kŏsa" bears the alternative title "Myŏngdang ch'ugwŏn" 명당축원. For the text of these two songs, which date from the 1870s, see Kang Hanyŏng 姜漢永 (ed.), *Shin Chaehyo p'ansori sasŏl chip* 申在孝 판소리 辭說集 (Seoul: Minjung sŏgwan, 1971), pp. 665-667 and 670.

11 Im Hyŏngt'aek 任熒澤 (comp. and transl.), *Yijo shidae sŏsashi* 李朝時代敍事詩 (Seoul: Ch'angjak-kwa pip'yŏngsa) 2 vols, vol. 1, pp. 311-314. Such oracles are often chanted and follow fixed patterns, and therefore are often considered to belong to the category of *muga*.

12 Im Hyŏngt'aek, *Yijo shidae sŏsashi*, vol. 1, pp. 307-310.

buy a house and rice paddies with the remaining money, so that they "never again need to touch an oar in their life". For the most part, this sounds like the kind of oracle the shamans present their clients with nowadays. In the poem, however, the fishermen are not satisfied by the deity's promises. Even if they acquire wealth, they counter, in the end the extortions of the government clerks will leave them empty-handed. The god then replies that this is a matter beyond his power. He advises the fishermen to direct their complaint to the poet on the shore (Yi Kŏnch'ang, of course), who could write a poem about it that might reach the ears of the monarch. Although at first glance Yi Kŏnch'ang's poem seems to illustrate interaction between the oral vernacular and written Chinese, at the same time it emphasizes the inequality of the two discourses. To influence the elite who actually rule the land, a poem in Chinese is more effective than even the actions of a god of the shamans (who depends on oral dialogue). Chinese and, to a lesser degree, Sino-Korean embedded in a vernacular context embody the discourse of power. This fact is crucial to an understanding of the reason why so many Sinitic elements were introduced in the *muga*.

MUGA COLLECTIONS AND COLLECTORS

The writing down of *muga* began in earnest only after the Chosŏn period, when Korea was under the colonial yoke of Japan; the bulk of the *muga* available in writing today has been collected since Liberation in 1945. Because issues of ethnic and national identity have always been closely linked to the collecting of *muga*, it is necessary to reflect briefly on the motivations of the collectors and the particular aspects of the *muga* that researchers focused on.

Son Chint'ae 孫晉泰 (1900-?), who in 1930 was the first to publish a *muga* collection, was primarily interested in history, the subject he studied at Waseda University in Tokyo. His interest, however, was not so much the political and economic aspects of history, but the lives of the general populace, for the study of which, he felt, the *muga* contained valuable material (an assumption I share).[13] The rapid changes the twentieth century brought threatened to obliterate this "intangible record" of the Korean people. Thus Son was motivated by a desire to record old traditions that, as part of the historical heritage of the people, were crucial to Korean ethnic or national identity.

The second collection was compiled under the direction of the Japanese researchers Akamatsu Chijō 赤松 智上 (1886-1960) and Akiba Takashi 秋葉 隆 (1888-1954), although much of the actual work was done by their Korean assistants, one of whom, Im Sŏkchae 任晳宰 (1903-98), became an important collector himself after 1945. Son Chint'ae also helped in the compilation process. The two-volume book produced by Akamatsu and Akiba (of which the *muga* collection is volume 1) was part of the systematic and comprehensive attempt by the Japanese to generate knowledge that might in some way serve colonial domination.[14] Akiba was of the opinion that the songs, with their many repetitions, reflected the slow pace of the agricultural society of Korea and he also saw a connection between the peaceful coexistence of numerous Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian elements in the songs and the pacific and conciliatory nature of rural village society.[15] To him the *muga* represented an antithesis of the modern.

In the decades following national liberation in 1945, the *muga* were increasingly presented as examples of Korea's indigenous culture, and of the culture of the common people (*minjung* 民衆), who of course had always made use of the vernacular. In the process, the antiquity of shaman songs was often emphasized, for instance by connecting the *muga* collected in modern times with the origin myths of the old states on the peninsula. The literary scholar Kim Tonguk 金東旭 (1922-90) argued that almost all genres of traditional vernacular poetry had their roots in shamanic songs.[16] This is not to say that he assumed the present form of the *muga* to be identical to that of ancient *muga*, but the general effect of his approach and that of the scholars who looked for Koreanness in the songs was to deflect attention from their historicity. When historical changes in the *muga* are discussed at all, it is usually in terms of authenticity; are particular songs true to the tradition or not? What the changes in the *muga* meant and mean to the shamans and their audiences and what implications such modifications have for the study

13 Son Chint'ae, *Chōsen shinka ihen* 朝鮮神歌遺編 (Tokyo: Kyōdo kenkyūsha, 1930), p. 1.

14 Ch'oe Kilsŏng, "War and Ethnology/Folklore in Colonial Korea," in Akitoshi Shimizu and Jan van Bremen (eds.), *Wartime Japanese Anthropology in Asia and the Pacific* (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 2003), pp. 169-187; Boudewijn Walraven, "The Natives Next-Door: Ethnology in Colonial Korea," in Jan van Bremen and Akitoshi Shimizu (eds.), *Anthropology and Colonialism in Asia and Oceania* (London: Curzon, 1999), pp. 219-244.

15 Akamatsu Chijō & Akiba Takashi, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū* (朝鮮巫覡の研究 Keijō: Ōsaka yagō shoten, 1937-1938), vol. 2, p. 240.

16 Kim Tonguk, *Han'guk kayo ŭi yŏn'gu* 韓國歌謠의 硏究 (Seoul: Ŭryu munhwasa, 1961).

of Korean culture is, in many cases, not considered at all. In particular, the presence of the elements of literate culture that are the focal point of this article did not suit the national identity framework in which most *muga* collection took place. Akiba had duly noted these elements, but only linked them to what was, in his view, the somewhat retarded development of Korean society, which was still a predominantly agricultural society. Some researchers carefully annotated Sino-Korean phrases that were difficult to understand, but the wider implications of their insertion into the *muga* for the study of Korean society were not problematized.

MUGA AS A SOURCE FOR CHOSŎN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY

As the collecting of *muga* only really started in the third decade of the twentieth century, it must be asked whether they should be regarded as a reliable source for the study of the Chosŏn period. The answer has to be affirmative, due to a combination of two factors, the first concerning the accuracy of the recordings and the second, the extent to which the songs may have changed.

When the literati recorded forms of oral literature in the Chosŏn period or even earlier, they did so for their own purposes. They did not merely reproduce what they heard, but modified it, sometimes to make it carry a different message. The second poem by Yi Kŏnch'ang is a case in point. Considerable adaptation could not be avoided in any case when translation from the vernacular into Chinese was involved, because of the very different nature of the two languages. Even when the *muga* were recorded systematically in the twentieth century, they were not immune to certain distortions that are inevitable when oral literature is decontextualized from its original setting and recontextualized in the pages of a book or an article. To a much greater degree than most of the oral literature recorded in some form in the Chosŏn period, however, they retained their original form. When the earliest collectors of *muga*, such as Son Chint'ae and Akiba and Akamatsu set to work they certainly had, as I have hinted, their own agendas, but at the same time their academic training had taught them to respect the authenticity and integrity of the text. Contrary to figures like Im Che and Yi Kŏnch'ang, the modern collectors tried to record texts accurately when they wrote down the songs; they did not create works of their own.[17] Consequently, the *muga*, which were recorded in considerable quantity, offer a much more faithful picture of oral literature than the incidental recordings and incorporations of oral material into written literature during the Chosŏn period.

This still leaves the question unanswered of whether the texts recorded in the 1920s and 1930s may be used as a source for the study of Chosŏn society and culture which had ended several decades earlier. I would be the last to assert that the *muga* – the sacred songs of an ancient creed – have hardly changed over the ages. In fact, I have tried to demonstrate at length that they did change, and moreover that they did so to a significant extent.[18] That, however, is exactly why they are of interest in the present context, because by the same token they show the dynamic absorption of vast quantities of material derived from the elite written culture while Confucian culture filtered down in Chosŏn society. So the *muga* changed over time, but the nature of the songs as part of the specialized lore of the shaman, the mastery of which renders a shaman authoritative and powerful, guaranteed that their content would not be subject to rapid change. A review of *muga* collected over about eighty years in the twentieth century reveals that there were some changes during this period, but also that much was retained. Therefore, the conclusion is warranted that the *muga* recorded in the 1920s and 1930s – and to a lesser degree, those of successive decades – to a large extent reflect ideas and world-views of the late nineteenth century or earlier and in this sense belong to the Chosŏn period. Specific passages provide

17 This does not mean, of course, that nothing was changed in the complicated process from the first recording of a song to the preparation of the final text to be published; the basic aim, however, was to record the songs as they were sung.

18 Walraven, *Songs of the Shaman*.

evidence for this supposition. Therefore the *muga* are a legitimate source from which to study the penetration of Chosŏn-literati culture into layers of society that were totally or largely illiterate.

SINITIC CULTURE IN THE MUGA

The extent to which elements derived from Sinitic culture permeated the *muga* can most easily be demonstrated at the micro level of formulaic metrical phrases and the slightly more general level of conventional 'themes'. I have tried, in an earlier publication, to show the degree to which shamanic songs absorbed such elements and will not – for reasons of brevity – present full evidence for this again here.[19] Instead, I will focus on a few instances of *muga* that contain concepts that are of particular relevance to the larger issues which I will discuss below.

One of the most striking texts to illustrate the extent to which literate elements found their way into shamanic texts is "Sŏngjo p'uri" 成造푸리, a song explaining the origin of the god of the house (Sŏngjo or Sŏngju), collected by Son Chint'ae.[20] In a note appended to this song, Son complains that it was very hard to translate because some parts were pure Chinese, without even the added verbal endings and particles (*t'o* 吐) that were sometimes used to make a kind of hybrid Korean from a Chinese original. His informant, Ch'oe Sundo 崔順道, was a blind male shaman from Tongnae 東萊 in South Kyŏngsang Province. On the whole, male shamans are somewhat more likely to sing songs that are heavily influenced by elite culture, although there is certainly no scarcity of such influences in the songs of female shamans either. This suggests, of course, that men functioned as a channel in the transmission of such influences, a point that will be discussed later. At the same time, however, the example of "Sŏngjo p'uri" demonstrates that these men were not necessarily literate, as Ch'oe Sundo was blind.

The song begins, like so many *muga*, with the topos of the origin of the world and human culture. The content is entirely derived from Sinitic culture. After the 'opening' of Heaven and Earth, the appearance of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors (*samhwang* 三皇 and *oje* 五帝) is described at length, complete with all the acts of creation and invention with which they are credited:

After in a flash Heaven and Earth had opened up
in the time of the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors,
the Heavenly Sovereign appeared first
and became ruler thanks to the virtue of [the element] Wood
and when sun and moon and the constellations illuminated [the world]
the light of sun and moon was bright.
When next the Earthly Sovereign appeared
he became ruler thanks to the virtue of [the element] Earth
and so grasses and leaves came forth.
Then again the Human Sovereign appeared
and the nine brothers divided the nine regions.[21]

The song then moves to surer historical ground with the appearance of Confucius, who, it says, taught the basic virtues and the distinction between good and evil, as well as that between the *yangban*, the former ruling class in Korea, and commoners (the latter distinction actually being a Korean characteristic!). Only then does the story of Sŏngjo himself begin, who, according to the song, was originally neither from China nor from Chosŏn, but from India (*Sŏch'ŏn'guk* 西天國). The names given for his grandfather and grandmother are identical to those of the parents of the historical Buddha. Many of the details of Sŏngjŏ's birth and youth are of no importance in this context, but the language in which his birth and early days are described merits attention. When he is born, he is as handsome as the Tang poet Du Mu 杜牧, and at the age of two he is as eloquent as the orators Su Qin 蘇秦 and Zhang Yi 張儀 of the period of the Warring States. As a child he studies the *Book of Documents* and the *Book of Odes* as well as the Hundred Schools of Thought. Finally he comes of age and marries, but in spite of his early promise his behaviour is far from exemplary:

At that time Sŏngjo lost himself in wine and women,
he immersed himself in the houses of pleasure,
and was oblivious to affairs of state.
When four, five months had passed,
the censors at court reported this to His Majesty,

19 Walraven, *Songs of the Shaman*, Chapter 5.
20 Son Chint'ae, *Chōsen shinka ihen*, pp. 79-176.
21 Similar passages are recurrent in *muga*; see for instance AA, p. 271, in a song from Osan 烏山, and pp. 375-376, in a Cheju 濟州 Island song called "Ch'ogamje" 초감제.

and the King, because there was no other way,
opened the Great Legal Compendium
and considered the [relevant] laws.
There it said:
"To rascals who are oblivious
to the Three Bonds and the Five Relationships,
who are not filial to their parents,
who ill-treat their good wives,
who do not live in harmony with their neighbours,
who do not maintain good relations with their relatives,
the law of the land will be applied
after [their cases] have been examined in every detail:
three years of exile to the Island of Yellow Earth
which is without mountains and without people
has been set as punishment for them."

To atone for his transgressions against Confucian morality Sŏngjo is sent into exile. This is a crucial episode in the story, as exile is the ordeal which transforms Sŏngjo into a deity. It is common in shamanic narratives of origin, *ponp'uri* 本푸리, for the protagonist to undergo separation at some point from his or her parents and the world of ordinary mortals. This is a kind of initiatory experience, from which he or she will return as a supernatural being. In one Cheju *muga*, for instance, a young girl gets lost in the hills while she is picking strawberries; over time she becomes so much at one with nature that her body starts to resemble a tree and moss starts growing on her back. Eventually she is discovered by a hunter and taken back to the world of man, where she becomes the goddess of a local shrine.[22] In the case of this Sŏngjo *muga*, however, this basic plot is narrated in the language of the bureaucratic state. Sŏngjo commits several offences and according to the law is condemned to the punishment stipulated for such crimes. Only when he has spent three years on the island and no one has come to his rescue, does the original shamanic pattern emerge. When his food supply is exhausted and he has to feed himself with whatever he can find, fur starts to grow on his body and it becomes impossible to distinguish whether he is a human being or an animal. Yet, in the wording of the subsequent scenes, the influence of Chinese culture once again asserts itself, in phrases that consist entirely of Sino-Korean,[23] with references to the cuckoo of Shu 蜀 and the parrots of Longshan 隴山. In the remainder of the song, too, references to Sinitic culture are frequent. The poets Li Bai 李白, Bai Letian 白樂天 and Su Dongpo 蘇東坡 all make an appearance, with mention of their names and references to the most famous of their poems. There also is a paraphrase of several lines from a very well-known poem by Zhang Ji 張繼 anthologized in the *Three Hundred Tang Poems*.[24] References to Chinese historical and legendary figures are also numerous. At the end of the song, after Sŏngjo has been rescued from his place of exile and has resumed human shape, he finally performs the act that makes him a god with a specific task. Using the wood from trees he planted in his youth, he builds a house. The house is not complete without writing: the wooden pillars are adorned with auspicious phrases in Chinese. The *muga* quotes these with no mistakes.[25]

Shaman painting of Queen Min

The number of references in this *muga* to the literate

22 Hyŏn Yongjun 玄容駿, *Cheju-do musok charyo sajŏn* 濟州島巫俗資料事典 (Seoul: Shin'gu munhwasa, 1980), pp. 721-726.
23 E.g., p. 129: 滿塘秋水紅蓮花/暗香浮動月桂花며/消息轉듣 短命花며/二月春風海棠花며/...etc.
24 The poem has been translated in English as "A Night-Mooring near Maple Bridge"; Witter Bynner (transl.), *Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty* (Taipei: Wen-hsing shu-tien, 1952), p. 4.
25 E.g., p. 169: 天增歲月人增壽, 春滿乾坤福滿家.

Sinitic culture of the elite is remarkable, but within the total corpus of *muga* it stands out more for the accuracy of these references than for their sheer quantity. Other *muga* from both male and female shamans also contain an abundance of such allusions to high culture. In another song for the god of the house called "Hwangje p'uri" 黃帝푸리, sung by the female shaman Pae Kyŏngjae 裴敬載, there is a description of the paintings adorning the newly built house, which depict scenes from Chinese history and an episode from a Korean novel that circulated in both Korean and Chinese versions, the *Kuunmong* 九雲夢 (A Nine Cloud Dream). The following lines describe a painting of a famous episode from the historical novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, in which the sage Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 tests the patience of Liu Bei 劉備, who comes to seek his help, by making him wait for days and days before he receives him.[26]

> *If one looks at the western wall, it is vividly depicted*
> *how among the tribulations and turmoil of the Three Kingdoms*
> *Liu Xuande* 劉玄德 *[= Liu Bei], scion of the Imperial House of Han* 漢,
> *astride his horse Red Rabbit*
> *waits in snow and cold for Master Wolong* 臥龍 *[= Zhuge Liang]*
> *at the cottage in Nanyang* 南陽.

The same *mudang*, or female shaman, begins a song used as part of an introduction in rituals for the dead, "Chidusŏ" 指頭書, with verses that incorporate the first and third line of the *Thousand Character Text*: *T'y'ŏn chi hyŏn hwang saeng-gin hu-e, il wŏl yŏng ch'aek* [correctly: *ch'ŭk*] *toeyŏssyera* 텬지현황 생긴 후에, 일월영책돼여쎠라.[27] The choice of the day for the ritual is explained in lines that refer to methods requiring a certain knowledge of Chinese and have been described as part of popular Confucianism.[28] Further on there are many more allusions to Sinitic culture, references to the legendary creator of the Eight Trigrams, Fuxi 伏羲,[29] and the long-lived Dongfang Shuo 東方朔,[30] for example. There are also numerous references to the literate world of Buddhist culture, which include names of mantras (one of which is quoted in full) and the nine categories of rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitābha explained in the sutra *Kwan-muryangsubul kyŏng*觀無量壽佛經.[31]

AWARENESS OF KOREA IN MUGA

Interlaced with the Sinitic elements in the *muga* there are passages that betray an awareness of Korea, which is described in terms that owe much to the perspective of the elite. In the same "Chidusŏ" that I mentioned above, Pae Kyŏngjae elaborates on a theme that is very common in *muga*: a description of Korea that serves as a general introduction to the place where the ritual is held and is couched in terms that are inspired by geomantic theories. Here the Kunlun 崑崙 mountains in China are mentioned first as the "supreme ancestor" (宗祖) of mountains, but thereafter the focus is entirely on Korea, which is located between Mt. Paektu 白頭山 in the north and Mt. Halla 漢拏山 in the south, and praised for the auspiciousness of its terrain and the beauty of its landscapes. It is described as "the Little Middle Kingdom of the Civilization of Rites and Righteousness" (禮義文物小中華).[32] There are two slight inaccuracies in the rendering of this phrase, but these are of minor significance and do not obscure the meaning. Next is an enumeration of the mountains and rivers of the Eight Provinces, which adheres to the administrative division of the peninsula current during the Chosŏn period before the reforms of 1896. Then comes another common theme found in shaman songs, a historical overview of the peninsula, beginning with Tan'gun 檀君, whose dates place him as a contemporary of the Chinese Emperor Yao 堯. His Chosŏn is succeeded by that of Kija 箕子 and that of Wiman 衛滿, dated, respectively, to the era of King Wen 文 and the days of the struggle between Chu 楚 and Han 漢 in China. From here on the references to Chinese history disappear and the focus is entirely on the Korean peninsula.

26 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, pp. 240-241. In the late Chosŏn period, Koreans were avid readers of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (Samgukchi 三國志), both in the original Chinese and in Korean translations.

27 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 257.

28 Griffin M. Dix, "The East Asian Country of Propriety: Confucianism in a Korean Village," PhD dissertation, University of California at San Diego, 1977.

29 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 264.

30 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 265.

31 *Taishō Tripitaka*, 365. Such borrowings from Buddhist written sources are common. E.g., Ch'oe Chŏngyŏ 최정여 & Sŏ Taesŏk 徐大錫, *Tonghaean muga* 東海岸巫歌 (Seoul: Hyŏngsŏl ch'ulp'ansa, 1974), p. 244, in which the *Shinmyo changgu taedarani* 神妙章句大陀羅尼 is cited, slightly garbled (the title is given as *Shinmo changgun taedarani*), but clearly recognizable.

32 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 257.

There is no trace left of the rise and fall
of the Samhan 三韓*, of Pyŏn[han]* 弁韓*, Ma[han]* 馬韓
and Chin[han] 辰韓*.*
Of the fortresses of Koguryŏ 高句麗 *and Paekche* 百濟
only the ruins remain.
Of the thousand years of the Kingdom of Shilla 新羅
the mountains and rivers are as of old,
but of the five hundred years of the Kingdom of Koryŏ 高麗
nothing but the castle walls are to be seen.

When Chosŏn is founded, it needs its own capital. We can now introduce yet another common theme of *muga*, the listing of the capitals of successive dynasties, in the process of which the historical narrative returns again to earlier periods. Once more Tan'gun and Kija make an appearance, together with Wang Kŏn 王建 of Koryŏ. When it comes to the selection of a capital for Chosŏn, the monk Muhak 無學 conducts a survey with his geomancer's compass and decides on Hanyang 漢陽 as the most suitable location. Subsequently, the *muga* provides a thumbnail sketch of the administrative system of Chosŏn Korea, with the three state councillors (*chŏngsŭng* 政丞) and the six ministers (*p'ansŏ* 判書) and vice-ministers (*ch'amp'an* 參判) of the Six Boards and various military commanders in the capital, and in the countryside the magistracies with the Six Offices (*Yukpang* 六房, corresponding to the Six Boards, *Yukcho* 六曹, in Seoul). At this point, at last, the song switches from the general to the specific, when the city of Suwŏn 水原 is singled out as a place where officials of the senior third rank are appointed as magistrates. Suwŏn is mentioned because the ritual during which the *muga* is sung is conducted for a family living outside the P'altal 八達 Gate of this city. Thus in this song, as in many other *muga*, a ritual for one specific family in one particular locality is placed within a much wider geographical, historical and political-administrative context.

"Chidusŏ" concentrates on the more immediate concerns of the ritual in the lines that follow the introductory part, but in the description of food offerings the wider context of the nation intrudes once again, when aspects of Korea's culinary geography make an appearance, with certain foods for which particular localities in different regions of the country were famous: sweet potatoes from Pongsan 鳳山, mixed noodles (*pibim kuksu* 비빔국수) from P'yŏngyang 平壤, cold noodles from Hwangju 黃州, and abalone from Ulsan 蔚山.[33] It is both the economic and political framework and the imagined unity of the larger entity of the nation that tie these regional specialties to the site of the ritual.

Attention to the political structure of Chosŏn can also be seen in "Antang malmi" 안땅말미 by the female shaman Kong Sŏngnyŏ 孔姓女, a song used to perform *kosa* (a small-scale ritual) in the inner quarters of a house.[34] In the introductory part, the ritual is situated in Chosŏn'guk 朝鮮國, which is placed aside Taehan'guk 大漢國, the Country of the Great Han (China), and said to be ruled by the monarch of the Yi lineage, whose family's origin is in Hamgyŏng 咸鏡 Province. Note that in spite of the fact that this *muga* was recorded in the colonial period the situation described is that of Chosŏn. Zooming in on the location, the shaman refers to the thirty-seven districts of Kyŏnggi 京畿 Province[35] and more specifically to Yangju 楊州,[36] before she lists the palaces of the capital and calls for respectful treatment of the spirit tablets of the Royal Ancestral Temple (Chongmyo 宗廟) and the altars for the deities of Land and Grain (Sajiktan 社稷壇), the two most sacred places of the Confucian state, which was equated, metonymically, with these Sajik Altars. An awareness of the country as a whole appears again in a passage about local tutelary deities (*sŏnghwang* 城隍[37]), when the "*sŏnghwang* of the mountains and rivers of the vast, vast Eight Provinces" are invoked.[38]

Of all the Korean regions it was Cheju Island that remained marginal to the central state for longest, and was regarded by mainlanders as "uncivilized". Several uprisings at the end of the Chosŏn period have raised questions about the allegiance of the islanders to the Korean nation at that time. It is telling, therefore, that even in Cheju Island *muga* there is evidence of attempts to link the island to the more comprehensive entity of the country, in ways that are very similar to those in the

33 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 264.

34 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, pp. 547-556.

35 References to the number of districts within a province are a typical feature of *muga* in general. Cf. for instance, Akiba Takashi, "Fujin kotsuryū no uta 巫人乞粒の歌," *Seikyū gakusō* 青丘學叢 vol. 6 (1931), pp. 99-100 (a song from Seoul), with the same number for Kyŏnggi Province, Akamatsu and Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, pp. 275-276 (in a *muga* from Osan 烏山) and Hyŏn Yongjun, *Chejudo musok charyo sajŏn*, p. 643, with a Cheju *muga* example.

36 Yangju was the name of the general area in which the new capital of Chosŏn was founded.

37 In China these characters denote the City God, but in Korea they refer to local guardian deities similar to the mountain gods.

38 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 552.

Shaman painting of Tan'gun, the mythical progenitor of the Korean people

muga discussed above. In the oldest recorded version of the "Ch'ogamje" 초감제 *muga* there are references to famous mountains in various regions of Chosŏn: Samgaksan 三角山 in Kyŏnggi Province, Kŭmgangsan 金剛山 in Kangwŏn 江原 Province and Kyeryongsan 鷄龍山 in Ch'ungch'ŏng 忠淸 Province, and a more recent version contrasts "our country, Chosŏn, the Country Under Heaven, East of the Sea" (우리 나라 천하혜동조선국) with the country of the Tartars (Manchus), the China of the Son of Heaven, and Japan.[39] Altogether Cheju *muga* have retained some characteristics that set them somewhat apart from mainland *muga*, but they, too, betray an awareness of the larger community to which the island belongs, even if the attitude of the islanders towards central authority remains somewhat ambiguous. The story of the origin of the god of the local shrine, T'osandang 兎山堂, refers in detail to the system of local magistrates appointed by the court, and part of it is set in the capital.[40] The song of the origin of the local goddess Paekchutto 백주또 traces her origin back to Seoul[41] and when another god-to-be leaves Cheju and comes to the palace of the Dragon King he is addressed as the "Generalissimo from Chosŏn".[42] The same martial figure defeats the "northern robbers" that threaten China, but refuses to accept any reward and only wishes to return to his home country, Chosŏn.[43]

Back on the mainland, another *muga* that betrays an awareness of state and country is "Hogu nojŏnggi" 호구路程記 (Itinerary of the Hogu) by Pae Kyŏngjae, a song for the gods of smallpox, also known as the Guests (*Sonnim* 손님) or *Pyŏlsang* 별상.[44] The Guests are depicted as coming from China (the Big Country, *Taeguk* 대국) to Korea (the Small Country, *Soguk* 소국) attracted by Korea's good food. Their progress once they have crossed the border is that of government officials who wherever they go announce their arrival beforehand by official letter and are entertained by local administrators. Going from Ŭiju 義州 to Wiwŏn 渭原, Pyŏktong 碧潼, Sunan 巡按, Sukch'ŏn 肅川 and Pyongyang 平壤, and then to Chunghwa 中和, Hwangju 黃州, Haeju 海州, Songdo 松都 (Kaesŏng 開城), P'aju 坡州, Changdan 長湍, Koyang 高陽 and Kup'abal 舊把撥, to arrive in the capital via the Muak

39 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 371; Hyŏn, *Cheju-do musok charyo sajŏn*, p. 43.
40 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, pp. 357-369;
41 Hyŏn, *Chejudo musok charyo sajŏn*, p. 662.
42 Hyŏn, *Chejudo musok charyo sajŏn*, p. 641,
43 Hyŏn, *Chejudo musok charyo sajŏn*, pp. 642-643.
44 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, pp. 556-562.

毋岳 Pass, they settle in the quarters built for the regular envoys from China, the Mohwagwan 慕華館, where the local *pyŏlsang* 별상 (*Yi-ssi* 李氏 *pyŏlsang*) of "this land" comes to meet them. Then public announcements (presumably about the arrival of the Guests and the way they should be treated) are attached to the gates of the city and instructions sent to the Eight Provinces.

Pae Kyŏngjae's song for the *Sonnim* is unusually rich in bureaucratic detail, but is certainly not atypical for this kind of *muga*. "Sonnim kut" by the female shaman Pyŏn Yŏnho is of a much later date (1972), but is, in many ways, very similar.[45] In the introductory part there are references to the origin of Heaven and Earth and the legendary earliest rulers of China in a heavily Sino-Korean style, very similar to those in "Songjo p'uri". These are freely mixed with Buddhist references: Maitreya is mentioned as the creator of Confucianism! When the *Sonnim* are introduced, the food of the country where they live is contrasted with its clothes. Although the Chinese wear robes of silk, their food is strange and poor compared to that of Korea. This induces the *Sonnim* to go to Korea which, so they have heard, as well as good food has very beautiful scenery. In the description of the route the *Sonnim* take, there are details that are reminiscent of the passage in the *p'ansori* piece "Hŭngbu ka" 興夫歌 describing the journey of the swallows who return from China to Korea in spring. When they have to cross the Yalu River, a skipper tells them that all boats but one have been lost in the 1592 Imjin 壬辰 invasions of the Japanese. After they have managed the crossing thanks to an invocation to the Buddha, they do some sightseeing in Pyongyang and Kaesŏng, before arriving at the capital Seoul. The remainder of the story is irrelevant here, but it should be noted that the *Sonnim muga* of Pae Kyŏngjae and Pyŏn Yŏnho both present a distinct view of Korean territory, political unity, history and culture. Geomantic descriptions of the peninsula, an important vehicle for the concept of national unity since at least the Koryŏ period,[46] play a significant role in the definition of this space. In general, the *muga* in both the early and more recent collections nearly always take care to situate the ritual for which they are sung in the wider context of the country as a whole, which is apparently relevant to the realm of ritual, or even essential to it.

CHANNELS AND AGENTS

The question of how certain means of communication were established between literate and oral culture is too complex to be dealt with exhaustively in this article, but at least some of the channels and agents through which this process took place should be indicated. A crucial factor is the extent of literacy in Chosŏn. Unfortunately, even defining the meaning of this term is difficult. If it signifies a command of written Chinese sufficient to read the kind of literature prescribed for the state examinations, the number of literate persons was small, but still much larger than those who actually took the examinations. If literacy is defined as no more than a knowledge of *han'gŭl*, the number of literate people vastly increases, but exact figures are impossible to come by.[47] In practice, literacy was not an absolute matter, but existed in all kinds of gradations, from a perfect or somewhat less than perfect command of Classical Chinese, to the capacity to understand Chinese with the help of *idu* 吏讀,[48] a knowledge of the basic characters from elementary readers for children, or just the ability to read and write *han'gŭl*.

For those who were unable to read Chinese with ease, bilingual *ŏnhae* 諺解 editions of the classics and elementary readers offered access – although it was limited – to Sinitic culture. By the end of the Chosŏn period, the quantity and distribution of such literature was considerable.[49] One of the elementary readers was *Tongmong sŏnsŭp* 童蒙先習 (First lessons for ignorant children), which in the eighteenth century was published in an *ŏnhae* edition at the orders of King Yŏngjo 英祖.[50] *Tongmong sŏnsŭp* was very widely used, in various forms, both printed and as a manuscript. In the present context it is relevant to note that this book contains a brief overview of Chinese history, beginning with the legendary sover-

45 Ch'oe Chŏngyŏ & Sŏ Taesŏk, *Tonghaean muga*, pp. 240-265.

46 Gari Ledyard, "Cartography in Korea," in J.B. Harley and David Woodward (eds.), *History of Cartography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), vol. 2, book 2, pp. 235-345.

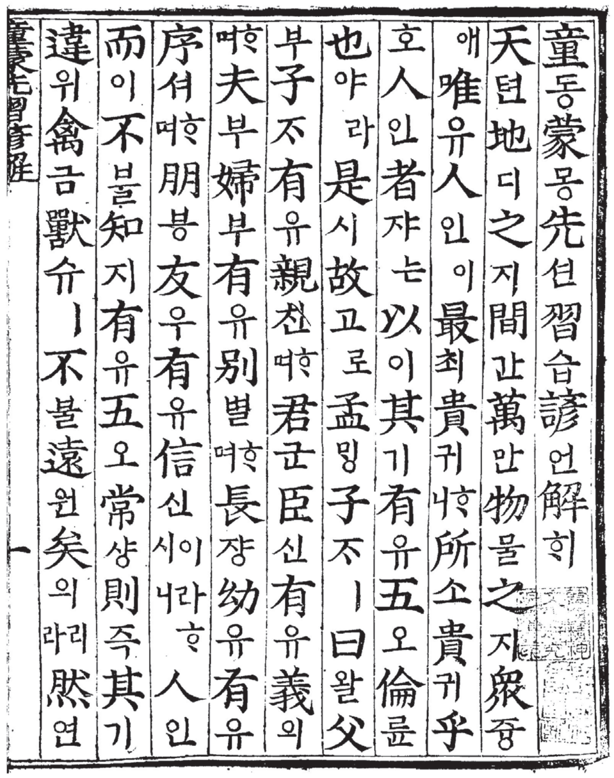
47 The earliest figures are from the colonial period and suggest very low rates of literacy. Considering the state of late Chosŏn book culture, I get the impression, however, that these figures tend to underestimate the actual extent of literacy, probably because they do not sufficiently take all possible gradations into account.

48 A system of writing in which Chinese characters were used to render Korean particles and verbal endings in an effort to Koreanize Chinese texts, much used by government clerks until the end of the nineteenth century.

49 For a general survey of Chosŏn book culture, see Boudewijn Walraven, "Reader's Etiquette, and Other Aspects of Book Culture in Chosŏn Korea," in *Books in Numbers* ed. by Wilt Idema (Cambridge MA: Harvard-Yenching Library, 2007), pp. 237-265.

of Chinese history, beginning with the legendary sovereigns and emperors, which is not unlike the description of the same topic in the *muga* quoted earlier.[51] *Tongmong sŏnsŭp* also provides a short account of Korean history. It is conceivable, therefore, that its contents were either read by shamans who had mastered *han'gŭl*, or transmitted orally to them by persons who possessed only limited literacy. More likely such material was first transferred to performance genres other than the *muga*, because these, too, contain similar passages.

To describe cases in which texts that are not of oral origin are transmitted orally, possibly by performers who are not illiterate (which disqualifies them as oral performers in the strict sense of the Parry-Lord theory of oral literature), the category of the 'vocal' has been proposed as an intermediary between the oral and the written.[52] Such vocal literature was of crucial importance for the propagation of ideas, concepts and images in the diglossic society of Chosŏn Korea, with its range of degrees of literacy. In Korea, the concise *shijo* and more discursive *kasa* fit perfectly under this rubric and have served as major channels for the transmission of Chinese culture. In principle, they were creations of *yangban* culture, albeit to a lesser degree in the late Chosŏn period than in the early years of the dynasty. They circulated primarily in vocal form and were, on occasion, consciously used to reach layers of society who were not literate, at least not in so far as literacy was understood by the *yangban*. To propagate the Confucian message of the sixteen *shijo* collectively entitled *Hunmin ka* 訓民歌 (Songs to educate the people), composed by Chŏng Ch'ŏl 鄭澈 (1536-1593), the government had them printed in the seventeenth century and sent to the provinces, to "be constantly recited by women and children".[53] From the contents of this publi-


童동蒙몽先션習습諺언解히
天텬地디之지間간萬만物믈之지衆즁
애唯유人인이最최貴귀ᄒᆞ니所소貴귀乎
호人인者쟈ᄂᆞᆫ以이其기有유五오倫륜
也야라是시故고로孟밍子ᄌᆞㅣ曰왈父
부子ᄌᆞ有유親친ᄒᆞ며君군臣신有유義의
ᄒᆞ며夫부婦부有유別별ᄒᆞ며長댱幼유有유
序셔ᄒᆞ며朋붕友우有유信신이라ᄒᆞ시니人인
而이不블知지有유五오常샹則즉其기
違위禽금獸슈ㅣ不블遠원矣의라리然연
童蒙先習諺解

Tongmong sŏnsŭp 童蒙先習 (see footnote 50 for more details)

Evidence that shamans were familiar with *shijo* by the end of the nineteenth century at the latest is provided by *muga* from Seoul which incorporate some of these *shijo* in their entirety. *Muga* from other regions contain at least traces of *shijo*.[54] Apart from that there is considerable overlap between *muga* and *shijo* in formulaic phrases. The same may be said, a fortiori, of *kasa*. It is no exaggeration to say that the references to literate Sinitic culture that are common in the *muga* can nearly all be found in *kasa* too, even though they often appear in a completely different context.

In some cases, a somewhat closer relationship may

50 *Tongmong sŏnsŭp* has been attributed to Pak Semu 朴世茂 (1487-1564) and Kim An'guk 金安國 (1478-1543). The postface to the oldest printed edition, dated 1543, however, names Min Chein 閔齊仁 (1493-1549) as the author. There is ample evidence to show that it was frequently reprinted and widely used. *Tongmong sŏnsŭp ŏnhae*, the edition commissioned by Yŏngjo, was published in 1742, 1748 and 1797. One commercial edition of *Tongmong sŏnsŭp* from 1880 added Korean endings to the notes, making it easier to read for those with an imperfect knowledge of Chinese. Another edition was published in 1891. In several places its printing blocks were kept so that new copies could be made at any time. Cf. Maurice Courant, *Bibliographie Coréenne: Tableau littéraire de la Corée* 3 vols. with supplement (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1894-1901), nrs. 12 and 13; Fang, Chaoying, *The Asami Library: a Descriptive Catalogue* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p; 209; Kim Tujong 金斗鍾, *Han'guk ko-inswae kisul sa* 韓國古印刷史 (Seoul: T'amgudang, 1981), pp. 240, 372, 457 and 459; Maema Kyōsaku 前間恭作, *Han'guk p'anbonhak* 韓國板本學 (Korean annot ated edition, prepared by An Ch'un'gŭn 安春根, of *Chōsen no hanpon* 朝鮮の板本. Seoul: Pŏmusa, 1985), pp. 69-70. For online access to an *ŏnhae* version of the book, see: http://yoksa.aks.ac.kr/jsp/aa/ImageView.jsp?aa10up=kh2_je_a_vsu_A10D^26_000&aa10no=kh2_je_a_vsu_A10D^26_001 [accessed 20 November 2010].

51 Pak Semu (oe 外), *Tongmong sŏnsŭp (oe)*, with transl. by Yi Sŏkho 李錫浩 (Seoul: Uryŭ munhwasa, 1974), pp. 42-73.

52 Barbara Ruch, "Medieval Jongleurs and the Making of a National Literature," in John Whitney Hall and Toyoda Takeshi (eds.), *Japan in the Muromachi Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 286-287.

53 They were also referred to as *Kwŏnmin ka*"勸民歌 (Songs to encourage the people [to behave properly]). Cf. Dieter Eikemeier, "Daß Man die Frauen und Kinder in den Dörfern Veranlaßt sie Ständig zu Rezitieren," in Dieter Eikemeier et al. (eds.), *Ch'en-yüeh chi* (Tübingen: Attempto, 1982), pp. 31-53. For a reflection on the boundaries and connections between Chinese and vernacular literature, it is interesting to note that in the nineteenth century Song Talsu 宋達洙 translated the "Hunmin ka" into Chinese; ibid. p. 45.

54 Walraven, *Songs of the Shaman*, pp. 116-117.

be detected between *kasa* and *muga*, although their exact connection is hard to define. The initial lines of the *Thousand Character Text*, for instance, which have been mentioned above as appearing in a *muga*, also appear as the opening lines of the anonymous *kasa* "Oksŏl hwadap ka" 옥설화답가, which must have been written before 1828.[55] This *kasa* also contains geomantic descriptions of China and Korea and references to Chinese and Korean history that are very similar to passages found in many shaman songs.

The *kasa* "Myŏngdang ka" 명당가, which is of uncertain date but belongs to the late Chosŏn period, contains a description of a geomantically auspicious home (which ultimately derives its force from Paektusan, [56] the 'ancestor' of all Korean mountains). [57] Such geomantic descriptions constitute a theme that is frequently found in *muga*, but is not shamanic in origin. Geomancy was a separate system of belief, potentially at odds with shamanism, which was introduced from China in the late Shilla period. Only when it had become too influential to ignore must it have intruded into the world of the *muga*. In "Myŏngdang ka" there are also several references to Chinese tradition or Confucian customs that cannot be explained as being of purely shamanic origin. The *kasa* speaks, for instance, of the wealth of Shi Chong 石崇, the "hundred children" of Guo Fenyang 郭汾陽, and functionaries of the Confucian local compacts (*hyangyak* 鄕約). All this makes it unlikely that "Myŏngdang ka" is a 'literary' elaboration of a shaman song. It is quite plausible, on the other hand, that the geomantic descriptions found so frequently in *muga* are derived in their entirety from geomantic *kasa* like "Myŏngdang ka".

In this connection, Shin Chaehyo's "Kosă" is of interest. As its alternative name "Myŏngdang ch'ugwŏn" suggests, it is very similar in content to "Myŏngdang ka", but references to the superior geomantic qualities of the Kyŏngbok 慶福 Palace suggest a connection with the rebuilding of this palace, which was completed in 1869. This is corroborated by Shin's "Syŏngjyo ka", which appears to have been written for performance by his protégée Chin Ch'aesŏn 陳彩仙 at a banquet held to celebrate the reconstruction of Kyŏngbok Palace. Shin adapted ritual texts, such as the *mudang* might sing, to suit his own purposes. On the other hand, later *muga* for the house god also refer to the rebuilding of the Kyŏngbok Palace and seem, directly or indirectly, to be influenced by Sin Chaehyo's version.[58]

Another *kasa* that should be considered here is "Ant'aek ka" 안택가,[59] which is, again, of uncertain date. *Ant'aek* was the name of a ritual that was performed by *p'ansu*[60] 판수 or *mudang* to obtain the blessing of a peaceful household. One may assume that the *kasa* "Ant'aek ka", which is replete with references to Chinese history and Confucian sages, is a sinified version of a song sung during such rituals. Possibly the sinitic elements were added in the milieu of the *p'ansu*, who were men and therefore somewhat more acceptable to the *yangban* elite than the *mudang*. It is also possible that learned allusions were inserted when the text came to be sung for entertainment rather than for ritual purposes. In any case it is quite likely, however, that the more elaborate, sinified versions again influenced the songs sung by the *p'ansu* and *mudang*, which in general also display features associated with elite culture.

P'ansori is another possible channel through which elements from elite culture may have entered the *muga*. The "Hogu nojŏnggi" mentioned earlier, for instance, contains quite an explicit reference to the *p'ansori* libretto *Hŭngbu ka*. *P'ansori* itself may have grown out of the narrative songs of the shamans,[61] but if so the latter influenced the manner of singing rather than the content of the songs. On the whole the formulaic phrases and themes shared by *p'ansori* and *muga* are of such a nature that it is much more plausible that they entered the *muga* from the *p'ansori* than the other way around. A good example is one of the *hŏdu ka* 虛頭歌 (relatively short songs for *p'ansori* singers to loosen their voices) written by Sin Chaehyo. Sometimes referred to as "Yŏktae ka" 歷代歌, it presents an overview of Chinese and Korean history of

55 Kim Sŏngbae 金聖培 et Al., *Kasa munhak chŏnjip* 歌辭文學全集 (Seoul: Chŏngyŏnsa, 1961), pp. 556-561; B.C.A. Walraven, "Ch'ŏnjamun-ŭro poa-on Han'guk kasa" 千字文으로 보아 온 韓國歌辭, *Kugŏ kungmunhak* 국어국문학 XCIII (Seoul, 1984), pp. 459-472.

56 Gari Ledyard says of Mt. Paektu that from the Koryŏ period it functioned as "a spiritual power plant that sent potent legitimating forces coursing through Korea's veins"; see his "Cartography in Korea," p. 278.

57 Kim Sŏngbae et al., *Kasa munhak chŏnjip*, pp. 298-300.

58 Walraven, *Songs of the Shaman*, pp. 152, 173-174

59 Kim Sŏngbae et al., *Kasa munhak chŏnjip*, pp. 311-316.

60 The male *p'ansu* carried out rituals for purposes that were similar to those performed by the *mudang*, but they were more likely to exorcize spirits, whereas the for the most part female shamans tended to adopt a more respectful manner, begging and cajoling the spirit world.

61 Marshall R. Pihl, *The Korean Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1994), pp. 60-63.

the kind one also finds in simplified form in the shaman songs.[62]

The genres mentioned above could not function as channels for the transmission of elements of literate culture without human agency. The clerks in administrative offices, both in the capital and in the provinces, were instances of the diffusion of elite culture, and they undoubtedly contributed to its further dissemination. Some members of their class, for example, became involved in the publication of books. In spite of their literacy and aspirations to upward mobility, however, they held on to the corporate worship of deities venerated by the shamans, which their *yangban* superiors regarded with a wary eye.[63] They were also in regular contact with people who were directly related to the vocal genres mentioned above. In the eighteenth century, Kim Ch'ŏnt'aek 金天澤 and Kim Sujang 金壽長, both non-*yangban* government employees, established a reputation as singers and anthologists of *shijo*. In general, the clerks who worked in government offices had the opportunity to get to know the musicians and other performing artists (*kwangdae* 광대) who were called upon to perform at official functions and who, in turn, were often married to *mudang*.[64] *Kwangdae* were also called upon in certain places to perform the small rituals referred to as *kosa*[65] and they played a pivotal role in the creation of *p'ansori*, a genre which in itself fused elite and popular culture. How close the *kwangdae* were to the *mudang* may be inferred from the use of the term *mubu* 巫夫, 'shaman's husband' as an alternative appellation for the performing artists who worked for the government.[66] The existence of ties between shamans and *kwangdae* is illustrated by some lines from the *Ch'angbu kŏri* 倡夫거리, a ritual sequence devoted to the deified spirits of *kwangdae*. In a *muga* sung in Seoul during this sequence the early-nineteenth-century *p'ansori* singer Mo Hŭnggap 牟興甲 is mentioned as the *Urvater* of all *kwangdae*.[67] The parallelism in the lines of this song clearly expresses the close relationship between *mudang* and *kwangdae*:

> *The great ancestors of the mudang are Ahwang* 蛾黃 *and Yŏyŏng* 餘榮,[68]
> *the great ancestor of the kwangdae is Mun [= Mo] Hŭnggap.*

Kim Hŏnsŏn 金憲宣 has suggested that the text of the *Ch'angbu kŏri* was originally used by the *kwangdae* for *kosa* that they themselves used to perform, as well as by other artists of the Chosŏn period, such as the itinerant *namsadang* 男寺黨 or *kŏllipp'ae* 乞粒牌.[69] On the basis of details in the text he argues convincingly that the *muga* is probably based on a particular form of *kosa* the *kwangdae* performed for the *yangban* who had passed the state examinations.[70] If this is true, it is important to remember that in the end such texts were used for all kinds of shamanic rituals and had a much wider audience than that for which they were originally intended.

Kisaeng 妓生, too, were part of the chain that linked elite culture to other strata of the population. They are known as performers of both *shijo* and *kasa* in general, and more specifically there are records of *kisaeng* chanting the Confucian classic of *The Great Learning* (in Andong 安東), Chŏng Ch'ŏl's *kasa* "Kwandong pyŏlgok" 關東別曲 (in the Kwandong area and Seoul) and the eulogy of the ancestors of the royal family, *Yongbiŏch'ŏn ka* 龍飛御天歌 (in Yŏnghŭng 永興, the ancestral abode of the Yi monarchs).[71] They stood in frequent contact with the *yangban*, but were often related through blood ties to shamans and *kwangdae*.[72] Because they were in the employment of the government, they were, moreover, in regular contact with the government clerks, for whom they were potential wives.[73]

Last but not least, we must take into account the possi-

62 Kang Hanyŏng, *Shin Chaehyo p'ansori sasŏl chip*, pp. 655-657.
63 Walraven, "Popular Religion in a Confucianized Society," pp. 178-179.
64 Walraven, *Songs of the Shaman*, p. 105-107.
65 Son T'aedo 손대도, *Kwangdae ŭi kach'ang munhwa* 광대의 가창문화 (Seoul: Chimmundang, 2003), pp. 156-179.
66 The *mubu* were united in local associations, which seem also to have supervised the activities of the *mudang*; Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 2, pp. 275-296. It should be noted that the statutes of these associations were in Chinese, suggesting a certain command of the language among the *mubu*. For a recent study of the connections between *mubu* or *kwangdae* and shamans see Son T'aedo, *Kwangdae ŭi kach'ang munhwa*, in particular Chapter 2.
67 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū*, vol. 1, p. 110. The text actually says Mun Hŭnggap, but there is general consensus that this is a corruption of Mo Hŭnggap.
68 Ahwang and Yŏyŏng are the names of the two wives of the legendary Chinese emperor Shun 舜.
69 These groups were originally affiliated to Buddhist temples for which they collected money for reconstruction projects, and the like.
70 Kim Hŏnsŏn, *Han'guk hwaraengi musok ŭi yŏksa-wa wŏlli* 한국 화랭이 무속의 역사와 원리 (Seoul: Chisik sanŏpsa, 1997), pp. 82-85.
71 Yi Nŭnghwa 李能和, *Chosŏn haeŏhwasa* 朝鮮解語花史 (facsimile of the original 1926 edition; Seoul: Sinhan sŏrim, 1968), pp. 192-194.
72 Walraven, *Songs of the Shaman*, p. 111.

bility of the existence of a limited number of literate shamans. As 'spiritual mothers and fathers' (*shin ŏmŏni* 신어머니 and *shin abŏji* 신아버지) of junior shamans they may have been able to train their disciples to memorize texts that were more indebted to literate culture than would have been possible otherwise. In the case of the *p'ansu*, who were blind (like the singer of the Sŏngjo *muga* discussed above), the abundance of literary references may be explained as due to the training they received from literate assistants.

The combined efforts of these different social groups – the clerks, *kwangdae* and other performing artists, *kisaeng*, *p'ansu* and *mudang* – provided 'stepping stones', bridging the divide between the literate and the oral, the rulers and the ruled.

CONCLUSIONS

In the argument presented above, the emphasis has been on the movement from elements of elite culture that were originally firmly linked to the cosmopolitan language of written Chinese towards the vernacular songs of the shamans. The use of phrases from Chinese history and literature in the *muga* was an effort to appropriate at least something of the authority of the culture of the dominant elite. It may also be seen as an attempt to cater to the taste of the *yangban* and educated patrons, who in the privacy of their own quarters continued to sponsor shamanic rituals.[74] The very wide diffusion of such phrases in *muga* from all over the country suggests, however, that it was not only to please the more educated clients. At least by the time the *muga* were recorded, elements that had originally been part of elite culture were a major ingredient of the songs, irrespective of the audience. By then the *muga* had turned into a channel for the transmission of Confucian culture to layers of the population that were far removed from the centre of power.

At the same time, however, shaman songs turned into an instrument for the transformation of the culture they seemed to defer to. They subverted it, because they did not respect the exclusive, hegemonic claims of the dominant ideology. In the songs Confucian elements appear side by side with Buddhist phrases, all within a shamanic context, and in the final analysis all borrowings serve the ends of the shamans. A female shaman from Ch'ungch'ŏng Province begins her narrative *muga* about the god Chesŏk (originally the Indian celestial god Indra) as follows, effortlessly moving from Confucianism to Buddhism and then to concepts that, in a broad sense, may be called Daoist:[75]

> *When Heaven was created under the sign of cha* 子 [76]
> *the Heavenly Sovereign appeared,*
> *when Earth was created under the sign of ch'uk* 丑
> *the Terrestrial Sovereign appeared,*
> *when man was created under the sign of in* 寅,
> *the Human Sovereign appeared.*
> *Taihao Fuxi* 太昊伏羲 *and Emperor Shennong* 神農,
> *Yao* 堯, *Shun, Yu* 禹 *and Tang* 湯, *Wen* 文 *and Wu* 武,
> *the Duke of Zhou* 周公,
> *and Confucius revered the Way of the Literati.*
> *At that time the Way of the Buddha was created*
> *and the Tathāgata Śākyamuni, the Buddha Amitābha*
> *and the World-Honoured Three Buddhas appeared.*
> *Then the heavenly official Sŏkchon* 釋尊[77] *Chesŏk* 帝釋
> *who had been on a mission in heaven*
> *committed an offence in heaven*
> *and [by way of punishment] went down*
> *to the Chancellery [in the world] of Mankind*
> *(In'ganch'ŏng* 人間廳*).*

What we see at work here we may regard as what Michel de Certeau has called "the use made in 'popular' milieus of the cultures diffused by the 'elites' that produce language", which is "the revenge that utilizing tactics take on the power that dominates [cultural] production".[78]

There is another, and for the purposes of this article more important, implication, however. The abundant use of language and ideas derived from elite culture, which benefitted from the consistent attempts by the government to propagate Confucian values among the population, was more than just an attempt to share the prestige of the elite and a ruse to retain other cultural forms that

73 Kim Yongsuk 金用淑, *Han'guk yŏsoksa* 韓國女俗史 (Seoul: Minŭmsa, 1990), p. 245.

74 Walraven, "Popular Religion in a Confucianized Society," and "Shamans and Popular Religion Around 1900," in Henrik H. Sørensen (ed.), *Religions in Traditional Korea*, (SBS Monographs 3; Copenhagen, 1995), pp. 107-130.

75 Kim Yŏngjin 金榮振, *Ch'ungch'ŏngdo muga* 忠淸道巫歌 (Seoul: Hyŏngsŏl ch'ulp'ansa, 1976), p. 244.

76 *Cha*, and – in following lines – *ch'uk* and *in*, are the first three of the Twelve Branches, the zodiacal signs of Rat, Ox and Tiger.

77 Sŏkchon is actually a designation for Śakyamuni, but here seems to refer to Chesŏk.

78 Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, transl. by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 32.

better fitted the daily needs of the dominated. Whether it intended to do so or not, it also created, or helped to create (because there were other factors at work as well), a common language and a common set of ideas shared by a very large proportion of the population, which in turn forged a larger community than the groups constituted by ties of family, class and locality. Ultimately it may be seen as contributing to the creation of a national culture and the nation-state.

The concept of the community of the nation was based on a Confucian social template, but it is important to note that, for both the elite and the dominated, this had been shorn of one characteristic that is thought by some to have inhibited the emergence of a true national consciousness: the cosmopolitan, universalistic aspect of Confucianism.[79] High and low conceived of the community they lived in as delimited by the Yalu and the Tumen in the north and by the seas surrounding the peninsula.[80] In this sense, too, Confucian ideology was subverted.

The content of the *muga* provides concrete evidence for the creation of a national consciousness in this sense, and also for its diffusion. The songs of the shamans illustrate a conception of the world in which their rituals, in themselves private and local,[81] are placed in a much wider and public context, which also, however, has clear limits. With their descriptions of the territory of the nation, from Paektusan in the north to Hallasan on Cheju Island in the south,[82] the *muga* created an imaginary space that went beyond the actual experience of the participants in the rituals, but stayed within national boundaries. Both shamans and clients were depicted as belonging to a specific territory, which was not the local village or the private space where the ritual was performed, but Korea (which even in the twentieth-century versions of the songs retained many of the characteristics of Chosŏn) as a whole. This was done through the frequent repetition of standard themes such as 'Mountains and rivers', 'Auspicious geomantic location', and 'Itinerary', which would give even peasants who had never strayed from their own hamlet a mental map of the country.[83] This territory was, moreover, depicted, through the many *muga* passages enumerating successive dynasties and national capitals, as a historically constituted entity. Sometimes these passages are historically correct, at other times not, but in this context their accuracy is irrelevant. The imagining of a community does not depend on valid historical proof; the act of imagination itself suffices. The *muga* also present Korea as a politically unified whole, with a particular administrative structure and recruiting mechanisms for new officials, through themes like 'Government posts', 'Magistrate's procession', and 'Examination scene'. As the lines quoted at the beginning of this article attest, in the imaginary of the *muga* the apparatus of this state was so much respected and central that even gods are described as going to take the examinations in the nation's capital.

In some passages, Chinese territory and Chinese history are mentioned as well, but there is always an awareness that Korea is different, even while it shares the same civilization. Sinitic civilization is an important point of reference for 'Little China', but Korea retains its own identity.[84] In the "Sonnim kut" *muga*, the crossing of the Yalu by the 'Guests' is marked as a crucial moment by the great difficulties the *Sonnim* have to overcome to reach the other bank of the river. Other *Sonnim* songs, from different Korean regions, also emphasize that Korean food is different from and better than Chinese food. This is a typical example of ignoring regional differences in

79 James Palais mentions the influence of Sung Neo-Confucianism as a "major obstacle to the development of national consciousness"; see "Nationalism: Good or Bad?" in *Nationalism and the Construction of Korean Identity*, ed. by Hyung Il Pai and Timothy R. Tangherlini (Berkeley: Institute of Asian Studies/Center for Korean Studies, 1998), pp. 215-216. For some objections against this idea see Duncan, "Proto-nationalism in Premodern Korea," p. 210: "The modern depiction of the *yangban* as hopeless Sinophile toadyists […] seems to me to be a gross simplification of a complex and constantly shifting mentality that often placed primary emphasis on a distinctly Korean identity."

80 This is obvious when one reads, for instance, *kasa* or *shijo* written by the *yangban* about their trips beyond the border. Crossing the border is invariably a moment of great emotional significance. In an account of his exile to a remote island off the southern coast, Yi Sebo (1802-95) expresses relief that although the people there are hardly civilized, they at least belong to "our country" (*aguk* 我國); Chin Tonghyŏk 진동혁, *Chusŏk Yi Sebo shijo chip* 주석 이세보 시조집 (Seoul: Chŏngŭmsa, 1985).

81 It is responsiveness to private needs that are not served by general social and political structures that has kept shamans in business over the centuries; cf. Walraven, "Popular Religion in a Confucianized Society," pp. 160-198, and for contemporary society "Weavers of Ritual: How Korean Shamans Achieve their Aims," *Review of Korean Studies* vol. 5, No. 1 (2002): pp. 85-104.

82 Akamatsu & Akiba, *Chōsen fuzoku no kenkyū,* vol. 1, p. 257.

83 For a list of the most common themes of this kind, see Walraven, *Songs of the Shaman*, Appendix III.

84 Similarly, in the Chinese poems written by Koreans during the Koryŏ period constant allusions and overt references to China did not stand in the way of an already firm sense of Korean identity; François Martin, "Expression Chinoise et Spécificité Coréenne: Quelques Remarques sur le *Hansi* (Poème Coréen en Langue Chinoise)," *Cahiers d'Études Coréennes* 5 (1989): pp. 147-167.

order to imagine national unity, which characteristically has to gloss over an abundance of potentially conflicting identities. The fact is that even in the second half of the twentieth century regional differences in food in Korea were so pronounced that a taxi driver in Chŏnju 全州 could assure me that people like him could go to nearby Kyŏngsang Province, but it was impossible for them to stay there overnight, "because we cannot eat their food". Yet, in the *muga* Korean food is one, and in its imagined unity, superior to Chinese food.

Thus in the *muga* one can detect a premodern 'vernacularly imagined community', a representation of unity with, I would suggest, the contours of a nation-state. The fact that this idea of unity, disseminated vocally through popular rituals, did not depend on developments associated with modernity such as print capitalism, the factor Benedict Anderson has seen as crucial to the origin of national consciousness,[85] should stimulate a questioning and rethinking of the use of terms like national consciousness and nation-state and their relation to modernity (a concept whose validity has also been questioned). This is, of course, not an issue that is only relevant to Korean history. The common assumption that the rise of nation-states is a relatively recent phenomenon, and inseparably linked to the emergence of modernity, has also been challenged by prominent European mediaeval historians who advocate the thesis that the formation of nation-states took place centuries before the advent of modernity. Recently, a vigorous debate about the matter in Britain has suggested a cautious rapprochement between the two positions, which may inspire a rethinking of the problem in the context of other geographical areas.[86] For Korea, the nationalist tendency of much of twentieth-century historiography has stood in the way of a dispassionate examination of the origin of national consciousness, with advocates of a perennial national identity confronting scholars who reacted by countering any suggestion that the nation-state, let alone nationalism, might have predated the nineteenth or twentieth century. Undoubtedly the radical changes occurring around that time significantly changed concepts of Korean identity. Without a thorough investigation of all relevant factors, however, there is no reason to believe that Korea, which in its historical development followed a path different in many ways from that of European nations, neatly fits the paradigm that links modernity (in itself a notion that needs to be questioned[87]) and the nation-state (which poses problems even when applied to Europe[88]). To mention but one factor, the Confucian vision of the state as an organic whole in which each group has its own tasks to fulfil but everyone is part of the wider community, has the potential to develop into the basis of a nation-state when this vision comes to be shared by the majority of the population, which arguably it did in the second half of the Chosŏn period.[89] Contrary to what one might expect, the *muga* (together with other vernacular vocal genres like the *kasa*) reinforced this vision, functioning as a channel for the diffusion and reproduction of an identity that transcended the local community.

85 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Chapter 3.

86 The dialogue between the "modernists" and their opponents in Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (eds.) *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) points in the direction of a modification of the viewpoints of both parties and adds considerable nuance to the debate but is, as the title indicates, completely focused on European history.

87 Cf. Jack Goody's assault on the concept of modernity as a fundamentally European phenomenon, with the Italian Renaissance as "the critical moment in the development of 'modernity'". Goody, *Renaissances: The One or the Many* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For an alternative East-Asian concept of modernity, see Miyajima Hiroshi, "The Advent of the Japanese Early Modern Age Within East Asia," *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies* vol. 7, 2 (2007), pp. 25-48.

88 The general concept of the nation-state tends to deflect attention from important differences between nations. Great Britain and Italy, for instance, are nation-states in very different ways.

89 Theorists of national consciousness and nationalism tend to see (theoretical) equality as crucial to the emergence of the (modern) nation-state. This assumption, too, should be questioned. Wide-spread political involvement, deemed essential for the nation-state, does not automatically guarantee an absence of hierarchy; cf. Scales and Zimmer, *Power and the Nation in European History*, p. 9.

Felix Siegmund

Tubers in a Grain Culture:

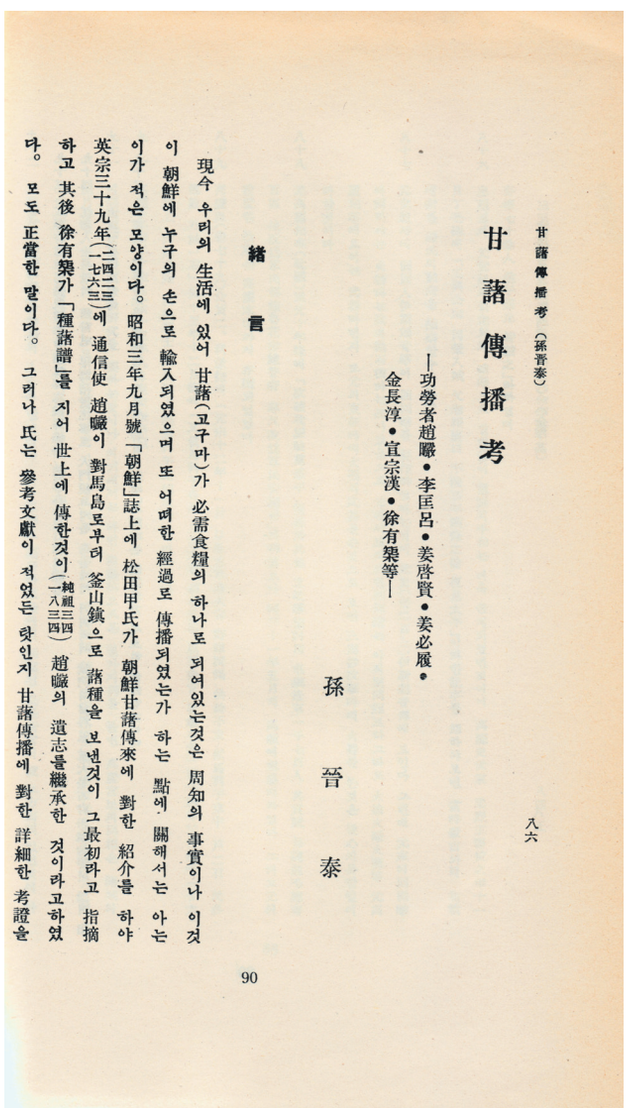
THE INTRODUCTION OF SWEET AND WHITE POTATOES TO CHŎSON KOREA AND ITS CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS[1]

INTRODUCTION

In the early years of the second half of the eighteenth century, a number of Korean scholars planned an agricultural revolution. They intended to solve, once and for all, the problem of feeding Korea by importing and cultivating a new food crop: the sweet potato.[2] They were optimistic about the potential of this plant, and went to great lengths to import it. The sweet potato had already changed Chinese and Japanese agriculture, and was now to be tried out in Korea.

This article deals with the history of food in late Chosŏn Korea – specifically with the history of the sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) and the potato (*Solanum tuberosum*), which will be called the 'white potato' in order to differentiate between the two species. The two 'potatoes' are not botanically related, but the semantic similarity suggested by their names in English is also found in Korean and, more importantly, in Classical Chinese – to the extent that we cannot always be sure which tuber a text is talking about. Also, both the roles generally attributed to the two tubers in East Asian agricultural literature and their taxonomic proximity to each other suggest they should be examined together, as they shall be here.[3]

This article is intended to be understood as an example of how we can approach and extract meaning from material culture (in this case, food culture) in the history of Chosŏn Korea. It is also my intention to shed some light on the structures in which (material) culture, economics, and systems of thought are interwoven to form the fabric of what we call 'society'. Furthermore, the use


甘藷傳播考 (孫晉泰)

甘藷傳播考

—功勞者趙曮•李匡呂•姜啓賢•姜必履•
金長淳•宣宗漢•徐有榘等—

孫晉泰

八六

緒言

現今 우리의 生活에 있어 甘藷(고구마)가 必需食糧의 하나로 되여있는것은 周知의 事實이나 이것이 朝鮮에 누구의 손으로 輸入되였으며 또 어떠한 經過로 傳播되였는가 하는 點에 關해서는 아는이가 적은 모양이다。昭和三年九月號「朝鮮」誌上에 松田甲氏가 朝鮮甘藷傳來에 對한 紹介를 하야 英宗三十九年(一七六三)에 通信使 趙曮이 對馬島로부터 釜山鎭으로 藷種을 보낸것이 그最初라고 指摘하고 其後 徐有榘가「種藷譜」를 지어 世上에 傳한것이(純祖三四(一八三四)) 趙曮의 遺志를繼承한 것이라고하였다。모도 正當한 말이다。그러나 氏는 參考文獻이 적었든 탓인지 甘藷傳播에 對한 詳細한 考證을

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The first page of Son Chint'ae's pioneering study

1 This work was supported by the Academy of Korean Studies of the Republic of Korea in the years 2009/2010 (AKS-2009-MA-1001).

2 The word 'potato' is derived from a word in a South American language, which was rendered as 'batata'. It was first used for the sweet potato and only later came to refer to the white potato. See J.G. Hawkes, "History of the Potato", in *The Potato Crop*, ed. by P.M. Harris (London: Chapman & Hall, 1978), p. 5.

3 However, examining them together – as two subjects in one article – does not mean that they were used in almost the same way, as implied by Michael Pettid, *Korean Cuisine. An Illustrated History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), p. 44.

of source material from agronomic manuals (*nongsŏ* 農書) will, I hope, show the usefulness of these manuals as sources for social and even an intellectual history. I am no specialist in cultural theory, or in agronomic history. My approach is based on the picture that emerges from the sources; therefore, some of those sources are quoted at some length in translation. I hope that specialists in the fields of food history, cultural theory and agronomic history will find the preliminary remarks in this article useful and find that they broaden the perspective. My reason for writing this article, despite the daunting nature of the task, is the absence of publications on such topics – specifically on the sweet potato – in Western languages. I hope that more interest in the connections between agronomic and economic history, material and general culture, and intellectual history might be generated in Korean studies.

The importance of the history of food is clear from the frequent famines, sometimes resulting in mass starvation, which were a common problem in later Chosŏn and gave rise to annual food shortages in the spring, before the new grain crops could be harvested. These were so common we might even assume that people were accustomed to them. The lower strata of the populace seldom had enough to eat.[4] From the late seventeenth century onwards, cultivation of the sweet potato played an important role in the relief of famine crises in the southern Chinese region of Fujian, where it was introduced by Chinese seamen in 1593 or 1594.[5] The sweet potato was also introduced to Japan in the early seventeenth century, and was used very successfully to fight famine there too.[6] Sweet potato cultivation was remarkably successful in the region of Satsuma in southern Japan, especially in the early eighteenth century.[7]

Another historical process more likely to be known to Western readers is the spread of the potato in Europe and the near total shift of grain-based to potato-based economies, the most famous example being the introduction of the potato to nineteenth-century Ireland, with catastrophic consequences.[8] While it is not possible to discuss the spread of the tubers in more depth here, all in all, the two 'potatoes' seem to have been of great use in warding off famine following their dissemination around the world. But tubers – or the sweet potato, at least – seem to have been less effective in Korea. This article also attempts to explain why the sweet potato was less successful there and how that came to be so.

While there is a wealth of scholarly publications on the philosophical, cosmological, ideological and political histories of Korea, the country's agricultural and economic history and the history of its material culture have received very little attention in the West, even though they would obviously be relevant to understanding an agrarian society like Chosŏn. The history of tubers in Korea has, to my knowledge, not been dealt with in Western languages, but the subject has been studied by Korean and Japanese scholars. Modern scholarly interest in the history of the sweet potato in Korea starts with a study by the Japanese linguist Ogura Shinpei 小倉進平, which was included in his study on Korean dialects, published in 1924 in Keijō 京城 (now Seoul).[9] Ogura Shinpei's study does not appear to have had a great impact on his contemporaries and a later study by the Korean historian Son Chint'ae 孫晉泰 (1900-?),[10] published in 1941, does not mention it. Son Chint'ae's publication was followed by a slow but steady succession of studies on the sweet potato in Korea, which recently culminated in a wide-ranging work on Cho Ŏm 趙曮 (1719-1777) and the sweet potato, published in 2004, which can be said to sum up Korean scholarship on the history of the tuber.[11]

Following Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea (1592-1598), the country's economic and demographic foundations – including its agriculture – had to be rebuilt. In such a situation organizational and social changes were likely to occur. But Korean agriculture also changed because of the new crops that were gradually introduced to the country. The most noteworthy among them were corn (maize), tobacco, tomato, red pepper (chilli pepper), pumpkins,

4 Kang Inhŭi 姜仁姬, *Han'guk siksaenghwal sa* 韓國食生活史, 2nd edn. (Seoul: Samyŏngsa 三英社, 1989), p. 315.

5 Quan Hansheng 全漢昇, *Ming Qing jingjishi yanjiu* 明清經濟史研究 (Taibei 臺北: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi 聯經出版事業公司, 1987), p. 57. Gong Zongjian 公宗鑒, "Dui ganshu de zairenshi 对甘薯的再认识", *Nongye kaogu* 农业考古 1 (1991), 205-218 (p. 208).

6 Patricia O'Brien, "Sweet Potatoes and Yams", in *The Cambridge World History of Food*, ed. by Kenneth F. Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), I, 207-218 (p. 209).

7 Kim Chaesŭng 金在勝, "Cho Ŏm-ŭi koguma chŏnp'a-wa chaebaebŏp yŏng'guja 조엄의 고구마 전파와 재배법 연구자", in *Cho Ŏm yŏn'gu nonch'ong* 趙曮研究論叢, ed. by O Yŏnggyo 오영교 (Wŏnju 原州: Wŏnju-si 原州市, 2004), 39-94, (p. 48).

8 James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire: Exotic Produce and British Taste 1660-1800* (London: McMillan, 1997), p. 104.

9 Ogura Shinpei 小倉進平, *Nanbu Chōsen-no hōgen* 南部朝鮮の方言 (Keijō 京城 [Seoul]: Chōsenshi gakukai 朝鮮史学会, 1924).

10 Son Chint'ae 孫晉泰, "*Kamjŏ chŏnp'a ko*甘藷傳播考", *Chindan hakpo* 震檀學報 13 (1941), 86-109.

11 *Cho Ŏm yŏn'gu nonch'ong* 趙曮研究論叢, ed.by O Yŏnggyo 오영교(Wŏnju 原州: Wŏnju-si 原州市, 2004).

and, finally, the sweet and white potatoes. It is noteworthy that among these plants only maize and the two 'potatoes' are potential staples, so their role can be expected to differ from that of the other crops. Another important agricultural change in the later Chosŏn period was the trend towards paddy field cultivation, encouraged by preferential treatment in taxation. As a consequence, paddy field agriculture could (through higher average yields) produce more grain with lower taxation, which resulted in a higher overall grain productivity. This rise in grain productivity makes it even harder to know what impact other (new) crops had on the economy, as it is possible that increased grain production was responsible for most or all of the changes in food security.

The food situation for the general populace in eighteenth-century Korea was tense, as the country suffered from yearly spring famines, which resulted from the supplies of the last year being used up before the new barley could be harvested.[12] Also, the climate at that time was probably influenced by the phenomenon known as the 'Little Ice Age', a general fall in temperature which worsened conditions for agriculture, especially for crops dependent on long periods of mild weather. According to data compiled by the historian Kim Yŏnok 金蓮玉, there was a period from around 1550 to 1800 in which extreme climatic phenomena occurred with great frequency.[13] The occurrence of such phenomena must have worsened the agronomic situation and would have contributed to a sense of crisis in agriculture that motivated a search for ways to improve the status quo of crop production. In 1763, the very year Cho Ŏm is believed to have brought sweet potatoes to Korea, possibly for the first time ever, the southern part of Korea suffered from a famine that affected nearly half a million people.[14] The success of sweet potato cultivation in China and Japan became known in Korea and as the precarious food situation of Korea's general populace was plain to see, it is not surprising that scholars began to consider the potential this new crop might have in the fight against famine and the efforts at stabilizing the country's food situation.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SWEET POTATO TO KOREA

There is not enough evidence to ascertain when the sweet potato first became known in Korea and when it was first discussed. The name for the sweet potato in Classical Chinese, *kamjŏ* 甘藷 (in Chinese it is pronounced *ganzhu*), came to Korea through agronomic manuals, together with information about the plant itself. The most important among those manuals are the *Nongzheng quanshu* 農政全書 and the *Ganzhu shu* 甘薯疏, both by the Chinese scholar Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 (1562-1633).[15] Xu Guangqi also spread the idea that food shortages should be offset by the extension of sweet potato cultivation.[16] While it is very likely that knowledge of the sweet potato first came to Korea through Chinese or Japanese books, it is difficult to say when this occurred, as it is not possible to date the introduction of such works to the country. To make matters worse, the spread of the information contained in (but not confined to) these books is nearly impossible to trace. It would involve the highly complex philological problem of mutual borrowing and the incorporation of texts, possibly with amendments or omissions, into newly compiled manuals, a topic that would itself require a book-length study. But the real problem lies in the fact that the publication of books tells us little about the spread of the practice of tuber cultivation – unless explicitly mentioned, which is rare. After all, the men who wrote these books did not tend to be practical farmers.

We can assume that the *Kamjŏ po* 甘藷譜, of unknown origin, is probably the earliest text on the sweet potato written and circulated in Korea. The text is also called *Kang-ssi kamjŏ po* 姜氏甘藷譜 (*Kang's Sweet Potato Manual*), as it is thought by some scholars to have been written by Kang P'illi 姜必履 (1713-1767).[17] The *Kamjŏ po* was followed by a wealth of publications on the cultivation of the sweet potato, many of which, fortunately, are extant. The premodern literature on the sweet potato consists mostly of manuals (*nongsŏ*) and, as would be expected, has a distinctly practical orientation. While most manuals also include a few remarks on the history of the sweet potato, the most important works on this subject are those by Yi Kyugyŏng 李圭景 (1788-?), which are not themselves

12 Yŏm Chŏngsŏp 염정섭, "Chosŏn sidae kuhwang chŏngch'aek-kwa kuhwang changmul-losŏ-ŭi koguma 조선시대 구황정책과 구황작물로서의 고구마", in *Cho Ŏm yŏn'gu nonch'ong*, ed. by O Yŏnggyo, 95-151, (p. 126).

13 Table nr. 7 in Kim Yŏnok 金蓮玉, "Han'guk-ŭi sobinggi kihu 韓國의 小氷期 氣候", *Chirihak-kwa chiri kyoyuk* 地理學과 地理敎育 14 (1984), 1-16, (p. 7).

14 Kim Chaesŭng 金在勝, "Koguma-ŭi Chosŏn chŏllae 고구마의 朝鮮 傳來," *Tongsŏ sahak* 東西史學 8 (2001), 97-117, (p. 105).

15 Kim Chaesŭng, "Cho Ŏm-ŭi koguma chŏnp'a", p. 63.

16 Francesca Bray, *Science and civilisation in China. Vol. 6: Biology and biological technology; Part 2: Agriculture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 67.

17 Yŏm Chŏngsŏp, "Chosŏn sidae kuhwang chŏngch'aek", p. 134.

manuals in the strictest sense. Although Yi Kyugyŏng's works contain information on the cultivation of the plant, their emphasis is on historical questions. Translations of parts of these works will be provided later in this article.

However, the account generally believed to describe the first introduction of the sweet potato to Korea is not an agronomic manual, but a passage from the *Haesa ilgi* 海槎日記, the extant travelogue of Cho Ŏm (1719-1777), who took part in the embassy to Japan in 1763. Cho Ŏm is also thought to have later compiled a short manual on sweet potato cultivation, probably based on the techniques he was introduced to in Japan, but I am unaware of any evidence for this manual. His account is as follows[18]:

> *On the island there is a plant whose leaves and roots are edible. It is named 'sweet potato'. Some call it hyojama* 孝子麻[19] *and in Japanese pronunciation it sounds like 'kogwiwima'* 古貴為麻.[20] *[…] It can be said that it is a good resource for the prevention of famines.*
> *One hears about these fruits that they came from the area around Nanjing* 南京[21] *and then came to Japan. On the islands of the Japanese land mass, they are especially widespread and Tsushima* 對馬 *is the place where sweet potato cultivation flourishes. […]*
> *Last year, when I came to the harbour of Sasuna* 佐須奈 *for the first time, I saw the sweet potatoes and after some effort I was given a few tu* 斗. *I took them with me, brought them to Pusan* 釜山 *and let them*[22] *take the seeds. This time, I have again made some effort and got sweet potatoes on my way back. I plan to give those sweet potato seeds to the officials in Naeju* 萊州.[23]
> *Among the other members of the embassy, there are also some who took sweet potatoes with them. If the seeds should all be able to sprout, and if we could then spread it broadly in our country and so make it […] helpful as in the case of cotton*[24] *– would that not be of great help for the people of our eastern country?*[25]

So upon having heard about the sweet potato and how its cultivation benefitted Japan, Cho Ŏm decided to search for it and bring seeds to Korea. He then gave those seeds away and they were planted in the region around Pusan, which is therefore the earliest confirmed place of sweet potato cultivation in Korea. However, Cho Ŏm envisioned much wider use of the sweet potato in Korea, an idea that is then often found with later writers:

> *If the sweet potatoes, which are to be planted in Naeju, should be a good and rich success, then one should also bring the sweet potato to Cheju* 濟州 *and the other islands and cultivate it there. This would be fitting indeed! I have heard that the soil and the environment in Cheju are mostly similar to those on Tsushima. If the sweet potato should finally yield a luxuriant success, one could entirely do away with the dependence of the people of Cheju on the relief service and the grain transports by sea from the stores in Chŏlla province! But it is unclear whether the region of Cheju is suitable for the cultivation of the sweet potato. The yields of the different soils are all different. If one just relocates plants at will, how can one foretell the results?*[26]

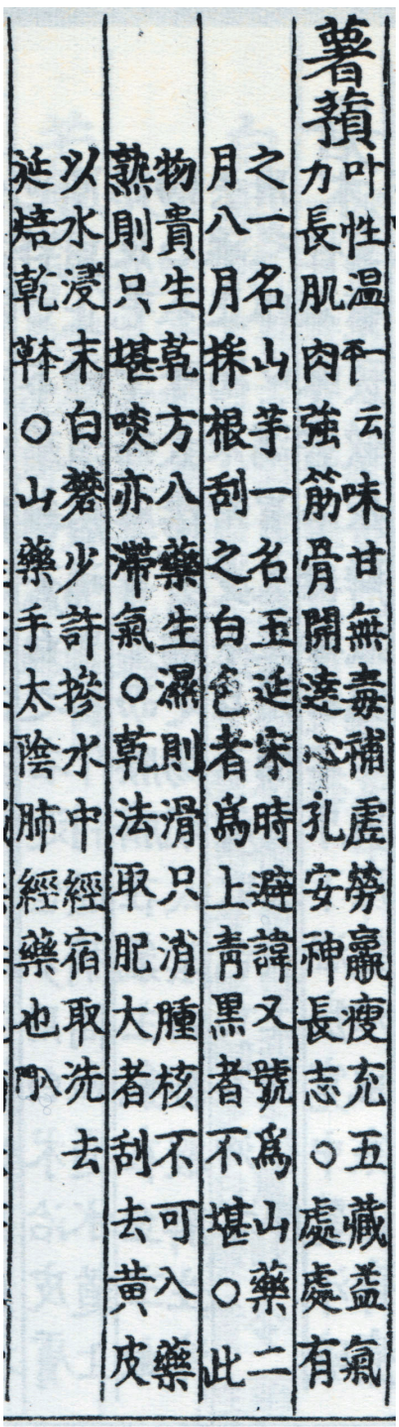
Even though he closes his account with a warning, the overall impression is that Cho Ŏm believed the sweet potato would help overcome the problem of food insecurity in the south of Korea. Cho Ŏm's account might indeed have helped in setting the scene for the pro-sweet potato literature that was to follow. However, not much attention was paid to his cautious remark about the difference between Japanese and Korean climate and soils. Most of the literature assumes that what worked in Japan and China could, and indeed would, work in Korea too. In the few decades after the introduction of the sweet potato, its cultivation was encouraged in a number of works, among which one of the best known is the *Pukhagŭi* 北

18 All translations are mine, unless specified otherwise.
19 *Hyojama* literally translates as "hemp of the filial son."
20 Semantically, this makes no sense, so it is presumably only used to transliterate the sound. 'Kogwiwima' is the modern Korean reading of the characters and thus differs from the Korean reading of the seventeenth century. The connection to the modern Korean *koguma* is quite visible in this form.
21 Nanjing was the capital of the Chinese Ming 明 dynasty, still in use after the fall of the dynasty in 1644. It is possible that Cho Ŏm expresses a degree of Ming-loyalism through this usage.
22 It is not clear who 'them' refers to. It is likely that Cho Ŏm gave the seeds to local administrative officials with whom he had contact in Pusan.
23 This is most likely another name for Tongnae 東萊, the area around Pusan.
24 Cho Ŏm refers to the benefits that the Korean economy gained from the introduction of cotton to the country from Yuan China in the mid fourteenth century. At the end of the fourteenth century, Chosŏn's cotton industry was well known. See Yi Ch'unnyŏng 李春寧, *Yijo nong'ŏp kisul sa* 李朝農業技術史, (Seoul: Han'guk yŏn'guhoe 韓國研究會, 1964), p. 44.
25 Cho Ŏm 趙曮, *Haesa il'gi* 海槎日記, kwŏn 5, month 6, day 18.
26 Ibid.

學議 manifesto by Pak Chega 朴齊家 (published 1790). Pak Chega was impressed by the sweet potato cultivation in Qing China and in the chapter titled "Planting Sweet Potatoes" he encourages emulation of the Chinese example in Korea:

> *The sweet potato is extraordinary among the measures against famine. It would be fitting to order the officials in charge of the military settlements (tunjŏn'gwan* 屯田官*) to [...] plant sweet potatoes. Also they can be planted in great quantities in locations such as Chŏn'gyo* 箭串[27] *and on the yulto* 栗島.[28] *Furthermore, the people should be brought to plant sweet potatoes themselves. Then it will not be necessary to worry this year. One simply lets the sweet potatoes sprout and watches out for dampness and frost.*[29]

It seems Pak Chega might have misunderstood what he saw in China. At that time the sweet potato was not well-adapted for plantation in the rough climate of northern China and Manchuria – it was modern cultivars that made it feasible to grow sweet potatoes in the north. It is possible that Pak Chega actually saw white potatoes and was for some reason unable to differentiate between those and sweet potatoes. Whatever he saw, his appeal is very clear: the official policy of Chosŏn Korea should be more supportive towards cultivation of the tuber crop, which could then be used as a staple to combat famine. Pak Chega does not relate his appeal to the state of tuber cultivation in Korea at the time, but it is obvious that he thought the status quo in this regard insufficient and believed it to compare unfavourably with what he saw in China.



Hŏ Jun's famous Chosŏn medical dictionary, the Tongŭi pogam 東醫寶鑑 (The Precious Mirror of Eastern Medicine, 1611)

POSSIBILITY OF AN EARLIER INTRODUCTION

While it has been claimed that Cho Ŏm was the first to introduce the sweet potato to Korea and leave a record of its introduction, there are reasons to believe that it was actually brought to Korea earlier. The vernacular word for the sweet potato, *koguma*, is mentioned by Cho Ŏm and is clearly described as the Japanese word for 'sweet potato', but Cho Ŏm – and other later writers – exclusively use the term *kamjŏ* in their studies. It would therefore be reasonable to expect the spread of the use of the word *kamjŏ*, or variations thereof, into the vernacular.[30] The Japanese term for the sweet potato is *karaimo* (sweet taro) or *satsuma imo* (taro from Satsuma) and *koguma* is most likely derived from a word from the Tsushima dialect where the sweet potato is still called *kōkoimo*, *kōkomo*, *kōkomomo* or *kōkōimo* until today.[31] This form must also be the form that Cho Ŏm used in his report.[32] Most Korean scholars state that the name *koguma* derived from the word imported by Cho Ŏm.[33] But

27 These characters could also be read "chŏnch'ŏn". Most likely, this is a reference to the area around the Chŏn'gyo bridge in the capital (today's Seoul).

28 These could be river islands on which chestnuts were cultivated. The use of chestnuts was widespread in Korea, especially in the north, a fact which is also noted in Yi Chunghwan (李重煥, 1690-1752?)'s *T'aengniji* 擇里志. *T'aengniji/Pukhagŭi* 擇里志 – 北學議, ed. and trans. by No Toyang 盧道陽 and Yi Sŏkho 李錫浩 (Seoul: Taeyang sŏjŏk 大洋書籍, 1982), p. 194.

29 Pak Chega 朴濟家, "Pukhagŭi 北學議," in *Chŏngyujip* 貞蕤集, ed. by Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe 國史編纂委員會, (Seoul: T'amgudang 探求堂, 1971), p. 449.

30 This seems to have been the case later, when the word *kamja* was coined for the white potato.

31 *Nihon kokugo dai jiten* 日本国語大辞典, 2nd ed. (Tokio: Shōgakukan 小学館, 1972), vol. 5, p. 265.

32 See Ogura Shinpei, *Nanbu Chōsen-no hōgen*, p. 203 and Son Chint'ae, "Kamjŏ chŏnp'a ko", p. 107. The form Cho Ŏm uses is 孝子麻, which he states is read as 'kogwiwima' 古貴為麻. It is not easy to explain why the character 麻 appears instead of 芋.

it is also possible that the sweet potato reached Korea much earlier from Tsushima and that its name entered Korean from the language of Tsushima then. Due to its clandestine nature, it is impossible to date such an introduction, but it could have been well before the official introduction by Cho Ŏm in 1763.[34] Even if such an introduction was at a later date, it could still have been independent from Cho Ŏm and the 1763 embassy.

THE OTHER TUBER – INTRODUCTION OF THE WHITE POTATO TO KOREA

Until now, I have focused on the sweet potato, partly because there is less material on the white potato, and also because the white potato was introduced to Korea a few decades later. While some evidence suggests that the sweet potato was introduced to Korea through the systematic efforts of a learned elite, this is not the case with the white potato, which found its way to Korea via an unknown route, as indicated in the following account by Yi Kyugyŏng in his *On the Potato.*

> *The white potato (pukchŏ* 北藷*) has come to our eastern country later [than the sweet potato] and only a dozen years*[35] *have passed since then. […] As for the white potato, it came over the Tumen* 豆滿 *River and across the northern border. This was roughly between the years kapsin* 甲申[36] *and ŭr'yu* 乙酉[37] *of the reign of our King Sunjo* 純祖[38]*. […] Since the advent of the potato, not even twelve years*[39] *have passed. Its seeds have been spread to all places and everyone profits from it. (In the cities of Yangju* 楊州*, Wŏnju* 原州 *and Ch'ŏrwŏn* 鐵原 *one plants the white potato in bad years and thus escapes starvation. In the area of the prefecture of Kyŏngsŏng* 鏡城 *on the northern border, about 20 miles from the relais station of Susŏng* 輸城,[40] *there is a village in the mountain valley which has 50 or 60 families. They live only on the white potatoes they plant, which is their staple food for the whole of the year.) […] If, as a consequence, cultivation of the white potato [is] spread, it will, like taro and hoch'ŏn* 胡擅[41] *only be planted on the rich soil in the pleasure gardens of the rich. How could the poor hill-dwelling people [make] any use of this?! I only fear that, when the potato [flourishes], the sweet potato [will] then decline. Would that not be a pity for the successes that wise men worked so hard for in the past?*[42]

According to Yi Kyugyŏng, the white potato was introduced to Korea in 1824 or 1825 via the northern border and then spread rapidly in the north, becoming an important staple crop. Yi Kyugyŏng believed the success of the white potato might even endanger sweet potato cultivation. We can therefore assume that in the mid nineteenth century the impact of the sweet potato was still not overwhelming. Yi Kyugyŏng's reason for believing the white potato might pose a risk to sweet potato cultivation was that it did what the sweet potato was *supposed* to do: reduce the risk of starvation in bad harvest years. And indeed the white potato had considerable, if poorly documented, success in the north. It quickly became a staple for mountain villages in the northern part of Korea.[43] At the beginning of the twentieth century, the widespread use of the white potato as a staple food in the northern part of Korea compared favourably with the unsatisfying state of sweet potato cultivation.[44]

In a passage from the above text that has been omitted here, Yi Kyugyŏng tries to establish a relation between the dates on which the sweet and the white potato were introduced to Korea, which he states are 60 years apart – the length of one calendar cycle. He interprets this coin-

33 Kim Chaesŭng, "Cho Ŏm-ŭi koguma chŏnp'a", p. 64. O Sugyŏng 吳壽京, "Chosŏn hugi iyong husaengag-ŭi chŏn'gae-wa 'kamjŏpo'-ŭi p'yŏnch'an 朝鮮後期 利用厚生學의 展開와'甘藷譜'의 篇纂", *Andong munhwa* 安東文化 16 (1995), 5-23, (p. 5). Yŏm Chŏngsŏp, "Chosŏn sidae kuhwang chŏngch'aek", p. 136.

34 This point is also made implicitly by Michael Pettid, *Korean Cuisine,* p. 41.

35 A *ki* 紀, meaning the cycle of twelve years used in the calendar.

36 This refers to 1824.

37 This refers to 1825.

38 King Sunjo reigned from 1800 until 1834.

39 Again, *ki* 紀 is used to describe this time-span.

40 Kyŏngsŏng and Susŏng still exist today. They are near the city of Ch'ŏngjin 清津 on the east coast of present-day North Hamgyŏng Province (咸鏡北道), North Korea.

41 It is not clear what this plant is.

42 Yi Kyugyŏng 李圭景, *Oju yŏnmun changjŏn san'go* 五洲衍文長箋散稿, ed. by Kojŏn kanhaenghoe 古典刊行會 (Seoul: Tongguk munhwasa 東國文化社,1959), pp. 65-66.

43 Kang Inhŭi, *Han'guk siksaenghwal sa*, p. 300.

44 Chōsen sōtokufu nōji shikenjō 朝鮮総督府農事試験場 (ed.), *Chōsen sōtokufu nōji shikenjō nijūgoshūnen kinenshi* 朝鮮総督府農事試験場二十五周年, (Keijō 京城 [Seoul]: Chōsen nōkai 朝鮮農会, 1931), vol. 1, 123 and 139.

cidence as having some metaphysical meaning, but does not go into the details of its implications.

Yi Kyugyŏng then gives a more detailed account of the introduction of the white potato, which is worth quoting at length:

> *Between the years kapsin and ŭr'yu in the reign of King Sunjo,*[45] *the white potato first came from the region north of the border. Someone thought that the physiognomist Kim*[46] *from […] the Myŏngch'ŏn* 明川 *district*[47] *had travelled to the capital and spread the white potato there. As the white potato appeared for the first time, one said that this thing comes from the region on the northern border and has been replanted over here. It is such that in the beginning this particular man*[48] *crossed our border illegally to gather ginseng.*[49] *To this end, he built himself a hut in a mountain valley and planted potatoes to eat. In the place where he had dwelled he left a small field with a plant with leaves resembling turnip mustard […] They [Those who found his fields] planted it on our soil and it grew well and proliferated. When I asked a merchant in Kaesŏng* 開城[50] *about it, he said he thought it was a sweet potato from the north and that it was used as a staple food.*
>
> *Yi Hyŏngjae* 李亨在*, whose style is Musan* 茂山*, was the leader*[51] *in Musan* 茂山.[52] *He heard about the white potato and searched for it among the people, but he got no answer from them. He asked why. They told him the following story: Since the white potato had come from over the stream, one inch of soil had become as valuable as gold. The governor of the province did not like that and he forbade its cultivation and its spread. But the people found it very useful for their nutrition, so they did not abide by the ban and secretly planted white potatoes. This was why they did not dare to give him potatoes.*[53]

According to this account, which Yi Kyugyŏng believes to be true, the white potato was introduced from the north by an illegal ginseng gatherer. After the ginseng poacher was chased away, the locals took over his potato field and the cultivation of potatoes spread rapidly. What is missing in this account is an explanation of how the locals came to know about the techniques of potato cultivation. It is likely that there would have been some form of contact between the locals and the ginseng gatherers. This contact would also help to explain the heavy-handed reaction of the local administration, who would not have allowed such cordial relations. It should be noted here that most of the supporters of tuber cultivation, and indeed most agricultural reformists, were scholars associated with opposition to the elites.[54]

The time interval given by Yi Kyugyŏng seems plausible. It is also quite possible that the white potato came to Korea via similar routes even earlier. From at least the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards, there was a more or less steady influx of immigrants from the border region with Qing China into Chosŏn territory.[55] But we know that knowledge about the sweet potato had spread before the introduction of the white potato. The term for the white potato must have entered the Korean vocabulary later than the word for sweet potato, as its name, *kamja*, is clearly derived from *kamjŏ*, the word for sweet potato. Therefore the white potato was spread at a time when the sweet potato was already known as *kamjŏ*.[56]

Yi Kyugyŏng also gives another account of the introduction of the white potato, which he subsequently rejects:

> *There is also a misleading report that in the year imjin* 壬辰[57] *an English ship landed on the island of Mokkodae* 牧古大 *in the region of Hongju* 洪州.[58] *The barbarians who had landed then planted the white potato plant on the island of Pulmo* 不毛 *and so it came to our*

45 This refers to the years 1824 and 1825 respectively.
46 In the text it only says "Kim mo" 金某. No personal name is given.
47 This district is located circa 50 km south of the city of Ch'ŏngjin 清津, on the east coast of present-day North Hamgyŏng Province (咸鏡北道), North Korea.
48 It is not clear who this man is. It is probably not the Kim mentioned above, as Kim is stated to have been Korean, while this ginseng poacher was not.
49 It is likely that this man was one of the Chinese poachers who illegally crossed the border to collect ginseng.
50 In the text it says "Kaesi" 開市, which is "the city of Kae[sŏng]".
51 In the text it says "chol" 倅. This is not an official title and probably refers to the assistant prefect (*t'ongp'an* 通判). See Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 528 and p. 555.
52 Musan is a region in the north-eastern part of present-day North Korea.
53 Yi Kyugyŏng, *Oju yŏnmun changjŏn san'go*, pp. 65-66.
54 O Sugyŏng, "Chosŏn hugi iyong husaengak", pp. 6-7.
55 Ch'oe Soja 최소자, *Ch'ŏng-gwa Chosŏn: Kŭnse tong asia-ŭi sangho insik* 淸과 朝鮮: 근세 동아시아의 상호인식, (Seoul: Hyean 혜안, 2005), pp. 25-126.
56 Kim Chaesŭng, "Cho Ŏm-ŭi koguma chŏnp'a", p. 69.
57 This refers to the year 1832.
58 Hongju is a region in present-day South Ch'ungch'ŏng Province (忠淸南道), South Korea.

> *eastern country. This is a misleading speculation; how could it suffice to make us believe it?*[59]

This last statement by Yi Kyugyŏng, however, should be reconsidered. The German missionary Karl Gützlaff (1803-1851) claimed to have introduced the white potato to Korea by 1832 and left the following record for 30 July 1832:

> *„This afternoon we went ashore to plant potatoes, giving them [the Koreans] the directions necessary to follow for insuring success. Even this act of benevolence they at first strenuously opposed; for it was against the laws of the country to introduce any foreign vegetable. We cared very little about their objections, but expatiated upon the benefits which might arise from such innovation, till they silently yielded*[60]

The event of an English ship landing on the coast is also mentioned in the *Sillok* 實錄.[61] So the event Yi Kyugyŏng dismisses so sharply really did occur: Gützlaff was in the very region Yi Kyugyŏng refers to and did try to disseminate potatoes. It is, however, quite possible that Yi Kyugyŏng is right in believing these events had little direct impact.

It is interesting that Gützlaff explains the Koreans' lack of appreciation for his potatoes by referring to one of their laws as, to my knowledge, no such law banning the import of vegetables existed. It might simply have been a pretext made up by local officials in reaction to a situation they were not prepared for and which might get them into trouble. Gützlaff also mentions that he frequently witnessed beatings of minor officials for no intelligible reason, although he suspected these beatings to be a show of power put on by major officials. Whatever the reason, the fact that the officials were punished so easily and often would support the view that they might make something up in the hope of appeasing Gützlaff and his entourage and sparing themselves further trouble. From Gützlaff's remarks on the Korean language, it is also clear that he had serious communication problems: although he was fluent in Chinese, he had no knowledge of Korean. However, the potatoes that the Koreans "silently yielded" to let him plant somewhere near the seashore do not seem to have been the beginning of a success story for the white potato in that region.

THE FAILURE TO ACCULTURATE THE SWEET POTATO AS A FAMINE RELIEF FOOD

In the context of this study, the term 'acculturation' could have at least two meanings: firstly, the process of raising cultivars that are adapted to certain geographical circumstances, and secondly, the process of a tactical integration of the new plant and its products into a particular cultural structure. The details of the first point must be left to the agricultural scientists. Here, it should be sufficient to note that technically the sweet potato can be grown in the south of Korea and can yield good harvests there.[62] The second point, the placing of the new plant into what, for lack of a better term, is to be crudely rendered as 'Chosŏn culture',[63] is what I will deal with in this second half of the article.

Both the lack of evidence for the widespread success of the sweet potato, and the ongoing activity in publishing manuals to overcome the rather limited scope of its cultivation, seem to indicate that the sweet potato was not integrated successfully into the Korean agricultural system as a staple food and that its impact was relatively small. At the least, as food historian Kang Inhŭi 姜仁姬 remarks, it took quite a long time to spread the sweet potato as a famine relief food.[64] It is remarkable that its dissemination took so long, as everything seems to have been in favour of the sweet potato: it can be planted with little equipment, it can be cultivated in places where grain

59 Yi Kyugyŏng, *Oju yŏnmun changjŏn san'go*, p. 67.

60 Charles Gutzlaff, *Journal of three voyages along the coast of China in 1831, 1832 and 1833, with notices of Siam, Corea and the Loo-Choo islands. To which is prefixed an introductory essay on the policy, religion, etc. of China,* by the Rev. W. Ellis, (London: Frederick Westley and A. H. Davis, 1834. [Reprint without year and publisher]), pp. 341-342.

61 *Sunjo Sillok* 純祖實錄 http://sillok.history.go.kr [accessed 8 November 2009], 32nd year, 7th month, 21st day.

62 Today there are sweet potato cultivars that can be grown as far north as the Chinese provinces of Heilongjiang 黑龍江and Inner Mongolia (內蒙古). See L. Zhang. Q. Wang, Q. Liu and Q. Wang, "Sweetpotato in China", in *The Sweetpotato,* ed. by Gad Loebenstein and George Thottappilly, (n.p.: Springer, 2009), pp. 325-358. However, these modern cultivars are not comparable to the plants available at the time.

63 This phrase is not meant to imply the existence of some kind of monolithic or even 'national' culture. It would be far more accurate to suggest that there were a number of local, regional cultures.

64 Kang Inhŭi, *Han'guk siksaenghwal sa*, p. 310.

65 The sweet taste is important as it signifies 'good food' and makes new crops more likely to be accepted. Christoph von Gundlach, "Die Einführung neuer Grundnahrungsmittel. Dargestellt am Beispiel der Kartoffel", *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 35:1 (1987), 44-56, (p. 46).

will not grow, and it tastes, as its name implies, sweet.[65] Another factor – so far overlooked, I believe – that makes the sweet potato attractive is the fact that all parts of the plant are edible. While the leaves of the white potato are toxic and only the tubers are edible, the green parts of the sweet potato can be used for feeding animals or even for human consumption.

How far spread then was cultivation of the tubers? We cannot know for sure as there are no hard data on the extent of tuber cultivation in Korea until the modern era. There are no statistics on tuber yields in pre-modern Korea, so anything we say is based on conjecture. A few clues can be gathered, mostly from the publication of manuals and their stated or probable purpose. Based on his reading of the manuals, Yŏm Chŏngsŏp believes that the sweet potato spread in the region of Pusan and Tongnae at the end of the eighteenth century.[66] The publication of a new manual by Sŏ Yugu 徐有榘in 1834 was aimed at further spreading the sweet potato in the south, from which we might deduce that there was sufficient cultivation and availability of seed in Korea at that time to render such a plan feasible. But the manual does not tell us much more. Other sources point out the problems of sweet potato cultivation, but there is not a single statement indicating that sweet potatoes were used successfully in famine relief. The cultivation of sweet potatoes therefore does not seem to have had much of an impact on the overall outlook of Korean agriculture until the twentieth century. It is possible that it was significant in some southern regions, but even evidence on that is scarce and impossible to quantify. There are few sources on the white potato and not much can be gleaned from them, except that, as stated above, the white potato had already been successfully used in the north in the mid nineteenth century (when Yi Kyugyŏng wrote his treatise) and that its cultivation was widespread at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Another approach to the question of how far the sweet potato had spread is to study its dissemination through the evolution of sweet potato cultivation techniques, as these are well documented in the *nongsŏ*. In Korea, the first of these techniques are those Cho Ŏm is believed to have brought back from Japan.[67] As has already been mentioned, Chinese and Japanese manuals were very influential in the development of cultivation techniques. Historian Kim Chaesŭng 金在勝 believes that Kang P'illi was very active in the spread of the sweet potato in southern Korea from 1764, when he became the magistrate of Tongnae.[68] If he is indeed the author of the manual known as the *Kang-ssi kamjŏ po*, then that manual could also be understood in this context to have the aim of spreading the sweet potato in southern Korea. In 1834, Sŏ Yugu published his *Kamjŏ po*, which describes techniques that were supposed to facilitate the successful introduction of the sweet potato to Chŏlla province.[69] From this evidence we can gather that the spread of the sweet potato in Korea took a very long time (about 70 years before it reached Chŏlla) and was geographically very restricted. These two features of the tuber's dissemination might be the result of a lack of transportation and underdeveloped interregional communication (as indicated by Pak Chega), which in turn resulted in scant interest in using the little transportation there was for agricultural exchange. However, we have no means of double-checking these hypotheses in the manuals. There is no hard evidence on the cultivation of the sweet potato until the modern era and the effectiveness of the publication of manuals on its dissemination should be questioned: sweet potatoes were still not in widespread use in Korea at the beginning of the twentieth century and Japanese agronomists in the country claimed that because of a lack of frost-proof storage facilities and the frequent theft of the tubers from the fields, sweet potato cultivation was difficult. It is unlikely that techniques as essential as frost-proofing and theft prevention had once been known and then forgotten. These problems must therefore have been an obstacle to the cultivation of the sweet potato in earlier times too. The Japanese agronomists also claimed that one important reason for the non-development of tuber cultivation in Korea was the lack of knowledge about sweet potato cultivation methods.[70] Presumably a solution to the storage problem would have been in use, had sweet potato cultivation been widespread.

The failure of the sweet potato was only partial, however. The tuber failed in its intended role as a famine relief food, but it was highly successful as a cash crop. Even though

66 Yŏm Chŏngsŏp, "Chosŏn sidae kuhwang chŏngch'aek", p. 139.
67 Ibid., p. 129.
68 Kim Chaesŭng, "Cho Ŏm-ŭi koguma chŏnp'a", p. 57.
69 Yi Ch'unnyŏng, *Yijo nong'ŏp kisul sa*, p. 86.
70 Chōsen sōtokufu nōji shikenjō (ed.), *Chōsen sōtokufu nōji shikenjō*, vol. 1, 123.

no extant sources promote the use of sweet potatoes as a cash crop, they became locally important for this purpose. It is also questionable whether the success as a cash crop should be seen as a failure, though it was certainly not what the authors of the *nongsŏ* had intended. Indeed, the sweet potato became a luxury item and was traded at high prices, as indicated in the *Kyŏngse yup'yo* 經世遺表, a socioeconomic study by the late Chosŏn thinker Chŏng Yag'yong 丁若鏞 (1726-1836), who describes the situation of sweet potato fields in Kangjin as follows:

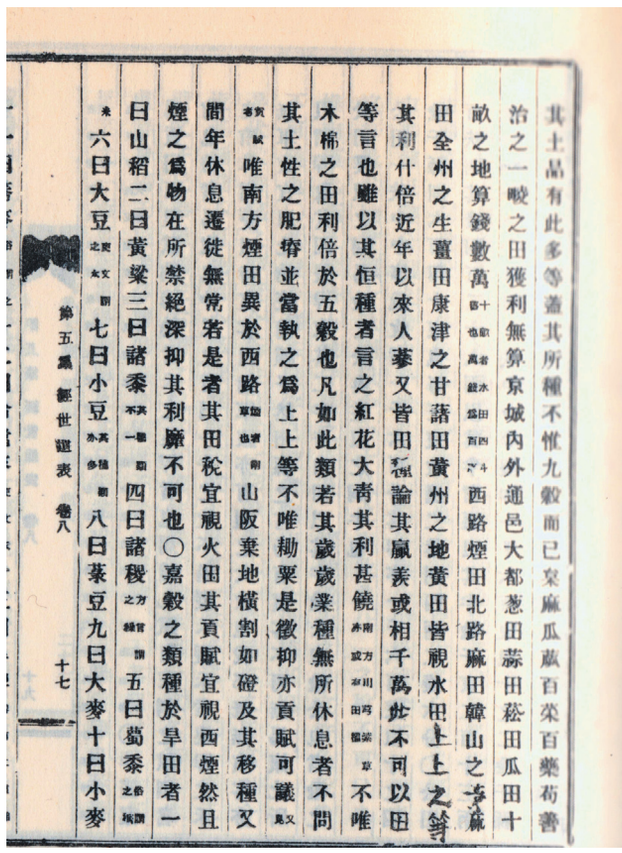
> *"The sweet potato fields of Kangjin* 康津 *and the foxglove fields of Hwangju* 黃州[71] *are all comparable to paddy fields of the highest rank. But the profit they yield is ten times as high."*[72]

Sŏ Yugu also touches on the sweet potato's luxury status in his grand-scale *nongsŏ*, the *Imwŏn kyŏngjeji* 林園經濟志, in which he describes the southern province of Chŏlla as the region most deeply involved in commercial sweet potato production.[73]

It is not clear why the sweet potato, intended by its advocates as a famine relief food, should come to be eaten almost exclusively as a luxury food. Possibly its luxury status has to do with the generally higher food flexibility of the upper social classes[74] and the taste of those classes for exotic foods. The lower classes, not used to exotic food and regarding "substitute foods" as inferior, were more likely to refuse the new food, unless pressed hard by hunger. Also the difficulty of transporting bulky tubers made them unfit for sale beyond the local area, and the high cost of transport should be taken into account. The development of the sweet potato's luxury status is another indication of the manuals' lack of influence, which specifically advocate the use of the tuber for fighting famine. The Japanese agronomists' comments on the lack of knowledge of cultivation techniques in Korea are likewise evidence of the manuals' failure to disseminate information about the sweet potato.

It was only much later that tubers became an important part of the Korean diet. As late as the early twentieth century, signs appeared of an increasing practical interest in sweet potato cultivation. In 1907, experiments aimed at improving cultivars were initiated at a scientific research station in Suwŏn 水原.[75] In North Korea food shortages led to the increased dietary importance of white potatoes, which are now processed into a multitude of products. Since the 1990s, white potatoes have been one of North Korea's major crops and their cultivation is an important part of food policy, since many substitutes for other foodstuffs are produced from processed white potatoes.[76]

North Korea produced 392,000 tons of sweet potato in 2009, compared to 283,000 tons in South Korea. The total yields in North and South Korea are marginal if compared to an overwhelming yield of 100,215,000 tons in China, but both countries can still be classed as large-scale sweet potato producers on a global scale.[77] Since the 1970s,



Chŏng Yag'yong's Kyŏngse yup'yo 經世遺表 **(Doctrines for Good Government, 1808-1817)**

71 Foxglove was, and still is, an important medical ingredient.

72 Chŏng Yagyong 丁若鏞, *Yŏyudang chŏnsŏ* 與猶堂全書, http://db.itkc.or.kr [accessed 10 December 2009], p. 152a.

73 See Kim Yongsŏp 金容燮, *Chosŏn hugi nongŏpsa yŏn'gu 2* 朝鮮後期農業史研究 2, (Seoul: Ilchogak 一潮閣, 1974), p. 157.

74 Christoph von Gundlach, "Die Einführung neuer Grundnahrungsmittel", p. 47.

75 Kim Chaesŭng, "Koguma-ŭi Chosŏn chŏllae", p. 98.

76 Im Sangch'ŏl 임상철, *Pukhan nong'ŏp* 북한농업, 2nd ed. (Seoul: Sŏil 서일, 2000), p. 93.

77 Data are taken from Vincent Lebot, *Tropical root and tuber crops: Cassava, sweet potato, yams and aroids*, (Wallingford, Oxfordshire and Cambridge, MA: CAB International, 2009), p. 97. Lebot's data refer to the numbers given by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

the area of land dedicated to sweet potato cultivation in South Korea has decreased by about 90% and seems now to have stabilized around 14,000 hectares. In 1971, an area of 111,229 hectares was used for sweet potato crops.[78]

The reasons given above do not fully explain the failure of the tubers in Korea. Sweet potatoes appeared to offer an opportunity to rectify the hardships of malnutrition and overcome the yearly spring crisis. So why did the sweet potato not catch on as a famine relief food in Korea? The answer seems, at least in part, to be a cultural one, although economic factors also need to be taken into account. The cultural effect, as will be outlined below, was clear to contemporaries: the Chosŏn people were just not able to overcome their feeling that grains were the food they were *meant* to eat – a thoroughly 'cultural' notion.

TUBERS IN A GRAIN CULTURE

Tubers were known in Korea long before the sweet potato was introduced. The most important tubers used as a foodstuff in the country were yam (*Dioscorea opposita-japonica*) and taro (*Colocasia esculenta*). The *Tongŭi pogam* 東醫寶鑑, a medical handbook compiled by a team around Hŏ Chun 許浚 (1546-1615) in the late sixteenth century, states that yam and taro had spread through Korea.[79] The *Sillok* records that in the year 1689 yam tubers were given to King Sukchong 肅宗 (r. 1674-1720) as a gift.[80] If yams were considered worthy of a king, they must have been held in high esteem. It is possible they were thought to be a tonic. The respective names given for the plants are *t'oran* 土卵 ('earth eggs' in Sino-Korean) for taro and *ma.h* 마ㅎ (which is 'pure' Korean)[81] for yam. In the case of taro, the *Tongŭi pogam* also tells us that there was a cultivated form of the plant and a 'poisonous' wild form. While the meaning of 'poisonous' is unclear and may not mean 'toxic',[82] these comments do suggest that there were two plants classed as 'taro' of which only one (or perhaps neither) corresponds to what we now identify as taro. Nonetheless, we can assume from the evidence above that Koreans were not unfamiliar with using tubers as food and that, at least locally, they were a part of the cuisine. It could also be assumed that at least some Korean cultivators in the southern part of the country would have been accustomed to tuber cultivation, which was an obstacle to the cultivation of tubers in, for example, England.[83] Therefore, it seems unlikely that the problems with the introduction of tubers had anything to do with the plant being unknown or seeming strange to farmers, as had often been the case in Europe. Sadly, no sources tell us whether the newly introduced tubers replaced taro and yam, as seems to have been the case in China.[84]

Even though tubers were evidently known from early times on, Korean agriculture can be characterized as being focused on grain production. Being the most important crop, grain naturally features prominently in culture. Cultural habits of food selection become deeply ingrained in production patterns and, as James Walvin states, in the case of Korea "touched on people's deepest persistent values and customs, and represented of course much more than mere nutrition or the satisfying of hunger".[85] More specifically, Chosŏn food culture can be characterized as a culture of "rice first".[86] While barley was the fare of the general populace and also the less wealthy local elite, rice was thought to be the ideal food and was regarded as being the foundation of the state's economy. Even though it was sometimes hard to get, rice was "an ideal component of any meal."[87] While most of the reasons for the importance of grain can easily be traced back to economics grounded in the mode of production in Chosŏn times, there is also a cultural side to this problem. Ohnuki-Tierney has demonstrated how rice was placed at the centre of a Japanese culture of food and how it came to constitute one of the tenets of Japanese 'self'.[88]

78 Im Sangch'ŏl, "Koguma-ŭi chaebae-wa iyong hyŏnhwang 고구마의 재배와 이용현황", in *Cho Ŏm yŏn'gu nonch'ong*, ed. by O Yŏnggyo, 153-220, (pp. 158-159).

79 Hŏ Chun 許俊 et al., *Tongŭi pogam* 東醫寶鑑. (Seoul: Namsandang 南山堂, 1976), p. 714 and p. 722.

80 *Sukchong Sillok* 肅宗實錄 http://sillok.history.go.kr [accessed 8 November 2009], 15th year, 1st month, 18th day.

81 By 'pure' Korean I mean that there are no obvious cognates in Chinese or Japanese and that the word could be considered to be found exclusively in the Korean lexicon. It is interesting that the word *ma.h* is native to Korea, as this might suggest there was a long cultural history of the plant in the country.

82 The complex problem of the concept 'poisonous' (*du* 毒 in Chinese, pronounced *tok* in Korean) in the Chinese tradition of food characterization – in which Korean medical manuals stand – is addressed by Eugene Anderson, *Ecologies of the Heart: Emotion, Belief, and the Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Chapter 3: "Chinese Nutritional Therapy", p. 207.

83 James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, p. 106.

84 Francesca Bray, *Science and civilisation in China*, pp. 530-531.

85 James Walvin, *Fruits of Empire*, p. 112.

86 Michael Pettid, *Korean Cuisine*, pp. 164-165.

87 Ibid., pp.28-29.

88 Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self: Japanese Identities through Time*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

It remains to be proven that Korean food is a similar case; quite possibly it is not. However, it is clear that rice was an important part of Chosŏn culture in its broadest sense and that it played an important role in the construction of cultural awareness of social groups in Korea, which were differentiated by rice consumption or lack thereof. While it has been argued quite convincingly that the 'culinary identification' of a foodstuff depends mainly on how it is flavoured,[89] it still seems that the underlying staple food, especially if it is not flavoured at all, is significant for cultural identity. From a cultural-historical perspective, it might be intriguing to consider how the sweet potato conveys meaning in the cultural sphere – in other words, how it is a cultural medium. This meaning would be different from that of grains and would thus have a different influence on both individuals and society.

Still, I believe that the cultural aspect merely sets the 'tone' for the way tuber cultivation developed in Korea. The most important force in deciding the dynamics of the cultivation of non-grain staples was that they must have seemed a danger to the socioeconomic system. This fear explains the ideology of a grain-based diet, which was employed to bolster the rule of an elite class whose economic well-being was based on grain taxes. Even though tubers were mostly intended by the reformers for use on land unsuited to grain cultivation, the fear that they might catch on and endanger grain cultivation would have been very real. That is not to say that collecting taxes on tubers would have been impossible. But it would have been novel and thus suspicious to the elites, who of course did not suffer from famine and for whom the grain-based system worked rather well. Indeed, the reaction to the spread of white potato cultivation in Switzerland in the later half of the eighteenth century (under a much less strict regulatory system than that employed in Chosŏn Korea) supports the idea that the introduction of a new staple into an economy based on another staple would likely be seen as a danger by the ruling class.[90] Similar cases are also recorded for south-western Germany.[91] While a shift towards a tuber-based diet and, perhaps more importantly, a change to the tax system would not have been impossible, they would have produced some sort of social mobility – upward as well as downward – at least for a period of transition in which individual initiative might be effective. Such social mobility would have endangered the hereditary ruling classes grip on power, and therefore a strong strain of conservatism can be expected in their reaction to the cultivation of new crops. It is, therefore, probable that the ruling elite would have used their power to oppose large-scale tuber cultivation in Korea.

Opposition from the ruling class was not the only problem that enterprising pioneers of the tuber had to face, though. Tubers require little or no post-harvest processing and are therefore much easier to harvest than grain. Correspondingly, it was also much easier for thieves and corrupt officials to steal tubers. A discussion of tuber theft can be found in the *Sillok* – records for the 18th year in the reign of King Chŏngjo 正祖 (1794) on the 25th day of the 12th month:

> *In the settlements in the coastal areas, there is a thing that is called the sweet potato. […]*
> *It would be fitting to supply the starving people with sweet potatoes, as [has been done in China] in Fujian* 福建 *and Zhejiang* 浙江*. But the customs of this land are truly remarkable. The sweet potato is only used as a dainty for its good taste and that is it. No one can use it as a substitute for cooked grains*[92] *and thus use it against famine. I deeply regret this. […]*
>
> *In the beginning, when the sweet potato came to Korea, the people competed for the tubers and used them to make their lives richer […] and thus the sweet potato was gradually cultivated more and more in Korea. But before it could become plentiful, the military settlements came to confiscate them. After that, the greedy officials followed in their footsteps and came to [people's] doors, called and shouted and took sweet potatoes away. Some officials took a hundred tubers, others took as much as [grows on] one ki* 畦*. Those who planted sweet potatoes got into difficulties and those who had not yet planted [them] warned each other against it. So the efforts in cultivating [the sweet potato] and [finding good] tech-*

89 Elisabeth Rozin, "The Structure of Cuisine", in *The psychology of human food selection*, ed. by Lewis M. Barker, (Westport, CT: AVI, 1982), 189-203, (p. 197).

90 Hubert Steinke, "Die Einführung der Kartoffel in der Waadt 1740 – 1790. Agrarmodernisierung aus bäuerlicher Sicht", *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie* 45 (1997), 15-39, (pp. 24-25).

91 Christoph von Gundlach, "Die Einführung neuer Grundnahrungsmittel", p. 51.

92 'Cooked grains' should probably be read as denoting 'staple foods'.

niques [for its cultivation] gradually came to be not as good as they had been. At the moment, the sweet potato is very rare and expensive.[93]

This report shows that at least twenty years after the sweet potato had been introduced its cultivation was still not widespread and, as the text indicates, was quite a gamble for those who ventured to try it. Also, the progress in cultivation techniques was hampered by the frequent setbacks the cultivators had to endure. While wanton requisition by corrupt officials was surely not limited to tubers, these were much easier to take, as they can be cooked immediately after being dug up. The above record from the *Sillok* also shows that the central government was aware of the state of sweet potato cultivation. However, no effective measures were taken to improve the situation – apparently, the problem was not deemed to be urgent.

Another scholar who dedicated a lot of energy to the sweet potato was Yi Kwangnyŏ 李匡呂 (1720-1783), who devoted himself to studying the tuber through the *Nongzheng quanshu* and more or less agreed with the view presented by Xu Guangqi.[94] Yi Kwangnyŏ had a highly original mind, as is proven by his studies on the teachings of Wang Yangming, long looked upon as heterodox in Korea.[95] In his writing, Yi Kwangnyŏ stresses that, though he was at first sceptical about this point, he came to accept that one of the obstacles to sweet potato cultivation in Korea was the grain-centred culture and the assumptions that governed food selection:

Gradually, those who planted sweet potatoes [harvested] more and more tubers, but much of [the crop] was lost because seedlings were held back again. So I came to worry again that the methods of cultivation were not lucid and good enough and that [for this reason] people planted the sweet potato one or two times and then stopped […]. Today, only in the southern provinces are there many who cultivate sweet potatoes. But they all use the sweet potato as a tidbit, […] a snack. And it is even impossible for anyone to substitute other food with it and to thus use it to fight famine.

Yi Kilbo 李吉甫[96] *explained the methods of sweet potato cultivation to me. I said to Yi Kilbo: "Dear Sir, why do you not cultivate this plant and let it flourish, so that the people may see its effect?" [Yi] Kilbo said: "The people of our country are used to eating big bowls of cooked rice.*[97] *How could they bear to substitute tubers for rice? Even though this plant is good and nice, it cannot in the end help our country to the same extent as in China." At that time I thought that these words were probably not quite right. But when I think about it now, it seems to me as if [Yi] Kilbo had in fact a rather lucid grasp on this matter. Still, with all things use and abolition, rise and fall have its natural time. This is so in the cases of plants like pumpkins, tobacco and cotton, which were not originally cultivated in China, but are all in daily use in China today.*[98] *[…] [These plants] were imported to the eastern country [Korea] – today one does not know […] how many hundreds of years ago that [was]. People today […] believe that they are indigenous plants which have always been here. No one […] remembers that they originally came from another country. Now, this will not be any different with the sweet potato. Especially as the sweet potato tastes so good and cannot even be compared to other plants!*

So I ponder again why the sweet potato has [had] no success. Maybe it is because it tastes so good and because the poor […] of the country cannot [partake of] its benefits and thus cannot lighten their poverty.[99]

Chosŏn grain culture is described here as a marker of otherness in comparison to China. The cultural necessity of eating cooked grain as a staple food is also portrayed as the main reason why tubers could not become popu-

93 *Chŏngjo Sillok* 正祖實錄, http://sillok.history.go.kr, [accessed 8 November 2009], 18th year, 12th month, 25th day.

94 O Sugyŏng, "Chosŏn hugi iyong husaengak", p. 10.

95 Yŏm Chŏngsŏp, "Chosŏn sidae kuhwang chŏngch'aek", p. 137.

96 It is not clear who this is. There is one Yi Kilbo who lived from 1700 to 1771, but he is not likely to be the person in question, as he is older than Yi Kwangnyŏ and therefore should not be referred to by just his personal name, as Yi Kwangnyŏ refers to him here.

97 It has in fact been argued that one of the most striking features of the food culture in Chosŏn Korea was the consumption of enormous quantities of food. See *Chosŏn sidae saenghwalsa 3: Ŭisikchu sara innŭn Chosŏn-ŭi p'unggyŏng* 조선시대 생활사 3 - 衣食住 살아있는 조선의 풍경, ed. by Han'guk komunsŏ hakhoe 한국고문서학회, (Seoul: Yŏksa pip'yŏngsa 역사비평사, 2006), p. 129 ff. This reference does not imply that there was a steady supply of such quantities of food; rather, it is meant as an explanation for food shortages, which are supposed to be caused in part by too much consumption. For general food shortages see Kang Inhŭi, *Han'guk siksaenghwal sa*, p. 315.

98 These are all plants that had already been introduced to Korea too and were used there with great success. In this instance, Yi Kwangnyŏ uses China as an example that Korea should emulate in the case of the sweet potato.

99 Yi Kwangnyŏ 李匡呂, *Yi Ch'ambong chip* 李參奉集, http://db.itkc.or.kr, [accessed 5 November 2009], pp. 256b-256d.

lar in Korea. Here, it seems, a myth is being constructed of the superiority of rice. A rational explanation based on cultural theory is difficult: myths are irrational; they are in fact empty signifiers and only come into being and survive by the process of being perpetuated, regardless of their truth.[100] Even though Yi Kwangnyŏ remarks on the irrationality of grain preference in food selection, he accepts that Yi Kilbo is right about the reason for the lack of acceptance of the sweet potato. As stated above, Yi Kwangnyŏ was a reform-minded scholar who was not easily discouraged by novelty. His support for Yi Kilbo's conclusion shows how strongly the situation suggested a cultural explanation for the lack of success in spreading the sweet potato.

All that might give us an indication of why sweet potato cultivation was possible and successful in China and Japan, but not in Korea: Korean food culture was different, and less open to the introduction of tubers as a staple. While this theory brings up new problems[101] and is not a satisfying answer if taken alone, culture should be considered as an important factor. Food culture is extremely complex and, as in all fields of cultural studies, contains so many trapdoors that I must concede further inquiry to specialists in that field.

Half a century later, around 1850, Yi Kyugyŏng also stresses in his *On the Potato* that grain is the core foodstuff according to the cosmic order:

> *Heaven brings grains and thus feeds our people. And when [Heaven] finds that this is still not sufficient [Heaven] brings crops like fruits and pumpkin to remedy this lack so that there is no need to worry. But the Great Change fluctuates and Yin and Yang are moving. In between there are disasters, floods and draughts. Thereupon people get caught in famines. No one can change this, regardless of the merits of Heaven and the labour of man. In between, Heaven is worried and does not forget [the suffering of man], like a lovingly caring mother, who is attached to her child and cannot bear to leave it behind or to expel it. Thereupon, Heaven brings a thing that water and draught may not harm and that can be used for the nourishment of the people in good and in meagre [times] alike. Its name is 'sweet potato'.*[102]

To Yi Kyugyŏng, Heaven is a caring deity[103] that looks after the needs of man but is not able to influence the recurrence of calamities that endanger food security. Grains – the normal staple – are what man is meant to eat. Tubers are then presented as Heaven's answer to the ongoing hardship that man faces due to being unable to obtain this ideal food.

If grain is perceived as the ideal food, one way to make sweet and white potatoes more culturally acceptable is to change them into grain. There are two ways to achieve this. One way is to process the tubers into a form that resembles grain products, or to mix them with grain, as is still done today with *kamjabap* ('potato rice'). In this way the tubers become more acceptable – more grain-like and therefore more food-like. This alteration can be understood as part of the process in human cuisine that Rozin describes as "transforming potential food into real food".[104] Another way to change tubers into grain is to declare them to *be* grain. This second approach is still visible today in East Asia, where tuber yields are translated into grain equivalents.[105] The category of 'grain' can apparently be extended enough to allow such a reinterpretation of food. Maybe this expansion of the category is possible because the differences between barley and rice in cultivation, processing, storage and, finally, in use and taste are so significant that the categorization of both of them as grain is obviously a construction that requires some flexibility.

The development of tuber cultivation in Korea is also apparent in fiction. In Chosŏn times there are only a few poems that mention the new tubers. In the colonial era tubers are mentioned more often in literature, and there is even a full-length novel called *koguma* (*The Sweet*

100 A similar view is held by Roland Barthes, *Mythen des Alltags* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1964), pp. 97-98.

101 For instance: Is there really such a thing that can be summed up as 'culture'? And if so, what are the characteristics of Chosŏn food culture in comparison to other food cultures?

102 Yi Kyugyŏng, *Oju yŏnmun changjŏn san'go*, p. 65.

103 Some might feel this is a rather careless use of the word 'deity'. By using this word, I do not mean to make any definite statement on the metaphysical implications of the world view of Yi Kyugyŏng, which to my knowledge has not yet been studied in depth. I would suggest, however, that there is a theistic element in his description of heaven, which he does not see as an abstract term for 'nature'.

104 Elisabeth Rozin, "The Structure of Cuisine", p. 190.

105 Dwight Perkins, *Agricultural Development in China: 1368-1968*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1969), pp. 270-271. Eugene N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), p. 136 and p. 149. Kim Iktal 金益達 (ed.), *Nong'ŏp taesajŏn* 農業大事典. (Seoul: Hagwŏnsa 學園社, 1962), p. 36.

Potato) by Yi Kŭnyŏng 李根榮 (1909-?), published in 1946. The novel deals with the social change and the decay of traditional rural society in post-colonial Korea.[106] There is also a short story called "*kamja*" (potatoes) by Kim Tong'in 金東仁 (1900-1951), published in 1935, in which the potato symbolizes the life of a woman from the northern part of Korea.[107] Perhaps this late appearance of the tubers in literature is no coincidence: only after they had become more widespread, become part of the culture and been linked into a net of images and symbols could they be employed to convey meaning.

THE SWEET POTATO AS A HEALTH FOOD

Another socio-cultural aspect of food is its use as medicine. This aspect carries a range of implications because of the much broader notion of 'medicine' in the Sinitic cultural tradition than in the 'modern western' medical tradition.[108] The tubers known before the advent of the sweet and white potato in Korea, yam and taro, were considered to be tonics, as has been mentioned above. It is thus easy to imagine that the new tubers, which were similar in appearance and use, were assumed to have the same medicinal properties. The sweet potato certainly does not lack nutritional value and is much higher in calories than the white potato. An important characteristic of the sweet potato is its high vitamin C content, which would have been highly beneficial to nutrition in Chosŏn times. However, contemporaries are unlikely to have been aware of the importance of vitamin C, whereas the tuber's higher calorie content would have been noticed.[109] Cash crop cultivation of the sweet potato would tie in with this view of tubers as a health food and might indicate that contemporaries had some empirical knowledge about the nutritional effects of the tubers.

Modern authors who, referring to the wisdom of the now, ancients, praise the medical benefits of the sweet potato should, however, be approached with caution. The obsession with health and the notion that it can be gained by eating healthily has a growing following in Korea (as well as worldwide) and big money is involved in perpetuating and maintaining this trend. The sweet potato has valuable nutritional qualities and might even have benefits in cancer prevention.[110] It is, however, no panacea. Its use in Chosŏn times should be seen in the context of nutrition rather than medicine, even though the two were even less strictly separated than they are in Korea today.

CONCLUSION

It seems that focusing on the impact of agricultural change or the potential for such change in theory and practice can be a good starting point for a fresh look at cultural and intellectual phenomena in Chosŏn society. However, more research would be necessary to ascertain whether this approach could be applied beyond the two tubers. It would be interesting to compare the case of the sweet and white potatoes with the introduction of other crops, maize being an obvious candidate.

Korean scholars originally intended to use the sweet potato as a staple that could be substituted for grains to prevent famine. But the sweet potato was not used extensively in the late Chosŏn period and its introduction seems to have had little effect on the big picture of agriculture at the time. Instead, sweet potatoes were grown in some parts of the country as a cash crop for niche markets and large-scale cultivation did not appear to set in until the modern era. The conditions which the sources show – or which can be tentatively reconstructed – with regard to the introduction and acculturation of the sweet potato in Korea contribute to the picture we can draw of late Chosŏn society, especially of the lives of the peasants. Even if my statements and conclusions remain hypothetical, they will, I hope, inspire the examination of late Chosŏn society from different angles. Reasons for the failure of the sweet potato in Korea were predominantly political, economic and cultural, even though there were also practical problems – focusing on the sweet potato thus highlights different aspects of society. The economy was organized around the production and (unequal) distribution of grain and changes to this system would have endangered the ruling class's material foundation and possibly its grip on power. This could be one reason why tuber cultivation was, at least in certain regions, hindered by the direct and indirect actions of the local officials and strongmen, as the sources above have shown. Supporters

106 See Chŏn Hongnam 전홍남, "Yi Kŭnyŏng ron 이근영 론", Han'guk ŏnŏ munhak 한국언어문학 30 (1992), 405-428, (pp. 413-414).

107 See Pak Hongsik 박홍식: "'Kamja'-ŭi sangjingsŏng '감자'의 상징성", *Usŏk ŏmun* 又石語文 2 (1985), 87-101, (p. 92 ff). An English translation of *Kamja* can be found in *Flowers of Fire: Twentieth-century Korean Stories*, ed. by Peter H. Lee. Rev. ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), pp. 10-18.

108 This has been described by Eugene Anderson, "Chinese Nutritional Therapy".

109 For nutritional data on the sweet potato, see G. Padmaja, "Uses and nutritional data of sweetpotato" in *The Sweetpotato,* ed. by Gad Loebenstein and George Thottappilly, pp. 287-324, (p. 212 ff).

110 Im Sangch'ŏl, "Koguma-ŭi chaebae-wa iyong hyŏnhwang", p. 154.

of the tubers were mostly literati who were not linked to the powerful elites.

As contemporaries had already realized, a cultural preference for grains was prevalent in Chosŏn and was not easy to overcome, so culture played a role too – but it could be argued that this also shows how much of what we call 'culture' is really based on economic interests. Economics decides the framework within which culture can develop, as it provides the material basis, which in the case of Chosŏn was grain production and the interests connected with it. All those factors is entangled in the complex structures that make up society and culture, and its effects can only be understood in this context. In such an environment, tuber cultivation could not gain a serious foothold, even though the continued extensive publication of *nongsŏ* texts clearly proves the expectations, even excitement, that the introduction of the sweet potato generated in Korea. Various strategies were adopted from different motives in order to overcome these aversions and help the spread of the sweet potato. The writing of books and pamphlets was the strategy preferred by the progressive literati, but their message seems to have failed to reach the peasants. Sale as a luxury commodity was a completely different approach to the tubers. Other options were declaring sweet potatoes to be basically grain or pointing out their nutritional and medicinal benefits.

The white potato, on the other hand, was well received by the peasants from the beginning, and successfully grown and spread by what could be understood as an underground movement. Peasants in the north even engaged in economic resistance against the suppression of potato cultivation, by ignoring the ban on growing the tubers. The spread of the white potato also shows that there was a functioning interregional network outside the literati and that, at least in the border region, this network was also able to transport knowledge across state borders.

Text and revisions: **Boudewijn Walraven,** original translation: **Frits Vos,** original text: **Philip Franz von Siebold**

Korean Studies in Early-Nineteenth Century Leiden

Eine Fisherfamilie

INTRODUCTION: BOUDEWIJN WALRAVEN

Although in the West Korean Studies as a truly independent subject largely is a phenomenon of recent decades, significant contributions to the study of Korea were made in the first half of the nineteenth century by Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866) and Johannes Hoffmann (1805-1878), well before the opening of Korea in 1876. Born in the German city of Würzburg, Siebold lived for seven years at Dejima, the Dutch trading post in Nagasaki, were he had been sent to act as the resident physician. Actually, only Dutchmen were allowed to live there and the Japanese interpreters in Nagasaki initially were suspicious of him because they noticed that his Dutch sounded quite unfamiliar. They were reassured by the explanation that Siebold was a *yama-orandajin,* "a mountain Dutchman." During his stay in Japan Siebold did a lot more than tending to the health of the Dutch on Dejima. He founded a school where he taught medicine to Japanese students and engaged in scientific fieldwork. He collected a huge amount of information about Japanese fauna and flora, and after a while also developed an interest in Japanese customs and culture. Upon his return to Europe he


NIPPON VII

TAB. X

SCRIPTURA COORAIANA.

SYLLABAE.

Syll. compositae.

Syll. simplices.

LITERAE

Vocales.

Consonantes.

aspiratae.

tenes.

Scriptura cooraiana

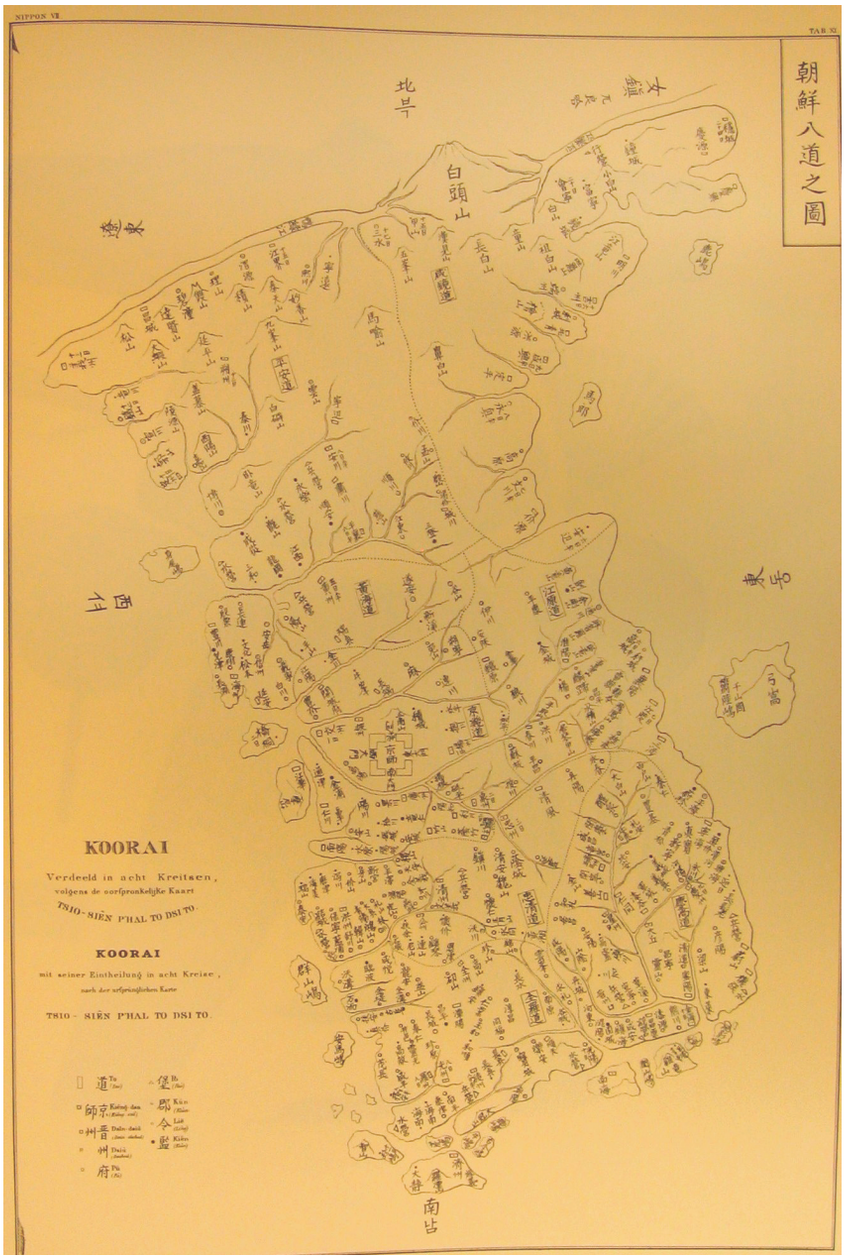
settled in Leiden and between 1832 and 1852 published his findings about Japan and Japan's neighbouring countries in what eventually turned into a five-volume work: *Nippon: Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan und dessen Neben- und Schutzländern Jezo mit den südlichen Kurilen, Sachalin, Korea und den Liu-Kiu-Inseln* (Nippon: archive for the description of Japan and its neighbouring and protectorate countries, Jezo with the southern Kuriles, Sachalin, Korea and the Ryukyu Islands).

In Nagasaki Siebold sometimes had opportunities to meet shipwrecked Koreans who lived in the Chōsen yashiki ("Korea House", an establishment maintained by the lord of Tsushima) near his own quarters, and tried to elicit information about their country from them. He also interrogated Japanese who had been to Tsushima and the Japanese trading post in Pusan about Korea. Already in 1824 he sent a han'gŭl chart to The Netherlands (where it aroused no interest whatsoever at the Royal Dutch Academy, as Siebold sourly remarks in a footnote in *Nippon*). After his return he was joined in Leiden by his fellow-Würzburger Hoffmann, whom he had accidentally met in a hotel in Antwerp where he had asked him to become his research assistant. Hoffmann was a somewhat curious choice for the job, as he had been trained as a singer. Nevertheless, he proved to be a competent scholar and eventually, in 1856, became Leiden University's first professor of Japanese. Together Siebold and Hoffmann devoted 162 pages, not counting the illustrations, of *Nippon* to Korea (which they called Kooraï, in the Japanese way). In this enterprise they were assisted by a Chinese gentleman, Ko Tsching Dschang (Guo Chengzhang).

Siebold first wrote in general about the Korean castaways he observed in Nagasaki. In his description one of the most notable features is his keen interest in race. Whereas in Hendrik Hamel's seventeenth-century description of Korea race is not mentioned at all, by the early nineteenth century the discourse of race (often phrased in anatomical terms, but also covering less tangible characteristics like temper and mentality) structured an important part of Siebold's descriptions. Subsequently, Siebold provided a detailed account of a meeting he had with a number of Korean castaways on 17 March, 1828. An English translation by Frits Vos of these two descriptions is given below.

Not translated from the first section with information about Korea, are remarks about language and writing systems, translations into German of a vernacular song and Chinese poems the Koreans wrote down or composed during the meeting, and brief general information about the geographical features, the climate, the economy, the administration and the religions of the peninsula

obtained from the Koreans Siebold met as well as from Japanese who had been in contact with Koreans on Tsushima and in Pusan. The first chapter about Korea was followed by a list of 455 Korean words, based on a list of characters, of which the Korean pronunciation and the Sino-Korean reading are given, together with the Sino-Japanese and Japanese readings. The next section was a translation from a Japanese book, *Chōsen monogatari* (Tales of Korea) published in Edo in 1750, in which it is related how Japanese traders in 1645 drifted to the coast to the north of Korea and via Manchuria and Korea were sent back to their fatherland. From the same source a description of the administrative structure of Korea, with the names of various civil and military offices was extracted.



Koorai

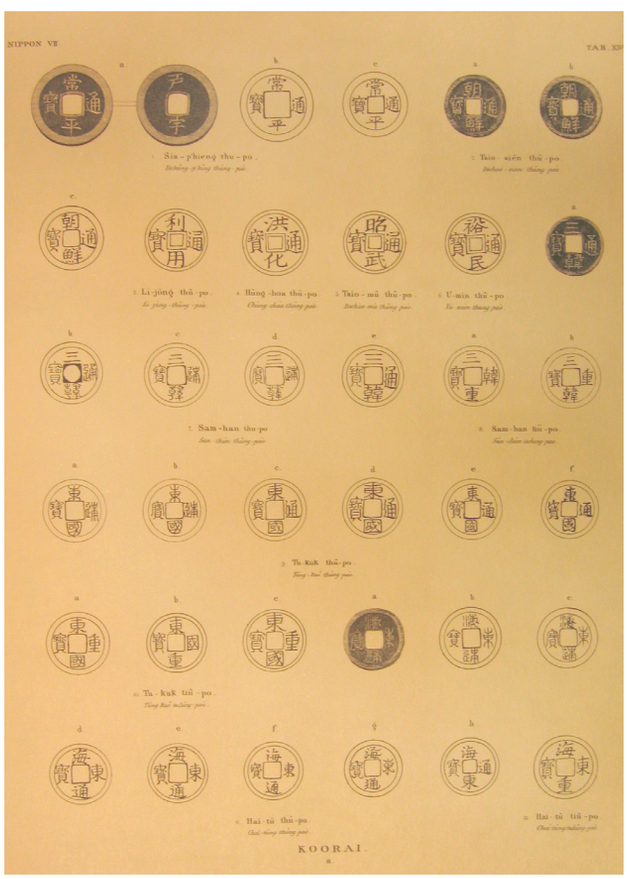
Nippon was published in installments and so it could happen that after the wordlist mentioned above had been printed, a similar list was obtained which was included in a following edition of the book. A version of the Yuhap 類合(a primer to learn Chinese characters) was put at the disposition of the scholars in Leiden by the Freiherr von Schilling-Canstadt, who in turn had obtained it from a Catholic priest, Father Hyacinth, archimandrite of the mission in Beijing. Hoffmann prepared a critical translation of this book with an introduction about the Korean language and writing systems. He also edited a similar text, the *Thousand Character Text* 千字文 (published as an appendix), the original of which now is held by the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden (which grew out of the collections Siebold had assembled).

Hoffmann also spent a great deal of effort on the next chapter, a survey of "Japan's relations with the Korean peninsula and China, based on Japanese sources," preceded by an outline history of Korea. He began with the myth of Tan'gun, on the basis of the account of the Tongguk t'onggam 東國通鑑 Comprehensive Mirror of the Eastern Country, which he could not consult directly but found quoted in Japanese sources, and concluded his account with the Manchu campaign against Chosŏn in 1637. Although he had to rely on Japanese sources, he was aware of their limitations, and attempted to maintain critical distance and qualify their value. He did not have the means to question Japanese accounts of influence on the Korean peninsula in ancient times, but sometimes used the term legends to characterize the sources. He also devoted considerable attention to the transfer of culture from Korea (particularly from Paekche) to Japan,

Kaufleute und Schiffsvolk

with for instance seamstresses arriving in 282 and scholars who introduced Chinese writing in 284. Interesting is his qualification of Parhae as created by "a special branch" of the nation of Koguryŏ (p. 98).

The final part of the sections of *Nippon* about Korea consists of explanations of the illustrations. The contents are mostly similar to the general description in the first section. Sometimes a few details are added. About the portrait of Hŏ Sach'ŏm (Siebold writes Hôsa tsêm), one of the people he met on 17 March, 1828, Siebold remarks that among all those present his features were the closest to the Caucasian race, although "less fine" because of the pronounced bone structure. Hŏ was judged to be most representative in looks of the elite and Siebold praises his educational achievements. He was "ein Mann von Bildung" with refined manners. Siebold was also impressed by his headgear, a fur cap that only left the face uncovered: "a very effective piece of clothing in cold climes, which really deserves to be copied." The last illustration is a copy of a Japanese map of Korea. Siebold notes that Hoffmann had gone to great lengths to render the place names on this map in Sino-Korean pronunciation, and utters the desire that henceforth all geographical works about Korea will use this terminology.



Koorai coins

NOTES ON KOORAÏ
from contact with some Koraaians stranded on the Japanese coast

Pictures of Korean Fishermen

ORIGINAL TEXT: PHILIP FRANZ VON SIEBOLD,
TRANSLATION: FRITS VOS,
REVISION: BOUDEWIJN WALRAVEN

Nearly every year Kooraian (*kooraïsche*] fishing boats and coastal vessels drift off to the Japanese coast because of the north-westerly storms that are predominant in spring. Therefore the Japanese government has made arrangements to transport these stranded vessels and the castaways to Nagasaki, the only place where foreigners may reside, where under the protection and at the expense of the Lord of Tsusima, who has been put in control of the political and commercial affairs between Japan and Kooraï, they are taken care of in a building belonging to him, and from there returned to the island of Tsusima and then to their homeland. And so one sees fishermen, sailors and merchants, often with several families, with wives and children, arrive in Nagasaki, and because the Lord of Tsusima's trading post is located quite near the Dutch factory on Dezima, we have the opportunity to observe these people closely in all their comings and goings and in their daily life. They often live there for several months waiting for a favourable wind, and keep themselves occupied by repairs to their vessels, the making of utensils and other manual labour. Although the place where they live is very simple, even poor, this is amply compensated for by the food, the excellent Japanese rice, the fine vegetables and fish, and the unlimited freedom they enjoy to visit the town and to enter the houses of the kind and, to the unfortunate, so hospitable Japanese, which even makes these poor castaways an object of envy to us, who are living in affluence and European luxury, but are state prisoners all the same.

The Kooraian is taller than the Japanese, although rarely more than 5½ Parisian feet, with a strong build, and well-balanced features, calm and nimble. The shape

Ein Kuestenfahrer (all picture plates reproduced here are from *Nippon*)

of his face in general has the characteristics of the Mongolian race: the wide, coarse face, with prominent cheekbones; the strong jaw; the flat bridge and wide wings of the nose; the rather big mouth with wide lips; the curious, apparently slanted form of the eyes; the coarse, thick, blackish hair, often inclining to a reddish-brown; the prominent eyebrows, the thin beard, together with a reddish-yellow or whitish complexion – all these make it possible to recognize him as an inhabitant of North-East Asia. The majority of the Kooraians I have observed belong to this type, and they themselves recognize it as the most characteristic of their nation.

However, in the facial features of the Kooraians one can see the characteristics of two races (*Volksstämme*). The nose that is flat next to the corners of the eyes, then spreads wide lower down, the slanted eyes that stand far

Ein Schiffsjunge

Ein Schiffsknecht

apart, and the more prominent cheekbones are marks of the race described above (to which the likenesses in pictures VI, VII and VIII belong); but if the top of the nose is high, and the nose more pronounced, then the facial features are closer to those of the Caucasians, and the shape of the eyes, too, becomes more like that of Europeans. Here the cheekbones are less pronounced, and the sharp profile that is absent in the Mongolian race becomes visible. The closer a person's facial features are to the race described first, the less beard that person will have, whereas individuals with a sharp profile often have quite a heavy beard. The skull of the latter is less compressed, their foreheads are straighter, rather than sloping back, and in their entire appearance they possess a kind of nobility, which one misses in the rough features of the Mongols (cf. pictures IV, V and IX).

The Kooraians behave in a serious, resigned manner, but in certain circumstances are cheerful, uninhibited; the way they walk is steady and nimble. The way they carry themselves betrays more independence and freedom than with the Japanese; also their posture exudes more energy and a more warlike spirit (*ein mehr kriegerischen Geist*) than that of the Japanese or Chinese; in

Kumtsjun

Ein Schiffer

Ein Kaufman

Hosatsem

intellectual polish (*Bildung des Geistes*) and refinement of manners, however, they lag far behind the Japanese of the same social class; they also miss the dexterity in daily social life, and the *savoir-vivre* that we admire to such a high degree in the most humble Japanese. They are reputed to be honest, loyal, and amiable; I would have less praise for their cleanliness and orderliness. They are hearty eaters, like alcoholic drinks, and seem much more than the Japanese to tend to the Asian inclination to favour leisure.

The Kooraians' clothes are very simple, and, for both sexes, mostly white, rarely blue, made from cotton for the common people and from silk for more distinguished persons. The white lends the common people a dirty appearance, because of a lack of cleanliness. Men wear a jacket that falls a little over the hips, and wide trousers, both often lined with cotton wool; the trousers are either tied up above the ankles, over socks that cover the feet, or hang loose around the legs, in which case the feet are bare. For shoes, they have a kind of straw sandal, in the case of women and children, daintily interwoven with threads of coloured cotton. Distinguished people wear shoes like the Chinese. The men's hair is twisted together in a kind

of knob-like knot. In summer they shave away the hair right at the top of the head, which makes the knot a bit thinner, and improves cleanliness and evaporation. With boys, and in general with those men who have not married, the hair is parted vertically on the head and plaited to the back in a thick, more or less long, braid that hangs over the nape of the neck. The men usually sport a moustache, and it is not uncommon for them to have a beard too, which in the case of old people is often quite long. The men often wear a headband like a net, woven from horse hair, and also a kind of hood of the same material. These headbands, called *man-gong*, are woven from horse hair with remarkable dexterity and are part of the national costume; nearly every Kooraian wears one, and keeps it on also under the wide sun-and-rain hat. The latter is a kind of remarkably large, wide-brimmed hat, made from straw or bamboo, and covered with varnished cotton, sometimes white, sometimes black. With its conical upper part it neatly fits over the knot of hair on the top of the head; in addition, it is fastened with a band around the chin. Men wear these hats to protect themselves from the sun and rain, and in winter exchange them for caps that reach down to the neck, with an opening in the front that leaves the face free. These winter caps are lined with fur, often from a kind of grey squirrel. Men of higher social status wear, over the clothes mentioned, a coat, also white. The costumes worn for official occasions and at court are said to be of precious worked silks and follow the ancient Chinese fashion.

The women, too, are simply dressed. A linen jacket, trousers, almost like those of the men, and over these a short skirt with many folds fastened around the hips; that is the way they dress, and so the wide trousers that stick out from under the skirt give them a funny appearance. Judging from a drawing we obtained from a Kooraian, distinguished ladies wear a coat that widens below, with sleeves that cover the hands, and have a tuft of hair that curls over the forehead, and a braid in the neck that is done up in a chignon with the help of a richly decorated hairpin. Among the commoner women I observed that their hair was parted in two equal halves and hung, combed back, about a hand's breadth, either loose or plaited, behind the ears down the neck. They often wear a black piece of cloth around their head. The costume of the children differs little from that of the adults. Parasols and fans are in general use, as in China and Japan, and the latter are often very tastefully made and decorated

Koorai objects

with charming trinkets (pictures I, II, XII).

The vessels I had the opportunity to see were light and simple, 30 or at most 50 Parisian feet long, and had two masts. The boards and beams are roughly worked and, remarkably enough, nowhere are they joined with iron or another metal. Instead of iron or copper, wooden nails are used. This way of building ships indicates a scarcity of metal, which can also be deduced from other circumstances, as we will show below. Each mast carries a sail made of straw mats that is fixed to a heavy yard in such a way that the sail can be easily moved up and down with the help of a pulley fixed at the top of the mast. The vessel has light, low railings, a winch on the foredeck to lift the anchor, and a rudder and oars like the Japanese ships. The anchors are of wood, the lashings made of straw rope and from the fibres of the stalks of the hemp palm (*Chamaerops excelsa Thunberg*). The attached picture (III) is a coaster, found lying on the beach in front of the Kooraians' house in Nagasaki. The rudder and the sails had been removed, and the midship-beams attached lengthwise to the masts over the deck, in order to create a hut, covered with bamboo and with mats on the deck.

As mentioned above, the Kooraian castaways often spent several months in our vicinity. They were quite resigned to their fate, and their hope of soon seeing their homeland again made them bear their adventure with

good cheer. At daybreak, they prayed while a drum (picture XIII, item 4) was beaten; afterwards all the members of the family would go about their business for the day and prepare for the journey home, while singing and games, and their beloved tobacco-smoking would fill the empty hours.

The drumming, when it is for a religious service, begins with strong and slow single strokes; the strokes then become faster and faster, before they slowly decrease, ending in a muffled roll, which turns into the strong single strokes again. It is in the same way that the call for morning, afternoon and evening prayers is beaten on the big drums in the *Buttoo* temples.

These simple people seem to like games a lot, unless it is the boredom they suffer from on Japanese soil that has accustomed them to this vice. I have often seen them play Japanese checkers and *Go-ban*, with a whole group of people sitting around them, absorbed in the game (Picture I). They place black and white pieces on the square fields of the board, and try to surround the pieces of their opponents, or push them back, to claim territory.

They also know the game of chess, a game that has been known to the Chinese and Japanese since ancient times; the 20 figures have names that are similar to those of our own game of chess, but consist of oblong, quadrangular pieces of wood, on which the names of the figures are written. With the poor fishermen and sailors it is difficult to find household items or similar objects that might give us an impression of their handicrafts. However, I did have the opportunity to see such objects belonging to more distinguished Kooraians and their Japanese supervisors and interpreters, and I will return to this in the course of this treatise.

The balmy days of the month of May at last bring the long longed-for south-easterly wind, and we see our Kooraians happily preparing themselves for their departure. The vessel has been patched up in a makeshift manner and after they have gone up and down the Bay of Nagasaki a couple of times to test it, they sail away to their destination, accompanied by a few Japanese vessels and supervisors in the service of the Lord of Tsusima. From Nagasaki they go to Iki – a distance of 13 *ri*, from Iki to Tsusima – 14 *ri*, and from there to Fusankai – 48 *ri*. The Japanese factory there hands them over to the Kooraian officials and their homeland.

Translated by Boudewijn Walraven

A Visit to Some Korean Merchants Who Were Shipwrecked off the Japanese Coast

Every time shipwrecked Koreans came to Nagasaki, I tried to seize the opportunity of visiting them in order to observe them in order to obtain some information about their country, which is so little known to us Europeans. Such visits, nevertheless, involved great difficulties. First I had to apply for permission from the commissioner [bugyō 奉行] of Nagasaki, for the Japanese superintendent of the Koreans was –as a subordinate officer to a Japanese feudal lord- allowed neither to receive me in his house nor to give me access to Koreans without the commissioner's knowledge. My Japanese friends, however, always knew how to wangle this permission under some pretext or other and to obtain access for me. Each time, the Koreans welcomed me very kindly. This was especially so on the occasion of a visit on March 17, 1828, when I was very pleasantly impressed by their behavior, and I found opportunity to make some interesting observations about their physical appearance, their customs, language, writing and the like. Since I happened to come upon a group of persons who were, after their fashion, rather educated, I was at last able to examine the level of culture, science and arts in Korea to some extent, and to obtain some reliable information about this unknown country.

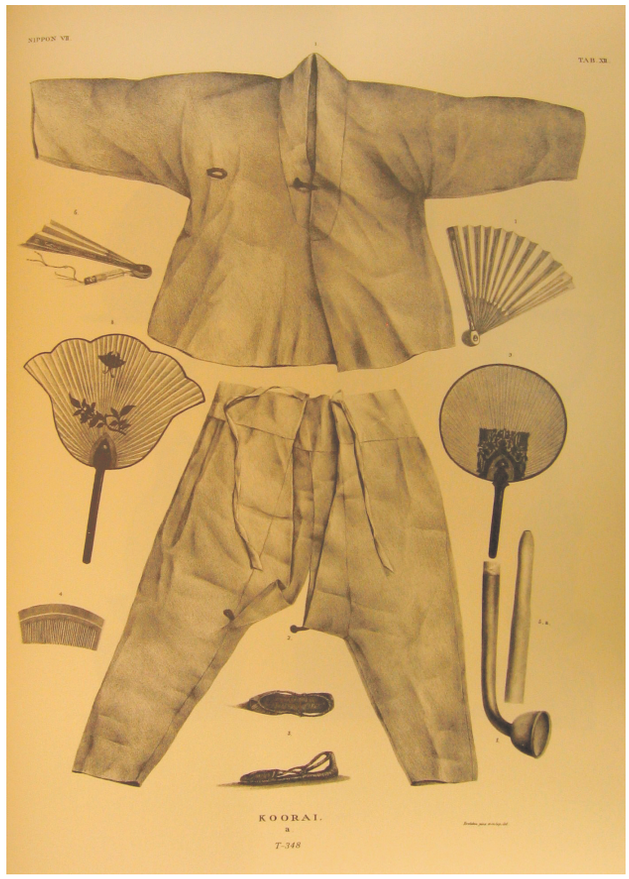
A group of 36 Koreans, consisting partly of fishermen, partly of sailors, as well as some merchants and travelers from the Province of Dsiên-la-to [全羅道], which –in three vessels- had been grounded at the west-coast of Kiusiu and at the Go-too Islands, found itself in the trading-house of the afore-mentioned Lord of Tsusima. I had already made the prior acquaintance of the superintendent and some officials and officers in the service of this lord, and –in accordance with Japanese custom- welcome gifts announced me as a guest who was to appear soon. The hospitality of the Japanese, which cannot be sufficiently praised, was again manifest on this occasion. In the reception-room of the superintendent, everything had been prepared to receive a guest from such an esteemed nation as The Netherlands is in Japan, in accordance with his rank, and to show the representatives of a neighboring Asian nation, inhospitable toward Europeans, the respect due to a country with which peaceful commercial

relations had been maintained for 200 years.

From the group of shipwrecked Koreans my Japanese host had selected four of the most respected and most educated men and, because of the difference in costumes, he had added a sailor and a ship's boy. Dressed in their best attire, these people entered the reception-room with a dignified gait and let themselves down on the mat in proper order, some in the Japanese way, others cross-legged according to their own custom.

These unfortunate persons had obviously put on their best clothes saved from their possessions on the occasion of the shipwreck. Some were dressed up in several jackets in a nearly awkward manner; head-dress and head-gear had been divided among them in such a way that one could easily guess their good intentions to give me an impression of their costumes. Some of them wore a long white top-coat over the jacket mentioned, and wide trousers of the same material. One of them was dressed in a jacket of bright blue silk, padded and stitched, and similar silk trousers. Their headgear was varied: some wore a hairnet, mangong [망건], one a steeple-crowned cap –likewise braided from horsehair-, another one a winter cap lined with fur, and yet another wore a large hat on top of the hairnet. Moreover, the others had brought large hats with them, from which fact I deduced that these belong to their festive attire. The sailor wore his hair simply twisted into a topknot, and the ship's boy let his parted hair hang down in a long thick braid. The broad-rimmed extremely light hat and the fur-cap protecting the neck and part of the face appeared to me very practical types of headgear.

In this way I mustered the Koreans who were facing us in a half-circle. Then I saluted them, and had an interpreter explain the aim of my visit and place some presents in front of them. The first one in the row replied to my speech in such a manner that it betrayed a certain proficiency in rhetoric and even resembled declamation, and gave vent to his regret that they were, as miserable victims of a shipwreck, incapable of offering presents in return. Thereupon the second one took over and tendered his thanks which he expressed more by signs than through eloquence. During the ensuing lull in our conversation it struck me that none of them remained sitting quietly, but that they all moved the upper part of their body continuously to and fro. They turned out to be two merchants, a teacher of Chinese and Korean writing and language as well as of Confucian ethics, a traveling



Koorai clothes

tradesman and the skipper –the one with whom I was now talking. These alert men had excellent manners, and their initially somewhat shy looks seemed gradually to brighten up. In this odd company I spent a very curious and instructive day. One of the merchants, however, was extremely dejected, I may even say diseased in mind. He had lost all possessions, had physically suffered during the shipwreck, and was –as was told to me- continuously occupied with the sad memories of the dead ones. His portrait may speak for him. The other one, who called himself Ho sa tsiém [許士瞻], was a cheerful and at the same time serious person who seemed that day to have forgotten his misfortune, and who really exerted himself to show the European strangers that he was not a common man. The scholar looked cunning, but not very scholarly; there was something vulgar in his features. When I asked Ho sa tsiém who among them had the typical features of the lower classes, he pointed on the sly at Kum Tsiun [金致潤](which was the name of the scholar) and availed himself of the occasion to pay a warm tribute to himself and to recommend himself as a typical specimen of the aristocracy. The skipper had that look in his eyes com-

mon to sailors of most nations: a fixed and serious stare under lowered eyebrows which seemed to protect the eyes simultaneously from the lustre of heaven and that of the water-level. The sailor's build furnished a good example of the coarse osseous system of the lower classes, and the ship's boy showed the smooth round face that is so typical of youths of the Mongolian race. The men had moustaches and beards around the chin; their beards and hair were essentially black, but shaded into auburn. From their features the characteristics of the two entirely different races mentioned earlier could easily be observed. The scholar had the type of the Mongolian race, whereas Ho sa tsiém's features approximated those of a Caucasian. As regards the skipper and one merchant, whose faces had rather lost flesh, the nose seemed to protrude more than actually was the case. The form of the boy's eyes confirmed my former observation concerning the so-called slanting of the eyes, and elsewhere I have given a description and picture of his eye.

Because of my former association with Koreans as well as my acquaintance with several Japanese who had been to Tsusima and Fusankai [釜山?], I had gained some knowledge of the Korean language and writing system, about the country, its customs and manners etc., and was now able to enlarge it greatly thanks to these intelligent people. Especially with regard to language and script, the present meeting provided me with the information I had longed for. As we still know extremely little about these subjects, I am convinced I shall be rendering a service to students of linguistics by communicating the results of my research in a separate chapter.

The presents I offered to the Koreans consisted of a few yards of colored cloth, cottons and some bottles of arrack and gin, and were joyfully accepted by them. They seemed to deliberate as to what they would give me as counter-presents, and the one in the upper-seat, who had spoken before, now apologized in an embarrassed way for their poverty, and asked me to accept some of the objects they had saved. These were some manuscripts, picture scrolls, a small table, some jugs and dishes, to which each of them added a garment or trinket which he could spare. The speaker had a very easy delivery; nevertheless, he did not give the impression of someone speaking impromptu, but his form of address was that of someone reciting something without understanding the meaning of it –a peculiarity of Korean delivery which is also characteristic of Japanese public speech. The Koreans pronounce their words emphatically between the teeth and in a drawling way, yet in such a manner that one can easily distinguish the division into syllables, words and sentences. In the meantime writing utensils and paper had been brought in, and some of them were busily committing something to paper. From three of them I received compositions in Chinese and Korean. These written communications are –because of their contents and way of writing- too interesting not to be added, in copies of the originals with translation, to my remarks on writing and language.

My friend Carl Hubert de Villeneuve, whom I cannot praise and thank enough for his active assistance as a draughtsman, but even more for his friendship and companionship in prosperity and misfortune during my Japanese career, had been busy drawing some portraits, while my Japanese painter Toiosuke [登與祖] made drawings of the costumes and the like. This day we succeeded better than ever, and these people were more willing to be measured and portrayed than the Koreans we had visited formerly. In general they showed more refinement than would have been expected from a people which had been described to us as being uncouth; repeatedly they expressed their gratitude for the presents and the entertainment.

We, De Villeneuve and I, afterwards visited our Korean friends, who showed a marked attachment to us, several times. They often conveyed their regards to us and occasionally sent us trifles, specimens of their writing, farewell letters, etc. From one of them I received a small landscape painted in Korea and executed in the Chinese style.

Translated by Frits Vos

This article has made use of the 1975 facsimile edition of von Siebold's original work: Philip Franz von Siebold, *Nippon: Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan. Vollständiger Neudruck der Urausgabe zur Erinnerung an Philipp Franz von Siebolds erstes Wirken in Japan 1823-1830*. Herausgegeben vom Japanisch-Holländischen Institut, Tokyo. Tokyo : Kodansha, 1975. Six volumes.

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