

THE KOREAN MISSION TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1883

The First Embassy Sent by Korea to an Occidental Nation

BY HAROLD J. NOBLE

ON May the nineteenth, at two o'clock in the afternoon, in the year 1883, General Lucius H. Foote, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Korea, accompanied by nine American naval officers in full dress uniform, was formally received at the Korean Foreign Office by His Excellency Mia Yong Mok, President of the Royal Korean Office for Foreign Affairs, and by the heads of the other four royal departments, attended by their retinues, when the officially ratified copies of the American-Korean Treaty were exchanged (1). This epochal treaty contained a clause providing for the free exchange of diplomatic representatives between the High Contracting Powers.

In an audience with His Majesty the King not long afterwards, General Foote took occasion to remark that his government would be gratified to receive the first envoy sent by His Majesty to the West. The following day in full state council His Majesty discussed the matter with his ministers, and determined to send two Plenipotentiaries with full powers on a special mission to the United States (2). It cannot be doubted that the King decided on this, for him, radical course not only to gain further knowledge of countries across the seas, but primarily, through his exercise of the sovereign function of despatching representatives abroad, to give assertion to his unexpressed claims to independence of China and to secure the moral support of official American and world recognition of the existence of such independence. The essential historical significance of this Mission lies in its [page 2] importance as an expression by Korea of her sovereignty and equality with the nations of the world.

Before discussing the Embassy itself, it will be well briefly to review the condition of the Peninsula at this time. For centuries Korea had been tributary to the mighty Middle Kingdom, and the Korean King had received his investiture from his sovereign lord, the Emperor of China ; when emissaries from the respected and feared Court at Peking came to the capital of the vassal kingdom, His Korean Majesty left His Palace, went humbly outside the gates of His city on the road to Peking, and at an arch of stone raised in the highway exchanged bows with the representatives of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of China. The technical status of the relations of China and Korea merits careful study, but it is sufficient for the purposes of this review to indicate the vassal position which Korea maintained with China. That by the time of the opening of Korea this relationship had become largely ceremonial, and likewise vexingly difficult to properly evaluate according to Western standards of international law, is not in point.

In 1867, in answer to the inquiry of the United States Minister in Peking as to the actual status of Korea, the spokes-man for the Chinese Government replied that China had no responsibility for Korea, and that the relationship of the two nations was simply one of ceremony. By this answer he thought cleverly to evade any American claims for damages for the destruction of the "General Sherman", an American vessel, in the Tatong River before Pyeng Yang in August of 1866, but in doing so he created a problem in international relations of great moment to the nations directly interested in the Far East, which was not solved until the close of the Sino-Japanese War.

In 1876, in Japan's first treaty with Korea, her Commissioner inserted a statement of Korea's independence ; and in 1882, Commodore R. W. Shufeldt, acting for the United States, with the assistance of Li Hung Chang, China's great [page 3] statesman, negotiated a treaty with Korea in which the latter was recognized as a sovereign state.

The year previous to the coming of General Foote, the father of the King, the Tai Wun Kun, had taken advantage of, or perhaps had instigated, a riot of some disaffected soldiery to bring about an attack upon the family of the Queen, the Mins, his mortal enemies, the friends of the Chinese, and upon the

hated Japanese. The resultant was the abduction of the Tai Wun Kun to China, and a marked increase of Chinese influence in the Peninsula, which was calculated to offset the moral claims to independence established by the Japanese and American treaties. The only party actively interested in independence, with the exception of the Tai Wun Kun whose distrust of the foreigner effectively kept him from participation in such a movement, was composed of three young noblemen, Kim Ok Kiun, So Kwang Pom, and Pak Yang Hio, who had the sympathies of His Majesty in this as in other aspirations.

It was under such conditions, and before Chinese policy had hardened into active obstruction of any move for independence, that the King determined to send an Embassy to the United States. The members of the Mission were selected with care. The first in rank was Prince Min Yong Ik, the Court favorite, the brother-in law to the heir apparent, and through adoption a nephew of the Queen, to whom he was the nearest relative. Twice he had been sent on Embassies abroad, once to China and once to Japan. The previous year during the emeute he had escaped his would-be-murderers by flight to the mountains, whence disguised as a Buddhist monk he had escaped to Fusan and Japan (3).

The Vice-Minister was Hong Yong Sik, a vice-president of the Foreign Office, the son of the Prime Minister, and formerly an Ambassador to Japan. From the high positions of these gentlemen we may realize the importance of this Mission in the eyes of the King and of His Government.

The third in rank was So Kwang Pom whose family was highly illustrious for the number of just and wise officers [page 7]it had produced, and who himself was respected and beloved for his just conduct as an official. He was highly intelligent and had entered with great perseverance and energy into the progressive spirit of the officials in Japan, with whom he had received his political training. In 1875, he and Kim Ok Kiun, the first Korean nobles to do so, made their way secretly to Japan, and on their return boldly went before the King and told him at length of what they had seen. With Kim Ok Kiun and Pak Yang Hio, he formed the Progressive Party of three, but he was more steady and less extreme than the other two. He was a baron (Chamise) and also held a special rank called Takiyo by virtue of which he was near the person of the King constantly. He also held office in the Home Department. While abroad, he was regarded as the Secretary of the Mission (4).

These three men were near to the age of the King, or in the neighborhood of thirty years, and it is safe to assume that the other members of the suite, Chai Kyung Soh, a military officer, Yu Kil Chun, Pyun Su, who had long resided in Japan, and Ko Yong Chol were likewise young. So Kwang Pom was the only outright Progressive in the group; Min Yong Ik was a leader of the Min faction ; and the other members of the Mission were more or less aligned with the conservative elements in the state. One of the group spoke Japanese fluently, and another Chinese.

As soon as he had been notified of the appointment of the Special Mission, General Foote wrote to the American Secretary of State, Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, to the United States Minister in Tokio, John A. Bingham, and to friends in America in important official positions, to prepare them for the coming of the Embassy in order that all possible courtesy might be shown to its members. He suggested that in planning a program for their entertainment arrangements should be made particularly to show them the fortifications, the arsenals, mints, customs houses, post offices, and public schools from San Francisco eastward. They desired especially to examine the American army, school systems and [page 5] methods of minting money, and general foote believed the sequence of the trip would be that the united states government would be asked to designate persons to organize and manage these departments of government for Korea (5). General Foote especially commended the mission to friends of his in California, his own state, that the Koreans might secure a good impression of the Pacific coast for the sake of California's share in the Korea trade, which was bound to grow with the opening of that country to foreign commerce (6). Indeed, the inception and success of the mission must be in a large measure credited to the efforts of General Foote, who saw here an opportunity to further the legitimate commercial interests of the country he represented.

The U. S. S. "Monocacy", which was then stationed at Chemulpo, was about to proceed to Japan for coal and with the consent of the commanding officer, Commander Cotton, General Foote offered the Korean government the use of this gunboat to convey the members of the special mission,

seven in all, to Nagasaki this offer was gratefully accepted (7).

On July 16/17, 1883, the "Monocacy", one of the American ships of war which had taken an important part in the bombardment of the Kangwha forts in the Low-Rogers expedition in 1872 (8), sailed in peace from the harbor of Chemulpo, carrying on board the first representatives of the Korean King and government to be sent to a nation of the west (9). This was indeed a memorable day in the brief life of the modern Korean state. when the "Monocacy" arrived at Nagasaki, by order of Rear-Admiral Pierce Crosby, the commander of the United States naval force in Asiatic waters, at the telegraphed suggestion of General Foote, the special mission was offered the privilege of continuing on board to Yokohama. General Foote feared that the mission might be under the necessity of requesting a similar courtesy from the Japanese government, and considered such action at this time not quite fitting (10). The Korean ministers politely refused Admiral Crosby's offer, however, and pro- [page 6] ceeded to Yokohama by regular mail steamer, and thence across the Pacific.

Before the special mission sailed from Japan, they secured as foreign secretary, Percival Lowell, the brother of the present president of Harvard University, and later the author of that interesting book, *Chosen, the Land of the Morning Calm*.

While the mission was in Japan, the Japanese government paid them scant attention, a policy which General Foote looked upon as narrow and shortsighted (11).

Upon the arrival of the special mission at San Francisco on the second day of September, 1883, they received from Major General John M. Schofield, of the army of the United States, the highest marks of respect; and on the fourth of the same month the San Francisco chamber of commerce and the board of trade, gave them a reception, on which occasion they were formally welcomed to the city, and met the prominent merchants and business men of San Francisco.

From San Francisco the special mission went east by the Central and Union Pacific railroads and arrived in Chicago on the twelfth of September, where they were received by Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan, of Civil War fame, and then commanding officer of the United States army, who did all in his power to make their brief stay in that city agreeable by causing them to be properly accompanied to various points of interest there (12).

Dr. John F. Goucher, a noted educator and founder of Goucher Woman's College, in Baltimore, Maryland, chanced to be on the same train during the trip eastwards, and made the acquaintance of the members of the mission. He became intensely interested in them, and through them in the people of their country, and as a result of this meeting he organized a campaign for the establishment of a mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Korea. Less than two years later the first missionaries of that church had arrived in Seoul and commenced their great pioneering efforts (13).

When the special mission left Chicago for Washington [page 7] on the evening of the thirteenth of the month, Lieutenant General Sheridan, as a mark of respect, detailed Colonel Gregory of his staff to accompany them to the national capital.

The special mission arrived in the city of Washington on the fifteenth of September, and were at once quartered at the Arlington Hotel as the guests of the government on the same day they were presented to Mr. Davis, acting Secretary of State.

There was residing in Washington at this time, attached to the Naval Library for special duty, a young American naval officer, Ensign George C. Foulk. He had served for two cruises (four years) on Asiatic station, and being of an inquiring mind he had turned his attention to a study of the Japanese and Chinese languages, and latterly to a small extent to the language of Korea. The previous spring he had approached his superiors with a request that he might be reassigned to Asiatic station, from which he had come shortly before, in order to continue his language studies and so to be of especial value to his government as he had noted, with the exception of a few French Catholic missionaries, only one foreigner, W. G. Aston, Her British Majesty's consul at Kobe, had any knowledge of the Korean language, and very few Americans in government service knew Chinese while none knew Japanese (14). Thus it was but natural that this young man should be brought to the attention of the President, Chester A. Arthur, and that the latter should direct him to assist in rendering suitable attentions to the members of the Korean

special mission. Lieutenant Theodore B. Mason, of the naval intelligence office, was likewise attached to the mission, and the two officers accompanied them on their trips through the eastern part of the United States (15).

At that time the president and secretary of state were temporarily in New York city, and these attache with Assistant Secretary Davis went with the mission to New York, where they were met by Secretary Frelinghuysen, who presented them to the presidents.

The scene of the presentation was a parlor in the Fifth [page 8] Avenue Hotel, on the twenty-third street side. President Arthur entered the room at about eleven o'clock, and it was at once announced to the ambassadors in their apartments that he awaited them. As they approached, the President stood near the middle of the room facing the door. He was dressed in ordinary morning costume. On his right stood Secretary of State Frelinghuysen, on his left Assistant Secretary Davis. Mr. Chew of the State Department, Lieutenant T. B. Mason, Ensign Foulk, and several other gentlemen stood a little behind.

The Korean dignitaries issued from their apartments in single file, and in single file proceeded along the corridors toward the room where the President waited for them. First in order came the first in rank, Min Yong Ik, the Minister Plenipotentiary of the King of Tah Chosun. He was dressed, as were all his companions, in his richest robes of state. A loose garment of flowered, plum-colored silk showed through its openings a snow white tunic, also silken. The whole was belted in with a broad band covered with curiously wrought plates of gold. Upon the ambassador's breast hung an apron with two storks embroidered in white upon a purple ground, and bordered with many brilliant colors. On his head he wore his hat of ceremony, a singular structure of silk, bamboo and horsehair, which according to Korean custom it was indispensable to wear on all official occasions.

Second in the procession came the vice-minister, Hong Yong Sik. his dress in the main resembled that of Min Yong Ik, his lower rank being denoted by the fact that only one stork was embroidered upon the apron covering his breast he was succeeded by So Kwang pom, who wore simply the tunics of white and plum-colored silk and the official hat. Percival Lowell followed. He was in evening dress. Yu Kil Chun, who was dressed in a green pelisse ; Pyun Su, who wore black, and Ko Yong Chol, in blue, brought up the rear.

Standing in the broad hall, just outside the open door of the reception room, the ambassadors and their suite formed a [page 9] single line facing the President. At a signal from the minister they dropped together on their knees, then, raising their hands above their heads, they bent their bodies forward with a slow, steady sweep until their foreheads touched the ground. After remaining in this attitude a few moments, they arose and advanced into the room, President Arthur and the gentlemen with him bowing deeply as they entered. Then Secretary Frelinghuysen came forward, led Prince Min Yong Ik to the President, and introduced him. The President and the Minister joined hands, looked earnestly in each other's faces for a moment, and through the interpreter exchanged some words of compliment. Then Hong Yong Sik, and after him the other members of the embassy, was presented to the President, and all the American gentlemen present were introduced to the Koreans (16). The newspaper account fails to mention Chai Kyung Soh, but doubtless he was present.

Minister Min Yong Ik then pronounced his formal address to the president, speaking in his native tongue in a solemn and rather pleasant voice. he said :

"We, Min Yong Ik and Hong Yong Sik, are present in person to address your excellency the President of the United States of America. Together we have come to your Excellency as the representatives of the government of Tah Chosun. We desire to convey to your Excellency from our hearts our sincere wishes for the health and welfare of your Excellency and the people of the United States. The people of our countries have entered into friendly intercourse with each other, and having both on our side and yours bound themselves mutually to continue these happy relations, we pray that the people of both our lands may live forever without change in peace and happiness. We beg to offer to your Excellency two official papers from our government. The first is a reply to your Excellency from his Majesty the King of Tah Chosun. the second is our letter of credentials, which we herewith ask leave to present." (17). [page 10]

The words of the ambassador having been translated, to him, President Arthur received the documents alluded to, the translation of the King's letter to President Arthur being as follows:

"The envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States of America, Lucius H. Foote, brought me your excellency's letter, which I have read with care, and with the contents of which I have been delighted.

"The treaty concluded last year has now been ratified and put into execution, and the natural result of this is that my country congratulates herself.

"Your excellency's minister, Lucius H. Foote, is on excellent terms with us; is just and upright; and in the transaction of his business at the capital is always in accord with the views of my government. He will fully realize in action the intention of the United States government with regard to his appointment. The relations between our countries will, I hope and trust, be every day closer, an end which will be most gratifying to all.

"I pray that under your Excellency's beneficent rule the people of the United States of America will for ages to come experience the most blessed results.

"Done under my own hand and seal in the four hundred and ninety second year of my house, sixth moon, eleventh day (14th July, 1883)."

(signature and seals of his majesty the King of Tah Chosun, by order of Min Yong Mok, President of the Foreign Office (18).

The second document was the credentials.

"His majesty the King of Tah Chosen to his Excellency Chester A. Arthur, President of the United States of America :—

"The ratifications of the treaty concluded between our countries having now been exchanged and friendly relations established, I now send to the United States [page 11] of America as Minister Plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary, Min Yong Ik, and as vice minister, Hong Yong Sik, in order to convey to your excellency the assurance of my gratification.

"Being in my confidence and instructed so fully to express my ideas, they will no doubt satisfactorily perform their duties, and I hope that full faith and credence will be given to them, in order that the friendship of our countries may be increased and that perfect harmony may be attained.

"I have no doubt that your excellency will fully share my views.

"Done under my own hand and seal in the four hundred and ninety second year of my house, sixth moon, eleventh day (14 July, 1883).

(seal) The King of Tah Chosun

by order Min Yong Mok,

(seal) President of the Foreign Office" (19).

Having received the documents, the President spoke in reply, his words being duly reported to Min Yong Ik in Korean. The President's remarks were these :

"Mr. Minister and Mr. Vice-Minister—it gives me much pleasure to receive you as the representatives of the King and government of Tah Chosun. I bid you a cordial welcome. We are not ignorant of your beautiful peninsular country, with its surrounding islands, or of their productions, or of the industries of your people, who in population number more than twice that of the United States when they became an independent nation. The ocean which intervenes between our respective domains has, by means of the introduction and perfection of steam navigation, become a highway of convenient and safe intercourse—you are our neighbors.

"The United States, from their geographical position, are of all others the nation with which the orientals should cultivate friendship and a commerce which [page 12] will prove to them and to us alike beneficial and profitable, and which must constantly increase.

"This Republic while conscious of its power, of its wealth and of its resources, seeks, as our history shows, no dominion or control over other nationalities and no acquisition of their territory, but does seek to give and receive the benefits of friendly relations and of a reciprocal and honest commerce.

"We know you can be a benefit to us, and we think that when you become familiar with the

improvement we have made in agricultural implements and processes and in the mechanical arts generally you will be satisfied that we can give you a fair return for the benefit you may confer on us, and it may be that in our system of education and in our laws you will discover something that you will be glad to adopt.

“It was fit and becoming that you should have made with us your first treaty of intercourse. You will be so good as to present to your King my respectful regards and to express to him my gratification and that of our people that he should have seen proper to honor us by the visit of the Embassy. I trust that while you are in our country you will have health and enjoyment.

“It will be the purpose of our government and people so to receive you that you shall carry home with you pleasant recollections of the American Republic.” (20).

After the speeches the President and the Ministers again shook hands, and the latter retired, accompanied to their rooms by Secretary Frelinghuysen, Lieutenant Mason and Ensign Foulk. Outside the door of the parlor they stopped, and, turning, repeated the obeisance they had made on entering (21).

On the same day, September 18th, the Special Mission, still escorted by the officers detailed to accompany them, took passage for Boston by the Fall River Line, arriving in [page 13] that city at seven on the following morning. During the day they inspected the Foreign Exhibition and the Manufacturers' Institute.

The next day, the model farm of J. W. Wolcott was visited to witness the use of the latest agricultural improvements and to inspect the farm buildings. Matters of agriculture were of particular interest to Chai Kyung Soh, and received his undivided attention. On the same day the Special Mission was taken by railway to Lowell, where the members were shown various processes of textile manufacture in the mills of the leading companies.

On September 22nd calls were made upon Governor Butler of Massachusetts, and the Mayor of Boston, and various public institutions of the city were inspected. During the afternoon the members of the Special Mission were entertained at the home of Percival Lowell, the Foreign Secretary of the Mission ; and on the 24th of September they returned to New York.

In advance of the arrival of the Mission at New York, Commodore John H. Upshur, of the United States Navy, Commandant of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, after conference with the city authorities and the merchants of New York, prepared a programme of excursions and visit³ for the entertainment and instruction of the Special Mission, in pursuance of which they visited and inspected among other places and institutions the New York Hospital, the Western Union Telegraph Office, the New York Fire Department, the Post Office Building (of especial interest to Hong Yong Sik), the establishments of Tiffany and Company, the Cramp Docks, Havermyer's Sugar Refinery, the offices of “The Evening Post” and “The New York Herald,” the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and the United States Military Academy at West Point (22).

On Saturday, September 29th, the Special Mission left New York, arriving at Washington in the afternoon. On their return to Washington every facility was afforded them [page 13] to become acquainted with the practical workings of the United States government.

During their conversations with the Secretary of State, the Korean Ministers were promised aid in the reorganization of their government through the suggestion of competent persons as advisers in military and civil affairs. From the Department of Agriculture, Chai Kyung Soh secured a large quantity of seeds of all descriptions, which he carefully took back to Seoul on his return.

The sight of members of the Korean nobility clad in their many colored robes of silk and their curious horse-hair hats must have been a vision to astonish the good citizens of Washington who chanced to see them walking in the parks or riding in carriages down Pennsylvania Avenue. The clerks in the government departments visited by the various members of the Mission must have wondered greatly at so unwonted an interruption of their work as the coming of these curiously garbed, dark skinned foreigners, who carried themselves with such a quiet dignity. Surely, the imaginative onlooker must have believed himself in the presence of characters from a new Arabian Nights.

Previous to the final departure of the Special Mission from the National Capital they were accorded a farewell audience with the President at noon, October 12th, when the Secretary of State again

presented them to President Arthur and the several members of his Cabinet, who were in attendance at the Executive Mansion. The Minister Plenipotentiary gratefully made his acknowledgments for the kindness and the many acts of courtesy, both official and private which he and the other members of the Special Mission had enjoyed during their sojourn in the United States. At the conclusion of this interview Secretary Frelinghuysen, at the request of the President, tendered to Min Yong Ik, and two of his suite whom he should select, passage to Korea on board the U. S. S. "Trenton," which was soon to leave for Eastern waters via the Mediterranean and the Suez Canal (23). This offer was gladly accepted, and the Minister Plenipotentiary chose So [page 15] Kwang Pom and Pyun Su as his companions, while the other members of the party went directly home by way of San Francisco.

Ensign Foulk had acquired an especial attachment for these strange quests of his country, and more at his own desire than from any actual necessity he was appointed by the President Naval Attache to the new American Legation in Seoul and was ordered to accompany the members of the Special Mission on board the "Trenton." At this time there were no United States Naval Attaches at either Peking or Tokyo, and Korea did not possess even the rudiments of a navy.

On or about the nineteenth day of November (24), the "Trenton," Captain R. L. Phythian commanding, sailed from New York for Chemulpo with Min Yong Ik, So Kwang Pom, Pyun Su and Ensign Foulk as passengers. During the voyage So Kwang Pom and Pyun Su were indefatigable in compiling notes on useful subjects. From encyclopedic sources, through Ensign Foulk's translations, they gathered a mass of information on the political and progressive histories of the world. At the expense, however, of what should have been to him valuable opportunities for observation and enlightenment, Min Yong Ik constantly studied the Confucian books which he carried with him. Though he seemed sincere in his expressions of his intention to use his utmost energy towards the development of his country, Ensign Foulk early observed that Prince Min was faint hearted and very changeable in his disposition (25). Such defects in his character boded ill for the future welfare of his country. When the "Trenton" arrived in Marseilles the three members of the Embassy, guided by Ensign Foulk, left the ship and spent seventeen days in travelling through France and England, and particularly in visiting Paris and London. They returned to the ship January 25th, 1884 (26). It is a matter of much regret that records of these visits, and of a later one to Rome, are not available, but there can be no doubt that the Korean Ministers were fittingly welcomed in these three European capitals. [page 16]

While the "Trenton" was leisurely sailing eastwards, the other members of the special mission were returning home more rapidly on the other side of the world headed by Hong Yong Sik, and accompanied by Percival Lowell, who went to spend the winter in Korea at the invitation of His Majesty the King, they arrived in Seoul in the middle of December from this time Hong Yong Sik's connection with the progressive party seems to date. After his return he expressed himself to a friend as having been in a light so bright as to dazzle him. He entered into the progressive spirit of the so-called "King's party" with much caution, however, and was always regarded by So Kwang Pom and Kim Ok Kiun as too slow and indecisive. Perhaps his violent death through his connection with this party may be considered to have been ample justification for his caution (27).

About a month before the arrival of the "Trenton," Hong Yong Sik was appointed Post Master General by His Majesty, with instructions to establish a postal service and post offices throughout the Kingdom, and to contract for postal services between Korea and adjacent countries (28), but he did little at first in the way of organizing his office.

At about the same time, His Majesty set aside an amount of land near Seoul, and made Chai Kyung Soh, who had especially studied such matters while in the United States, superintendent of the farm so established. The new official planted all of the seeds presented by the United States Department of Agriculture, and the plants grew well and thrived. The Government made all needful appropriations and manifested much interest in the experiment (29). The first year, after a very successful season, the whole crop was allowed to go to seed and large quantities of the seeds thus gathered were distributed, with directions for their use, to three hundred and five localities. The following year the Farm supplied the Palace and foreign residents with very creditable quantities of all the common vegetables, and in

addition commenced the breeding of farm animals through the importation of blooded stock from California (30). [page 17]

After a long and interesting voyage, the "Trenton" arrived in Chemulpo Harbor, May 31, 1884. A large number of officials went from Seoul to meet Prince Min and his suite and to escort them to the Capital. The trip up was made in chairs and on ponies, and the whole affair took on the character of a gala procession, and was made the occasion of much Official rejoicing. All possible attention was paid to Ensign Foulk, who was led to a house especially prepared for him in the heart of the city by order of His Majesty the King.

During the progress of the party from Chemulpo to Seoul, So Kwang Pom remarked to Ensign Foulk that he greatly feared Min Yong Ik's, influence might be employed against Western progress in spite of his intentions when abroad (31). In these remarks, So Kwang Pom showed himself a prophet not without foresight.

The party arrived in Seoul June 2nd, and the following day Min Yong Ik called on Minister Foote. The great contrast between what he had seen abroad and the conditions of his country on his return seemed to weigh heavily upon him, and he exclaimed to his host, "I was born in the dark ; I went into the light ; and I have returned into the dark again. I can not as yet see my way clearly, but I hope to soon" (32) .

At the invitation of His Majesty, Captain Phythain and ten other officers of the "Trenton" came to Seoul as the guests of the Government. When they were presented at Court, the King took opportunity to express his appreciation of the great kindness shown by the Government of the United States to his envoys. During the stay of these officers in Seoul the attentions both public and private shown them were marked and significant (33).

His Majesty the King showed his royal pleasure with the work of his envoys by conferring on them increased rank. Pyun Su, who hitherto had held no office under the Government, was made a chusoh, that is one who had direct access to his Sovereign. Min Yong Ik was made a Vice President of the Foreign Office, which position he held until he resigned [page 18] to become a general in command of one of the four Palace Battalions. So Kwang Pom was also given marks of favor, and held a position of trust close to the person of His Majesty.

With the return of the members of the Special Mission, that brief chapter in the history of modern Korea comes to an end. During the first months after the arrival of the "Trenton," however, the Government embarked on a series of reform measures with a willingness never again exhibited. As one of the results of the Mission the King and Government became convinced of the disinterested and friendly nature of American policy, and in consequence of this conviction the King came to look particularly to Americans for advice and encouragement. During the course of his tragic career, American advisers, American military officers, American teachers, American miners and technicians were called to serve Korea ; special concessions were given Americans ; and the King turned continually for counsel to the American re-presentatives to a degree highly embarrassing to them. While morally the Special Mission was an affirmation of Korean independence, the hardening of Chinese policy, coupled with a lack of national vision on the part of Korean officials in general, came largely to nullify the actual independence of the Korean Government

The complete story of the results of the Mission is a study in itself. Nevertheless, as an epilogue, it is not out of place to mention briefly something concerning the later careers of the men who were members of the Mission, or who were intimately connected with it. Tragedy marks most of their careers.

Min Yong Ik, under the pressure of his family and native environment, repudiated the progressive ideas which he seemed to entertain during his stay abroad, and became one of the leaders of conservatism and the chief member of the Chinese faction at the Korean Court. He came to be considered by the Progressives as an insurmountable obstacle to the cause of progress, and at a dinner given six months after the [page 19] arrival of the "Trenton" by his Vice-Minister, Hong Yong Sik, to celebrate the commencement of a modern postal service in Korea, Min Yong Ik was seriously wounded and only owed his life to the ministrations of Dr. H. N. Allen, an American missionary and later the United States

Minister to Korea. The remainder of his life he spent often in much personal danger, frequently in voluntary exile, the friend and then the foe of the Chinese, uncertain, unhappy, fear beset, realizing too late the danger to his country and to the national independence of his people of the policy pursued by his erstwhile friends, the Chinese.

Following the attempted coup d'état during which the life of Min Yong Ik was attempted, Hong Yong Sik, who took an active part with the Progressives, elected to remain with his Sovereign rather than to flee with the Japanese, and was killed in the presence of His Majesty.

So Kwang Pom escaped to Japan with others of the conspirators, and remained in exile for ten years, officially stigmatized by his own government as a traitor. After the Sino-Japanese War he returned, at first with active Japanese support He again took part in the Government, holding high office, and for a short time served as Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. He died in Washington, August 13, 1897.

After the emeute of 1884 Pyun Su escaped to Japan and thence to America, where he became a student at the Maryland Agricultural College. In 1891, after his graduation, and while he was employed in the United States Department of Agriculture, he was killed in a railroad accident.

Yu Kil Chun spent some time in prison after the emeute. He grew to be the leader in the Tai Wan Kun's party, and took an active part in the conspiracy which brought about the murder of the Queen. He was clever, vindictive, and cruel, and would stop at nothing to further his own interests.

Chai Kyong Soh alone seems not to have meddled in politics. He gave his entire time to his farm, with highly commendable results. The progress of the farm was greatly [page 20] retarded, however, by his sudden death in the spring of 1886. Ensign Foulk, the story of whose career would sound like a romantic novel, became United States Charge d' Affaires ad interim in December, 1884, and continued in that capacity for nearly three years. During this time he was confronted with problems of extreme delicacy and perplexity, but despite enormous handicaps of equipment and support he conducted his office with credit to his government. He left Korea in 1887, resigned from the Navy in 1889, and died in Japan in 1893, where he had been much loved as a professor in Doshisha College, Kyoto. His early death in large part was a result of the severe strain of his work in Korea.

NOTES ON SOURCES

- (1) Foote to Frelinghuysen, May 24, 1883.
- (2) do No. 14, July 13, 1883.
- (3) Foote to Bingham, No. 1, July 13, 1883.
- (4) Foulk to Frelinghuysen, enclosed in Foote to Frelinghuysen, No. 128, Dec. 17, 1884 ; Foreign Relations, 1885, pp. 332, ff.
- (5) Foote to Bingham, loc. cit.
- (6) Foote to E. L. Sullivan, Collector Port of San Francisco, No. 1, Misc.; July 13, 1883 ; to J. S. Faber, Pres. San Francisco Bd. of Trade, No. 2, Misc., July 13, 1883.
- (7) Foote to Frelinghuysen, No. 14, July 13, 1883,
- (8) See Griffis, *Corea the Hermit Nation*, Ch. XLVI.
- (9) Foote to Frelinghuysen, No. 14.
- (10) Idem.
- (11) Foote to Bingham, No. 6, Nov. 13, 1883.
- (12) Frelinghuysen to Foote, No. 27, Oct. 16. 1883.
- (13) Griffis, *A Modern Pioneer in Korea*, p. 52.
- (14) Foulk to Capt. J. G. Walker, April 18, 1883.
- (15) Pres. Arthur to Mason and Foulk, Sept. 14, 1883.
- (16) *New York Herald*, Sept. 19, 1883.
- (17) *Foreign Relations*, 1883, p. 249. [page 21]
- (18) op. cit., p. 250.

- (19) op. eit, p. 248, f.
- (20) op. cit.f p. 249, f.
- (21) New York Herald, Sept, 19, 1883.
- (22) Frelinghuysen to Foote, No. 27.
- (23) Idem.
- (24) W. E. Chandler to Foulk, notations on original, Nov. 1,1883.
- (25) Foulk to Frelinghuysen, op. cit.
- (26) R. L. Phythian to Foulk, Jan. 10, Feb. 11, 1884 ; nota-tions on original.
- (27) Foulk to Frelinghuysen, op. cit.
- (28) Foote to Frelinghuysen, No. 74, May 4, 1884.
- (29) do No. 77, May 28, 1884.
- (30) Foulk to Bayard, No. 225, Sept. 4, 1885.
- (31) Foulk to Frelinghuysen, op. cit.
- (32) Foote to Frelinghuysen, No. 84, June 17, 1884.
- (33) do No, 85, June 19, 1884.