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The Direct and Indirect Contributions of Western Missionaries to Korean Nationalism during the  
Late Choson and Early Japanese Annexation Periods, 1884-1920

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A thesis  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of History  
East Tennessee State University

in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Master of Arts in History

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by  
Walter J. Stucke

August 2011

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Dr. Henry Antkiewicz, Chair  
Dr. William Burgess  
Dr. Dale Schmitt

Keywords: Protestantism, Christianity, Missionaries, Nationalism, Korea, Late Choson Dynasty,  
Japanese Annexation, March First Movement

## ABSTRACT

The Direct and Indirect Contributions of Western Missionaries to Korean Nationalism during the  
Late Choson and Early Japanese Annexation Periods, 1884-1920

by

Walter J. Stucke

This thesis sets out to demonstrate the role of Western missionaries and Korean Christians, especially Protestants, on Korean nationalism. The first significant introduction of Protestantism into Korea came in 1884. Within just over thirty years, the Protestant Church in Korea expanded and many of the nationalist leaders took active roles in the Korean nationalist movement against Japanese imperialism. This thesis consults both Western and Korean primary sources including period newspapers. Some of the Korean primary sources were translated from Korean into English and others were originally written in English by Koreans. Also consulted are many valuable secondary sources which help further shed light on the subject at hand and give credence to the thesis. Chapters 2-4 show the direct contributions of Western missionaries to Korean nationalism and Chapters 5-7 show the indirect contributions of Western missionaries by the direct involvement of Korean Christians in their fight for independence against the old Korean order and Japan.

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## DEDICATION

To my mother Christine Stucke and my father Walter Stucke who always believed in my dreams and had the confidence that I could accomplish them. To my friends Darren, Bob, and Craig who steadfastly supported me and continuously encouraged me not to give up. I would also like to thank the Starbucks crew of Powell, TN who helped keep me awake as I spent many hours there completing my work. Many professors past and present helped make my thesis a reality. DVH, Dr. Mike Lowman, Dr. Kurt Grussendorf, Dr. Doug Burgess, Dr. Mel Page, Dr. Dale Schmitt, Dr. Emmett Essin, Dr. Leila Al-Imad, and especially Dr. Henry Antkiewicz all of whom contributed greatly to my learning. I must also mention Dr. William Dean who helped me bridge the gap between fact and fiction. Without his influence, I would not be the historian that I am today. I would also like to thank my fellow graduate students of the History Department at ETSU who toiled with me. Last but certainly not least, I dedicate this thesis to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit for saving and keeping me. Any mistakes, omissions, or errors that remain in this thesis are strictly the fault of the author.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Direct and Indirect Contributions of Western Missionaries to Korean Nationalism during the Late Choson and Early Japanese Annexation Periods, 1884-1920

Western missionaries contributed directly and indirectly to Korean nationalism during the late Choson and early Japanese annexation periods between the years of 1884-1920. The missionaries brought Christianity with them along with Western learning and ideas. By extension, many early Korean converts to Christianity built upon their newfound faith and learning the foundations of nationalism. It would be a misnomer to call the Korean nationalist movement a strictly Christian endeavor or Christian revolution but it would be equally inaccurate to not acknowledge the vast influence Christianity and Western ideas played in fueling the spirit of Korean nationalism in the minds and hearts of the nationalist leaders. This thesis is divided into two sections. The first section explores the direct contributions that Western missionaries made to Korean nationalism. The second section examines the indirect contributions of Western missionaries to Korean nationalism.

In the first section the spreading of Christianity, introduction of Western medicine, educating of male and female Koreans, and the popularizing of *hangul* (Korean alphabet) are evaluated and interpreted. The first section also provides additional insights and examples of many things that the missionaries encountered in their propagation of the gospel. In the second section establishment of the Independence Club, the Pyongyang Revival of 1907, the Conspiracy Case, and the March 1<sup>st</sup> Independence Movement are examined and interpreted.

The complexity of writing a thesis that incorporates non-Western languages and alphabets necessitates an explanation of the romanization methods used for Korean words and names of people and places. In Chinese writers use either the Wade-Giles or the pinyin system to

romanize names. In the same way the Korean language boasts two methods of its own. They are called the McCune-Reischauer and the revised romanization systems. As a result, alternate spellings often appear throughout this work for Korean names. For example, sometimes a word is spelled with a *t* instead of a *d* as in Taegu versus Daegu or with a *p* instead of a *b* as in Pusan versus Busan. Some common examples include the use of *ch* for *j*, *k* for *g*, and *r* for *l*. Other examples exist as well. Sometimes even an *f* is used on rare occasion in the place of a *b* or a *p*. Furthermore, many Koreans chose to anglicize their names or adopt Western names altogether. An important example is So Jai-pil (So Chae-pil) who changed his name to Philip Jaisohn. Alternatively, sometimes So Jai-pil can be spelled as Seo Jae-pil, Seo Jai-pil, etc. Also, many places have had their names changed outright. The modern day city of Incheon (Inchon) originally was known as Chemulpo.

## CHAPTER 2

### RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND DIPLOMATIC BACKGROUNDS AT THE TIME OF THE ARRIVAL OF WESTERN MISSIONARIES

Before directly going into the stories of the missionaries and their converts, an explanation of the Korean situation religiously, politically, and diplomatically must be investigated in order to give the reader a better impression of what the Korean peninsula held for the forthcoming missionaries.

#### *Religious Background*

During the Koryo (Goryeo) Dynasty, which lasted from A.D. 918 to 1392, “Buddhism...reached its peak...and was the dominant religion for four centuries.” The authority that Buddhist priests wielded superseded “decrees of the king.” Buddhist priests generally served as the “scribes, lawmakers, counselors, and secretaries.” At its zenith, Buddhism claimed “over ten thousand” priests.<sup>1</sup> Buddhism’s supremacy during the Koryo Dynasty did not go unrivaled. For a period of nearly seventy years (969-1036), Confucianism “gained the upper hand in the court.” In order to meet the challenge of Confucianism, the king issued an edict in 1036 that declared “that if a man had four sons one must become a monk and the death penalty was banished in deference to the religious ban on bloodshed.” By 1048, Korea had ten thousand monks. “A decade later he decreed that one of every three sons must become a monk and had nails made for monastery construction from metal intended for arms.” The Buddhist monks constructed many temples during this time. By 1140, “a Buddhist ceremony” had “thirty thousand monks...present.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kyung Cho Chung, *Korea Tomorrow: Land of the Morning Calm* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), 53-54.

<sup>2</sup> Cornelius Osgood, *The Koreans and their Culture* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1951), 247-248.

In 1392, the Choson (Yi) Dynasty began. The “resurgence” of Confucianism resulted from the support “of the newly established Ming dynasty in China.” One author suggests that the pro-Confucian slant of Yi Korea was a reaction against Buddhism not an outright embrace of Confucianism and that “the power of the latter religion crashed even more rapidly than it had risen.”<sup>3</sup> However, whether or not the embrace of Confucianism by Yi Korea was merely reactionary is debatable. Another author states, “the founding of the Yi dynasty was thus more than anything else a Confucian revolution.”<sup>4</sup> Confucianism promotes the “fivefold loyalties: ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger, and friends.” By mastering the Confucian classics a student could take and pass the civil service examinations and thus “lead religious ceremonies” and “hold political office.” Confucian morals are “little short of Christian ideals” with “filial piety” being the “cardinal virtue.” Confucianism still dominates in Korea by people of all religious stripes.<sup>5</sup>

Simply understanding an overview of the religious background of ancient Korea offers little service to the reader. The *minjung* (the masses) of Korea have believed for centuries in a coming millenarianism. Four religious traditions have given “millennial hope” and offered solace to “the oppressed people of Korea. They are Jung Kam Lok, Maitreya Buddhism, Tonghak religion, and Christianity during the Japanese annexation.”<sup>6</sup>

### Jung Kam Lok

*Jung Kam Lok (The Book of Revelation)* is a “Shaman[istic] apocalyptic book”<sup>7</sup> compiled from “oral traditions...in the 16<sup>th</sup> century” in Korea.<sup>8</sup> *Jung Kam Lok* promotes geomancy. The

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<sup>3</sup> Osgood, 248.

<sup>4</sup> Ja-Hyun Kim Haboush, *The Confucian Kingship in Korea* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 12.

<sup>5</sup> Kyung Cho Chung, 55-56.

<sup>6</sup> Sang Taek Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea: Minjung and Millenarianism* (Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 58.

geomancy of *Jung Kam Lok* must not be confused with modern concepts of Western geomancy that promote only balance and harmony but rather that of “*Pung Su Jiri* (wind-water-earth). *Feng Shui* (geomancy) is the belief that human life is controlled by the structures and events of the natural world. It teaches that there are lines of energy flowing throughout the earth, giving it life in much the same way that blood flows through the human body. This energy is called *Ki Maek*.” Koreans hoped for “smooth” *Ki Maek* as opposed to “disturbed” *Ki Maek* because the former brought “good” and the latter “troubles.”<sup>9</sup>

*Jung Kam Lok* consists of five important themes. They are “denial of the world, waiting for the Messiah, the ultimate city, the ascetic vocation, and positive fatalism.”<sup>10</sup> For the purposes of this paper, the five points of *Jung Kam Lok* will not be explored but their contributions to minjung millenarianism cannot be overstressed.

The main theme of *Jung Kam Lok* is the replacement of the Yi [Choson] dynasty by the kingdom of Jung. After 500 years the energy patterns of the earth will change; the Yi dynasty will be destroyed and replaced for 800 years by the Jung dynasty, who will rule from near Kye Ryong mountain. Then the Cho dynasty (100 years) will rule at Kaya mountain. Geomancy is used to answer why the different dynasties will rule in this way.<sup>11</sup>

Anti-government ideas and utopianism find their way into the minjung ideas of *Jung Kam Lok*. Messianism, also found in *Jung Kam Lok*, “set up by the Jung family” is “the equivalent of the messiah in the Korean mind.”<sup>12</sup> The *Dong-A Daily Newspaper* from January 11, 1924, compared *Jung Kam Lok* to the “Christian Old Testament” because both foreshadow a future Messiah. Being “indigenous” to Korea, *Jung Kam Lok* heavily influenced the “Tonghak religion, *Miruk* Buddhism and Christianity.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 67.

<sup>9</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 67.

<sup>10</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 74.

<sup>11</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 76.

<sup>12</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 76-77.

<sup>13</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 82-83.

### Maitreya Buddhism

As touched upon above, Buddhism gained a strong footing during the Koryo Dynasty. The Maitreya Buddha had been introduced a few centuries before the establishment of Koryo Korea. To Koreans Maitreya is “the future Buddha.” Maitreya means “friendliness” in Sanskrit and “after Gautama, Maitreya is the most revered of the *Bodhisattvas*, being found in both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.”<sup>14</sup> As shall be explored in a later chapter, during the Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1945) Maitreya Buddhism still held sway. Thirty-three men signed the Korean Declaration of Independence in 1919 and two of them were Buddhists “one of these being Han Yong Woon (1879-1944), a believer in Maitreya.”<sup>15</sup>

A Buddhist monk by the name of Wonhyo (617-686) “wrote over 240 books including Maitreya books.” It was he who brought *Miruk Bal Mun Kyung* “Maitreya teaching” to the Korean people. Wonhyo’s teachings promoted ten virtues: “Do not kill any living thing, do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not slander, do not swear, do not lie, do not flirt, do not philander, do not be jealous or angry, and do not argue foolishly.” Wonhyo “helped establish Maitreya Buddhism as a religion for the minjung.” Maitreya ushers in a new earth and is actually a physical being “not a figment of the imagination.” He is a non-reincarnated person unlike other living creatures “as taught in mainstream Buddhism.”<sup>16</sup>

According to Maitreya Buddhism, Maitreya will bring the Yonghwa “world” some “5,670 million years after the death of Sakyamuni [Gautama], at which time Maitreya will descend and preach three times under a Yonghwa tree.” A precise number of people “become enlightened” on three separate occasions numbering in the millions. The Yonghwa world has a

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<sup>14</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 87-88.

<sup>15</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 91.

<sup>16</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 92-95 passim.

“millennial city” that is “four-square in form” and the people there live for 84,000 years. The 1,000 year reign of Christ recorded in Revelation chapter 20 “is very similar” to the Yonghwa world. The Christian millennium, like Maitreya Buddhism, establishes a “millennial time...on earth with the return of the Messiah.”<sup>17</sup>

### Tonghak

Another faith advocating millenarianism for the minjung is Tonghak later called Chondogyo starting in 1905. Unlike other Asian faiths that penetrated deeply into Korean thought—Shamanism, Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism—Tonghak is uniquely Korean in origin and a relatively recent faith that combined elements of all of the above mentioned faiths. The founder of Tonghak (Religion of the Heavenly Way) was Choe Je-u (1824-1864) and he established this new religion in 1860. Choe’s followers “called” him “by his honorific name, Suun.” The prime target of Tonghak was Seohak (Christianity or Western Learning).<sup>18</sup> And by Christianity, it is understood to mean Catholicism for Protestants did not arrive in significant numbers until 1885. As the Choson Dynasty was coming to a close, the social conditions in Korea were deplorable. The *yangban* (educated ruling class of Korea) continued to enjoy lives of luxury at the expense of the minjung. Suun spent two decades moving “about the country, meditating in mountains and along river banks.” On April 5, 1860, Suun “received a revelation” from *Hanullim* the title given to God in Chondogyo. Over the next year Suun developed his ideas and wrote much of the Tonghak scripture. In 1861, he began proselytizing. Chondogyo had an

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<sup>17</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 96-97. On page 96, Lee also describes the Yonghwa world with these words, “All the mines provide more than enough resources for all, with ample gold, diamonds and other treasures, which are used like ordinary stones. With the natural world being luxuriant and peaceful, there is plenty of food for all. Everything is at peace, no divisions exist between people, and day and night have ceased. No-one ages or becomes sick, and all pain has disappeared.” This description is very similar to the New Jerusalem recorded in Revelation chapter 21.

<sup>18</sup> *Chondogyo Scripture: Donggyeong Daejeon (Great Scripture of Eastern Learning)*, trans. Yong Choon Kim and Suk San Yoon (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 2007), 55.

egalitarian bent to it which flew directly into the face of the contemporary Confucian social structure.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, Tonghak taught that all men had a divine nature “without distinction between the aristocrats and the commoners.” Suun obtained many converts which ultimately led to his execution on March 10, 1864, just a month shy of the four year anniversary of the establishment of Tonghak. The Religion of the Heavenly Way did not die with Suun.<sup>20</sup> The next leader after Suun was Choe Si-hyeong (1827-1898). He was given the name of Haeweol. Under his tenure the Tonghaks spurned the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895.<sup>21</sup>

As explored in further detail in Chapter 3, Catholicism entered Korea in the late sixteenth century but did not find a receptive audience until being reintroduced in the late eighteenth century by two Korean missionaries. By the mid-nineteenth century Western powers began to make inroads in both China and Japan. The king of Korea, Chuljong (r.1849-1863), paid little attention to the expanse of Western influence in East Asia. Hence, the monarch did little to curb the expanse of Catholicism in his realm. “When the reign began there were about 11,000 Christians in Korea and when it closed in 1863 there were in the vicinity of 20,000, or almost double.” Traditionally, the yangban despised Western learning and Christianity in particular because of its appeal to the common man. French priests stationed in Korea painted a “sad” picture portraying the king as “incapable and...a mere debauchee.” The yangban continually extorted the lower classes “and the latter were frequently consulting the books of prophecy which foretold the dissolution of the dynasty.” The equality promoted by Catholicism, the political weakness of the king, the dissatisfaction with the ruling class, and the Western threats

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<sup>19</sup> *Chondogyo Scripture*, 56.

<sup>20</sup> *Chondogyo Scripture*, 56.

<sup>21</sup> *Chondogyo Scripture*, 57-58.



being magnified in China brought both political instability and religious persecution to religious minorities in Korea.<sup>22</sup>

In 1860, the English and French ousted the Chinese Emperor followed by “the burning and the looting of the Summer Palace [Yuan Ming Yuan].” Peking had capitulated to Western powers bringing fear and anxiety to her vassal state of Korea. Three “concern[s]” prevailed in Korea with the bulk of worry directed towards Catholicism and Westerners in general. A Korean official wrote:

- (1) The Emperor, fleeing before his enemies, might wish to find asylum in Korea, or at least might take refuge in some Manchu fortress just beyond the border. Every possible approach ought to be strictly guarded so that the Emperor might not dare to force his way into Korean territory. (This shows the depth of Korea’s loyalty to China).
- (2) The outlaw bands that infested the neutral strip between Korea and China might attempt an invasion of Korea and forts ought to be built to prevent such an enterprise.
- (3) Worst of all, there might be a possible invasion of Korea by the foreigners. Korean cities would be wrecked, the morals of the people would be lowered, a depraved religion would be established. As the foreigners were strong only on the sea or on level ground the mountainous character of Korea would be of material advantage to her. The army should be reorganised, and forts should be built along the principal approaches to Seoul; also at Tongna, Namyang, Pubyung, and Inju. A fort should be built on high ground commanding the passage of the narrows at Kangwha. Western boats could not of course ascend the Han River. As the foreign religion spread rapidly in the provinces every precaution should be taken to prevent the foreign priests communicating with their countrymen abroad.<sup>23</sup>

Within three years Chuljong died and Gojong (r.1863-1907) took the throne at the age of eleven. Being a stripling, his father Heungseon Daewongun served as regent until 1873. The Daewongun pursued strict isolationist policies. He targeted all outside influences not least among these Catholicism. 1866 proved to be a watershed year of the negative kind in Western-Korean relations. Russia sought trade relations with Korea in January of that year and the French

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<sup>22</sup> Homer Hulbert, *Hulbert’s History of Korea*, vol. II, ed. Clarence Norwood Weems (Seoul: n.p., 1905; reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), 200 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>23</sup> Hulbert, *Hulbert’s History of Korea*, 201.

Catholics in Korea at the time suggested that Russia would only be stopped if Korea allied itself with either England or France. Prince Gung (Daewongun) paid lip service to the suggestion of the French Catholics in order to garner their trust.<sup>24</sup> Catholics suffered severe persecution in Korea in 1801 and 1839 but the worst was to come in 1866.<sup>25</sup> Daewongun brought “the bloody persecution of 1866. From 1866 up to 1870, eight thousand souls suffered martyrdom.”<sup>26</sup>

### *Political Background*

#### The Daewongun and Queen Min

During Daewongun’s regency (1863-1873) Korea observed strict isolationist policies. In all honesty, Daewongun set his eyes on permanent control of the throne even when his son came of age. He chose Queen Myeongseong (Min) for his son’s bride assuming that he would still be able to pull the strings behind closed doors. The Daewongun was a strong, dominating figure who ruled Korea with an iron will. His son, Gojong, certainly did not possess the domineering persona of his father. However, his chosen daughter-in-law proved to be “a woman of natural ability and of imperious will.” She hastily gathered a group of powerful political figures onto her side and challenged the regent’s power. She became “the instrument of his [Daewongun’s] undoing.” Queen Min had an element of toleration for Catholics, sought “China’s advice” in “foreign relations” and actually did not wholly despise cooperation with the Japanese.<sup>27</sup>

The Queen appointed her brother Min Seung-ho as party head and even convinced Daewongun’s own son the “elder brother to the king,” Yi Cha-myun to join the side of the Min clan. She suggested “that if the Regent could be removed they two might share the leadership

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<sup>24</sup> Hulbert, *Hulbert’s History of Korea*, 205.

<sup>25</sup> Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner and Edward J. Shultz (Seoul: Ilchokak Publishers, 1984), 263.

<sup>26</sup> W.J. Kang, “Early Korean Contact with Christianity and Korean Response: An Historical Introduction,” in *Korea’s Response to the West*, ed. Yung-Hwan Jo (Kalamazoo, MI: The Korea Research and Publications, Inc., 1971), 46.

<sup>27</sup> Hulbert, *Hulbert’s History of Korea*, 217-218.

affairs.” In disgrace and with immense pressure brought on from the allegiance of Yi Cha-myun and the Mins, Daewongun resigned his regency in 1873. It seemed that finally some “tranquility” would come to the royal family and that they could move “the peninsula” into “a new direction.” Unfortunately, a murderous plot was in the making that claimed the lives of Min Seung-ho, his mother, and his son. Min Seung-ho “received a letter” along with a “casket wrapped in silk” ostensibly from a friendly party member. “He was requested to open it only in the presence of his mother and his son.” Someone, presumably cronies of the Daewongun, had actually placed a bomb into the casket that “exploded with terrific force” killing the three onlookers.<sup>28</sup>

The Daewongun remained bitter towards his son and especially to Queen Min. “In the Tai-won-kun’s own words, the Mins had long been his political enemies.” Being conservative, the former regent despised any opening of Korea and, after diplomatic relations between Korea and Japan were formally recognized in 1876, even greater distance existed between the Queen and the Daewongun. The Mins certainly were not extreme progressives but “favored foreign intercourse and limited modernization.” With modernization coming to Korea from further investment from the Japan and China, Daewongun sought “to regain control of the Government.” In 1881, Daewongun used his support from students (approximately 10,000) loyal to him in “the southern province of Kyong-san” to strong-arm Gojong. “The King’s response was to execute the leaders” of the revolt.<sup>29</sup>

The original date for the emeute was October 31, 1881, but this “plot” was uncovered. Progressivism and “the expanding influence of Japan in Korea” instigated the uprising. To the Daewongun’s delight, “the five thousand soldiers in the castle of Seoul” revolted against Gojong and Min because of underpayment and “inadequate and...poor” rations. On July 23, 1882, the

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<sup>28</sup> Hulbert, *Hulbert’s History of Korea*, 218.

<sup>29</sup> Frederick Foo Chien, *The Opening of Korea: A Study of Chinese Diplomacy, 1876-1885* (North Haven, CT: The Shoe String Press, Inc., 1967), 94-96 passim.

mob of soldiers killed some who were loyal to the king and went after the queen “who had already fled” the palace. The rioting army foolishly attacked the Japanese Legation making it an international affair. On August 2, Daewongun wrote to China, “During this moment of crisis, it all depended on the Tai-won-kun who was courageous enough to exhort the ignorant soldiers and civilians on the rights and wrongs. They were all obedient to him and soon dispersed.” It had been a custom in Korea to receive “China’s sanction for each change of regime.” Both China and Japan entered into the conflict supporting Gojong over the Daewongun.<sup>30</sup>

### Trouble with France

The political instability that engulfed Korea in the 1860s involved religious persecution of both Koreans and Tonghaks. The Korean court executed three French Catholic priests in 1847 and the French government did not retaliate. In March 1866, Daewongun inflicted heavy persecution against the Catholics. “Only three of almost a score of French missionaries escaped with their lives.” With the sacking of Peking in 1860 and the dwindling cooperation between China and Korea, the French had the idea that Korea now acted autonomously of China. “The relations between China and Korea received their first major test at the time of the French expedition in 1866.” In July, a French gunboat took “preliminary surveys of the Western coast of Korea.” Henri de Bellonet wrote a stern warning to Daewongun that indicated the French’s misunderstanding of China/Korean relations, “Sir: I grieve to bring officially to the knowledge of your imperial highness a horrible outrage committed in the small kingdom of Corea, which formerly assumed the bonds of vassalage to the Chinese empire, but which this act of savage barbarity has forever separated from it.” De Bellonet worked off of his conception that China’s refusal to issue passports to French missionaries stationed in China bound for Korea and China’s

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<sup>30</sup> Chien, 96-99 passim.

refusal “to apply the treaties of Tientsin to” Korea no longer put the Hermit Kingdom under the dominion of her bigger brother China.<sup>31</sup>

Initially, it seemed de Bellonet expected China to stay out of France and Korea’s quarrel.<sup>32</sup> A French fleet sought restitution for the atrocities committed against the slain priests and attacked Ganghwa Island in October, 1866.<sup>33</sup> Ganghwa Island is located “at the mouth of the Han River.” The French fleet had only 600 men and a mere 160 of them were sent to capture the city on the island. “Only 80 returned uninjured, fighting as they retreated.” While not sending direct support to Korea, China maintained her loyalty.<sup>34</sup>

### *Diplomatic Background*

#### The First Contact and Early Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Korea

Most Americans knew very little of Korea prior to the start of the Korean War (1950-1953). One American writer who spent over fifty years living in Korea suggested that in 1940 “perhaps as many as 98 percent of Americans would not have been able to answer the question ‘What and where is Korea?’”<sup>35</sup> America’s first major encounter with Korea occurred in 1866 when the merchant ship the *General Sherman* vanished along with its crew in the Taedong River located in present day North Korea. Much mystery still surrounded the disappearance of the vessel in the Korean Peninsula five years later. An August 23, 1871, article in the *New York Times* reported that “the fate of the *General Sherman* has remained a mystery from that day to this.” The article indicated that an American fleet commanded by Admiral John Rodgers went to

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<sup>31</sup> M. Frederick Nelson, *Korea: And the Old Orders in Eastern Asia* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1946), 115-116. The 1858 *Treaty of Tientsin* opened up several more Chinese ports to Western powers during the Second Opium War. Western powers also would be allowed to open legations in Peking and foreigners could travel with less restriction in China.

<sup>32</sup> Nelson, 117.

<sup>33</sup> Keith Pratt, *Everlasting Flower: A History of Korea* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), 194.

<sup>34</sup> Nelson, 119.

<sup>35</sup> L. Robert Kohls, *Learning to Think Korean: A Guide to Living and Working in Korea* (Boston and London: Intercultural Press, 2001), 1.

Korea with the intent to only obtain a treaty which called for the cordial treatment of Americans shipwrecked upon Korean lands. Supposedly, the “barbarians” attacked Rodger’s fleet on June 1 causing him to demolish the Korean forces days later after the Korean authorities refused to apologize.<sup>36</sup> Missionary Robert J. Thomas of Scotland met his death aboard the *General Sherman*.<sup>37</sup>

The Americans routed the Koreans on June 10 and 11, 1871. In an effort to “vindicate the honor of the American flag,” Admiral Rodgers and his men set out to seek retribution for “the wanton and murderous attack on the United States surveying party [June 1 attack].” In total, only three Americans lost their lives and six were wounded, but the Koreans suffered far worse. Two hundred forty-three “mutilated bodies lay in and around” the citadel in addition to the hundreds that “ran into the water and were drowned.”<sup>38</sup> As was customary, the American aggressors were portrayed as heroes in spite of the fact that they unlawfully explored a country that had not welcomed them. The battle was hardly a fair fight. The superior weaponry of the United States turned the battle into a one sided bloodbath that the paper freely admits though insisted on calling the Americans righteous. Accounts from Admiral Rodgers and an officer did little to present a balanced picture of the fight.

The officer belonged to the *Monocacy* which saw action during the two day battle. He wrote the letter to a friend of his and boasted of how the United States “whipped the Coreans.” The unnamed officer estimated that nearly eight hundred Koreans perished in the fighting against three American deaths and nine wounded. He described the battle style of the Koreans to be that of “wild beasts” who wielded “very bad” arms. In spite of the antiquated weaponry used by the

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<sup>36</sup> “Our Little War,” *The New York Times*, 23 August 1871, no page number. (Accessed through [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), August 14, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> W.J. Kang, 48.

<sup>38</sup> “Interesting Details of the Second Engagement,” *The New York Times*, 22 August 1871, n.p. #. (Accessed through [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), August 15, 2010).

Koreans the officer still could not “fancy” the low casualty total for “their shot flew like hail” and was “so thick.” He surmised that “poor aim” proved to be the chief culprit of the Koreans. The officer posed a thought provoking question in the letter. He asked, “I suppose the ‘Corean pigeon’ is up?”<sup>39</sup> The Korean people “have been averse to having anything to do with us” and in order for the United States to make any use of Korea, they would have to send “a big army” to conquer the country.<sup>40</sup> The spirit of colonialism permeated the Western world as evidenced by the officer’s letter. Clearly, he felt that the Americans were entitled to Korea if they wanted to take it. In the end of the letter, the officer explored Korea’s relationship to China.

The vassalage of Korea to China had been entrenched for centuries. The Asiatic Squadron came into contact with the Prussian ship *Bertha*. The Prussians reported to the Americans that the Chinese spoke of a Korean rout of the American forces. One false report suggested that of “all our force at the first fight [June 1] only one officer, one boat and thirty men had escaped.” The officer described two other similar reports that claimed the Koreans devastated the Americans. He continued, “Pekin won’t let us have anything to do with Corea” and that they distorted the outcome of the fight in order to give the United States a “disadvantage” in potentially obtaining Korea because China did not want to lose her centuries-old vassal state.<sup>41</sup>

Admiral Rodgers’s report of the battle did not have the same personal tone of the unnamed officer’s letter but it still demonstrated the superior mindset of the Americans. His official report hinted at the numbers of the Koreans engaged in battle. Other reports put the Korean dead at eight hundred to nine hundred, but never suggested if the Koreans lost all or part

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<sup>39</sup> I suppose the author is referring to the United States’ ability to establish a treaty with Korea.

<sup>40</sup> “Later from the Corea,” *The New York Times*, 25 August 1871, n.p. #. (Accessed through [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), August 16, 2010).

<sup>41</sup> “Later from the Corea.”

of their forces. Rodgers had about nine hundred men at his disposal and claimed that “vastly superior numbers” battled his men. It may be assumed, supposing no exaggeration, that the Americans came up against thousands of brave Koreans.<sup>42</sup> The heroics of the Marines in Korea in 1871 continued to be applauded in 1913.<sup>43</sup>

Conflicting reports exist on whether or not Admiral Rodgers knew of the fate of the *General Sherman*. The article said that the American Navy twice attempted “to extract from the Korean Government some intelligible account of the fate of the *General Sherman*.” Commander Shufeldt of the *Wachusett* made the first attempt in 1867 and the following year Commander Sebigier of the *Shenandoah* tried to discover what had happened to the doomed vessel. Both efforts were “without success.”<sup>44</sup> However, another story indicates that the Asiatic Squadron knew of the demise of the *General Sherman* in 1866 and that the Korean authorities notified Schufeldt in person that no survivors remained. The same author further suggests that the *General Sherman* briefly belonged to the Koreans and served as their “first Western-style warship” until the Chinese pressured the Korean authorities to release the ship back to the U.S.<sup>45</sup>

The United States sought commercial interests in Korea in addition to seeking a treaty for the protection of shipwrecked seamen. Hamilton Fish served as Secretary of State from 1869-1877. He wrote a letter to then U.S. Minister to China, Francis Low, suggesting that “should the opportunity seem favorable for obtaining commercial advantages in Corea, the proposed treaty should include provisions to that effect.” Fish desired that Minister Low, who accompanied Admiral Rodgers, muster up a treaty similar to the two treaties the U.S. made with Japan; the

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<sup>42</sup> “Interesting Details of the Second Engagement.”

<sup>43</sup> “Our Marine Corps,” *The Barnstable Patriot*, 7 April 1913, 4. (Accessed through [www.sturgislibrary.org](http://www.sturgislibrary.org), August 19, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> “Our Little War.”

<sup>45</sup> Young-Sik Kim, “A Brief History of the US-Korea Relations Prior to 1945” (10 June 2003) <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/943949/posts> (accessed 14 August 2010).



Kava-Gana (Kanagawa) of 1854 at the behest of Matthew Perry and the Yeddo of 1858. While the United States made inroads with Japan and China, Korea remained “the Hermit Kingdom.” Fish advised Low that “little is known of the shores or internal waters of Corea, or of the people who inhabit the country.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, 1871 became the year in which the United States sought its first unequal treaty with Korea.

The United States failed to obtain a treaty with Korea in 1871. President Grant submitted his third annual message to Congress in December, 1871. He spoke quite glowingly of the “intimate relations” between Japan and the United States and of Emperor Meiji allowing for Americans “to serve in office[s] of importance in several departments of [Japanese] government.” Grant credited the cooperation to the United States’ “disinterested” policies towards Japan and planned on continuing “this disinterested and just policy with China as well as Japan.” Grant continued his message by offering sharp criticisms of Korea. He sought “to put and end to the barbarous treatment of our shipwrecked sailors on the Corean coast” by going through the U.S. minister at Peking.<sup>47</sup>

Grant’s words clearly revealed the United States’s diplomatic priority of China and Japan over Korea. By establishing cordial relations with America, Japan and to a lesser degree China, found favor with the U.S. Government. While the U.S. struggled to obtain any kind of treaty with Korea, the Japanese government sought out Americans to occupy positions in the Japanese government and China received U.S. ministers of state. By opening relations to America, Japan found a foothold in American policy ahead of Korea which eventually caused the United States to consistently side with Japanese interests over Korean interests.

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<sup>46</sup> “The Naval Expedition to the Corean Coast,” *The New York Times*, 7 August 1871, n.p. #. (Accessed through [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), August 15, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> “The President’s Message,” *The Barnstable Patriot*, 12 December 1871, 4. (Accessed through [www.sturgislibrary.org](http://www.sturgislibrary.org), August 19, 2010).

*The New York Times*, perhaps unintentionally, relegated Korea's status when it reported that the failure of Admiral Rodgers's mission in securing a treaty with Korea brought the ire of China. "If things are dropped at present, the expedition will have done more damage than good, and the Americans will sink in the estimation of such people as the Chinese."<sup>48</sup> Clearly, the writer showed more concern with American interests in China than in Korea.

American Methodist missionary, Homer Bezaleel Hulbert, whose story will be explored further, wrote that economic interests were the primary reason for the Rodgers-Low mission. Hulbert offered an account of the battle with a sympathetic view towards Korea suggesting that the Americans acted with "extreme unwisdom." Hulbert noted that the Korean regent of Ganghwa (the location of the battle) viewed the battle as a Korean victory in spite of the lopsided casualties.<sup>49</sup>

Hulbert wrote, "Even if the Americans had overrun the peninsula and yet had not unseated the King, their final withdrawal would have left the government in the firm belief that the foreigners had been whipped." The Koreans viewed the American encroachment into the "Gibraltar of Korea" as a "declaration of war." For the time being, any hope of the U.S. securing any treaty or trade rights in Korea faded. The regent set up a monument in Seoul "on which were carved anathemas against anyone who should ever propose peace with any Western power."<sup>50</sup>

#### Diplomatic Relations Opened with Japan (1876)

The Meiji Emperor (Mutsuhito) almost immediately sought diplomatic ties with Korea. Mutsuhito came to the Japanese throne in 1867 and by 1868 "diplomatic intercourse" existed between the two countries. However, Daewongun "severed" any potential diplomatic talks because they tended to "Western practices." Following after the pattern established by the United

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<sup>48</sup> "Interesting Details of the Second Engagement."

<sup>49</sup> Homer B. Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1909), 118-119.

<sup>50</sup> Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, 119.

States' gunboat diplomacy, Japan attempted to bully the Koreans by "a show of naval strength." The officer in charge of the fleet was Lieutenant-General Kuroda Kiyotaka. Kuroda sailed to Korea ostensibly to exact damages suffered by "the Japanese warship *Unyo*." Supposedly, the year previously, the vessel suffered devastation at the hands of Koreans. Furthermore, Japan sent a diplomat to China in an attempt to convince China to "relinquish" her "suzerainty over Korea." China refused to recognize Japanese suzerainty over Korea and insisted that the Hermit Kingdom was its own sovereign "in all matters relating to her government and religion." China only "advise[d] Korea to consider the Japanese demands." The Japanese persisted in their demands, China encouraged dialogue between the two feuding countries, and the Min clan was now in power in the stead of Daewongun. As a result Sin Hon (representative of Korea) and Kuroda signed a treaty on February 26, 1876, at Ganghwa.<sup>51</sup> Gojong, who took the throne in 1863 and the age of eleven, officially "forced" Daewongun from power in 1873 with the help of his able wife Queen Min.<sup>52</sup>

The near-forcible signing of a treaty between Korea and Japan in 1876 started a precedent that ultimately led to the annexation of Korea to Japan in 1910. Unlike the rest of the world that tended to view Christianity as a product of Western imperialism, "Koreans did not identify Christianity as something imposed by a foreign colonial power." Virtually all Asian nations suffered imperialistic abuses which led to great persecutions of the church in many Asiatic countries. Korea also suffered the damaging effects of imperialism but, unlike the rest of Asia, her abuse at the hands of imperial conquerors came from the *Japanese*.<sup>53</sup> Hence, Christianity

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<sup>51</sup> C.I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 16-17. The quote "a show of naval strength" appears in footnote 1 on page 16.

<sup>52</sup> Gregory Henderson, *Korea the Politics of the Vortex* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 62.

<sup>53</sup> In Soo Kim, *Protestants and the Formation of Modern Korean Nationalism, 1885-1920* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 1.

tended to not be relegated to the status of an imperialistic weapon but as an actual channel of hope which could bring justice, love, and peace to the Hermit Kingdom.

### The 1882 Treaty of Amity and Friendship

A decade after the two day battle, the United States still had not obtained any diplomatic relations with Korea. Commodore Shufeldt, who had searched for the *General Sherman* and its crew in 1867, negotiated the treaty on behalf of the United States. The treaty was signed on May 22, 1882 and ratified the following May. Lucius H. Foote was the first American diplomat to Korea (serving from 1883-1885) and was given the title of Minister Plenipotentiary. Perhaps with the intent to send a strong message to Korea, Mr. Foote left Yokohama “on board the...steam-ship *Monocacy*.”<sup>54</sup> The *Monocacy* was one of the ships involved in the 1871 assault onto Korean shores.

*The New York Times* declared that “Corea is no longer ‘the Hermit Nation’” on July 9, 1883. The paper offered a scathing and overtly biased account of Korea’s past hesitation of accepting foreigners:

This is a wonderful finale to a long, discouraging, and costly series of attempts to bring Corea into friendly relations with other portions of the civilized world. For centuries it has been the policy of Corea to repel with violence all overtures to land friendly embassies on her difficult and rock-bound shores. Even unfortunate shipwrecked seamen have been murdered, and foreign craft thrown upon the coast have been ruthlessly destroyed. Internal revolutions have gradually effected a radical change, both in the sentiments of the people and in the policy of the rulers. The dynasty of a tyrannical regency has passed away, and with the accession of a new Government it is hoped that a liberal bearing will characterize the Government of Corea.<sup>55</sup>

The writer also denounced “the roseate tints” of Korea which had been produced by “imaginative writers” and “Oriental fabulists.” He falsely claimed that “nothing indicates the possession of the

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<sup>54</sup> “Minister Foote in Corea,” *The New York Times*, 8 July 1883, n.p. #. (Accessed through [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), August 22, 2010).

<sup>55</sup> “The Opening of Corea,” *The New York Times*, 9 July 1883, n.p. #. (Accessed through [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), August 22, 2010).

wealth of precious metals.”<sup>56</sup> However, it had been known for centuries that Korea possessed an abundance of gold.<sup>57</sup> He assured his readers that Korea “with an advanced order of civilization will come new wants.” The writer portrayed the Koreans as a people patiently waiting for the civilizing influence of the United States and even boasted that “having awakened a fever in Korea, we must be prepared to satisfy new tastes and new desires.” He concluded by stating frankly that “commerce” had been “persistently forced upon her.”<sup>58</sup>

The Koreans “escorted” Lucius Foote “to the house of Mr. Mollendorff.” The German served as the Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs and was given the responsibility of “organizing” the Korean Customs service.<sup>59</sup> He worked on behalf of the Germans and the Chinese. Partly through Mollendorff’s efforts, the “Maritimes Customs” created “the most reliable source of income” for the Koreans.<sup>60</sup> Mollendorff’s efforts gave China a “firm hand on the [Korean] government,” but China’s control would be short lived.<sup>61</sup> Germany and Great Britain, following the example of the United States, secured treaties with Korea. She joined “the family of treaty powers” and gained her independence from China in spite of the fact that China “had...facilitated them.” China’s “suzerainty was comical in its incongruity.”<sup>62</sup> Korea now faced the Western powers on her own.

George C. Foulk served as U.S. Minister to Korea after Foote. Before this appointment, Foulk worked underneath Foote. Foulk wrote of Foote as being a lazy man who “made a cat’s paw of me.” Furthermore, Foulk complained to his father that Foote “is loafing about drawing

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<sup>56</sup> “The Opening of Korea.”

<sup>57</sup> Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience 1900-1950* (Norwalk, CT: EastBridge, 2003), 222.

<sup>58</sup> “The Opening of Korea.”

<sup>59</sup> “Minister Foote in Korea.”

<sup>60</sup> Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, 233.

<sup>61</sup> Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, 123.

<sup>62</sup> Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, 123-124.

his pay as minister, while I do his duty (and more than he can do) on my pay as an ensign.”  
Meanwhile, the U.S. Government turned a blind eye to Foote’s lethargic ways.<sup>63</sup>

As early as 1885, the U.S. Government took little interest in its business in Korea and neglected to afford the Koreans, in a timely manner, the guarantees between the two countries in the 1882 Treaty. Foulk expressed his disgust with the United States’s snail paced handling of “this mission.” He noted that “every day I am asked questions about the promises our government has made.” He felt personally responsible for fulfilling the U.S.’s promises because he had “been connected with all the work our government has to do with Korea.” America’s “neglect” made his “work...false” and “words untrue” and that U.S.-Korean relations bordered on collapsing.<sup>64</sup>

It is the conviction of this author that the United States wanted diplomacy with Korea in order to have protection of shipwrecked American sailors and to be in a better position to negotiate and establish better economic ties with China and Japan. The United States consistently demonstrated a relatively disinterested approach to its handling of Korean diplomacy. Syngman Rhee’s biographer Robert T. Oliver, writing a year after the ceasefire agreement between North and South Korea (1954), argued that Americans were wrong in claiming that the Korea problem was “difficult and confusing” but more accurately affirmed “that it is difficult...to handle and that consequently we should like to disengage ourselves from it wholly if we could.”<sup>65</sup> Foulk’s lamenting over the handling American-Korean diplomacy foreshadowed things to come between the two countries. America’s words continued to be untrue.

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<sup>63</sup> George C. Foulk, *America’s Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887*, ed. Samuel Hawley (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), 112. (Accessed through Google Books, August 23, 2010).

<sup>64</sup> Foulk, 112.

<sup>65</sup> Robert T. Oliver, “A Brief for Korea,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 294, America and a New Asia (Jul., 1954): 33. (Accessed through JSTOR, May 17, 2011).

Oliver informs his audience that the United States's bungling in Korea started seventy years before the cease fire (July 27, 1953) between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK). From the moment the United States and Korea established diplomatic ties, the United States frequently ignored its end of the bargain. Missionaries and businessmen helped transform and modernize aspects of Korea but about twenty years after the Schufeldt Treaty of 1882, the U.S. chose to bow the knee to Japanese and Russian interests in Korea over the desires of the natives of the peninsula.<sup>66</sup> The United States gave Japan a free hand in Korea to exploit the Hermit Nation as she saw fit. The Japanese abuses of Korea prompted the nationalist movement which was partially but heavily influenced by Korean Christians.

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<sup>66</sup> Oliver, "A Brief for Korea," 33.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE INTRODUCTION AND SPREADING OF CHRISTIANITY

Ironically, Korea's first contact with Christianity came from Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea in 1592. General Konishi Yukinaga led one of the first waves of samurais into Korea. "In the division of General Konishi, it is reported that there were about eighteen thousand Christian soldiers and the General himself was a Catholic." In the 1500s, Francis Xavier paved the way for Catholicism in Japan. Father Gregoria de Cespedes came with the invading army to convert and/or minister to current Catholics in the Japanese army. During the invasion however, "there is no special evidence of influence on the native Koreans." Some Korean prisoners of war accepted the Catholic faith while their conquerors held them captive in Japan. The Italian Jesuit missionary, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), served in China for many years. His missionary endeavors brought sizeable numbers of converts. Besides being highly educated in math and science, "Ricci's appreciation of Chinese culture earned acceptance by the Chinese literati and Christianity gained significant influence in China." Being a vassal state of China, Korea sent an annual tribute to the Chinese emperor. The envoys brought back Western learning and books about the God of the Bible. "Books on the teachings of the Christian Church appealed to Korean scholars who were looking for something new."<sup>67</sup>

The first significant contributor to the spread of Catholicism in Korea was Yi Songhun. At the behest of his friend Yi Pyok, Yi Songhun went to China asking the Catholic Priests for the Sacred Writings of the Church and for baptism. Yi Songhun received baptism and was given the Christian name of Peter. "When Peter Yi returned to Korea, he baptized his friend Yi Pyok, who received the baptismal name of 'John Baptist.'" With their devotion, Peter and John Baptist Yi

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<sup>67</sup> W.J. Kang, 43.



managed to gain quite a following. Both suffered martyrdom—the latter in 1791 and the former in 1801.<sup>68</sup>

The nineteenth century saw quite a few Korean converts to Catholic Christianity. Part of the readiness on the part of the Korean people to embrace this new learning stemmed from the introduction of the new faith through native Koreans. After Peter and John Baptist Yi brought Catholicism to the peninsula, Koreans observed in it an element of equality and hope able to break through “an age beset by a host of social ills brought on by the oppression of the weak and the unbridled pursuit of personal gain by powerful families, wealthy farmers, and rich merchants.” Initially, Catholicism appealed to certain yangban. “The Catholic doctrine of original sin, so unlike the dominant orthodoxy of Neo-Confucianism, evoked a warm response from many out-of-power scholars critical of the existing order.”<sup>69</sup> The “*chungin* class” also found a few converts. “Medical practitioners” and other middle class groups made up the chungin class. Notwithstanding the success of Catholicism amongst the yangban and the chungin, “the lower classes...the uneducated...and the poor” imbibed the universal faith in the greatest numbers. The majority of peasant converts lived in and around Seoul making the Catholic faith a religion “for urban dwellers.”<sup>70</sup>

The Catholic faith had a liberating effect on the common people teaching them that God created all people in His image and likeness. All were “God’s children” who could “worship Him on a basis of equality with the *yangban*.”<sup>71</sup> The new faith brought hope to both women and those in “despair,” for women actually had an outlet that placed them on equal footing with men in certain ways. The downtrodden heard stories of a heavenly “afterlife” that promised peace

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<sup>68</sup> W.J. Kang, 44.

<sup>69</sup> Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 239.

<sup>70</sup> Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 257.

<sup>71</sup> Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 258.

with God and prosperity in His kingdom. “Belief in Catholicism was in itself a grave and growing indictment of *yangban* society.”<sup>72</sup>

In 1832, Charles Gutzlaff arrived in Korea as the first Protestant missionary. The Prussian “distributed presents of books, buttons, and medicines, planted potatoes and taught their cultivation.” Gutzlaff’s literature consisted of the Bible and “Protestant Christian tracts.” Only staying a month, Gutzlaff left discouraged “fully impressed with their [Koreans’] need of soap and Bibles.”<sup>73</sup> Gutzlaff also presented the Koreans with Chinese literature.<sup>74</sup> All of his books distributed at this time were in Chinese because *hangul* (Korean script) would not be popularized for over fifty years.<sup>75</sup>

Following Gutzlaff, the dearth of Protestant missionary activity continued until 1877 when John Ross (1842-1915) and J. McIntyre “translated a number of the Gospels, and later the whole New Testament” into Korean. These two men served in China just along the Yalu River which separates China from Korea. One of the first of three converts and first Protestant Korean pastor was Soh Sang Ryun. Mr. Soh distributed Scripture and other Christian literature in present day North Korea, and like the Apostle Paul centuries before, “preached and lived Christ, and laid the foundations for the work in this [Sorai] village.” Soh and his family lived in Sorai and the village became a hotbed for Christianity in the decades to come.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 258.

<sup>73</sup> William Elliot Griffis, *Corea: The Hermit Nation*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Scribner, 1911; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1971), 359-360 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>74</sup> F.A. McKenzie, *Korea’s Fight for Freedom* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1920; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1970), 204 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>75</sup> Daniel M. Davies, “Building a City on a Hill in Korea: The Work of Henry G. Appenzeller,” *Church History* 61, no. 4 (Dec., 1992): 426. (Accessed through JSTOR, May 4, 2011).

<sup>76</sup> Horace G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea: Political—Social—Religious* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 131.

On September 20, 1884 the medical missionary Horace Newton Allen came to Korea after serving with the American Presbyterian Mission in China.<sup>77</sup> Horace Grant Underwood and the medical doctor John William Heron both arrived shortly thereafter—the former, April 5 and the latter, June 21.<sup>78</sup> Other early Protestant missionaries who left deep marks in Korea were Henry Gerhard Appenzeller and Mary F. Scranton.

H.G. Underwood devoted thirty-one years of his life to missionary, educational, and social work in Korea. Underwood set out for Korea from Japan. “Gruesome tales” of Korea surrounded him. Mr. Underwood knew of the murder of Catholic missionaries and their converts less than twenty years earlier. He heard many horror stories that related to the “barbarous character of the [Korean] people.”<sup>79</sup> As was customary in most places in the late nineteenth century, the streets of Korean cities proved to be “filthy” with “ditches full of stagnant sewage” near the roads. A plethora of diseases plagued the natives and foreigners alike. Commonplace plagues included typhoid, typhus, smallpox, and dysentery. According to Underwood’s wife, Lillias, “the people lay under the sway of superstitions of all sorts.”<sup>80</sup>

Lillias Underwood wrote that “sorcerers controlled the doings of every household” and that “fear of ghosts, goblins, and spirits of angry ancestors...filled the minds not only of the lowly and the women, but even of many of the highest and proudest of the people.”<sup>81</sup> No doubt the Underwoods felt burdened by their adjustment to a radically new culture and their built-in prejudices of Western civilization, culture, and religion contributed to the negative stereotypes that they evidently had towards certain customs and religious ideals of the Koreans. The small

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<sup>77</sup> Horace N. Allen, *Korea: Fact and Fancy* (Seoul: Methodist Publishing House, 1904), 168.

<sup>78</sup> Allen, *Korea: Fact and Fancy*, 171.

<sup>79</sup> Lillias H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea: Being an Intimate Record of the Life and Work of the Rev. H.G. Underwood, D.D., LL.D., for Thirty-One Years a Missionary of the Presbyterian Board in Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918), 39-40.

<sup>80</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 40-41.

<sup>81</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 41.

companies of foreigners found in Korea during these perilous days consisted of “officials, merchants, teachers, [and] missionaries.”<sup>82</sup> Missionaries contributed greatly to evangelization, education, and diplomacy during 1885-1920. This era saw three distinct time periods.

The United States led the way in missionary endeavors during the late Choson period.<sup>83</sup> The two missionary societies that led the wave of Western missions in Korea were the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church. American diplomat and Presbyterian missionary Dr. Horace N. Allen arrived in Korea in September of 1884.<sup>84</sup> He was the first Western physician in Korea and offered his services to both Koreans and Westerners alike. The missionaries garnered the respect of the nobility and the commoners and most operated under a “bottom up” policy in evangelization.<sup>85</sup> This method flew right in the face of traditional Confucian teachings on class structure.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, one teacher, George W. Gilmore, challenged Underwood’s and Dr. Heron’s (second physician of the King after Allen) targeting of the lower classes and thought it more appropriate to evangelize from the top down as was done in Japan.<sup>87</sup> Many significant factors furthered the successes of bottom up evangelization. They included “political instability, widespread poverty and the rigid class stratification.”<sup>88</sup>

The most prominent and well remembered missionary, Horace Grant Underwood, divided the early church into three periods: first, “wide seed sowing” (1885-1890); second, “expansion” period (1890-1895); third, “the beginnings of large harvests” (1895-1900).<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 56.

<sup>83</sup> The Choson Dynasty lasted from 1392-1910.

<sup>84</sup> Andrew Eungi Kim, “Political Insecurity, Social Chaos, Religious Void and the Rise of Protestantism in Late Nineteenth Century Korea,” *Social History* 26, no. 3 (Oct., 2001): 267. (Accessed through JSTOR, October 2, 2010).

<sup>85</sup> In Soo Kim, 51.

<sup>86</sup> Andrew Kim, 268.

<sup>87</sup> In Soo Kim, 51.

<sup>88</sup> Andrew Kim, 268.

<sup>89</sup> H.G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 134, 139, 144. Each period is mentioned on these three pages with the dates of the periods mentioned on page 144.

### First Period: Planting the Seed (1885-1890)

The persecutions against Christians had died down at the time of the new wave of Christian missionaries, but the memories of the persecution of Catholics in 1866 still lived. The belief and practice of Christianity was still a capital offence but “the general trend of opinion of the court and high officials was that anyone who cared to might follow the new religion.” Be that as it may, converts in “July and the fall of 1886 were baptized behind closed doors” but quickly thereafter, the missionaries and their converts worshipped with “impunity.”<sup>90</sup> The growth of the early church in Korea was slow but steady. Several reasons contributed to the growth and strength of the church during the late Choson period, but the two main contributors were the great care in which converts were examined and baptized and the adoption of the Nevius Method which is explained below.

The village of Sorai saw a small but vibrant harvest from the efforts of Soh Sang Yun. Soh preached the Christian message in his village and gained “a small company of Christians” who desired baptism. It took a group of missionaries a few months to make the trek to Sorai early in 1887. The missionary “delegation” did not baptize haphazardly. H.G. Underwood wrote:

They [converts at Sorai] were examined before the whole Mission, and finding they had been believers for some years, and were able to state intelligently the ground of their faith, the Mission unanimously decided that three of them should be admitted to the Church by baptism. Among these three was Mr. Soh Kyung Jo, the brother of Soh Sang Ryun [or Yun], the man who had been so prominent in the development of the work in Whang Hai Do, and the leader at Sorai.<sup>91</sup>

The missionaries conducted the baptism with secrecy. “The service was a solemn occasion, with Homer Hulbert, teacher at the Government School, watching at the door.” By 1887, Horace Allen had established himself as a “Korean official” and warned Underwood of the dangers in

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<sup>90</sup> H.G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 135-136.

<sup>91</sup> H.G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 137.

baptizing the three converts. Undeterred, Underwood went along with the baptismal.<sup>92</sup> By taking great caution in baptism, the missionaries helped to establish a firm foundation for the Christian church in Korea.

In 1888, Lillias Horton (she and H.G. Underwood were married in 1889) witnessed a baptismal ceremony conducted by H.G. Underwood. On a Saturday, a “final examination of applicants for baptism” was held. There were twelve or thirteen candidates for baptism, ten of whom were boys at the orphanage. Two missionaries, “Harkness and Gale were both there and said they never saw converts put through such a fire of questions, and that not half the applicants received into church at home [U.S.A. or Canada] could answer as they did.” Miss Horton was concerned with non-believers and hypocrites “trying to enter, for what they hoped to gain [monetarily].”<sup>93</sup> The Korean missionaries wanted a pure church made up of only genuine believers in Christ. Numbers were not of primary concern. An example of a typical examination for a baptismal candidate helps the reader understand the great care that went into baptizing converts.

But I want to tell you more about our boys. As they are such bright, ambitious, nice little fellows, it is a pleasure to teach them. I’m so thankful I have time to do it. When little Chesan Hagi (about 12) was asked why he wanted to be baptized, he said, “Because Christ loved me and died for me.” “But why do you have to be baptized in that account?” “Because He commanded it, and I want to do as He says.” Question. You expect to live a perfectly good life, if you enter the Church, such as a Christian should? (I’m [Lillias] not giving these questions exactly, but the answers were impressive in my mind and are verbatim.) “Alone I cannot do it, But Jesus has promised to help me.”<sup>94</sup> [emphasis hers]

Two other missionary policies further indicate the seriousness in which the Protestants took in establishing church membership and refute any notion that the missionaries sought

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<sup>92</sup> In Soo Kim, 48.

<sup>93</sup> Lillias Horton, letter to Dr. Ellinwood, 22 December 1888, in *Horace Grant Underwood Papers: The First American Missionary to Korea and the Founder of Yonsei University*, vol I: 1885-1892, transcribed by Sung-Deuk Oak (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2005), 488-489.

<sup>94</sup> Horton to Ellinwood, 22 December 1888.

numbers for number sake. First, the missionaries routinely practiced church discipline. If a baptized member fell into sin and refused to repent of it, his membership would be “withdrawn ‘under charges.’” If he repented he would simply be “disciplined.” Second, the missionaries divided professors of Christianity into four categories. The first being “baptized members.” The second, third, and fourth categories being “catechumens,” “probationers,” and “inquirers” respectively. Two of the latter categories (catechumens and probationers) had “given hopeful evidence of conversion and of a desire for baptism.”<sup>95</sup> Catechumens would be those who had accepted Christ and believed the catechisms of the church. They were the ones closest to receiving baptism and being accepted as full members of the church. Probationers were those who had made an outward profession of the Christian faith but whose faith had not been rigorously examined in order to determine the seriousness and sincerity of their faith. Inquirers were those who had expressed interest in Christianity and regularly asked questions about the faith.

A report from Pyongyang and Syen Chun defined non-baptized and non-catechumens as those “who attend more or less regularly and in various ways come in touch with the gospel.”<sup>96</sup> It is safe to assume that those who were less rooted in the Christian faith could be placed in the “probationer” or “inquirer” categories. In early years of the Protestant Church the smallest numbers almost always appeared in the baptized category followed, in ascending numerical order, by the catechumens with the probationers and inquirers being most numerous.<sup>97</sup> If the Protestant missionaries sought only numerical strength, they no doubt would have quickly

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<sup>95</sup> C.C. Vinton, “Statistics of the Protestant Churches in Korea: A Paper Read before the Decennial Conference of Christian Missions in Korea, October 10<sup>th</sup> 1895,” *The Korean Repository*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Seoul: n.p., 1895; reprint, New York: Paragon Reprint Book, Corp., 1964), 383 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>96</sup> Lillias H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots or Life in Korea* (Boston, New York, and Chicago: American Tract Society, 1904), 232.

<sup>97</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots*, 232.

baptized all who expressed even the slightest interest in the Christian faith thus giving them something greater to boast about in the eyes of the mission boards back home.<sup>98</sup>

The mode of baptism used by Underwood was sprinkling but he emphasized unity in the body of Christ, thus he welcomed Baptists into the sharing of the Protestant ministry in Korea. In addition to having an ecumenical approach to evangelism, Underwood did not have a racist bone in his body. “No one was too low or too high, too broad or too narrow; too white or too black for his sympathy, interest and love.”<sup>99</sup> Some converts in Sorai desired to be baptized through immersion after being influenced by a missionary there. However, they assumed Dr. Underwood would absolutely refuse such a thing. “They were surprised to find that he was perfectly ready to administer baptism in that way [immersion] if they wished it.” Furthermore, Underwood wanted the Baptists to join the Council of Missions “but was overruled by the majority of our mission, an attitude which grieved him much.”<sup>100</sup>

In 1888, the missionaries still had good reason to baptize and meet with caution. Loosely supported by a treaty between France and Korea, Jesuits began to openly walk in their Catholic “garb[s].” The treaty “contained no [Catholic] toleration clause” but the language of it was fuzzy enough to give the Jesuits an element of freedom. As their numbers grew in Seoul, French priests sought to build a building “on land they owned on South Mountain in Seoul.” The structural ideas of the French priests created certain difficulties which invariably led to the banning of Christianity by King Gojong “in the capital.” The French school was to sit above “a native tablet house and stand out above the palace.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See reference 216.

<sup>99</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 28-29.

<sup>100</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 198-199.

<sup>101</sup> Fred Harvey Harrington, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese: Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American Relations, 1884-1905* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1944; reprint, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, Inc., 1964), 88-89 (page citations are to the reprint edition).



During the exact time of the Jesuit building project ordeal, H.G. Underwood and Henry Appenzeller engaged in fruitful missionary work in Pyongyang. This was Underwood's "second trip to the interior and north." There, "they found twenty-five eager for baptism and the interest [in Christianity] intense and growing." Underwood and Appenzeller "suddenly" had to return to Seoul where they were "ordered" to go back to their native country and end "religious services...in the schools and little meeting places." As was customary, the foreigners in Korea engaged in "one of those critical fits of hysteria" at the ban of Christianity. They assumed that Underwood and Appenzeller's journey into the interior brought the ire of the Korean royal family and that religious activity should not be a part of their repertoire. Rather, the missionaries should stick to "medical and educational work without meddling with the Gospel." All of the foreigners in Korea were familiar with similar styles of persecution occurring in China and the non-missionaries did not desire "becoming martyrs" as they assumed that they would be lumped in together with the missionaries because they were from similar homelands.<sup>102</sup>

The Korean Christians suffered most during the 1888 persecution. "Korean teachers were stoned, servants of the missionaries found themselves in trouble, and social pressure was brought to bear on all who sent their children to the mission schools." Mary Scranton and others blamed the Catholics exclusively for the troubles.<sup>103</sup> Appenzeller and Underwood defied the edict because they insisted that it "was only directed at the Romanists."<sup>104</sup> Horace Allen actually sided with the Catholics even with his "anti-Catholic" tendencies. Allen noted that Catholic missionaries generally lived in more humble environments and always tried to establish a lifestyle on par with the indigenous Koreans. He wrote, "They [Jesuits] have lived in Korea in the guise of mourners, I have tended them in sickness and know that they live as do the humble

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<sup>102</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 69-71 passim.

<sup>103</sup> Harrington, 89-90.

<sup>104</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 70.

natives. They have worked long and patiently with none of the comforts which rob mission work of its trials.” Allen contended that the French simply followed the building example of Appenzeller though certain Catholics had warned Appenzeller of constructing schools.<sup>105</sup>

An early schism threatened the infant church in Korea. There was a fundamental difference in the approach Horace Allen took to evangelism than most of his Protestant brethren. Though not officially adopted until 1890, the Nevius Principles encouraged proselytizing from the lower rungs of society first. The majority of missionaries adopted this method as demonstrated through the itineration of Underwood and Appenzeller into the interior. With fervent evangelistic zeal, the majority of missionaries “wanted action, quick results, and mass conversions [albeit true conversions].” Allen’s method consisted of teaching “American civilization” first followed up by demonstrating that “Christianity supplied the base for Western culture.” Allen’s “close cooperation with the king” was also suspect. Allen targeted the conversion of the higher ranking members of society first.<sup>106</sup> A root of bitterness sprouted up between Allen and the majority of missionaries. Be that as it may, Protestant Christians, especially Presbyterians and Methodists, worked hard to bring the heathen into God’s Kingdom.

#### Second Period: Growth (1890-1895)

Many Koreans sought out missionaries not for spiritual revival or a genuine interest in Christianity but in hopes of monetary gain or employment advantages. Isabella Bird Bishop traveled extensively throughout Asia and was an eyewitness during a church service in Korea in which she wrote of the conviction of sin penetrating the hearts and minds of those Koreans present. The “Apostolic doctrines of sin, judgment to come, and divine love” led to the turning away from “daemon-worship” and the embracing of the fear of the Lord. She remarked of her

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<sup>105</sup> Harrington, 90.

<sup>106</sup> Harrington, 90.

amazement that these Koreans “had been attracted to Christianity in the first instance by the hope of gain!” But now, they experienced a genuine conversion to the Christian faith.<sup>107</sup>

The great care that the missionaries took in baptizing and training converts helped lead to the success of the Nevius Method. This method promoted the idea of “self-support” amongst the Koreans and assisted in the spread of “Korean nationalism.” Led by H.G. Underwood, the missionaries sought for better ways to evangelize the Koreans in the early days of missions and Underwood was “stimulated” by the writings of John L. Nevius. Mr. Nevius was a missionary to China for forty years. His articles, collectively titled “Planting and Development of Missionary Churches,” came out in the *Chinese Recorder* in 1885.<sup>108</sup>

Two years previously (1883), Nevius flirted with the ideas that later bore his name. He wrote that he was “trusting in God’s help and guidance” as to the scriptural validity of “self-support and self-propagation.” He feared that the use of public funds for collectivist purposes because he thought that that approach would “do more harm than good.” He certainly had much doubt to his ideas and suggested that he may in the future abandon them.<sup>109</sup> For the sake of the church in Korea, it was beneficial that Nevius did not abandon his methods because it led to a powerful church with “sturdy roots in foreign soil.” Of course, in short order, the church in Choson went from being foreign to native.<sup>110</sup>

Underwood wanted the enactment of the Nevius principles virtually as soon as he became aware of them. Two years before Nevius came to Korea (1888), H.G. Underwood said “there was not much chance of getting the people on the other side to (agree) [most likely, mission

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<sup>107</sup> Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Vicissitudes and Position of the Country*, vol. II (London: John Murray, 1905), 161.

<sup>108</sup> In Soo Kim, 49.

<sup>109</sup> Helen S. Coan Nevius, *The Life of John Livingston Nevius: For Forty Years a Missionary in China* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1895), 404.

<sup>110</sup> Donald Baker, “Sibling Rivalry in Twentieth-Century Korea: Comparative Growth Rates of Catholic and Protestant Communities,” in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 290.

boards in the U.S.A. and Canada].” Fortunately, a promoter of the “Old Plan” came full circle and pushed for the “New Plan” in Korea.<sup>111</sup> This promoter was most likely an influential member of the Presbyterian Mission Board. Underwood believed the Nevius Plan would “be adopted” in Korea. Writing over a year later, and a year before Nevius’s arrival in Korea, Underwood mentioned in a letter to Dr. Ellinwood that the Presbyterians were “thinking of asking the Methodists to unite with us in adopting the Nevius system of working” in order to avoid “difficulties” in evangelism.<sup>112</sup>

Nevius visited Seoul for two weeks in 1890 to introduce his principles.

The Nevius Principles according to R. Harry are:

116- r . Missionary personal evangelism through wide itineration. (b) Self-propagation. Every believer a teacher of someone and a learner from someone else better fitted. Every individual and group seeking by the “layering method” to extend the work. (c) Self-government. Every group under its chosen unpaid leaders; circuits under their own paid helpers who will later yield to pastors. (d) Self-support with all chapels provided by the believers; each group as soon as it is founded beginning to pay towards the circuit helper’s salary. (e) Systematic Bible study for every believer under his group leader and circuit helper. (f) Strict discipline enforced by Bible penalties. (g) Co-operation and union with other bodies or at least territorial division. (h) Non-interference in law suits or any such matters. (i) General helpfulness where possible in the economic life of the people.<sup>113</sup>

Nevius’s principles gave the Koreans an early sense of national awakening outside of the existing orders of Buddhism and Confucianism because the common man was allowed to play a vital part in something outside of his traditionally accepted role. The Nevius Principles encouraged self-government, an idea completely contrary to the contemporary mores, and self-support. They also pushed for the education of the masses. Grant it, the education focused on

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<sup>111</sup> H.G. Underwood, letter to Dr. Ellinwood, 12 March 1888, in *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, vol. I, 456.

<sup>112</sup> H.G. Underwood, letter to Dr. Ellinwood, 10 July 1889, in *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, vol. I, 552.

<sup>113</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 133-134.

Biblical teaching and basic medical care but the introduction of Western ideas also brought with it concepts of governance by the common man.<sup>114</sup>

H.G. Underwood interpreted the Nevius Principles in this way:

(a) It is better to aim at the conversion of the working classes than of the higher classes. (b) The conversion of women and the training of Christian girls should be a special aim, as mothers exercise an important influence over future generations. (c) Much could be effected in Christian education by maintaining elementary schools in country towns; therefore we should aim to have young men qualify in our boys' school and to send them out as teachers. (d) Our hope for an educated native ministry lies in the same quarter, and should be constantly held in view. (e) The word of God converts where man is without resources: therefore it is most important that we make every effort to place a clear translation of the Bible before the people as soon as possible. In all literary work, a pure Korean, free from Sinicism [Chinese characters], should be our aim. (f) An aggressive church must be a self-supporting church, and we must aim to diminish the proportion of dependents among our membership and to increase that of self-supporting, and therefore contributing individuals. (g) The mass of Koreans must be led to Christ by their fellow countrymen; therefore we shall thoroughly train a few as evangelists rather than preach to a multitude ourselves. (h) The services of our physicians can be turned to best account when it is possible to keep the same patient under treatment either in a hospital ward or in a patient's home, thus giving opportunity for instruction and example to penetrate deeply into the mind. Dispensary work is of comparatively little profit. (i) Patients from the country who have undergone a season of treatment ought to be followed up by visitation in their native villages, since their experience of compassionate dealing is likely to open a wide door for the evangelist.<sup>115</sup>

The Nevius Principles emphasized cooperation and “territorial division.” One important aspect of the success of Christianity in Korea was the unity amongst different Protestant and even Catholic sects. The Catholics divided the Korean peninsula into four sections—the northeast, northwest, central, and south. Engaged in missionary activity in the northeast and northwest were the German Benedictines and American Maryknolls. The central and south of Korea was evangelized by the French Catholics and Irish Columbans. The Protestants divided the peninsula between primarily Presbyterians and Methodists early on. North and central Korea was evangelized by the Northern Presbyterians. Southwest Korea was controlled by the

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<sup>114</sup> In Soo Kim, 50.

<sup>115</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 134-135.

American Southern Presbyterians. The northeast and southeast of Korea was sectioned off with the Canadian Presbyterians north of the Australian Presbyterians. “The Presbyterians and Methodists very early drew a map of Korea separating the areas in which they would organize churches.” Hence, Korean Protestants often changed denominational affiliation when they moved. The ecumenical cooperation of Protestants greatly reduced the number of schisms in the body of Christ which so often plagued “missionary work in...other parts of Asia.”<sup>116</sup>

The numerical figures at the decennial conference (read by C.C. Vinton, M.D.) in 1895 do not seem all that impressive at first but when the numerical strength of Christian workers is revealed, the results actually seem plentiful. The number of Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist congregations totaled 42. “In 19 or more of these stated preaching is observed, in the remainder the exercises are of a simpler character.” The Methodist Episcopal Church had three churches in Seoul and one in Chemulpo (Incheon). The Presbyterian Church had four churches in Seoul (Chong Dong Church being the first Protestant church established in Korea in 1887), one in Pyongyang, one in Busan, one in Gensan, and one in Chang Yun, the famous Sorai Church. In addition, there were scores of locations where “Sabbath preaching” was “regularly held.” At the time of the decennial there were “528 baptized members” and 567 members amongst the catechumens, probationers, and inquirers. Most converts were men (“about two-thirds”) and only a fifth of those wanting baptism were women. The year of 1894-1895 saw “202 communicants” being “received.” Chong Dong Church had “156 members” in 1895 which accounted for well over a third of the Protestant Christians in Korea at the time.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Shannon McCune, *Korea: Land of Broken Calm* (Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1966), 93-94.

<sup>117</sup> Vinton, “Statistics of the Protestant Churches in Korea: A Paper Read before the Decennial Conference of Christian Missions in Korea, October 10<sup>th</sup> 1895,” 382-384 passim.

The church in Korea gave the common man ownership of an organization outside of his home and allowed the indigenous people a chance to voice their opinions, vote, and participate in the operations of the church. In 1895, six churches were “ministered to by native pastors” with oversight of their ministries “by foreign missionaries.” Two of these churches even supported their own pastor, in “one case all” and in the other “part of his maintenance.” Furthermore, many Koreans organized their own itinerants entirely separately from the missionaries in order “to be engaged in this labor of love wholly at their own charges.” In addition to supporting their own pastors, the early Korean churches even built their own church buildings with funds donated by their congregations.<sup>118</sup>

The Chong Dong Presbyterian Church had 156 “members” and in 1895 was “building a place of worship for itself entirely with native funds.” At the time of the decennial, the congregation of Chong Dong Presbyterian Church had donated \$365 of the \$400 that had been used “thus far” and the remaining \$35 had been supplied “by other Koreans.” Multiple other churches shared similar stories with Chong Dong Presbyterian Church. Beyond this, the Korean Christians also donated money for “general benevolence” and for the support of “missionary work” in other parts of Korea. The “church members...performed most of the manual labor of erecting structures, giving almost as much in labor as in money.”<sup>119</sup>

By putting the Nevius Principles into play, the missionaries refused to simply hand things to the Koreans. The church in Sorai sought the missionaries to erect a “chapel” in 1890.<sup>120</sup> H.G. Underwood told the believers at Sorai, “You have plenty of trees, stones, straw, as materials for tiles and bricks, if you want to use them, and if you will only let me know when you are ready to

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<sup>118</sup> Vinton, “Statistics of the Protestant Churches in Korea: A Paper Read before the Decennial Conference of Christian Missions in Korea, October 10<sup>th</sup> 1895,” 384.

<sup>119</sup> Vinton, “Statistics of the Protestant Churches in Korea: A Paper Read before the Decennial Conference of Christian Missions in Korea, October 10<sup>th</sup> 1895,” 384.

<sup>120</sup> In Soo Kim, 50.

build your chapel, I will gladly help by coming down to assist in cutting down the trees, and in the erection.” The congregation went away with heavy “hearts” but when they grew “in numbers and in faith, they built their first church “under the able leadership...of Mr. McKenzie.” They “dedicated” the structure on July 3, 1895.<sup>121</sup> The dollar amounts given by Koreans pale in comparison with the monetary might of the Westerners, but the Koreans lived in horrendous penury. They gave all they could which begged Vinton to ask the question, “Are these rice Christians?”<sup>122</sup> The label “rice Christians” was a derogatory term given to Asians who simply wanted to use missionaries for job opportunities and economic gain.<sup>123</sup> Vinton closed his discussion on statistics around 3pm on October 10, 1895, in the presence of H.G. Underwood, S.A. Moffett, J.S. Gale, G.H. Jones, H.G. Appenzeller, H.B. Hulbert, Mrs. M.F. Scranton, among others<sup>124</sup> with the words, “A church of such promises, may we not expect that her next ten years will bring forth that by which the Lord shall indeed astonish the nations?”<sup>125</sup>

The Nevius Method played a vital role in church growth in late Choson Korea. “The Nevius principles of self-help, self-propagation, and self-government had profound and lasting effects on the formations and growth of Korean democracy.” The main proponent of the Nevius Method was the Presbyterian Church of Korea. In China, Nevius’s principles were “neither popular nor successful” but “gained practically universal acceptance” in Korea.<sup>126</sup> The role that the Nevius principles played in Korean nationalism is found in section two but is briefly touched upon here.

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<sup>121</sup> H.G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 109.

<sup>122</sup> Vinton, “Statistics of the Protestant Churches in Korea: A Paper Read before the Decennial Conference of Christian Missions in Korea, October 10<sup>th</sup> 1895,” 385.

<sup>123</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots*, 77.

<sup>124</sup> “The Decennial Anniversary,” *The Korean Repository*, 1895, 395.

<sup>125</sup> Vinton, 385.

<sup>126</sup> Jacqueline Pak, “Cradle of the Covenant: Ahn Changho and the Christian Roots of the Korean Constitution,” in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 127.



An early Christian convert and influential political figure was Ahn Changho. Ahn observed the workings of democracy and debate within the local church. With his observation of “self-organization” and “self-support” he understood new ways in which to unite and lead the Korean people. The “nature of self-government” realized certain intricate yet necessary “governing procedures” that were paramount in the later Korean nationalist revolt against Japan. “The debates and discourses of the Korean Christian Church” created the engine which drove nationalism.<sup>127</sup> By 1906, “the Church in Korea” came “pretty close to being self-governing.”<sup>128</sup> Past scholarship has consistently ignored the role the Nevius Method played in shaping “the democratic development in modern Korean history.”<sup>129</sup> But, the mind boggling explosion and rapidity in which the Korean church grew, especially in the years just preceding the Japanese Annexation in 1910, leave little doubt as to the power and vitality of the Koreans’ ability to help, support, and organize their country.

### Third Period: Reaping Bountifully (1895-1900)

1896 saw steady growth at Busan Station and Seoul Station but the real explosion occurred at Pyongyang Station. Initially, “Christian missions were unsuccessful in Phyong-yang. It was a very rich and very immoral city.”<sup>130</sup> Known for its wealth and lasciviousness, the city boasted of its rampant brothels, witchcraft, gambling, drunkenness, etc. On September 15, 1894 the Japanese delivered a crushing defeat to the Chinese at the Battle of Pyongyang during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). Thousands of Chinese troops were killed versus a couple hundred on the Japanese side. Meanwhile, the Methodists struggled to gain converts in Pyongyang and the Presbyterians fared equally with the Methodists with only “28 converts” up

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<sup>127</sup> Pak, “Cradle of the Covenant: Ahn Changho and the Christian Roots of the Korean Constitution,” 128.

<sup>128</sup> James S. Gale, *Korea in Transition* (New York: Young People’s Missionary Movement of the United States and Canada, 1909), 196.

<sup>129</sup> Pak, “Cradle of the Covenant: Ahn Changho and the Christian Roots of the Korean Constitution,” 128.

<sup>130</sup> Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors*, 158.

until the time of the Sino-Japanese War. This war brought “the destruction of Phyong-yang,” and her “inhabitants” fled in droves. In economic ruins, the pre-war population of “60,000 or 70,000” dwindled to a post-war population of “15,000” with the Christian population dispersing as well.<sup>131</sup>

After the Sino-Japanese War “there had been a very great change” in Pyongyang. Many of the most “notorious” and wicked men converted to Christianity and began “leading pure and righteous lives.” In quick succession the missionaries observed “28 baptisms” and had “140 catechumens under instruction, and subject to a [customary] long period of probation before receiving baptism.” During these moments of bountiful reaping, many Bible studies were held “for six hours daily” with dozens of Korean men “from each of [the] fifteen villages, all convinced of the truth of Christianity” seeking education in the Holy Bible. The Koreans and missionaries also sang hymns during the religious instruction and the new converts even donated “\$84 for the sufferers” of a great famine in India.<sup>132</sup> The successive “evening meetings” were crowded “within and without by men, reverent and earnest in manner” desiring to hear more of the Bible and of Jesus Christ, and on one night in particular, with “every face aglow except that of poor, bewildered Im.” Apparently Im, an “old man, with his forehead in the dust, prayed like a child” that “more teachers” would come to Korea after the safe arrival of a petition to New York with such a request. He wanted “the eyes of the foreigners [New Yorkers]” to “be opened” to the endless possibilities of missionary activity in Korea.<sup>133</sup>

At the start of 1896, approximately eighty baptized Koreans and only sixteen catechumens lived in or near Pyongyang Station. By years end, “137 men and women” had been

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<sup>131</sup> Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors*, 158.

<sup>132</sup> Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors*, 158-159. The reference to the Indian famine is found in footnote 1 on page 158. There were several famines around the time that Bishop wrote her book in 1905. The quote probably refers to the famine of 1896-97 or 1899-1900.

<sup>133</sup> Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors*, 161.

baptized and the number of catechumens rose to 503.<sup>134</sup> The growth in Pyongyang alone, accounted for a near fifty percent increase in Christian converts in all of Korea from 1895's figures to those of 1896. Besides the converts, previous Christians continued their growth in biblical knowledge and training. Furthermore, the Pyongyang church constructed many buildings including; hospitals, schools, church "additions," and homes for Samuel Moffett and Mr. Lee.<sup>135</sup>

It may seem odd that the church built homes for missionaries but Moffett was "fear[ed]...broken down" in April, 1896. Even H.G. Underwood suffered a "nervous disorder" at the same time.<sup>136</sup> Moffett went on six "itinerating trips" in 1896.<sup>137</sup> In 1895 and 1896, Moffett spent about ten months in isolation from any Western influence which prompted Lillias Horton Underwood to comment that "life in these relapsing climates, where the nervous strain is so great, especially in a work which taxes a man's best power to the limit, is a very different thing to contend with, from that in the States." She wondered if a home would "have helped him."<sup>138</sup>

With the continued growth of the Korean church, the indigenous population led the way in expanding the church. By 1897, C.C. Vinton wrote that there was "no lack among the native Christians of inclination, of ability, and of financial support in extending the gospel." The Christian faith brought the rich and the poor alike together. Government officials and commoners from "village after village," united in a common cause, radically altered the religious atmosphere of Korea.<sup>139</sup> The number of service locations increased to 101. The number of converts after 1896 was under 2,000 but by the end of the following year, they totaled nearly 3,400. The

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<sup>134</sup> "Reports to the Annual Meeting of the Presbyterian Mission North," *The Korean Repository*, vol. III, 1896, 483.

<sup>135</sup> "Reports to the Annual Meeting of the Presbyterian Mission North," *The Korean Repository*, 1896, 483.

<sup>136</sup> L.H. Underwood, letter to Dr. Ellinwood, 22 April 1896, in *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, vol. II, 392.

<sup>137</sup> "Reports to the Annual Meeting of the Presbyterian Mission North," *The Korean Repository*, 1896, 483.

<sup>138</sup> L.H. Underwood, letter to Dr. Ellinwood, 22 April 1896, in *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, vol. II, 392.

<sup>139</sup> C.C. Vinton, "The Presbyterian Annual Meeting," *The Korean Repository*, 1897, vol. IV, 340.

number of boys and girls attending school also continued to blossom. The Koreans' "contributions" for 1897 reached \$971.12.<sup>140</sup>

The missionaries still had some room for concern. The bulk of Korean Christians still were "in many respects incoherent, untaught, [and] unorganized" and as such, "a power as dangerous for evil as it is capable of good." Visiting from New York, Robert E. Speer urged for more missionaries to come to Korea. His primary concern at this point in Korea was not so much the further proselytizing of the Koreans as it was in helping the young church to "organize and regulate until that church has confidence to stand alone."<sup>141</sup>

The Methodists had successes of their own. The 1898 Annual Meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Mission showed a near 100 percent increase in baptism over the previous year. By the end of 1898, the Methodists baptized 461 with 219 of them occurring during the aforementioned year. "Members and probationers" accounted for 2,068 people with 689 being added to the Methodist Church in 1898. Methodist schools also had enrollments of approximately 400 with both boys and girls in attendance. The Methodists' hospitals also treated 15,000 people along with W.B. Scranton and H.G. Appenzeller making major inroads in the complete, more accurate, translation of the New Testament which was "completed and issued from the press" in 1898.<sup>142</sup> Appenzeller and Scranton did not act alone in this new translation into Korean. For example, James Scarth Gale was "assigned John, Acts, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, and Revelation."<sup>143</sup> Though Ross and McIntyre had completed a New Testament translation as early as 1877, it was not the best possible effort undertaken.

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<sup>140</sup> Vinton, "The Presbyterian Annual Meeting," 342.

<sup>141</sup> Vinton, "The Presbyterian Annual Meeting," 340.

<sup>142</sup> "Annual Meeting of the Methodist Episcopal Mission," *The Korean Repository*, vol. V, August 1898, 311.

<sup>143</sup> Gale, *Korea in Transition*, 138.

Thus far, this paper has briefly discussed the religious, political, and diplomatic situation in Korea at the time of the arrival of Protestant missionaries to Korea. After the Presbyterians and Methodists established their various mission stations, they sought to build a pure and purified indigenous church that promoted self-help, self-support, and self-organization. But how did they accomplish this task? The great care taken in the baptizing of converts along with the adoption of the Nevius principles certainly ignited and powered the Korean church into the direction of self-government, but there is much, much more to the story for these two missionary methods certainly cannot be given all of the credit. Yes, the Koreans evangelized their own people and gave money for the erection of their own churches, schools, and charitable purposes, but the introduction of Western medicine, the education of boys and girls with the establishments of primary and secondary schools along with the construction of colleges and medical schools, and the popularizing of hangul made the success of the Nevius principles possible. In Chapter 4, the educational and social contributions of Western missionaries are addressed.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE MEDICAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND LINGUISTIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF WESTERN MISSIONARIES

Perhaps the United States's most extensive accounts of Korea came from the pens of missionaries. Many books, letters, and articles written by missionaries gave the U.S. access to the Hermit Kingdom. Two English language newspapers, *The Korean Repository* (1892, 1895-1898), edited by Mr. and Mrs. F. Ohlinger in 1892 and Henry Appenzeller and George Heber Jones from 1895-1898 and *The Korea Review* (1902-1907) produced and edited by Homer B. Hulbert (1863-1949) are a goldmine of information for things Korean at the time of their printing. U.S. missionary and diplomat Horace Newton Allen (1858-1932) incorporated Western medicine into Korea along with clamoring for Korean independence against Japan. Allen established the first modern hospital in Korea known as Kwanghyewon (1885). Oliver R. Avison expanded Kwanghyewon (also known as Jejungwon) and formed Severance Medical School (1886). As previously noted, another American missionary of notable influence was Horace Grant Underwood (1859-1916). The Underwood family served in Korea under various capacities for four generations. Underwood played a vital role in the establishment of Chosen Christian College in 1915, and later it was renamed Yonhi College in 1917. Severance Medical College and Yonhi College "merged" in 1957 and became Yonsei University.<sup>144</sup> Currently, Yonsei University is one of the top three universities in the Republic of Korea.

Other highly influential missionaries included Henry Appenzeller (1858-1902), George Heber Jones (1867-1919), and a Canadian missionary James Scarth Gale (1863-1937). Mary

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<sup>144</sup> "History of Yonsei University" <http://www.yonsei.ac.kr/eng/about/history/chronicle/index.asp> (Accessed 5 September 2010).

Scranton established Ewha Woman's University in 1886. Today, it is the highest ranked women's university in Korea and one of the highest ranked women's universities in the world.

### The Kapsin Coup

The Kapsin Coup occurred on December 4-6, 1884. The Korea of the late nineteenth century felt the full brunt of political instability. The power of the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty of China continued to wane. Meiji Japan on the other hand propelled her country into a world contender and Korea, caught in the middle of its powerful neighbors, struggled with its ability to maintain its freedom. Russia's desire to establish ports on the Korean peninsula only furthered the political headaches facing Korea. Additionally, many Western powers sought various treaties with the Hermit Kingdom. "When wars are being waged, royalty assassinated, and dynasties falling" the abysmal state of education in late Choson was understandable.<sup>145</sup> The early Protestant missionaries "founded Korea's first modern school for girls and for boys; started the first school for the blind; established orphanages for abandoned children; founded the first modern hospital; and made modern medicine available to the poor." The philanthropy towards the masses coupled with the events of the Kapsin Coup gave missionaries, especially Protestants, an open door in Korea.<sup>146</sup>

Kim Ok-kiun led the Korean Progressive Party which consistently sought modernization reforms but their efforts "were continually foiled" by conservatives in the government. Kim's attempted coup served as an example of the political instability of the day. Supposedly, the conservatives determined to kill the progressive leaders on December 4, 1884. Kim and his followers with the help of Japanese soldiers invaded and burned the new Korean post office during a "banquet" held "in honor of [its] opening." This event raised the prestige of Dr. Allen in

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<sup>145</sup> Horace Horton Underwood, *Modern Education in Korea* (New York: International Press, 1926), 10.

<sup>146</sup> Andrew Kim, 276.

the eyes of the royal family for he saved the life of “the queen’s cousin” who was seriously wounded during the fighting. The ruffian progressives next targeted the palace (Dec. 6) and “seized” it. The queen enlisted the help of Chinese soldiers and together with Korean soldiers battled the belligerents.<sup>147</sup> The aggressors “had to fight their way to the shore [of Incheon Harbor] and barely escaped with their lives.”<sup>148</sup> After reaching Chemulpo (Incheon), they fled to Japan.<sup>149</sup>

Several future Korean leaders came of age politically during the Kapsin Coup. In addition to Kim Ok-kiun, Soh Jae-pil, Pak Young-hio, Soh Kwang-pom, Hong Young-sik, and Yun Chi-ho among “others” participated in the failed coup.<sup>150</sup> Soh Jae-pil (later Philip Jaisohn) and Yun Chi-ho later converted to Christianity and led the Independence Club formed by Jaisohn. The Independence Club is explored in a later chapter. The progressives Ok-kiun, Jaisohn, and a few others had taken up military training in Japan. During the three day coup, one of Jaisohn’s jobs was to “guard the gates of the temporary palace against a possible intrusion of the enemies of the new government.”<sup>151</sup> The young whippersnappers wanted to change the Korean world with “out-and-out...reform.”<sup>152</sup>

Some of the reforms the progressives sought included the “abolition of class distinctions,” tax reform, universal education with a school “in every district in the country,” currency reform, government housing, sanitary improvements, “prohibition of devil worship and

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<sup>147</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots or Life in Korea*, 119-120.

<sup>148</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 40.

<sup>149</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots or Life in Korea*, 120.

<sup>150</sup> Philip Jaisohn, *My Days in Korea and Other Essays*, ed. Sun-pyo Hong (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1999), 18.

<sup>151</sup> Jaisohn, 17-19 passim.

<sup>152</sup> F.A. McKenzie, *The Tragedy of Korea* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), 33.



other superstitious practices,” and the end of slavery. Other measures of reform also were sought.<sup>153</sup>

The revolutionaries were ill prepared to thwart the royal family. Jaisohn called them “dummy soldiers” with no military training and “no ammunition.” On top of this, the Chinese general Yuan Shikai had consistently remained faithful to the Mins and with the help of Yuan who was “in Seoul” with his army ruined any long-term, governmental ambitions of the progressives. Few progressive leaders survived the emeute of 1884. Kim Ok-kiun, Pak Young-hio, Soh, Kwang-pom, and Soh Jae-pil escaped.<sup>154</sup> As is often the case, the ringleader Ok-kiun, succumbed to an assassination in 1894. Jaisohn would not soon forget Ok-kiun’s murder. He lamented, “I think it was the most cowardly crime that a Korean had ever committed and it was one of the blackest deeds of Queen Min.”<sup>155</sup>

During the Kapsin Coup the Korean and Chinese soldiers numbered nearly 6,000 compared to just 140 Japanese soldiers/conspirators.<sup>156</sup> It seemed a miracle that they survived and reached safety in Japan. However, many Japanese officials still remained at the Japanese Legation and yearned for the safe passage to Chemulpo and ultimately to Japan. The U.S. Navy had assigned John B. Bernadou to work with the American Legation and the Smithsonian Institute. Bernadou “with a guard of Chinese and Koreans” secured the successful escape of the Japanese officials.<sup>157</sup> For his heroics, “the Japanese Government made him a handsome present”<sup>158</sup> and gave him a “testimonial.”<sup>159</sup> Allen’s heroics would not be soon forgotten either.

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<sup>153</sup> Jaisohn, 18.

<sup>154</sup> Jaisohn, 19-20.

<sup>155</sup> Jaisohn, 24.

<sup>156</sup> Allen, *Korea: Fact and Fancy*, 169.

<sup>157</sup> Allen, *Korea: Fact and Fancy*, 169.

<sup>158</sup> “Commander Bernadou Dead,” *The New York Times*, 3 October 1908, n.p. #. (Accessed through [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), October 3, 2010).

<sup>159</sup> Allen, *Korea: Fact and Fancy*, 169.

Prince Min, “the greatest man in Korea next to his ruler,” teetered on the brink of death. Dr. Allen’s personal account of what met him at the recently attacked Post Office offers the reader a grim picture of certain death.

After being rushed across the city under an escort of native troops, I found the foreign representatives and the high native dignitaries spattered with blood and terribly agitated, while the host of the evening, Prince Min, was laying at the point of death with arteries severed and seven sword cuts on his head and body. This man had just returned from America where he had gone to ratify our treaty [Schufeldt Treaty of 1882] with his country...

It took three months of constant care, attended with much anxiety and peril, to bring the prince back to health and even then he was badly scarred and worse scared Korean who, soon after his recovery, took up his permanent residency in China.<sup>160</sup>

Homer Bezaleel Hulbert recorded the coup in his monumental work *The Passing of Korea*. In Hulbert’s record the number of troops on both sides varied from Allen’s figures.<sup>161</sup> Notwithstanding disputes over numeric totals, the two accounts paralleled nicely. However, the exact culprit who inflicted the blows on Prince Min remained shrouded in mystery in Hulbert’s opinion. He speculated the possibility of a conspiracy on the part of the conservatives to commit the appearance of coup and then turn around and blame the progressives for the attack on the government in order to stifle the rogue party’s ambitions. Little more than two decades after the event at hand Hulbert stated, “It has never been proved that this attack was made by the radicals themselves, but at any rate they saw that they must act promptly, for whether the crime was theirs or not they knew that it would be charged against them.”<sup>162</sup>

Rhee Syngman noted that shortly before the failed coup Prince Min traveled quite extensively in the United States and was “provided cordial hospitality” and showed great

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<sup>160</sup> Horace N. Allen, *Things Korean* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908), 70. (Accessed through Google Books, October 3, 2010).

<sup>161</sup> Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, 125. Allen claimed that over 6,000 Chinese and Korean troops battled 140 Japanese soldiers, whereas Hulbert wrote of “the four hundred Japanese” and that “the Chinese force outnumbered them seven to one” putting their total at approximately 2,800.

<sup>162</sup> Hulbert, 125.

“kindness.” Prince Min returned to Korea with the intent of introducing “enlightenment” to the Korean people but “influential members of the nobility and the royal household...opposed” Min’s ambitions of bridge building between East and West. The royal family and the nobility thought it best to continue to look to China for protection.<sup>163</sup> It is little wonder why Hulbert considered the possibility of either the conservatives or the progressives as the assassins. Min enthusiastically embraced reform but then back peddled. Neither faction could trust him.

The Schufeldt Treaty of 1882 did not grant the United States religious freedom in Korea. As such, many potential dangers faced the missionaries outside of the usual scourges of disease, illness, and homesickness. The masterful medical techniques and surgical procedures of Dr. Allen allowed the missionaries a measure of evangelistic freedom and favor with the royal court. Prince Min even thought that Allen’s medical work had divine attributes.<sup>164</sup> Certainly, Allen himself expressed surprise when his medical abilities opened “missionary work proper” and fostered his “unexpected career” as “medical officer to the royal court,” which eventually led to his becoming the United States diplomat to Korea. The Korean government also provided Allen with a hospital.<sup>165</sup>

### Western Medicine

Allen’s saving of Min Young Ik was only the beginning of medical missions in Korea. The king established the Government Hospital in 1885 and placed Allen over it. “Under the efficient leadership of Dr. Allen,” the work grew at an alarmingly fast pace. Allen could not keep up with the dispensary work. Shortly after the opening of the Government Hospital, Allen “eagerly anticipated” the presence John W. Heron, M.D. to assist along with another doctor,

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<sup>163</sup> Syngman Rhee, *The Spirit of Independence: A Primer of Korean Modernization and Reform*, trans. Han-Kyo Kim (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 172. (Accessed through Google Books, October 4, 2010).

<sup>164</sup> In Soo Kim, 18.

<sup>165</sup> Allen, *Things Korean*, 188.

W.B. Scranton who's mother was the famed Mary F. Scranton.<sup>166</sup> Mary Scranton gained her fame through the establishment of Ewha Woman's University. A significant problem faced the medical missionaries because at that time it was forbidden for men to see any part of a woman with the exception of her eyes.<sup>167</sup> By 1886, Annie J. Ellers came to Korea and had been thrust into the leadership position of the "female department" at the hospital. Dr. Heron took charge of the hospital in 1887 after Allen left his post for diplomatic pursuits. Lillias S. Horton, M.D. came to Korea in 1888 where she took over for Miss Ellers who had married missionary D.A. Bunker. Miss Horton married H.G. Underwood in 1889 but continued with her hospital work.<sup>168</sup> Frequently, the king and queen sent "dancing girls to the hospital" to act as nurses for female patients. This procedure bothered the missionaries but Korean culture adamantly rejected any notion of men treating women.<sup>169</sup>

To get an idea of the adverse circumstances in which male doctors treated female patients and of the primitive understanding of Koreans' grasp on medicine and surgical techniques, a story by Mrs. Underwood is worth recounting.

I learned later that Korean doctors, always men, who had treated the queen, felt her pulse by using a cord, one end of which was fastened about her wrist, and the other carried into the next room was held in the doctor's fingers. The royal tongue, I was told, was protruded through a slit in the screen for the physician's observation. I found the queen's trouble nothing more serious than a small furuncle which needed lancing; but as the mere suggestion of approaching her sacred person with any sort of surgical instrument was looked upon with unspeakable horror and indignation by all who surrounded her, and was flatly forbidden by the king, patience and slower measures were necessarily resorted to.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea: 1832-1910*, 3d ed. (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1980), 117-118.

<sup>167</sup> In late Choson, Korean women had to walk the streets with their entire bodies covered with the exception of their eyes. The look is comparable to conservative forms of the hijab worn by many traditional Islamic women.

<sup>168</sup> Paik, 118-120 passim.

<sup>169</sup> Martha Huntley, *Caring, Growing, Changing: A History of the Protestant Mission in Korea* (New York: Friendship Press, 1984), 101.

<sup>170</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots or Life in Korea*, 25.

Just as Horace Allen came into favor with the royal household because of his medical work, Lillias Underwood gained the trust of King Gojong and Queen Min. She became the queen's personal physician and had many audiences with her majesty. Certainly, Mrs. Underwood had a more glowing view of the queen than did Philip Jaisohn who maintained an element of bitterness with the queen after the slaying of Kim Ok-kiun. She found that the queen's mental capacities exceeded her physical beauty though Mrs. Underwood had "seen the queen when she looked positively beautiful." To the physician, her royal highness possessed more than her fair share of leadership qualities with her "force, intellect and strength of character." In addition, the queen had learned a great deal about the Western world "and their governments." Mrs. Underwood felt that Queen Min actually was progressive at heart and pushed for "the best interests of her country and sought the good of the people."<sup>171</sup>

Philip Jaisohn portrayed the queen as one who paid lip service to progressivism but "at heart" she was "as antagonistic toward all foreign ideas and customs as Taiwongun." Furthermore, unlike Mrs. Underwood's opinion of the queen, Jaisohn insisted that the queen's policies increased "poverty and oppression."<sup>172</sup> Be that as it may, medical missions continued unabated in Korea.

The Government Hospital came under the direction of missionary O.R. Avison in 1893. Dr. Avison made the greatest impact on medical missions in Korea. With King Gojong's permission, Avison, "reorganized the government hospital" and "made it a missionary institution."<sup>173</sup> Missionary involvement with the hospital almost failed early on but the Presbyterian Mission Board chose to follow Horace Allen's advice "against that of every missionary they had on the field." Most missionaries saw the hospital as a money pit where

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<sup>171</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-Knots or Life in Korea*, 24.

<sup>172</sup> Jaisohn, 4.

<sup>173</sup> Paik, 334.

Korean corruption ran deep. Upon Avison's arrival in November, 1893 "the hospital consisted of a one-story Korean style building, 16 by 28 feet."<sup>174</sup> Dr. Avison went to the United States "on furlough in 1899-1900." While sharing his missionary work he received a large donation for the establishment of a better hospital in Seoul. Louis H. Severance, who had never been to Korea, donated ten thousand dollars for this work and the hospital came to be known as Severance Hospital a title it still retains to the present day.<sup>175</sup>

In 1900, an eclectic group of missionaries met in Carnegie Hall where Avison gave a presentation on medical missions. Avison wanted to make sure everyone present (about 5,000) could hear him. He spoke at a volume which allowed for "a man sitting on the farthest back row of the second balcony" to be able to understand. The man sitting furthest from the speaker was none other than Louis Severance.<sup>176</sup>

Besides founding Severance Hospital, Avison also led the way in the establishment of Severance Union Medical College and Chosen Christian College.<sup>177</sup> Avison presided as President of both institutions.<sup>178</sup> Medical missions had five lasting effects that brought unity to the missionaries and the people of Korea. First, "public marks of royal favor" had allowed for further spreading of the Gospel. Second, the missionaries introduced a smallpox vaccination which nearly eliminated "the scourge of the country." Third, the caring for the poor and destitute at the newly founded hospital in Seoul led to governmental regulation. Many had been left to die on the roadside "in summer's scorching heat, drenching rain, or winter's icy blasts." The Korean court witnessed first-hand the "love and mercy taught by Christianity" and passed laws

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<sup>174</sup> Huntley, *Caring, Growing, Changing*, 101.

<sup>175</sup> Paik, 333.

<sup>176</sup> Huntley, *Caring, Growing, Changing*, 102-103.

<sup>177</sup> Paik, 334.

<sup>178</sup> Hugh Heung-wo Cynn, *The Rebirth of Korea: The Reawakening of the People; its Causes, and the Outlook* (New York and Cincinnati: The Abingdon Press, 1920), 137.

“forbidding the casting” of the destitute to the roadways to die. Fourth, the curbing of cholera epidemics caused all classes of Koreans to ask, ““Would we love even our own people as these foreigners love us; and why?”” Fifth, the medical care provided by Moffett and Lee in Pyongyang (1894) during the Sino-Japanese War helped the tremendous growth of Christianity in and around that city.<sup>179</sup>

Many other medical clinics, hospitals, and schools were established by missionaries but the Severance Hospital stands out and above all of the rest. Most medical clinics and hospitals simply folded within a few years.

The educating of the masses did not stop within the field of medicine but extended to other subjects as well. Elementary, middle, and high schools along with numerous universities sprang up wherever the missionaries could be found and enrolled both male and female students.

### Universal Education

Besides medicinal education, the missionaries brought other forms of Western education to Korea. The Methodist and Presbyterian missions alike established numerous schools for pupils of all ages but five schools stand out in importance. Not including Severance Union Medical College, the five schools are Pai Chai Boy’s High School, Ewha Girls’ High School, Choson Christian College, Pyongyang Theological Seminary, and Union Christian College.

Methodist missionary Henry Appenzeller founded Paejae (Pai Chai) Boy’s High School on June 8, 1886, “under Government auspices.”<sup>180</sup> Some sources put the founding date of Appenzeller’s school at 1885, but it did not get official recognition until 1886 when King Gojong named the school Pai Chai Hak Dang. During the first unofficial year of the school’s existence (1885-1886), Appenzeller primarily taught English. Early on, both Presbyterian and Methodist

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<sup>179</sup> H.G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, 102-103.

<sup>180</sup> Harry A. Rhodes, ed., *History of the Korea Mission Presbyterian Church U.S.A.: 1884-1934* (Seoul: Chosen Missionary Presbyterian Church U.S.A., 1934), 582.

schools had few students. By 1887-1888, there was only one Presbyterian middle school in Korea with twenty-five students.<sup>181</sup> The number of Methodist students was lower. Pai Chai continued to steadily grow over the next decade. By 1895, Pai Chai College had been added to Pai Chai High School. Pai Chai College employed seven teachers in 1895. Five teachers were Korean with two working in the English Department and three in the “Chinese and Unmun [hangul] Departments.” The other two teachers were Westerners who worked in the English Department. It appeared that Pai Chai did not require formal enrollment but simply allowed boys to start attending class any time during the school year. “Sixty-four” responded “to [the] roll-call the first morning” of the newly established college.<sup>182</sup>

The school focused on training young men in three areas: mental, moral, and spiritual. Pai Chai College was missions minded but “no revival” occurred in its first year. The primacy of the school was the teachings of Christ. D.A. Bunker explained it this way:

This brief outline does not take into consideration the constant personal influence of the Christian teacher upon the scholar, nor the wholesome uplift given to a crude boy by breathing the atmosphere of a Christian institution. Nor in this connection should mention of the nature of our text books be omitted. Our books are edited on strictly religious principles. They contain prayers, and many helpful hints as to God, His goodness, power and love; as to Christ and his power to save all who call upon Him. There are many thoughts along these and similar lines which tend to turn the minds of the students into proper channels. One of our boys closed a letter to the writer with a benediction quoted from St. Paul’s writings. Not a bad beginning for a Pai Chai boy. Certainly a good ending.<sup>183</sup>

The first academic year saw “275 men and boys” come “under Christian influence.” Some months saw greater attendance at Pai Chai than others but overall two-hundred seventy-five unique students attended the school. The maiden year of Pai Chai College brought an important speaker who lectured on geography and the “secular and ecclesiastical history” of Europe. The

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<sup>181</sup> Rhodes, 550.

<sup>182</sup> D.A. Bunker, “Pai Chai College,” *The Korean Repository*, 21 August 1896, vol. III, 1896, 361.

<sup>183</sup> Bunker, 361.



man was Philip Jaisohn. Large numbers of boys came to hear this man who had traveled to the United States and earned a medical degree.<sup>184</sup> Jaisohn's conversion to Christianity and his contributions to Korean nationalism are given in Section II.

While Pai Chai became known as a college in 1895, it must not be understood in the traditional sense. The "average age" of boys studying English was eighteen and of those studying Korean ten. All students of Pai Chai did not become Christians. The story of one Ye Chon Kyung ended badly. He "fell among thieves, became a robber" and faced execution for murder.<sup>185</sup> However, many of the young men who came to Pai Chai and especially the ones who heard Dr. Jaisohn's lectures embraced the Christian faith and became patriots to the nationalist cause. Dr. Jaisohn established his Independence Club in 1896 and several students from Pai Chai "succeeded to the leadership of the Independence Club." The club fought "official corruption, inefficiency, and timidity toward foreign aggressiveness." A sampling of famous students at Pai Chai under Jaisohn's tutelage include: "Syngman Rhee...President of the Republic of Korea; the late Ahn Chang-ho, one of Korea's most brilliant and patriotic statesmen; Kimm Kiusic, formerly head of the Legislative Assembly in South Korea; and Hugh Cynn, for many years General Secretary of the National Council of the Y.M.C.A. in Korea."<sup>186</sup> Cynn also became Principal of Pai Chai.<sup>187</sup>

The political influence of Pai Chai pupils is quite remarkable considering the small size of the school. As late as 1926, forty years after its founding, Pai Chai had an enrollment of only eight hundred students with twenty-seven teachers.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Bunker, 363.

<sup>185</sup> Bunker, 364.

<sup>186</sup> Channing Liem, *America's Finest Gift to Korea: The Life of Philip Jaisohn* (New York: The William-Frederick Press, 1952), 51-52.

<sup>187</sup> Cynn, title page.

<sup>188</sup> H.H. Underwood, 46.

To cite Rhee's example, in 1894 he came to Pai Chai "intending to scoff at the 'foreign devils'" but then realized the importance of learning English. His friend, Keung-woo (Hugh) Cynn "urged" Rhee to attend Pai Chai "and study the modern world." He assumed his "religious [Buddhism] or social [Confucianism] beliefs" would be unshaken.<sup>189</sup> Henry Appenzeller advocated a school newspaper for Pai Chai. "Rhee became the chief editorial writer" of it and Appenzeller proofread Rhee's final product. This assignment gave Rhee his "first venture in leadership" and he and Kimm Kiusic began publishing the first "daily newspaper in Korea."<sup>190</sup>

While at Pai Chai, Rhee believed only the "poor and ignorant" believed in Christianity and that he would never convert because of his vast knowledge of Buddhism and Confucianism. Furthermore, he was a yangban, but a shift in his thinking occurred "when he learned for the first time that people in Christian lands were protected against the tyranny of rulers."<sup>191</sup> The seed had been planted, hence he began to "respect" Christianity and formally trusted Christ while in a Korean prison for treason (1898-1904) for "the figure of Jesus became for him a living inspiration" and that through Christ he "was under the care of God."<sup>192</sup>

Women played a vital role in the education of Korean girls. Methodist Mary Scranton founded her school in June 1886 in Seoul "with a single pupil, a child found lying against the city wall with her mother who was suffering from typhus." Scranton's school became known as Ewha.<sup>193</sup> Today, Ewha Womans University boasts a student body of nearly 20,000. Women had little value in the Korea of late Choson. Ewha Womans University's website states, "Korea's first educational institution for women, Ewha Haktang (the precursor of the University),

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14. <sup>189</sup> Robert T. Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth* (New York: Dodd Mead and Co., 1960),

<sup>190</sup> Oliver, *The Man Behind the Myth*, 19.

<sup>191</sup> Oliver, *The Man Behind the Myth*, 60-61.

<sup>192</sup> Oliver, *The Man Behind the Myth*, 62.

<sup>193</sup> Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 181.

provided women with opportunities for modern education and allowing them to recognize their value and rights as human beings.”<sup>194</sup> Because of Ewha and other schools, a Korean woman’s life experienced a revolution. No longer was she reduced to the “duties” of “reverence to ancestors and hospitality to guests.” For once, the monopoly on knowledge did not belong solely to men for “knowledge” became “just as important to them as to men for the full enjoyment and development of life.”<sup>195</sup> Hugh Cynn wrote:

It has been distinctly fortunate for Korea that the leadership in the broadening of the sphere of women has been taken by the Christian women, and all the quiet but effective transforming movements went hand in hand with Christian service of one form or another, because without the association of the Christian virtues the result might have been disastrous to the edification of homes.<sup>196</sup>

Miss L.E. Frey articulated the daily routine at Ewha as follows:

The girls breakfast at seven, and begin school at eight. ‘We teach English, arithmetic, general history, and the native language, but most important of all are the Bible studies. After dinner you will hear the noon prayer bell ring, and if you step quietly into the hall, you will hear them in their rooms praying. Fifteen minutes alone with Jesus every day does more for our girls that [than] we are able to tell. School is out at four o’clock, and the little girls are quite ready to play after their confinement during school hours. The older ones quickly find their sewing, for each girl has the care of the clothes of two or more little ones and it takes much of their time outside of study hours.’<sup>197</sup>

*The Korean Repository* reported in February 1892 that, outside of mission schools, there were “no schools whatever for the education of girls.”<sup>198</sup> Miss L.C. Rothweiler, an early missionary to Korea, described the goal of the education of Korean girls. The female missionaries sought “to rescue girls from a life of want, vice and ignorance.” Once a girl gained an education for herself, it was desired that she would “be a factor in lessening ignorance among her sisters.” In other words, the missionaries were to train Korean women to be able to train their

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<sup>194</sup> “Ewha Womans University History,” (September 2010) <http://www.ewha.ac.kr/english/> (accessed 28 May 2011).

<sup>195</sup> Cynn, 136.

<sup>196</sup> Cynn, 137.

<sup>197</sup> L.E. Frey, “Notes and Comments,” *The Korean Repository*, 1896, vol. III, 261.

<sup>198</sup> “Korean Schools,” *The Korean Repository*, February 1892, vol. I, ed. F. Ohlinger and Mrs. F. Ohlinger,

fellow countrywomen. The girls were educated “to be helpmeets in building and maintaining *true* homes, to be teachers of day schools, assistants in our boarding schools, to be nurses or assistants in medical work, in a word to fit them to help their sisters in Korea.”<sup>199</sup> [emphasis hers] The missionaries educated the Korean girls and women in domestic duties, hangul, Chinese, English, arithmetic, geography, history, science, and Arabic numerals.<sup>200</sup> Of course, all of this education would be done within a Christian atmosphere with the Bible being thoroughly studied and applied.

The influence of Choson Christian College, Pyongyang Theological Seminary, and Union Christian College on Western education and nationalism has similarities with Pai Chai and Ewha and the latter’s involvement with Christianity and nationalism is investigated in section two.

#### Linguistic Contributions

China obtained suzerainty over Korea in the second century BC. The Chinese and Koreans spoke different languages, but the Koreans had no written language of their own. The only access that the peninsula had to writing was the adoption of Chinese characters which took years to master. Briefly, Korea used *idu*, “a system of writing Korean sounds by employing Chinese characters.” It was not until the fifteenth century that the Korean sage king Sejong (r. 1418-1450) invented hangul. Sejong lamented that Koreans were “very often unable in the long run to express all that they wish.” A small number of hangul writings “appeared in the latter half of the fifteenth century” but quickly hangul fell from any sort of popularity it may have had and went into four centuries of hibernation. The official written governmental language of Choson remained Chinese. Critics of hangul relegated its status by calling it *onmun* or “a vulgar script”

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<sup>199</sup> L.C. Rothweiler, “What shall we Teach in our Girls’ Schools?,” *The Korean Repository*, 1892, vol. I, 89.

<sup>200</sup> Rothweiler, 90-93 passim.

no more worthy than to be used by and “suitable only for women.”<sup>201</sup> Protestant missionaries in China struggled for fifty years after their arrival to bring about a translation of the Bible into Chinese.<sup>202</sup> Surely, Underwood, Allen, Appenzeller, and other pioneer missionaries to Korea wanted to avoid a similar fate with Chinese missions in providing their mission field with a translation of the Bible into the native tongue.

As noted, Ross and McIntyre already translated the Bible into Korean while they evangelized in China along the Sino-Korean border. Missionary and linguist, James Scarth Gale, put it this way:

Korea’s native script is surely the simplest language in the world. Invented in 1445 A.D., it has come quietly down the dusty ages, waiting for, who knew what? Never used, it was looked on with contempt as being so easy. Why yes, women could learn it in a month or little more; of what use could such a cheap script be? By one of those mysterious providences it was made ready and kept waiting for the New Testament and other Christian literature. Up to this day these have had almost exclusive use of this wonderfully simple language. This perhaps is the most remarkable providence of all, this language sleeping its long sleep of four hundred years, waiting till the hour should strike on the clock, that it might rise and tell of all Christ’s wondrous works. They call it Un-mun [onmun], the ‘dirty language,’ because it is so simple and easy as compared with proud Chinese picture writing. God surely loves the humble things of life, and chooses the things that are naught to bring to naught the things that are. Tied in the belts of the women are New Testaments in common Korean; in the pack of the mountaineer on his brisk journeying; in the wall-box of the hamlet home; piled up on the shelf of the living-room are these books in Un-mun telling of *Ye su* (Jesus), mighty to save.<sup>203</sup> [emphasis his]

Besides the Bible, numerous other Chinese books and gospel tracts were translated into Korean by Western missionaries. These works had been written by missionaries in China for the people of China but proved useful in Korea as well. From 1881-1896 fifty-six works were translated from Chinese into Korean. Twenty missionaries contributed to the translational work with most contributing to one or two works. H.G. Underwood led the way with fifteen

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<sup>201</sup> Spencer J. Palmer, *Korea and Christianity: The Problem of Identification with Tradition* (Seoul: Hollym Corporation, 1967), 70-71.

<sup>202</sup> Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, 69.

<sup>203</sup> Gale, 137-138.

translations, followed by F. Ohlinger with eight, W.B. Scranton (son of Mary Scranton) with six, and S.A. Moffett with five. A few of Underwood's translations include *Salvation of the World*, *Redemption*, and *Salient Doctrine of Christianity* and twelve others. Ohlinger translated *Sin Like Leprosy* and *Leading the Family in the Right Way* along with six other works. Scranton's six works included *Harmony of the Gospels* and *Article of Religion*. Two of five of Moffett's works were *True Plan of Salvation* and *Discourse of Salvation*. James Scarth Gale gave to the Koreans John Bunyan's famous *Pilgrim's Progress*.<sup>204</sup>

The missionaries faced a serious issue when improving upon the Korean Bible. It is what Lillias Underwood called the "Term Question" and it pertained to the proper word that should be used to convey "God" to the Koreans. Much debate centered on this important question. Some missionaries felt that "Jehovah" ought to be used, whereas others insisted that "Hananim" was better suited to the Korean mind. To some, the use of Hananim bordered on violating the First Commandment for Hananim was the chief god of ancient Korea similar to Zeus in Greek Mythology. Lillias Underwood gave this analogy:

The apostles found the Greeks worshipping Zeus as their chief god; if Paul had advised them, 'Call Jehovah Zeus if you like, but really Jehovah is the only God; He is different from what you think of Zeus, but you still may call him Zeus,' he would have done what our missionaries did in the case of the term 'Hananim,' the usual translation of which is 'The Honorable Heavens.'<sup>205</sup>

The Episcopalians and Catholics in Korea chose to stick with Jehovah and most Presbyterians and Methodists chose to use Hananim.<sup>206</sup> Some feared that the use of Hananim would "likely" bring "error" because many Koreans would assume that they could continue worshipping all of their deities along with Hananim. Mrs. Underwood did not fully approve of the use of Hananim

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<sup>204</sup> Sung-Deuk Oak, "Chinese Protestant Literature and Early Korean Protestantism," in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 77-78.

<sup>205</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 124-125.

<sup>206</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years among the Top-knots*, 104-105.

stating, “In my judgment it is not strictly in accord with scriptural precept or example.”<sup>207</sup> In the end, Hananim held sway and is the predominant word used for God in Korean churches to the present day.

In the late nineteenth century, most books in hangul were Christian works. The wide availability of literature in hangul encouraged Koreans to master their native script given to them by Sejong the Great. Seo Chae-pil (Philip Jaisohn) started the first Korean language newspaper in Korea called the *Tongnip sinmun* (*The Independent*). “The renaissance” of the native Korean script “by the Christian missionaries” supported the “new vernacular literature closely associated with” the “reformist-nationalist movement.” Jaisohn’s family was murdered along with Kim Ok-kiun after the failed coup of 1884 and Jaisohn fled to the United States where he converted to Christianity, learned English, and earned his medical degree in 1895 from George Washington University Medical School. He returned to Korea in 1896 where he lectured at Pai Chai and published his English-Korean newspaper *The Independent*. Jaisohn conscientiously used no Chinese characters in his paper “following the example of the Christian missionaries.” The paper’s circulation exploded from three hundred to three thousand “within a year.”<sup>208</sup>

*The Independent* found its way into the hands of “every Government official and all foreign legations.” Furthermore, the common Korean could make complaints against corruption within the government and see his situation remedied. Jaisohn was, however, “careful not to offend the king.” Jaisohn appealed to Christianity as “his primary doctrinal source” against injustices in the government. In a sense, Jaisohn was a missionary in his own right for “his

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<sup>207</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 124-125.

<sup>208</sup> Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, 75-76.

arguments had a strong Puritan tenor.” Jaisohn’s bold attacks on corrupt government officials inspired the writing of “novels, and the inspiration for later vernacular newspapers.”<sup>209</sup>

In the first three chapters the direct contributions of Western missionaries has been explored. Chapters 5-7 show the indirect contributions of the missionaries through the direct contributions of Korean Christians to nationalism.

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<sup>209</sup> Palmer, *Korea and Christianity*, 76-77.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE INDEPENDENCE CLUB

It must not be assumed that Western missionary endeavors ceased after 1900. In fact, missionaries became even busier as their churches exploded. The Korean church matured rather quickly as evidenced by the success of Korean churches through the application of the Nevius Method. It was in such an environment that Philip Jaisohn and Yun Chi-ho returned to Korea, both having embraced the Protestant faith and obtaining fine Western educations at top American universities. Jaisohn and Yun saw themselves as Christ's agents for the betterment of Korea politically, educationally, and religiously. They welcomed Korean people from many different religious persuasions into the Independence Club.

After the failed Kapsin Coup, Jaisohn fled to Japan and then to San Francisco in 1885. He spent the next several years in the United States and converted to the Christian faith while learning English at the local YMCA. A staunch Presbyterian, Jaisohn met a wealthy man named Mr. Hollenbeck who served as Jaisohn's benefactor for many years. Jaisohn moved to Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania and schooled at Hillman Academy "to prepare for college." He gained his American citizenship in 1888 and officially changed his name to "Philip Jaisohn." After completing his studies at Hillman, Jaisohn went on to Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania. During this time Mr. Hollenbeck presented Jaisohn with a very generous deal. He "offered him seven thousand dollars, to be paid in yearly installments for the next seven years" Hollenbeck's deal stipulated that Jaisohn would complete four years at Lafayette and then enroll at Princeton for three years in the pursuit for theological studies thereafter returning to Korea as a Presbyterian missionary. Jaisohn "declined" Hollenbeck's generosity because he did not think

that he was cut out to be a missionary and because he was “considered a criminal in Korea” because of his connection to the Kapsin Coup.<sup>210</sup>

Before the Independence Club, there was the Chongdong Club started in 1894. The Chongdong Club consisted of an eclectic blend of people including European diplomats, missionaries, and Koreans. Some of the prominent Christians in the club included Yun Chi-ho, H.G. Underwood, Henry Appenzeller, and Philip Jaisohn. With the Japanese making further encroachments upon Korean sovereignty (most notably the murder of Queen Min), members of the Chongdong Club fought to get the king under the protection of a foreign legation. Eventually, King Gojong safely made it to the Russian Legation where “he ruled the country for twelve months.” The American and Russian Legations shared in the hiding of the ten “plotters” who helped scurry the king to the Russian Legation.<sup>211</sup>

Two years later (1897), Philip Jaisohn wanted a “permanent structure” built in order to commemorate Korean independence and sovereignty. With the intention of sending a strong message, Jaisohn tore down a centuries-old gate that had been used “for the purpose of receiving Chinese ambassadors” during coronation ceremonies for Korean kings. Jaisohn settled on an arch because it was cheapest. He had considered a public park, building, or road.<sup>212</sup> The cornerstone had been laid on November 21, 1896, and completed on November 20, 1897, in which Jaisohn gave a speech boldly proclaiming Korean independence in spite of Chinese, Russian, and Japanese pressure to the contrary. Independence Hall and Independence Arch were in close proximity to one another and the two were combined into Independence Park.<sup>213</sup> Se Eung Oh, an expert on the Independence Club, possibly confused the current Arch with the one

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<sup>210</sup> Se Eung Oh, *Dr. Jaisohn's Reform Movement, 1896-1898: A Critical Appraisal of the Independence Club* (Lanham, MD, New York, and London: University Press of America, Inc., 1995), 11-13 passim.

<sup>211</sup> Oh, 45-46.

<sup>212</sup> Jaisohn, 405.

<sup>213</sup> Oh, 49-50.

dedicated in 1897. He claimed that the Arch is still “present”<sup>214</sup> though Jaisohn claimed it had actually been demolished by the Japanese in 1937.<sup>215</sup> However, on November 16, 1947, Jaisohn gave another speech “on practically the same spot” as he did in 1897 to “re-dedicate the same arch to the same cause” as had been done fifty years previously.<sup>216</sup>

The cornerstone dedication ceremony of November 21, 1896, had a Christian bent to it. No doubt, this was a result of Jaisohn’s own devout Christian faith and that of many of Jaisohn’s followers. Many people spoke that day including several missionaries. The ceremonies started with the Pai Chai Glee Club singing a song entitled “Korea.” Next, Henry Appenzeller prayed in Korean for “Divine blessing upon Korea and asked protection for Korea’s independence.” After Appenzeller’s prayer, Ahn Kyung-soo, President of the Independence Club, and Governor of Seoul, Ye Chae-yon spoke. Missionary D.A. Bunker had been working with the Pai Chai Glee Club and was “thanked” after the students brilliantly sang “Independence.” The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lee Wan-yong gave a few words on “the Future of Our Country.” Lastly, Philip Jaisohn addressed the crowd and waxed eloquently on “Foreigners in Korea.” The students from Pai Chai sang again and the Royal English School students participated in a “drill.” The ceremony closed “with loud cheers for His Majesty and the Independence Club.” Afterwards, Horace Allen gave some words at Independence Hall promising “that America would always be one of Korea’s best friends.”<sup>217</sup>

The Independence Arch brought a little diplomatic tension between Korea, China, Russia, and Japan, but the memorial issued by the Independence Club against Russia in 1897 brought great diplomatic strain between the United States and Russia. *The Independent* complained of

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<sup>214</sup> Oh, 50.

<sup>215</sup> Jaisohn, 33.

<sup>216</sup> Jaisohn, 404.

<sup>217</sup> Channing Liem, *The First Korean American—A Forgotten Hero: Philip Jaisohn* (Philadelphia: The Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation, Inc., 1984), 173-174.

four things. First, the Independence Club spoke against the increasing number of Russian military officers and soldiers (160 total) entering Seoul even though the paper initially “welcomed the Russian advisors [and soldiers]” when they numbered three and ten respectively. Second, the Club denounced Russian oversight of the Korean Finance Ministry. Third, the Club even more severely criticized an agreement signed by De Speyer and Foreign Minister Cho Pyung-sik that turned “Korean finance and customs completely to Russian governance.” Fourth, the establishment of a Russo-Korean central bank ignited the greatest ire of the Club against the Russians.<sup>218</sup>

The Russian Consul General of Korea, Alexei Speyer, and former medical missionary turned U.S. Minister and Consul General, Horace N. Allen, discussed the “memorial against Russia by the Korean Independence Club” on February 24, 1898. In a conversation at Allen’s home, Speyer complained that three Americans were behind the memorial. They were General Charles W. Legendre, F.J.H. Nienstead, and Jaisohn. Allen countered that Nienstead was “half dead and cares nothing for such things.”<sup>219</sup> Nienstead was “a military instructor for King Kojong’s army.”<sup>220</sup> As far as Legendre was concerned, Allen stated that the United States “looked upon him as a Frenchman” and that his loyalties were more to France than to the United States in spite of his U.S. citizenship. And when it came to Jaisohn, Allen readily acknowledged the Korean-American’s involvement in the memorial and that all efforts were being made to get Jaisohn back to the United States.<sup>221</sup> Clearly, the dispute between Speyer and Allen indicate the patriotic influence of the Independence Club.

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<sup>218</sup> Oh, 71-72.

<sup>219</sup> Horace Allen, February 24, 1898, in *Horace Newton Allen’s Diary, 1883-1903*, ed. Won-Mo Kim (Seoul: Dankook University Press, 1991), 562-563.

<sup>220</sup> Young-Sik Kim.

<sup>221</sup> Allen, February 24, 1898, 563-564.

Before the dispute over the memorial of the Independence Club, Jaisohn did not like the idea of having Gojong under the protection of a legation because he wanted Korea to be self-governing and worried that Gojong's intimate political relationship with the Russian minister, Karl Waeber, could potentially lead Korea to become dominated by Russia instead of Japan. From here, Jaisohn created *The Independent* partly as a result of the King's confinement. In turn, *The Independent* "was one of the main factors which led to the formation of the Independence Club." At the time, Jaisohn "did not affiliate" his newspaper or "himself" with the Independence Club. The new club consisted of approximately "twenty-five government officials, many of them Chongdong Club members and other progressive elements."<sup>222</sup> Besides Jaisohn, the three most prominent leaders of the Independence Club were Yun Chi-ho, Nam Kungok, and Yi Sanjae "all educated Christians" who left their yangban upbringings after converting to Christianity and embracing "the Christian doctrine of equality for all."<sup>223</sup> Besides sparking the establishment of the Independence Club, *The Independent* also encouraged others to start hangul newspapers of their own. The two exclusively hangul papers that followed *The Independent* were the *Korean Christian Advocate* and the *Christian News* both published in Seoul.<sup>224</sup>

The first three newspapers in hangul all were started by Korean Christians and promoted improvements in Korean society from a Christian standpoint and with Christian values interspersed within a Confucian framework. What makes the publication of these three papers and the influence they exerted on society all the more remarkable is the fact that during the period of 1895-1898 there were barely a thousand Christians in all of Korea.<sup>225</sup> On top of this,

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<sup>222</sup> Oh, 47-48.

<sup>223</sup> Byong-suh Kim, "Modernization and the Explosive Growth and Decline of Korean Protestant Religiosity," in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 315-316.

<sup>224</sup> Bishop, 271.

<sup>225</sup> Roy E. Shearer, *Wildfire: Church Growth in Korea* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), 51.

the most active churches in Korea, the Presbyterians and the Methodists, only had a combined total of forty-four Western missionaries on the field in 1893.<sup>226</sup> During the period 1895-1898 the number of Western missionaries had not increased all that much.

Jacqueline Pak called the Independence Club one of “ten such encounters with Christianity” experienced by nationalist leader Ahn Chang-ho.<sup>227</sup> *The Independent* was a precursor to the Independence Club and many ideas promoted by the Independence Club found a home in the newspaper as well. The goal of *The Independent* and the Independence Club was to establish a “Korea for the Koreans.”<sup>228</sup> Many events spurred the publication of *The Independent* and the creation of the Independence Club and popularized them over their brief existence. The Japanese willily schemed for the life of Queen Min and brought about her assassination in October of 1895. On top of this, the Tonghak Rebellion had taken place the previous year directly resulting in the Sino-Japanese War, and “the Russo-Japanese competition to control the Korean court” put the balance of Korean sovereignty on a dangerously slippery slope.<sup>229</sup> After hearing of the patriot Ahn Chang-ho’s death in 1938, Jaisohn wrote, “It seems that he had attended my lectures [at Pai Chai] a year or so without my knowledge or his making himself known to me. The seeds of education I sowed during my three years sojourn in Korea between 1895-1898 seem to have taken root in the hearts of many young men.”<sup>230</sup>

Channing Liem, Jaisohn’s biographer and longtime friend, noted that the Independence Club was occasionally called the “Yes” or “No” Club as one of its primary “objective[s]” was to teach “democratic processes” by voting “yes” or “no.”<sup>231</sup> “Yes and No” meetings commenced

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<sup>226</sup> Shearer, 183. Shearer’s work is an excellent source for numerical figures.

<sup>227</sup> Pak, 126.

<sup>228</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 144-145.

<sup>229</sup> Oh, 131.

<sup>230</sup> Jaisohn, 253.

<sup>231</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 345. See endnote 1 from Chapter 9.

on August 29, 1897. The talking point was called, “Resolved that the education of masses is the most urgent task for the Korean people.” This particular episode was a mock debate where Jaisohn selected two individuals to present a supporting opinion and two a dissenting opinion. A pro-education speaker would be followed by an anti-education speaker and the process would repeat itself. Then, the club members offered opinions and questions on the debate. After all discussion, the members voted yes or no. Jaisohn abounded with exuberance at the success of the meetings commenting that the Club members “grasped and mastered the intricacies of parliamentary rule” with ease.<sup>232</sup>

Jaisohn saw the urgent need to empower the broken Koreans and move them on the path of modernization in the face of opposition from the hard line Confucian-conservatives. However, Jaisohn had some confidence in Gojong in spite of “all his shortcomings” and believed that the Korean people must stand behind the monarchy because it was “the only institution on which the salvation of the nation depended.” Hence, Jaisohn did not seek an abolition of the monarchy but called for a constitutional monarchy.<sup>233</sup> Jaisohn understood that Korea’s “chance of survival” rested solely on her “God-given right that Koreans as a race not perish but contribute to the march of human civilization” and in her ability “to become powerful...by emulating the Western powers.” *The Independent* reported that patriotism was the second most important theme for the Korean people. The most important element of Korean nationalism was obedience to “God’s [ten] commandments.” He crusaded for the construction of the Independence Arch which acted as a symbol denouncing Chinese suzerainty over Korea. He also “urged” the salutation of the Korean flag and Gojong’s picture in “all schools.”<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 178.

<sup>233</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 150-151.

<sup>234</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 156-157.

Jaisohn's nationalism did not call for an abandonment of all things Korean. He wanted to empower the Korean monarchy to be the engine in which many aspects of Westernized government could be driven. He tried "to both criticize and use the [monarchical] tradition in order to mobilize support for the state," and one way in which the Independence Club did this was through integrating "foreign political institutions" with "traditional symbols." Jaisohn and his followers wanted to abandon certain aspects of Confucianism, abolish all forms of superstition, and eliminate from the Korean mind the mentality of "cultural and political subservience to China." Howbeit, Jaisohn aimed to achieve these ends through ways conducive to the Korean mind.<sup>235</sup>

Jaisohn stressed the importance and necessity of education specifically Western style education. Jaisohn explained that the "fruits" of education would take a while to grow but that in the long run an educated populace could withstand the imperialistic onslaught much more effectively. He wrote in 1896, "When this younger generation absorbs the new ideas and trains itself in Christian civilization, nobody knows what blessings are in store for Korea and what blossoms may bloom in the national life of this now cheerless country."<sup>236</sup>

Jaisohn did not shy away from condemning his own people. He "attacked" the yangban and "rebuked" commoners for their behavior that disrupted the common peace in the land. The yangban tended to be "paracites [sic]" and the commoners hypocrites. The greatest place of hypocrisy was in the home. "He bemoaned the fact that the men folk resented oppression by their rulers but smugly treated their wives as they were slaves." Jaisohn also implored the Koreans to improve upon their physical health. The yangban maintained cleanliness but physically speaking were "frail and in delicate health" because they refused to exercise. Korean culture taught that

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<sup>235</sup> Michael E. Robinson, "Nationalism and the Korean Tradition, 1896-1920: Iconoclasm, Reform, and National Identity," *Korean Studies* 10 (1986): 38.

<sup>236</sup> Jaisohn, 170.



physical exertion of any kind was “degrading.” On the other hand, the common man regularly exercised his body through “strenuous labor” but seldom bathed or combed his hair. Jaisohn wanted a Korea where all people took care of themselves physically.<sup>237</sup>

One of the most despairing forms of inequality was that of the genders. Korean husbands generally treated their wives as near slaves and often times had concubines.<sup>238</sup> When it came to the punishment of crimes, women would usually be executed if their husbands committed a crime worthy of death. Generally speaking, the husband would be decapitated and the woman would be forced to swallow poison when such punishments were implemented. If the woman alone committed a crime, only she would suffer punishment and/or execution if the crime warranted death. Men also had more rights when it came to divorce. A woman had “no pretext whatever” to “obtain a legal separation from her husband.” She could flee to her father but could not legally secure a divorce. On the other hand, the husband could divorce for a plethora of reasons. Higher class women did have a few more rights in the matter of divorce than lower class women.<sup>239</sup> *The Independent* sought to curb the liberty-gap between men and women by banning the “concubine system,” arranged marriages, and by establishing a minimum age for marriage. Jaisohn feared that “a healthy society” was impossible when men ruled over women by brute “strength.” The relationships and marriages called for by Jaisohn should be “on the basis of mutual trust and love.”<sup>240</sup>

Korea has had a tradition of millenarianism as discussed in Chapter 2. From time to time, the masses have risen up “advocating the equality of people.” The Kapsin Coup of 1884, the

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<sup>237</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 158-159.

<sup>238</sup> Oh, 25.

<sup>239</sup> “The Status of Woman Concluded,” *The Korea Review*, ed. Homer Hulbert, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Seoul: The Methodist Publishing House, April 1902; reprint, Seoul: Kyung-In Publishing Co., n.d.), 155-157 passim (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>240</sup> Oh, 25-26.

Tonghak Rebellion of 1894, and other minor events were the most contemporary minjung (oppressed masses) uprisings. However, no success resulted from these failed reform attempts. Not until Philip Jaisohn returned to Korea and published *The Independent* could Korea claim to have a genuine voice for reform. Se Eung Oh wrote, “For the first time in Korean history, a far-reaching, systematic process to teach the people that God gave people equal rights appeared—for rich and poor of whatever background, the right to make a living or acquire an education, could not take away any person or institution except by the court after an impartial trial.”<sup>241</sup> The very concept of independence had been hard to express in the Korean language. Missionary James Scarth Gale said, “Independence is a new thought to Korea, and a new word has been coined to express it.”<sup>242</sup>

As is often the case, people of controversy generally meet their demise. Philip Jaisohn tried to walk a fine line between honoring and obeying the king and urging his countrymen to progressive ideas. He labored to strike a balance between things of old Korea and those of the West. Attacking foreign encroachment upon Korean soil proved costly for Jaisohn because he was an American citizen. Gojong insisted that the reformer should focus his attention to the real reason why he was brought back to Korea, namely as “a foreign advisor to the Privy Council.”<sup>243</sup> By the spring of 1898, Jaisohn’s days were numbered in Korea. On Monday, December 13, 1897, Horace Allen and Cho Pyung-Sik met and discussed Gojong’s intention to banish Jaisohn from Korea because he was a “traitor” for his participation in the emeute of 1884 and for his criticisms of the Korean government in *The Independent*. In addition to his job as advisor to the Privy Council, Jaisohn had also been offered a multiyear contract with the American Mining

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<sup>241</sup> Oh, 24-25.

<sup>242</sup> James S. Gale, *Korean Sketches* (New York, Chicago, and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1898; reprint, Seoul: Kyung-In Publishing Co., 1975), 62 (page citations are to the original edition).

<sup>243</sup> Oh, 76.

Company to act as interpreter and surgeon. Allen recorded that Jaisohn would gladly leave Korea so long as “the remaining eight years of his contract” were paid.<sup>244</sup> In his February 24, 1898, conversation with Speyer, Allen told the Russian minister that he could not “deport a man without cause” but that Jaisohn would not take refuge in the mines and he would leave Korea promptly once he received his eight years of salary.<sup>245</sup>

Jaisohn faced increasing pressure to leave Korea. Some missionaries desired for him to stay and others thought it best if he left Korea. Horace Allen and others felt that Jaisohn wanted too much change too quickly and that Korea would not be safe for him until the time was right for Jaisohn’s reforms. By the time Jaisohn departed Korea on May 14, 1898, the Independence Club had 10,000 members and *The Independent* had “hundreds of thousands of readers.”<sup>246</sup> Though the newspaper only had a maximum number of 3,000 for each issue “as many as 50 times” that number (150,000) actually read or heard each issue as each copy tended to be circulated to multiple people or read aloud to crowds.<sup>247</sup> Jaisohn had confidence that both his newspaper and Independence Club would continue to be forces through the help of able friends both Korean and foreign. Certain “dedicated leaders” vowed to carry on Jaisohn’s dreams. These leaders included Yun Chi-ho, Yi Sangjae, Namkung Uk, Chong Kyo, and Rhee Syngman. *The Independent* could have been expected to survive at least for a while with the “establishment” of the Triangle Press. Jaisohn owned this press along with Henry Appenzeller and Homer Hulbert.<sup>248</sup>

When Jaisohn and his wife left Korea, it was a somber occasion and during his departing speech “tears welled up in his eyes and his voice quavered.” Yun Chi-ho indicated that Korea’s

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<sup>244</sup> Horace Allen, December 13, 1897, in *Horace Newton Allen’s Diary, 1883-1903*, 560.

<sup>245</sup> Allen, February 24, 1898, 564.

<sup>246</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 208-209.

<sup>247</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 148.

<sup>248</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 209.

view of Jaisohn had changed radically during his second departure. In 1884, “he left Korea with the hatred and curses of all—high and low.” Most Koreans gladly would have killed Jaisohn at that time but now he was a national hero whom most Koreans would be willing to shed their own blood to save.<sup>249</sup> Jaisohn had stubbornly stayed in Korea until he and his wife had been led to believe that her mother was on death’s doorstep. When Jaisohn encountered his mother-in-law back in the States he realized that he had been a “victim of a ruse.” His mother-in-law was in perfect health.<sup>250</sup> Back in Korea, the leadership of the Independence Club eventually came under the control of Yun Chi-ho.

Yun Chi-ho became a Christian in Shanghai in March 1887 while pursuing studies at a local college. While there, he made a “declaration of faith”<sup>251</sup> In his declaration, Yun stated, “I lately read over four principal Confucian books, and found many proverbs” but they “cannot satisfy the demands of the soul.” He closed his declaration expressing his orthodox Christian, eschatological views. “I believe: God is love, Christ is the Savior. If the prophecies concerning this physical world have been so almost literally fulfilled, those concerning the future world must be as true.”<sup>252</sup> From 1888 to 1891, Yun studied theology at Vanderbilt University but grew tired of all of the intricacies of such studies and yearned for Christians, both students and teachers alike, to simply rejoice in the simplicity of the Gospel. While complaining of his Biblical studies in his diary, he lamented that Christians often failed to follow the scriptural mandate that states, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” In Yun’s opinion, this verse was “better theology” than what he received at Vanderbilt.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Chi-ho Yun, May 14, 1898 in *Yun Chi-ho’s Diary: 1897-1902*, vol. 5 (Seoul: National History Compilation Committee, 1975), 160.

<sup>250</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 210-211.

<sup>251</sup> Hyung-Chan Kim, “Yun Chi-ho in America: The Training of a Korean Patriot in the South 1888-1893,” *Korea Journal* 18 (June 1978): 18.

<sup>252</sup> Hyung-Chan Kim, 24.

<sup>253</sup> Hyung-Chan Kim, 19.

After Vanderbilt, Yun continued his studies at Emory. More importantly, Yun experienced life in the South less than thirty years after the Civil War. He witnessed many debates about African American and women's rights. One particular discussion witnessed by Yun centered on what to do with African Americans. One side wanted to send all black people back to Africa and the other side "proposed to establish schools for blacks to enlighten them." Yun often went to "black churches and had Sunday services with them." Yun had sympathy for African Americans. He could never reconcile the notion that according to American thought all men were created equal but then at the same time, the black man was relegated to a second-rate status.<sup>254</sup>

While it is true that *The Independent* and the Independence Club advocated women's rights, it must not be assumed that they called for equality in the sense that is understood in the twenty-first century. As touched upon, women in nineteenth century Korea were little more than slaves and reformers such as Jaisohn and Yun were men of their times. As such, the Independence Club and its newspaper encouraged men to love their wives and accept them as people not simply household servants with whom to bear children. However, Yun felt that bearing children did add to a lady's "womanliness" and promoted traditional gender roles. Most striking, he vehemently opposed women's suffrage. He thought it had a potential to exploit "bad" women and destroy the femininity of "good" ones.<sup>255</sup>

During his time in the United States, Yun yearned for the day in which he could return to his native land and establish a Christian school to teach the Bible and other Western subjects. He did not get to achieve this wish until after his release from prison on February 13, 1915, after his

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<sup>254</sup> Hyung-Chan Kim, 21.

<sup>255</sup> Hyung-Chan Kim, 22.

conviction in the Conspiracy Case which is discussed in the following chapter.<sup>256</sup> In the meantime, Yun had an opportunity to express his Christian ideas and progressive hope for Korea in the print of *The Independent* and through his speeches to the Independence Club.

During Jaisohn's waning days in Korea the Independence Club furiously fought to keep him in the country. Three men rounded up numerous people to speak outside of the Foreign Office and "appointed...the Committee to draw up a resolution asking the Foreign Office to retain Dr. Jaisohn."<sup>257</sup> On May 6, Jaisohn asked Yun to take over *The Independent* in both the "vernacular and English." Furthermore, Jaisohn implored Yun to keep the paper out of Russian hands who sought its purchase stating, "I would rather starve than to sell the paper to a Russian." Jaisohn stressed the nobility of the paper and said that "it is a grand work and better than being Vice-President under the present government." Jaisohn was quite confident that if the paper survived for a couple of years there would be "change" provided Yun "abstain[ed] from politics and personalities."<sup>258</sup>

That same day, Jaisohn lamented to Yun about Gojong's insult to himself and his wife by refusing to give presents to them. Jaisohn's complaint was "not for the sake of the present" but for the fact that Gojong dealt kindlier to non-Koreans than a fellow Korean. Gojong gave handsome gifts to Speyer and Nienstand and to the Underwood, Bunker, and Allen families. It must be noted that not all missionaries were on board with Jaisohn or the Independence Club. Yun expressed "utter surprise" when he found Dr. Underwood "circulating disparaging remarks concerning" himself and Jaisohn.<sup>259</sup> Notwithstanding, two highly influential missionaries, Appenzeller and Hulbert, maintained their loyalty to *The Independent* and the Independence

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<sup>256</sup> Hyung-Chan Kim, 23.

<sup>257</sup> Yun, May 5, 1898, 156.

<sup>258</sup> Yun, May 6, 1898, 157-158.

<sup>259</sup> Yun, May 6, 1898, 158.

Club. Not only did Yun face criticism from fellow Christian missionaries, he also wrestled with self doubt. He confided in his diary that he “may not be able to sustain the reputation of the papers” and that he “may conduct the Korean part in a [decent] fashion” but that he doubted his ability to “carry on the English portion with any shade of success.”<sup>260</sup>

Yun began his leadership role of the Independence Club on May 12, 1898, just two days before Jaisohn went back to the United States. Yun’s trepidation continued. His diary entry that day consisted of fourteen words seven of which read, “Unhappy and nervous all the day long.” Over the next eleven days, Yun tirelessly worked for the paper and described it simply as “a hard job.” He asked himself the question, “How am I to carry it on?” Yun also continued to express displeasure over Underwood’s consistent chiding of the paper.<sup>261</sup> While being a timid man, *The Independent* and the Independence Club under Yun’s leadership did not back down from criticizing the Korean government. After Jaisohn’s ouster, the two organs of progressivism (the paper and club) boldly attacked “a favorite of the emperor.”<sup>262</sup>

Because of his Christian faith, Yun “drew many Christians to the club.”<sup>263</sup> Like Jaisohn, Yun incorporated Korean ideals within a Western and Christian framework. Being a former yangban, Yun had mastered the Chinese classics and made parallels between certain Confucian ideas and Christianity. During one speech he proclaimed, “Do right! Not only does the Bible, that has overturned the world, say so, but the Books of Confucius as well.” He referred to “honesty” and told his hearers that good would overcome evil and that truthfulness would prevail

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<sup>260</sup> Yun, May 6, 1898, 158.

<sup>261</sup> Yun, May 12, 1898, 159-160.

<sup>262</sup> Oh, 91. During this period, the king of Korea had had his title changed to “Emperor.”

<sup>263</sup> Oh, 57.

against corruption, and “the laziness and rottenness, and good-for-nothingness that infects the country, will pass away” as long as Koreans did the right thing.<sup>264</sup>

On top the lambasting of foreigners, the Independence Club did not shy away from criticizing government officials from Korea. Several important government figures felt the brunt of the Independence Club but two in particular stand out. They were Cho Pyung-Sik and Yi Yong-ik. It was Cho who attempted to place the Korean Finance Ministry under Russian jurisdiction and who Gojong considered his favorite naming him *Ch'am Chong*, which was “the powerful second-ranking position in the Council of State” on July 14, 1898.<sup>265</sup> The trouble with Cho was his deception. He opposed the Independence Club because they had foiled his financial plans with Russia. Additionally, Cho concerned himself only with his personal ambitions and was an opportunist. He portrayed himself as a conservative but really took sides with whoever he thought could best further his own career. Had he been anti-Western, he would not have tried to yoke the financial dealings of Russia and Korea into one.<sup>266</sup>

Cho sought revenge against the Independence Club shortly after he took office. A man by the name of Ahn Kyung-su had briefly been president of the Independence Club and had committed certain crimes. Cho attempted to discredit the Independence Club by painting the whole organization as co-conspirators with Ahn. His broad brushstrokes ultimately failed and inevitably drew the ire of Yun and the other Club members. Just two days after Cho assumed his new position, the Independence Club requested his resignation. Cho refused and the Independence Club began its “harass[ment]” crusade. Cho quickly found himself being stalked

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<sup>264</sup> James S. Gale, *The Vanguard: A Tale of Korea* (New York, Chicago, and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1904), 224-225. (Accessed through Google Books, June 6, 2011).

<sup>265</sup> Oh, 91.

<sup>266</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 198-199.



by thirty members of the Independence Club “wherever he went” and finally agreed to hold a discussion with them at his home but then never showed at the appointed time.<sup>267</sup>

Cho continuously averted his stalkers by promising to speak with them and then claiming he was unable to talk. The Independence Club responded with scathing reports in *The Independent* denouncing Cho as a liar causing him to flee to the palace. Gojong walked a thin line trying to appease all parties involved. Yun advised Gojong that it was through his “support two years before” that the Independence Club even came into existence. Next, Yun also “reminded” Gojong of the “favorite slogan” of the Independence Club: “Loyalty to the Emperor and for Patriotism.” Gojong responded in his usual, pensive fashion tiptoeing between the arguments of pro-Cho Koreans and the Independence Club. Notwithstanding, Cho resigned under pressure on July 21, 1898, scoring “another major victory for the Independence Club.”<sup>268</sup>

Gojong appointed Yi Yong-ik the head of *Chon Whan Kuk* (Bureau of Engraving). Under Yi’s leadership, Korean holdings of silver dwindled. Yi issued “several grades of copper coins” fleecing his people out of a third of their money. The copper coins had “only two thirds...of the face value” with the government profiting from the other third. By June 1898, the Independence Club, unsuccessful thus far in Yi’s removal, summoned Yi’s subordinate, Finance Minister Sim Sang-hun, to give an account of the circulation of copper coins. Initially, Sim only acknowledged the production of the coins but insisted that none had been circulated until the next day when “newly minted copper coins” in circulation were brought to him. Sim confessed to lying but the Club understood Yi to be the real culprit in the matter. The Independence Club turned up the heat on Yi wanting to indict him on criminal charges. Though Yi never faced criminal prosecution,

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<sup>267</sup> Oh, 91-92.

<sup>268</sup> Oh, 92-93.

Gojong “dismissed” Yi from the Bureau of Engraving on August 13, 1898 and the circulation of copper coins ceased until the “abolition” of the Independence Club in December 1898.<sup>269</sup>

Yun did not always have strong feelings for the Independence Club. In 1897, he wrote in his diary of his dislike for the club and its ideas but soon thereafter “became an enthusiast.” He frequently went with Jaisohn and promoted the Club at Christian gatherings.<sup>270</sup> On a few occasions, especially under Yun’s leadership, *The Independent* told its audience that the best and most efficient ways to advance society was through the “church, school, and press.”<sup>271</sup> In spite of the Christian and Western emphasis of *The Independent* and the Independence Club only a small percentage who belonged to this reform movement were actually Christian. The Club had as many as 10,000 members at one time in spite of the fact that the total number of Christians in Korea was only a fraction of that amount. Some Club members practiced Buddhism, Confucianism, Chondogyo, Daoism, etc., but the leaders generally adhered to Christianity. It would be almost ten years before Christians played a dominant role on a large scale.

The number of Christians continued to blossom in the early twentieth century. As noted, Pyongyang rapidly increased its Christian numbers after the end of Sino-Japanese War in 1895 but revival in Pyongyang was only beginning. Starting in 1907 and under the heavy influence of Kil Son-ju, a great revival swept the land. Thousands upon thousands of Koreans converted to the Christian faith over the next few years as a result of this revival. While the Japanese were keenly aware of the progressivism of Jaisohn, Yun, and others, they increasingly observed the threat Christianity and the church played against their colonialist ambitions. In an attempt to

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<sup>269</sup> Oh, 94-95.

<sup>270</sup> Ken Wells, “Civic Morality in the Nationalist Thought of Yun Chi-ho, 1881-1911,” *Papers on Far Eastern History* 28 (1983): 125.

<sup>271</sup> Wells, 128.

suppress any notion of Korean Nationalism, the Japanese routinely targeted Christians and their churches.

As the Christian population exploded, something known as the Conspiracy Case erupted. The Resident-General of Korea, Ito Hirobumi, had been assassinated by the Korean Catholic nationalist, An Jung-geun, in 1909, and after the Japanese annexation of Korea in 1910, it was rumored that Governor-General Terauchi Masatake's life was also sought by Korean nationalists. The Japanese government blamed Christians and rounded up and arrested hundreds of Christian leaders. The Great Pyongyang Revival and the Conspiracy Case and their contributions to Korean Nationalism are explored in Chapter 6.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE GREAT REVIVAL OF PYONGYANG AND THE CONSPIRACY CASE

In 1900, approximately 18,000 Protestant Christians lived in Korea along with over 42,000 Catholics. In 1897, fewer than 5,000 Koreans practiced Protestantism. Perhaps most astounding, in 1890, Moffett records only 265 Protestants in Korea.<sup>272</sup> By 1910, that number skyrocketed to an astounding 200,000 in a country of 13 million. However, the Christian community was not evenly dispersed throughout the peninsula. The bulk of Korean Christendom rested in Pyongyang and the northwestern provinces.<sup>273</sup> This section of the country experienced the most turmoil during the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and later during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). A smaller revival occurred in Pyongyang in 1904 but the services were “upset” by the approaching Japanese army and the entire “city became almost deserted” for a time.<sup>274</sup> This area also saw a lot of trade between Chinese, Russian, Japanese, and Korean merchants making it a multi-cultural society. In the business of day to day life, the Koreans often felt the brunt of Chinese and Japanese domination. Sensing this, the missionaries “introduced ideas and ways of life” that provided a better alternative than that offered by Korea’s more powerful neighbors.<sup>275</sup> The Protestants were not the only ones experiencing rapid growth in the first decade of the century. Catholics followers rose to over 73,000 placing the entire Christian community at well over a quarter million. Catholics increased by over 70 percent and Protestants by a mind boggling 1,000 percent from 1900-1910. That decade saw an increase of approximately 450 percent if both arms of Christianity are combined.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>272</sup> Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol II: 1500 to 1900 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2005), 545.

<sup>273</sup> Donald Clark, 38.

<sup>274</sup> Charles Allen Clark, *The Korean Church and the Nevius Methods* (New York and Chicago: Fleming H. Revell, 1930), 147.

<sup>275</sup> Donald Clark, 38.

<sup>276</sup> Moffett, 545.

## The Pyongyang Revival

To many outside observers and those less familiar with the mission work of Korea, it appeared that the Korean Christians cared little for the actual faith and more for the material benefits that could be reaped from the Westerners. Secretary of the American Legation, William Franklin Sands, arrived in Korea in 1898 during the period when the Independence Club and *The Independent* had their greatest influences. He felt that Korean Christians lacked a genuine spirituality but were more concerned with temporal blessings. He wrote, “It was never quite clear to me that Koreans really sought the Christianity of American missions. It seemed that what they saw there was a humanitarian ethical life, political principles which appealed to many strongly, and a simple access to knowledge of Western life they wanted and needed, but that did not mean to them religion.”<sup>277</sup>

While the Korean Church of 1898 had lacked a major revival, Sands’s opinion is not entirely accurate. Working for the American Legation, most missionary stories and information he received came from word-of-mouth not personal observation. Second, his arrival was right at the time that Philip Jaisohn and Yun Chi-ho made major inroads in the Korean political process. Third, both Horace Allen and the Underwoods disliked the extreme nature in which the Independence Club sought reform and Sands would have no doubt heard many complaints targeted at Korean Christians from both missionaries and Korean governmental officials. The writings of missionaries reveal that by 1898 the Korean Church had few “rice Christians” and that it was largely self-supporting and self-propagating through the use of the Nevius Method. The desire for real Christianity must have surprised Sands in the ensuing years. The Pyongyang Revival showed the vitality of the Korean Church. If one were a Christian, the believer in Christ

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<sup>277</sup> William Franklin Sands, *Undiplomatic Memories* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1930), 96. (Accessed through Google Books, June 12, 2011).

attributed the movement to the working and manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Even the “non-Christian” Professor of English Literature at Canterbury College and the University of New Zealand, J. Macmillan Brown, noted that the revival, “would be a remarkable movement in any part of the world; it is unprecedented and striking in China.”<sup>278</sup> At the time of Brown’s comment, the Pyongyang Revival had spread to Manchuria. One author later referred to Pyongyang as “the Jerusalem of the East.”<sup>279</sup>

The Pyongyang Revival is often referred to as the Great Revival. In spite of the complications brought on by Japan’s recent victory over Russia and the struggles Pyongyang experienced during that war, the northern church survived. Missionary James Scarth Gale reported that after the war the Koreans around Pyongyang actually had “health, and peace, and comfortable homes” along with “friends.” They wanted something more and began praying earnestly for revival in 1906. However, in spite of these blessings Gale pointed out that there was a deep yearning and “an agony of distress” for something more in the souls of the Korean people.<sup>280</sup> The most important thing to note about the revival is that it was not primarily born out of a desire for economic improvement or freedom from Japan (though the nationalist movement proper was) but from a genuine conviction of sin. To be sure, the “Japanese conquest of Korea” played a part in the spurring the revival but was not the main contributor. In fact, many missionaries actually thought the Japanese takeover of Korea would be better for the imperialized country.<sup>281</sup>

The first signs of revival occurred in a city east of Pyongyang called Wonsan. The Methodists of Wonsan followed by the Presbyterians of Pyongyang held multiple church

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<sup>278</sup> Gale, *Korea in Transition*, 219-220.

<sup>279</sup> Donald Clark, 116.

<sup>280</sup> Gale, *Korea in Transition*, 201.

<sup>281</sup> Donald Clark, 40

meetings. In services paralleling the emotionalism of Jonathan Edwards's Great Awakening in the American colonies in the 1740s, Koreans often fell prostrate screaming and crying out to God for mercy. Missionary Charlie Clark witnessed the tumult in one meeting writing, "The people seemed on fire with a loathing for sin and wild to tell it and get rid of the burden." Though being theologically conservative, Clark brushed off the idea of demon possession as being nothing more than "insanity or nervousness or an injudicious lack of discipline in childhood" until one evening when he was convinced that a demon had been exorcised from a man.<sup>282</sup> No sins were too large or too small to confess. Great fear fell upon the church as believers lived in "horror and grief" until they could confess and repent of their sins before God. Every meeting was "alike...affecting foreigners as well as natives."<sup>283</sup>

The most prominent leader of the Pyongyang Revival was Kil Son-ju. He organized preaching services, called for early morning prayer meetings, played a vital part in the "Million Souls Movement (1909-1910)," gave the Korean church a revivalist spirit, and developed a fundamentalist Korean Christianity promoting "biblical inerrancy against the inroads of liberal scholarship." Many call him "the father of Korean Christianity." Without Kil, Korean Protestantism would have taken on a completely different style. He bridged the gap between the "alien" religion brought from beyond the seas by Western missionaries and the Korean mind. Kil did not entirely separate from his Confucian upbringing filling his sermons with "Korean history" and "Chinese literature and philosophy."<sup>284</sup> The Koreans learned from the missionaries

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<sup>282</sup> Donald Clark, 39-40.

<sup>283</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 224.

<sup>284</sup> Chong Bum Kim, "Preaching the Apocalypse in Colonial Korea: The Protestant Millennialism of Kil Son-ju," in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Rober E. Buswell and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 150.

who were theologically conservative, “verbal inspiration.” With Kil and the missionaries heavily influencing Korean Christendom, any notion of theological liberalism did not exist.<sup>285</sup>

In 1890, Horace Grant Underwood started Bible classes in Korea and they met with much success in the following years. As revival swept across Pyongyang and the surrounding areas, Kil promised “twenty two hundred preaching days” for 1907 and the following years during one of the Bible classes.<sup>286</sup> As noted, emotionalism and confession of sin ran rampant during the revival. Prayer for revival began in earnest in 1906 and by January 1907, “noon prayer meetings” commenced. Several days passed and nothing unusual happened. Kil stated that “the air” promoted “nothingness.” On January 14, 1907, Rev. Graham Lee called for a few people to pray and suddenly “score[s]” of people began praying. From here, every sin imaginable began to be confessed. One eyewitness, Rev. W.N. Blair, said, “Then began a meeting the like of which I had never seen before, nor wish to see again unless in God’s sight it is absolutely necessary.” Blair’s concern was that the most heinous and reproachful of sins were publicly declared and that many of the people present could face serious legal repercussions including jail and the death penalty after expressing regret for crimes committed.<sup>287</sup>

When Kil Sun-ju’s turn came to preach, he gave a usual charismatic illustration in which “he had himself tied with ropes and in his preaching frantically broke loose to illustrate how the sinner should break away from sin.”<sup>288</sup> As the Korean church saw thousands added to their number, it became necessary for the holding of multiple baptismal services. While the Korean church had been proactive for much of its short life, no national pastor had been in charge of a baptismal service. On March 1, 1908, Kil Sun-ju baptized two hundred people in the “first

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<sup>285</sup> Byung-Mu Ahn, “The Korean Church’s Understanding of Jesus: An Historical Overview,” *International Review of Missions* 74, no. 293 (1985): 81.

<sup>286</sup> Rhodes, 109.

<sup>287</sup> Rhodes, 281-283 passim.

<sup>288</sup> Rhodes, 284.



baptismal service held by a national pastor” with the help of Samuel Moffett at Kil’s Central Church in Pyongyang.<sup>289</sup>

Writing in 1908, F.A. McKenzie summarized the revival as being as great as any revival “in the annals of modern Christian propagandism.”<sup>290</sup> From Pyongyang and northwestern Korea, the revival spread across the Yalu and Tumen Rivers into Manchuria. The Koreans spread the revival to “distant communities where no white man had ever been.”<sup>291</sup> Much more could be said on the emotional aspects of the revival, but most stories share many commonalities so there is little need to belabor the point.

During the revival, Union Christian College of Pyongyang opened. Originally known as Soongsil Academy, the school became a university in 1907. The objective of Union Christian College was to train pastors and “leaders” for Christian ministry.<sup>292</sup> The first graduating class consisted of two pupils in 1908 followed by five graduates in 1910. The first building appeared in 1911 and the first dormitories were constructed in 1912-1913 after a five thousand dollar gift from Mrs. Cyrus McCormick.<sup>293</sup> The university continued its growth and many of its students went on to further the Christian message.<sup>294</sup>

The momentum that resulted from the success of the Pyongyang Revival brought about the “Million Souls Movement” in 1909-1910. Even though Christianity grew by leaps and bounds during the revival, the total Christian “adherents” was approximately 200,000.<sup>295</sup> Samuel H. Moffett noted that Protestantism “resembled a ripple more than a tidal wave” at this time.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> Shearer, 59.

<sup>290</sup> F.A. McKenzie, *The Tragedy of Korea*, 99.

<sup>291</sup> F.A. McKenzie, *Korea’s Fight for Freedom*, 209.

<sup>292</sup> T. Stanley Soltau, *Korea: The Hermit Nation and its Response to Christianity* (Toronto: World Dominion Press, 1932), 52.

<sup>293</sup> Rhodes, 421.

<sup>294</sup> Soltau, 52-53.

<sup>295</sup> Palmer, 88.

<sup>296</sup> Moffett, 545.

Martha Huntley demonstrated that the Pyongyang Revival truly was of Korean nature versus the Million Souls Movement which was predominantly influenced by Western missionaries with the assistance of Koreans. The former succeeded, the latter failed. The Million Souls Movement used proselytizing methods familiar to Westerners but foreign to Koreans—passing out tracts and knocking on doors. The missionaries fell “far” short of their goal of one million and “a fair proportion of those who did [join] later fell away.” To Huntley, the Million Souls Movement “lacked the supernatural power” of the Pyongyang Revival.<sup>297</sup> The American ways of doing things did not help the Million Souls Movement.<sup>298</sup> While commonplace in the twenty-first century, numerical “goal[s]” were uncommon one hundred years ago. The missionaries brought their heavy-hitting preachers, including evangelist J. Wilbur Chapman from overseas for the movement and even the famous song leader Charles M. Alexander but it was to little avail.<sup>299</sup> Besides leading music for Chapman, Alexander also led music for R.A. Torrey for many years. Torrey co-edited *The Fundamentals*, a multi-volume work published from 1910 to 1915. It is from here that the Christian term *fundamentalism* was coined.

As the church grew, so did the distrust of the Japanese. The Japanese established a protectorate over Korea in 1905 and annexed Korea in 1910. The Japanese frequently spied on churches because it was the one place where Koreans had some autonomy after 1910. For example, often a Japanese official would “listen in” to a Bible lesson and claim the “Bible stories” contained “anti-Japanese allusions, thereby bringing on a police investigation.”<sup>300</sup> The Japanese feared any sort of democratic movement on the part of the Korean people and felt threatened by the Korean Church in this area.

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<sup>297</sup> Martha Huntley, *To Start a Work: The Foundations of Protestant Mission in Korea, 1884-1919* (Seoul: Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1987), 419.

<sup>298</sup> Shearer, 177.

<sup>299</sup> Paik, 385.

<sup>300</sup> Donald Clark, 43.

Hugh Cynn, friend of Syngman Rhee and fellow pupil at Pai Chai, believed there existed a connection between Christianity and democracy. Writing in 1920, Cynn postulated, “In the furtherance of modern democratic principles, the Christian religion rendered a distinct service in Korea.” To Cynn, Christianity naturally brought democracy even without any interference of Western missionaries into Korean politics. The two were inseparable. Both Western and Korean Christians never sought “domination...or machination” but that the growth and spread of Christianity along with democratic ideas was due in Cynn’s opinion, “to the fact that the principle and practice of democracy are the emanation and interpretation of Christianity.”<sup>301</sup> Arthur Judson Brown visited Korea in 1909 and stated that both the missionaries and the Koreans wanted a complete separation of church and state and that “revolutionary propaganda” had been forbidden. During the time of Brown’s visit the YMCA had shut down any attempts at political organization but the Salvation Army had “increased” in its “political feeling.” Many missionaries of the Salvation Army were new to the country and did not know Korean and had to rely on translators. Brown insinuated that the interpreters had duped the missionaries in the Salvation Army by interpreting their sermons in politically charged ways. But overall, the missionaries stayed clear of politics.<sup>302</sup>

### The Conspiracy Case

Eunsik Cho wrote, “Korean Christianity had an intimate relationship with nationalism. This is the reason why the Japanese government persecuted the Korean church. Christianity in Korea became a basis of Korean nationalism symbolizing a new era.”<sup>303</sup> The giant wave of

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<sup>301</sup> Cynn, 128-129.

<sup>302</sup> Arthur Judson Brown, *Report on a Second Visit to China, Japan and Korea: 1909, with a Discussion of some Problems of Mission Work* (New York: The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., 1909), 92.

<sup>303</sup> Eunsik Cho, “The Great Revival of 1907 in Korea: Its Cause and Effect,” *Missiology* 26, no. 3 (July 1998): 291.

Christians added to the church of the Pyongyang Revival caused great concern for the Japanese and their administration over their newly obtained colony.

The Conspiracy Case started on December 28, 1910, when a few plotters sought to kill the Governor-General of Korea Terauchi Masatake. The perpetrators failed to carry out their plans due to “strict vigilance of the police officers” on the scene. The conspirators planned to assassinate Terauchi after he got off of the train at Syen Chun.<sup>304</sup> The Tonghaks (Chondogyo) had assembled many Righteous Armies to attack the Japanese. Terauchi appointed the former military officer Akashi Motojiro as chief of police in Korea. The Righteous Armies had been effectively decimated by the Japanese police under Akashi, killing thousands of hostile Koreans. However, two groups remained in the “northern provinces” that the Japanese feared would offer resistance to their control. They were the strong Christian population and the New People’s Association (*Shinminhoe*). The Christian patriot and pupil of Philip Jaisohn, Ahn Chang-ho founded the organization along with Yi Kap, Yi Tong-hwi, “and others.” They established the organization for educational and industrial purposes.<sup>305</sup>

Intent on putting the Christians on “display”, the Japanese arrested 123 Christian leaders on “fabricated” charges that they conspired to kill Terauchi. Initially, nearly 700 were arrested, with the 123 being “selected” and 105 of them going to jail “despite eloquent evidences presented against the charges.”<sup>306</sup> Just as the Japanese government placed every facet of Korean life, government, and education under the authority of the Meiji Emperor (Mutsuhito) in 1910, they attempted to place jurisdiction of the Korean Church under the Emperor of Japan and the Japanese Church. Japan knew that “suppressing” Christians outright in Korea would draw the ire

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<sup>304</sup> Arthur Judson Brown, *The Korean Conspiracy Case* (Northfield, MA: Northfield Press, 1912), 5.

<sup>305</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, *The Politics of Korean Nationalism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), 92.

<sup>306</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 92-93.

of the Western world and so the fabrication of the Conspiracy Case gave them a more legitimate reason to discredit and arrest the “outstanding Korean Christian Leaders.” Syngman Rhee narrowly escaped arrest when missionaries Philip Gillett and John R. Mott convinced the Japanese authorities that “Rhee was so well known in America” that the United States Government and Japan would have diplomatic “trouble” if he was not allowed to remain free.<sup>307</sup>

Japan feared Korean Christians because the majority of the “most intelligent and progressive Korean leaders” practiced the Western faith.<sup>308</sup> In 1907, Homer B. Hulbert wrote several articles in *The Korea Review* about Japanese involvement in Korea. He argued that the Japanese placed the missionaries in a difficult situation because though the missionaries went to Korea “to teach Christianity and only that” they taught ideas (in Hulbert’s opinion) that inevitably gave the Korean a sense of “morality, cleanness, honesty, [and] patriotism.”<sup>309</sup> The Japanese quickly pounced upon Korean Christians due to their rapid numerical increases and more importantly because “of the Western concepts of political rights and freedom” that were most pronounced in the lives of Korean Christians.<sup>310</sup> To Hulbert, the idea that Christians could indirectly stay out of politics was an impossibility. To be sure, they avoided direct involvement in politics but the Korean Christians naturally took their new beliefs and molded them in political ways. “Affecting politics” could not be avoided by the missionaries. The only way Hulbert believed Christian missionaries could completely stay indirectly out of politics was to pack their bags and go back to their native lands.<sup>311</sup>

The missionaries and their Korean converts generally maintained and promoted the separation of church and state. But that the separation of patriotism from the state could occur

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<sup>307</sup> Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth*, 118.

<sup>308</sup> Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth*, 119.

<sup>309</sup> Homer B. Hulbert, ed., *The Japanese in Korea: Extracts from the Korea Review* (Seoul: n.p., 1907), 66.

<sup>310</sup> C.I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, 194.

<sup>311</sup> Hulbert, *The Japanese in Korea*, 67.

proved to be completely impossible. Occasionally, the missionaries suggested “passive resistance” if the Japanese authorities demanded the Koreans to behave in ways that were sinful or un-Christian. The Koreans often ran to the missionaries for solace “because he [the missionary] has behind him a government that has to be reckoned with” whereas the Korean did not.<sup>312</sup>

The trial for the one hundred twenty-three defendants was little more than a farce. “The Judges had made up their minds before the trial and...they were in effect judges, jury and prosecuting attorneys combined.” The trial reflected poorly on Japan in the eyes of the other imperialistic powers because they violated their own legal system in the prosecution of the Christian leaders raising doubts as to Japan’s civilizing capability. Four events transpired that clearly marked the conspiracy trial as a show trial. Translational problems, rejection of alibis, false confessions, and a speedy refusal to an appeal gave the defendants little hope of winning their cases.<sup>313</sup>

First, the Japanese Court refused accurate testimony for the Korean defendants. The judges did not know the Korean language and many portions of the defenses’ testimony were “not fairly interpreted” or “parts” were “omitted.” Several present foreigners, including missionaries, who knew Korean, testified to the above discrepancies but the judge said “that it ‘was of no consequence.’” Second, the Court refused to hear witnesses when the defense prepared alibis. Many defendants held preaching or other religious services “far removed from those [places] where they were charged by the police with plotting [the] assassination.” Kil Sun-

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<sup>312</sup> Hulbert, *The Japanese in Korea*, 67.

<sup>313</sup> Brown, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, 14-17 passim.

ju's son Kil Chin-hyong attended classes at Pyongyang College where "two foreign professors" who wanted to testify on Kil's behalf were not permitted to do so.<sup>314</sup>

Japan's biggest mistake came when the Court procured false professions. The Japanese police engaged in "secret examinations" and more than willingly used untoward methods to exact confessions because to do so brought potential career advancement for whoever could produce a confession. The prosecution accused nineteen Western missionaries as being co-conspirators with George S. McCune<sup>315</sup> and Samuel A. Moffett being the missionary ringleaders. The prosecution argued that the assassins would watch McCune shake hands with the Governor-General at the train station and then kill Terauchi. Moffett supposedly "bitterly upbraided" the plotters for the failed assassination. Interestingly, the Japanese did not attempt to prosecute the missionaries but used the false testimonies against McCune, Moffett, and others as ammunition against the Koreans. But, as Arthur Judson Brown poised "if the 'confessions' were valid against the Koreans, they were valid against the Americans." Contrariwise, the Court later "openly" admitted that the missionaries played no part in the conspiracy but used the testimonies against the Koreans anyway.<sup>316</sup>

One more issue surrounded the false confessions, every defendant with the exception of one "emphatically repudiated" any self-incrimination. Some testified that the Japanese police "tortured [them] into insensibility," that they blacked out, and when they came to, were "told" they admitted to the conspiracy. Others said that they endured "brutal and inhuman treatment" confessing to crimes they did not commit. When not under duress, these Koreans recanted. The judges displayed their anti-Korean bias when questioning the defendants. They set up "traps" to

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<sup>314</sup> Brown, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, 15.

<sup>315</sup> George S. McCune was the father of George M. McCune who along with Edwin O. Reischauer developed the McCune-Reischauer romanization system for the Korean language.

<sup>316</sup> Brown, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, 15-16.

get the Koreans to contradict themselves. One pastor was “tripped in a slight verbal inaccuracy” and the judge labeled him “a lying Jesus doctrine pastor.” The Japanese in the courtroom exploded with laughter after the judge’s snide remark.<sup>317</sup>

Lastly, the defense demanded the “unseating” of Chief Judge Tsukahara and the other judges and requested a new trial with new judges citing Article 41 of the Code of Criminal Proceedings. The judges suspended the trial on July 17 and rejected the appeal a short time later. After the court came back into session, it lasted only four days from August 23 to 27. The 105 defendants were sentenced on September 28, 1912. Yun Chi-ho and five others were given ten years in prison. Eighteen defendants received seven years, thirty-nine received six years, forty-two received five years imprisonment including Kil Sun-ju’s son, Kil Chin-hyong.<sup>318</sup> Brown noted that Yun Chi-ho was “President of the Southern Methodist College at Song-do and Vice-President of the Korea Y.M.C.A.” The other Christian leaders sentenced to prison included “a professor in the Methodist-Presbyterian Academy at Pyeng Yang [Pyongyang], two professors in the Presbyterian Hugh O’Neill, Jr., Academy at Syen Chyun, and several pastors and elders of churches.”<sup>319</sup>

A pamphlet entitled a *Call to Prayer for Korea* dated December 30, 1912, briefly sketches a few things from the trial. More importantly, the pamphlet pointed out the attack the Japanese government was making against the Korean Church and the wedge that Japan was trying to drive between the missionaries and the Koreans. The Japanese people increasingly believed that “the American missionaries in Korea are inimical to their [Japanese] interests” and that the “influence” between the two must be “broken.” The Japanese “military police” continued

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<sup>317</sup> Brown, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, 16-17.

<sup>318</sup> For a list of those convicted and their sentences see, *The Korean Conspiracy Trial: Full Report of the Proceedings by the Special Correspondent of the Japan Chronicle* (Kobe, Japan: Japan Chronicle, 1912), 135-136.

<sup>319</sup> Brown, *The Korean Conspiracy Case*, 17.



to harass the Korean Church in its efforts to curb the spread of Christianity and the missionary work.<sup>320</sup> The Japanese had specifically targeted the Hugh O'Neill Academy because it was located in Syenchun where the assassination was supposed to have taken place. In March 1912, the student population at the academy had dwindled to nineteen. The judges acquitted seventeen, fourteen of whom attended the Hugh O'Neill Academy.<sup>321</sup> It should be noted that Japanese missionaries and Japanese Christians usually "sympathized" with the Koreans during the trial.<sup>322</sup>

The head of the Korean Revenue Bureau, N. Suzuki, offered a different opinion of the Conspiracy Case while in New York. He declared that many Americans were "grossly misinformed" and that the Korean people were still savages who considered lying "natural." He argued that the defendants could never get their stories straight and frequently contradicted themselves. Suzuki also denied that Korean inmates had been tortured. Suzuki suggested that the complaints of torture resulted from the old Korean way of extracting a confession. Under Choson Korea, criminals absolutely refused to admit guilt even if irrefutable proof was "secured." The paper continued with Suzuki's opinion stating "they would not confess a crime unless it was impossible to bear the torture." Suzuki surmised that the Korean people assumed the confessions of Koreans were obtained through traditional methods and lacked knowledge of "Japanese jurisdiction." Suzuki was with Terauchi when the latter was to be assassinated.<sup>323</sup>

However, Suzuki's account completely ignored the lack of testimony presented by the defense through partial or bad translation from Korean into Japanese. The missionaries at the trial testified that they observed mistranslations made by the Japanese appointed translators and that the judges presiding over the cases did not care about hearing a defendant's entire

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<sup>320</sup> *Call to Prayer for Korea* (No city: n.p., December 30, 1912), no page numbers.

<sup>321</sup> Rhodes, 221-222.

<sup>322</sup> Rhodes, 499.

<sup>323</sup> "Defends Japan in Korean Conspiracy," *The New York Times*, 13 October 1912, no page #. (Accessed through [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), June 14, 2011).

statements. Also, Suzuki also failed to mention the ignoring of alibis on the part of the judges. Suzuki tried to explain away discrepancies by claiming that the Korean people were backward. Certainly, Suzuki's arguments fit well with the period he lived in when the imperialistic powers saw it as their duty to civilize savage societies. It seems that overall most Americans probably sided with Suzuki because the United States consistently sided with Japan over Korea when the two had a dispute.

On March 20, 1913, in a face saving maneuver, the Japanese released one hundred of the prisoners connected to the Conspiracy Case. Six men, including Yun Chi-ho had their sentences reduced. Yun's sentence went from ten years to six. Four others were sentenced to six years. These were Yan Ki-tak, An Tai-kog, Im Chi-Chong, and Yi Sung-hun. Ok Kwan-pin was sentenced to five years at this time as well.<sup>324</sup>

Clearly, the Japanese government targeted Korean Christians because of their political involvement, patriotism, and tendencies towards democracy. On March 1, 1919, the Independence Movement took place. Korean Christians heavily influenced the movement and often suffered a disproportionately high rate of persecution.

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<sup>324</sup> "100 Koreans Freed," *The New York Times*, 21 March 1913, no page #. (Accessed through [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), June 14, 2011).

## CHAPTER 7

### THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT OF MARCH 1, 1919

Koreans of virtually every religious, social, and political persuasion participated in the Independence Movement of March 1, 1919. Japan continued to make encroachments upon Korean lands and economic rights. The Governor-General of Korea prioritized Japanese leanings in the education of Korean youth. The Japanese government favored the teaching of Japanese over Korean and avoided teaching Korean history at all costs. The goal of Japan was to assimilate the Koreans into the Japanese empire by denying them their cultural identity. Article V of the Chosen Educational Ordinance of 1911 stated, “Common education shall aim at imparting common knowledge and art, special attention being paid to the engendering of national characteristics and the spread of the national language.”<sup>325</sup> The national language was Japanese and the national characteristics were Japanese. The Independence Movement was not born from “outside” influences or from the Korean government. Rather, it was a “revolution from within and among grassroots [efforts].”<sup>326</sup>

The Japanese targeted Christian schools in particular by demanding that private “accredited” schools cease the teaching of any religious doctrines in 1915. The Japanese government gave a decade-long “grace period” to the mission schools. Some mission schools chose to close in 1925 instead of removing Christian instruction from their curriculum. Pai Chai chose to eventually cooperate and “dropped religion” as part of the standardized curriculum.<sup>327</sup> While all religious training was forbidden in accredited schools, it is not too presumptuous to assume that Christianity was the primary target of this decree. The Japanese government targeted

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<sup>325</sup> H.H. Underwood, 191.

<sup>326</sup> Byung-wook Ahn, “Spirit and Significance of Samil Revolution,” *Koreana Quarterly* 13, no. 1-2 (1971): 2-3.

<sup>327</sup> Donald Clark, 44-45.

Christian leaders in the Conspiracy Case and never put forward any similar cases against other religious organizations during the same period.

Hong Yi-Sup put forth the thesis that the Independence Movement (Samil Movement) came from a combination of three areas. They were religious leaders, class conflict, and internationalism. Hong argued that most approaches to the Samil Movement focus only on one of the areas. Hong rightly ascertains that no one religion or denomination deserves all of the credit for bringing the movement to pass citing the ecumenical cooperation between many religions.<sup>328</sup> However, when the leadership of the movement is scrutinized, there is little doubt that progressive, religious elements deserve a good portion for the credit. To be sure, Koreans from all economic, political, and religious (or lack thereof) backgrounds participated in the peaceful uprising.

Notwithstanding, of the thirty-three signers of the Korean Declaration of Independence, sixteen were Christians, fifteen were Chondogyo (formerly known as Tonghak), and two were Buddhists.<sup>329</sup> In 1919, the Christian population neared only two percent of the entire Korean population.<sup>330</sup> Yet, over forty-eight percent of the signers belonged to Christianity, which indicates the disproportionately high role Christians played in the movement. More Koreans practiced Chondogyo than Christianity. Of the three religious faiths that had signers of the Declaration, the oldest and numerically largest was Buddhism but only two signers claimed this faith. Unlike Christianity and Chondogyo, Buddhism had been a part of Korea for centuries. The former two had only been on the peninsula for less than a century and more accurately, just over fifty years in real force. This fact indicates stagnation towards progressivism on the part of

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<sup>328</sup> Yi-Sup Hong, "March 1, 1919: A Turning Point in the Modern History of Korea," *Korea Journal* 11, no. 3 (1 March 1971): 6.

<sup>329</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 217.

<sup>330</sup> Rhodes, 547.

Buddhism. Furthermore, the younger signers tended to be Christians indicating that Christianity had a younger bent to it. The average birth year for a Christian signer (16 total) was 1878 making the average age of a Christian signer forty-one. The average birth year for a Chondogyo signer (15 total) was 1866 making the average age of a Chondogyo signer fifty-three. The average age for a Buddhist signer was forty-seven, but this is insignificant because there were only two of them. Confucianism claimed no signers of the Korean Declaration of Independence.<sup>331</sup>

The March 1, 1919, Independence Movement demonstrates the direct and indirect contributions of Western missionaries to Korean nationalism better than any event. The missionaries came teaching the traditional Christian “message” thus directly contributing. Many Korean Christians took the Christian message as one that could provide both eternal life and temporal freedom from Japanese oppression.<sup>332</sup> The Korean Christians took the Westerners’ ideas and molded them to fit their unique situation thus giving the missionaries indirect influence as well. Kil Sun-ju frequently preached on the apocalypse and portrayed the Japanese nation as the anti-Christ.<sup>333</sup> Kil’s hearers often fed off of Korean concepts of millenarianism as found in *Jung Kam Lok* and Maitreya Buddhism, both which promised the collapse of a corrupt world with an incorrupt world.<sup>334</sup>

After the successful Pyongyang Revival and the unsuccessful Million Souls Movement, Kil continued to propagate the Christian gospel and place heavy emphasis on the apocalypse. Kil considered the Korean people as a country in bondage waiting for their deliverance from slavery. Kil often related the plight of the nation of Israel at the hands of Egypt as being synonymous with Korea’s persecution under Japan. His followers believed “the crossing of the Red

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<sup>331</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 217.

<sup>332</sup> A. Hamish Ion, “British and Canadian Missionaries and the March 1<sup>st</sup> 1919 Movement,” *Hokudai Hogaku Ronshu* 28, no. 3 (26 December 1977): 152.

<sup>333</sup> Sang Taek Lee, 215.

<sup>334</sup> Chong Bum Kim, 151.

Sea...would come in Korea's immediate future." The missionaries pushed a pre-millennial eschatology and Kil adapted it to Korea's struggle.<sup>335</sup> His emphasis on the apocalypse became an obsession. Kil devoured the Bible but certain portions more than others. He read the entire Old Testament approximately thirty times but "from Genesis to Esther...540 times." He read the entire New Testament about one hundred times and "the book of Revelation more than ten thousand times."<sup>336</sup> Because of his participation in the March 1, 1919, Independence Movement, he went to prison for over two years where he memorized the book of Revelation.<sup>337</sup>

Kil and others motivated Korean Christians towards independence through apocalyptic preaching but they were not alone in promoting independence. Ironically, as Korea became a possession of Japan more and more Korean students obtained educational opportunities in Japan. By 1915, 481 Koreans studied in Japan and nearly 800 by 1918. Many ideas floated around as to what should be done. Most of the students lived and studied in Tokyo and formed the Korean Student Fraternity in October 1912 with the intent of "the development of mental, moral, and physical powers, and the promotion of democratic thought." Generally, the students debated the above ideas but at one point a student called for the life of Terauchi in 1915 just as Ito had been killed in 1909. At Tokyo University, the Korean Student Fraternity found unlikely allies in their quest for democracy. Professors Yoshino Sakuzo and Minobe Tatsukichi along with many Japanese students actually promoted progressive ideas, one of which was Korean democracy and

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<sup>335</sup> In Soo Kim, 122. Kil's eschatological views (moving from slavery to freedom) in many ways paralleled the eschatology of African Americans in the nineteenth century though I have not found any connection between Kil's views and those of prominent African American ministers of the nineteenth century.

<sup>336</sup> In Soo Kim, 113.

<sup>337</sup> In Soo Kim, 123.

liberty.<sup>338</sup> Yoshino wrote on “liberal topics” in the “Christian periodical, *Shinjin* (‘New People’)” and for the far reaching *Chuo Koron* (“Central Review”).<sup>339</sup>

Three students led the way in the Korean Student Fraternity. They were So Chun, Chang Toksu, and Yi Kwangsu. The most important of the three for fostering independence was Yi. Yi wrote the first Korean novel called *Mujong* (Heartlessness) in 1917. Being a Christian, Yi felt the path to Korean “modernity” rested with the “adaptation of Western intellectual, religious, and material culture” in order to put Korea on par with the most powerful nations.<sup>340</sup> Yi Kwangsu believed in a “Christian universalism” writing in his novel, “when he saw the portrait of Christ on the crucifix” the protagonist Yi Hyong-sik realized “people were all the same human beings.”<sup>341</sup> To Yi’s thinking, neo-Confucianism kept Korea under the “vassalage” of China and that “Western learning” and Christianity would allow Korea to become its own “nation-state.” The Korean students at Tokyo rejected traditional values in place of Western ideals to a greater degree than China and Japan. The former was sluggish in modernization and the latter “had betrayed its claim to be the Light of Asia by forcing a military regime on Korea.” The West offered the greatest solace.<sup>342</sup>

The Korean people got a boost from Woodrow Wilson’s words on January 8, 1918, when he gave his famous Fourteen Points promoting the “self-determination” of nations.<sup>343</sup> Korea had an especial reason to take confidence in Wilson’s speech because Wilson befriended Rhee Syngman when the former was President of Princeton University where Rhee received his PhD

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<sup>338</sup> Kenneth M. Wells, “Background to the March First Movement: Koreans in Japan, 1905-1919,” *Korean Studies* 13 (1989): 8-9.

<sup>339</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 98.

<sup>340</sup> Wells, “Background to the March First Movement,” 9-10.

<sup>341</sup> Jiakun Zhang, “Imagining the Nation: Dilemma of Modernity in Yi Kwangsu’s *Mujong*,” (26 November 2010) <http://www.dukenexus.org/465/imagining-the-nation-dilemma-of-modernity-in-yi-kwang-su%e2%80%99s-mujong/> (accessed 16 June 2011).

<sup>342</sup> Wells, “Background to the March First Movement,” 11.

<sup>343</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 101.

in 1910. “Woodrow Wilson and his family became Rhee’s intimate friends” during Rhee’s studies at Princeton. The Woodrow Wilson family hoped for Rhee to become a successful missionary in Korea.<sup>344</sup> It must be remembered that President Wilson came from Presbyterian stock, his father being a Presbyterian minister. Rhee also had converted to Christianity, specifically the Presbyterian persuasion. Robert T. Oliver wrote that while Rhee attended Princeton Wilson “used to introduce the Korean as ‘the man who will redeem Korea’s freedom.’” As such, Rhee had complete confidence that the President of the United States would work towards Korea’s freedom.<sup>345</sup> Rhee Syngman and Henry Chung (also a Christian) were to represent Koreans in America during the Paris Peace Conference in December, 1918, but “could not get passports.”<sup>346</sup>

The majority of Korean “intellectuals” in Japan had been exposed to Western ways through Protestant missionaries. “Numbers of these students attributed Western civilization to Christianity.” Kil Sun-ju was not the only one drawing the comparison between Israel and Korea. Many of the Korean students in Japan also look to Christianity as the “deliver[er]” from the yoke of “bondage” of the Japanese. Yi Kwangsu loved the promise of Christianity for his people but did not like the “traditional” observation of it by the Koreans. He wanted the Korean people to mold the Christian faith to their unique situation understanding that their temporal plight was different from the missionaries’. One famous reformer, Cho Mansik, attended Meiji University and looked to Christianity in a more extreme fashion than even Yi Kwangsu. Kenneth Wells wrote, “Cho Mansik actively promoted Christianity as the source of national renewal, even

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<sup>344</sup> Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth*, 110.

<sup>345</sup> Oliver, *Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth*, 132.

<sup>346</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 103.



predicting Korean independence on the ability of the many Korean Christians in Tokyo to form one united nondenominational Korean church.”<sup>347</sup>

Korean nationalists also lived in China. In addition to the Korean students in Japan and those Koreans working towards nationalism in America, the New Korea Youth Organization was formed in Shanghai in June and July of 1918. The two most prominent leaders were Yo Un-hyong and Chang Tok-su. At fourteen, Yo became a student at Pai Chai in 1900 and converted to Christianity in 1907. Yo met Charles Crane, U.S. businessman and politician, in Shanghai at the Pan Pacific Conference in which Crane spoke on self-determination, echoing the words of Wilson. Yo gave Crane a copy of a “petition for Korean Independence” to Crane who was to pass it on to Wilson. Yo also gave a copy to Thomas Franklin Fairfax Millard founder of *Millard’s Review of the Far East* who was to head to the same Paris Peace Conference that Rhee and Chung failed to attend due to passport difficulties. In addition to Yo’s efforts, the famous Korean politician, Kim Kyu-sik, went to the Paris Peace Conference from Beijing.<sup>348</sup> Kim Kyu-sik, along with Kim Ku and Rhee Syngman, competed for the Korean presidency after Korea’s liberation from Japan in 1945 and division at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel 1948.

In 1886, Horace Grant Underwood established the Home and School “for orphan boys” which later became the John D. Wells Academy for Christian Workers. Underwood took in a small boy called Little John who was gravely ill. Against the counsel of other missionaries for fear that the boy’s certain death would draw the ire of the Koreans, Underwood helped nurse the little one back to health. The child grew to a man where he “became...one of the most earnest and efficient of native Christian workers, teaching in the school, taking a leading part in the church and Y.M.C.A. and acting as Mr. Underwood’s secretary for years.” Little John’s real

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<sup>347</sup> Wells, “Background to the March First Movement,” 11.

<sup>348</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 103-104.

identity was Kim Kyu-sik<sup>349</sup> and it was he who “carried out extensive propaganda activities for Korea” when in attendance at the Paris Peace Conference.<sup>350</sup>

The story of the February 8, 1919, movement commenced by Yi Kwangsu and other Korean students in Japan and the more important March 1, 1919, uprising are explored below but the connection between the missionaries, Korean Christians, the education of girls, and Woodrow Wilson’s words in the eyes of the Japanese Police and Gendarmery Department were expressed in the March 12, 1919, edition of the Japanese newspaper the *Chosen Shimbun*. An entire paragraph is worth quoting because a paraphrase would not serve its impact justice.

The missionaries look upon the present Korean as they did upon the old Korean, and they consider it proper for the Korean to say anything he wants to, if they only enter the Christian schools. They take the statement of Wilson about the self-determination of nations and hide behind their religion and stir up the people. However, the missionaries have tried to apply the free customs of other nations to these Korean people who are not fully civilized. From the part that even girl students in Christian schools have taken it is very evident that this uprising has come from the missionaries.<sup>351</sup>

Of course, the missionaries did not use the lure of democracy to coerce Koreans to attend Christian schools, but the Koreans did learn of Western styles of government and history in the Christian schools. The article went on to criticize the yoking of Christians with Chundoism (Chondogyo) during the movement and even mocked the missionaries for reaching out to “the low trash of the nation.” Hugh Cynn repudiated any notion of the missionaries being behind the movement but did agree with missionaries for “plant[ing] the seed of democracy.”<sup>352</sup>

An event foreshadowing things to come in Korea on March 1, 1919, occurred in the Kanda<sup>353</sup> neighborhood of Tokyo on February 8, 1919. At the Korean YMCA, Yi Kwangsu read the Declaration of Independence he “composed” in January of that year. Yi presented his case for

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<sup>349</sup> L.H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea*, 44-46 passim.

<sup>350</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 104.

<sup>351</sup> Cynn, 63-64.

<sup>352</sup> Cynn, 64-65.

<sup>353</sup> Ironically, the Kanda Train Station opened on March 1, 1919.

Korean independence. He noted how all of the major imperial powers (including Japan) recognized Korean independence as late as 1905. Yi argued that Korea's relation with China over the centuries was "diplomatic" and that Korea had maintained her autonomy for centuries. He also expounded upon the abuses Japan inflicted upon Korea and her people as well as warned the Western world of the dangers associated with Japanese ambitions and that Japan's claim of Korea as "buffer against China" was not needed anymore because of Japan's decisive victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War. Furthermore, Yi enunciated that the betterment of Korea and the Korean people would only come if the peninsula was liberated from Japanese domination.<sup>354</sup>

Gojong was the penultimate king of the Choson Dynasty. He abdicated his throne in 1907 facing Japanese pressure. His son, Sunjong, ruled from 1907 until the annexation of Korea on August 29, 1910. The March 1, 1919, Independence Movement did not spring directly from the February 8, 1919, movement in Japan. The "spontaneity" of the March First Movement made it different indeed from most attempts at revolution.<sup>355</sup> The sudden death of Gojong in 1919 actually spurred the March First Movement more than anything else. The commoners of Korea had limited knowledge of the "nationalist activities abroad" due to Japanese censorship of the media. Gojong passed away on January 22, 1919, of natural causes but the Korean people suspected foul play. Perhaps, they thought the king had been induced to commit suicide or worse, had "been poisoned." The tentative date for the funeral was March 3, 1919.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> Wells, "Background to the March First Movement," 11-12.

<sup>355</sup> Ki-baek Lee, "The March First Movement," in *Listening to Korea: A Korean Anthology*, ed. Marshall R. Pihl (New York, Washington, and London: Praeger Publishers, 1973), 14.

<sup>356</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 107-108.

Many people left their villages, towns, and cities and headed to Seoul. Nearly 200,000 people came to the city in hopes of attending Gojong's funeral.<sup>357</sup> The influx of people created the perfect opportunity for the movement. Four Korean patriots prepared "plans" for the peaceful movement. They were Choe Rin, Choe Namson (who wrote the March 1, 1919 Declaration of Independence), Song Chinu, and Hyon Sang-yun. The four agreed on the following proposals:

Solicit comrades and execute nationwide demonstrations for independence. Issue the declaration of independence. Submit memorandums to the Japanese government, to the two legislative houses, and the government-general. Send a message to the American President asking for assistance toward independence. Send messages to the foreign representatives at the Peace Conference asking for assistance toward independence. Choe Namson to draft the declaration, memoranda, and the messages. Issue the documents in the name of representatives of the Korean people. Select representatives from among members of Chondogyo, Christians, and renowned figures of the defunct Korean government.<sup>358</sup>

The Christian and Chondogyo leaders had two separate plans. The Chondogyo leaders wanted a "nationwide demonstration," whereas the Christians sought to simply "petition" the Japanese government for independence. The Christian leader and one of the thirty-three signers of the Declaration, Yi Sung-hun, convinced the Christian leaders to go with the Chondogyo plan. Yi was one of the ten, along with Yun Chi-ho, who received ten years imprisonment (later reduced to six) during the Conspiracy Case.<sup>359</sup>

The missionaries often found themselves drawn into the movement unawares. For example, the Canadian missionary Robert Grierson allowed some Korean friends into his home to talk about a "secret" matter on February 27, 1919. It was not until two days later that Grierson "realized that his home had been used as the site of a political conspiracy." On March First at the Presbyterian boys' school in Pyongyang, Chong Il-sun read what amounted to the "declaration of independence of the Korean people." The Japanese believed the missionaries

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<sup>357</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 108.

<sup>358</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 108.

<sup>359</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 109.

were behind the movement when mission schools were used as staging grounds and eleven out of the sixteen Christian signers of the Declaration were “ordained ministers, former students of missionaries in the Presbyterian and Methodist Theological Seminaries.”<sup>360</sup>

Some Korean teachers and students at Ewha Womans University participated in the March First Movement. Two teachers in particular went to jail for a long time. They were Induk Pak and Julia Syn. One student of sixteen years of age, Yu Kwansoon, died during the demonstrations and received a heroine’s welcome from her fellow students.<sup>361</sup> Students at Choson Christian College and Union Christian College also actively participated in the demonstrations in large numbers to the ire of their missionary teachers.

The signers of the Declaration informed the Japanese police of their plans, and one of the leaders read the Declaration in a Seoul restaurant at two o’clock in the afternoon. The Japanese police arrested the signers. Kil Son-ju (one of the signers) came later from Pyongyang and turned himself in to the police. The Chondogyo leader, Son Byong Hee, first signed the Declaration. Amazingly, the Japanese always kept “hawklike eyes” on the Koreans but they did not see the March First Movement coming. Koreans of all classes and religions paraded in the streets. Korean bands played music and the people waved Korean flags and yelled “the ancient national cheer” *mansei*.<sup>362</sup> *Mansei* is roughly translated “Long live Korean Independence.” The March First Movement was enormous. It actually lasted for about a year. Overall, about ten percent of the population (two million) took an active role in the movement. There were “more than 1500 separate gatherings. The majority of the demonstrations took place in and around Seoul, Pyongyang, and northwest Korea. However, they did spread south all the way to Busan.

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<sup>360</sup> Donald N. Clark, “Surely God will Work out their Salvation: Protestant Missionaries in the March First Movement,” *Korean Studies* 13 (1989): 51-53 passim.

<sup>361</sup> Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea*, 183.

<sup>362</sup> Osgood, 285-286.

Pyongyang saw twelve demonstrations with a total of thirty thousand demonstrators. Other Korean cities near Manchuria, Kanggye, Uiju, Chongju, Cholsan, and others had scores of demonstrations. In the south, Shonju had twenty-one demonstrations and Mokpo, though only having two, lead the way with sixty-two thousand demonstrators. However, no city compared to Seoul in the enormity of demonstrators or demonstrations. There were fifty-seven demonstrations with 570,000 “participants.”<sup>363</sup>

The Declaration written by Choe Namson actually quoted verbatim I Corinthians 14:40: “Let all things be done decently and in order,” as part of one of the “three items of agreement.” Ironically, Choe, who was not a Christian, did not sign the very Declaration he penned. It declared that the Korean people had been their own sovereign nation for thousands of years and listed the several abuses of Japanese imperialism. Unlike the Declaration of Independence of the United States which had deistic elements to it, the Korean Declaration stated that Korean independence “is the clear leading of God.” The first item of agreement started off with the words, “This work of ours is in behalf of truth, religion, and life.”<sup>364</sup> Choe did not finish writing the Declaration until February 26<sup>th</sup>, and the following day 21,000 copies were “printed and sorted for distribution.”<sup>365</sup>

The Japanese responded to the peaceful demonstrations with violence. During the year following the March First Movement, the Japanese government reported 19,054 arrests 471 of whom were females. The Japanese also killed 7,645 and wounded 45,562. The Japanese government arrested 3,428 Christians amongst Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, other Protestants, and Catholics. Christians represented eighteen percent of the total arrested in a

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<sup>363</sup> Ki-baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, 342-344 passim.

<sup>364</sup> “Declaration of Independence: English Translation,” (1 March 1919) <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/search/controller/view/kada-m2042.html> (accessed 19 June 2011). The opinions of this paragraph are my own but the quotes come from the Declaration attached to the link.

<sup>365</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 110.

country that was at most two percent Christian at that time. Being the most numerous Christians in Korea, the Presbyterians and Methodists represented the largest Christian numbers—the former at 2,486 and the latter at 560. However, Catholics numbered nearly the same as Methodists yet only fifty-five actually were arrested suggesting that they were less involved in the demonstrations. A number of Buddhist and Confucianists were also arrested. The number of Chondogyo seized were 2,283 of whom only fifteen were females. It is possible that the religious numbers given are inaccurate because the Japanese police listed 9,304 arrestees as having “no religious affiliation” and 3,907 whose religion was unknown.<sup>366</sup>

As noted above, the Japanese arrested 471 females. Also noted above, the Japanese police lamented the education of girls at the missionary schools. Female empowerment would only make the assimilation of Korea to Japanese ways more cumbersome. Not a single Buddhist or Confucian female, out of a total of 566, was arrested. Only fifteen female practitioners of Chondogyo, out of 2,283, were arrested. On the contrary, the Japanese arrested 309 Christian females. They represented 65.6 percent of the total female arrestees though only two percent of the country practiced Christianity. The number of Christian females arrested may have been higher. Ninety-eight females had an unreported religion and forty-nine had “no religious affiliation.”<sup>367</sup> This figure clearly demonstrates the massive involvement of Christian females in the demonstrations over the other religions. It may also suggest that the Japanese targeted Christian females, but it would have been difficult to discern the faith of individuals as they marched down the streets. Either way, Christian females outpaced females of other religious persuasions in their political involvement and the Japanese knew it.

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<sup>366</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 115.

<sup>367</sup> Chong-Sik Lee, 115.

During the demonstrations, the Presbyterian Christian and pupil of Philip Jaisohn, Ahn Changho, put together the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai. He saw the emergence of the Independence Movement as God-orchestrated event which “merged” his “Christian faith” with “his conception of sovereign democracy and independence government.” Ahn selected Syngman to be the president of the Provisional Government knowing that Rhee could influence greater authority over “U.S. policy toward colonial Korea.” The Provisional Assembly approved Ahn’s Constitution on September 11, 1919.<sup>368</sup>

Another Christian revolutionary leader worked for Korean independence in the United States at this time. Philip Jaisohn led the First Korean Congress in Philadelphia on April 14-16, 1919. Over two-hundred Koreans attended including all “leading personages” minus Ahn Changho. The Mayor of Philadelphia at that time was Thomas Smith, a close friend of Jaisohn’s. He allowed Jaisohn to carry on the Congress. Both Jaisohn and Rhee spoke during the Congress. The leaders tried to tie it to Wilson’s Fourteen Points but Rhee’s old friend Wilson, “ignored a personal letter” from the former. Rather, “Wilson decided that Japan’s cooperation was more important for the establishment of the League of Nations than Korean independence.” Sadly, in spite of the religious nature of the meeting (the majority of Koreans present being devout Christian laymen or clergymen), with the exception of the Episcopal minister Floyed Tomkins; “the Congress was boycotted by representatives of every denomination which had missionaries in Korea.” The United States Congress also showed its disapproval. Wilson did not even “show a gesture of support.”<sup>369</sup>

Because the United States favored its relationship with Japan more than Korea, the latter remained under Japanese domination for twenty-six more years. Not until the Japanese surrender

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<sup>368</sup> Pak, 135-136.

<sup>369</sup> Liem, *The First Korean American*, 222-224 passim.



on August 15, 1945, did the Korean people experience any sort of freedom. Korean Christian involvement in later independence movements also occurred. Christianity grew spectacularly in the 1960s in South Korea and played major roles in the Minjung Movement in the 1980s. Today, Christianity is the largest practiced religion in South Korea. Approximately thirty percent claim it as their faith followed by Buddhism representing about twenty-two percent of the population. Half of the country follows smaller religious organizations or practices no faith at all. Chondogyo now claims fewer than two percent of Koreans. Korea has a higher percentage of Protestants than any other Asian nation and is number two in their annual sending out missionaries, trailing only the United States.

## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

Western missionaries contributed directly and indirectly to Korean nationalism during the late Choson and early Japanese annexation periods between the years of 1884-1920. Most Christian nationalist contributions came from Protestants. Before 1884, Protestantism made very little inroads on the Korean peninsula. The political and economic turmoil of Korea made the country fertile ground for something new and refreshing. The millenarianism of the old religions of Buddhism, Daoism, and shamanism, and especially the reaction against some of the philosophies of Confucianism helped Christianity grow and spread for Christianity provided the millenarianism outlet of the old religions and most Koreans coupled Christianity with democracy which flew in the face of the Neo-Confucian social structure and order. Furthermore, the Protestant missionaries immediately found favor with the Korean royal family. Additionally, Korea reacted against the imperialism of the only non-Christian imperialist power, Japan. Had the British, for example, pushed her interests in Korea as she did in China, Christianity probably would not have been as well received.

Most Protestant missionaries to Korea came from the United States. This fact also helped the spread of the Christian church because Korea and the United States had little diplomatic ties so the United States was not seen as an imperialistic threat but rather as a bastion of hope by Koreans who received Western educations. Most of these Western educated Koreans became Christians and brought their ideas of religion and politics back to Korea where the ideas of self-government, self-support, and self-propagation had already found home in Protestant Korean churches through the implementation of the Nevius Methods. By the time the two combined in significant numbers after the Pyongyang Revival, the Japanese took notice and targeted Korean

Christians, churches, and missionaries. The scope of the Japanese espionage was best represented during the Conspiracy Case. The nationalist movements amongst Korean students in Japan and the Korean leaders in the United States and China were generally led by Christians. The unbalanced Christian involvement during the March First Movement and amongst the signers of the Declaration, along with the high proportion of Christians (especially females) arrested, lend credence to the direct and indirect contributions of Western missionaries to Korean nationalism.

Finally, it must be remembered that the coming of Protestant missionaries and the spirit of revolution was coincidental. A nationalist movement would have occurred in Korea during this period even if both Catholicism and Protestantism never arrived on the peninsula. Japan experienced the Meiji Restoration, China saw the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in 1911, and the Western imperialists continued seeking new colonies. All of these events would have struck the ire of the Korean people after the full realization of their meanings were felt. However, the flavor of the nationalist movement in Korea would have been radically different had the Western missionaries never arrived.

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