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Christianity has had a profound impact upon Korean political and social life. That influence began in the 1600s and continues until the present time.[1] Indeed, Korea has been the only East Asian nation that has incorporated Christianity into the mainstream of its political and social life.

This essay deals with the impact of Christianity upon Korean political and social life, focusing upon the work of three pioneer Protestant missionaries and three early Korean converts to Protestantism at the end of the Yi dynasty (1884-1910). That discussion is preceded, however, by a brief sketch of the history of Korea's cultural development prior to the first impact of Christianity in 1600.

#### BACKGROUND ON KOREAN HISTORY

Korea has one of the longest continuous histories--at least two thousand years--of any nation in the world.[2] Shamanism has had a vital presence in Korea from prehistory.[3] Buddhism and Confucianism have been firmly entrenched in Korea from about 370 A.D.,[4] while Taoism entered Korea from China around 600 A.D.[5] All the major building blocks, minus Christianity, of Korea's political and social life--Shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism--had been established in Korea by 636 A.D. the time of the Unified Shilla dynasty.[6] As shall be noted below, Christianity's first influence upon Korean society and politics came much later, around 1600 A. D.[7]

The secret to Korea's longevity has been the natural birth and death cycle of its dynasties.[8] Each of the three great dynasties in Korea--Silla (668-935), Koryo (935-1392), and Yi (1392-1910)--have followed the pattern of birth, a period of creativity, a period of stagnation, a period of decadence, and death. The Yi dynasty, the last dynasty in Korean history and the dynasty in which Christianity began to influence Korea, began in 1392 A.D.[9] King Taejo (1392-1398) began construction of the walls of Seoul one hundred years before Columbus discovered the New World. While the Americas and Europe commemorated the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage to the Americas in 1992, Korea celebrated the 600th year of the founding of the Yi dynasty and the beginning of the construction of Seoul.

In a departure from the two previous dynasties, which embraced Buddhism,[10] the imperial families of the Yi dynasty promoted Confucianism.[11] Not only did the Yi kings and queens promote Confucianism, but they also persecuted Buddhism.[12] Brilliant scholarship, impressive art, creative developments in government, and the flourishing of philosophy characterized the initial period of the Yi dynasty, from 1392 to 1540.[13] Korea contributed to the Renaissance spirit in Asia at the same time as the Renaissance in Europe.

King Sejong (1418-1450), the fourth king of the Yi dynasty, emerged as a classic Renaissance man.[14] Moved by compassion for the common Korean, the farmer, Sejong commissioned the creation of a remarkable writing system, han'gul; encouraged scientific development of agriculture,

astronomy, and medicine; commissioned the creation of movable metal type for both Chinese and han'gul; and sponsored development of weapons to defend the northern borders of the kingdom. Sejong typified Renaissance learning and epitomized the creativity of the early Yi dynasty.

Between 1540 to 1575, from the end of the reign of Chungjong (1506-1544) to the death of the Queen regent for child King Sonjo (1552-1608), the Yi dynasty entered a stagnation period.[15] Hideyoshi's invasions of Korea, launched from Japan in 1592, followed closely by the Manchu invasions of Korea, launched in 1627, dealt a blow from which the Yi dynasty never fully recovered.[16] From about 1600, or from about the time of the first English settlements in the North American continent, the Yi Dynasty's creative vitality had begun an irreversible decline. [17] At that juncture, Christianity began to influence Korean politics and society.

#### ERA OF CATHOLIC INFLUENCE IN KOREAN POLITICS AND SOCIETY (1600-1894)

As with all other faiths in Korea, with the exception of Tan'gun worship, Christianity's first influence came from China. With the ebbing of vitality and the setting in of corruption in Yi dynasty Korean society and politics around 1600, Neo-Confucian scholars discovered the writings of Marco Ricci in China. That inaugurated the era of Catholic influence in Korean politics and society.

#### **THE PRACTICAL LEARNING MOVEMENT: SIRHAK**

Out of the increasing corruption and stagnation of Yi dynasty Korea arose a Neo-Confucian reform movement--the Practical Learning (sirhak) movement from 1620 to 1820.[18] The Sirhak scholars turned their attention to every branch of learning. They became the first Koreans to show an interest in Catholicism, or Western learning (sohak), through contacts with European Jesuit missionaries in Ming China (1368-1662). In the early 1600s, Yi Sugwang (1563-1628) referred to Matteo Ricci's True Principles of Catholicism in his writings.[19] Other Sirhak thinkers also expressed interest in Jesuit writings but took a more critical stance toward them.

The first real stirrings of interest in Catholicism in Korea came in the late 1770s.[20] Scholars in the Southerner's faction (namin)[21] of the Sirhak movement developed a profound interest in Christianity, especially the Sip'a branch of the Southerner's faction--the Party of Expediency. That out-of-power faction had a special attraction to Christianity: in 1784, Yi Sung-hun (1756-1801) returned from a diplomatic mission in Peking a baptized Christian.[22]

The Korean Christians developed their faith without the benefit of Western missionaries but, rather, through writings (e.g., First Steps in Catholic Doctrine [Ch'onhak Ch'oham]) by missionaries in China.[23] They sought a way in Catholicism to correct the growing political and social corruption of the stagnating Yi dynasty in Korea.[24]

#### **THE ENLIGHTENMENT MOVEMENT**

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the Practical Learning movement transformed into the Enlightenment movement (Kaehwa pa) through the synthesizing of Sirhak thought by Chong Yag-yong (1762-1836), also known as Ta-san.[25] By the early nineteenth century, Enlightenment scholars began to call for the opening of Korea to Western technology and trade.[26] The Enlightenment movement, which grew out of the Practical Learning movement, had little to do

directly with Catholicism but prepared the soil from which would sprout the Protestant-inspired Progressive or Independence Party.[27]

### **CATHOLIC PERSECUTIONS OF 1801 AND 1839**

The Rites Controversy brought Catholicism's challenge to the corrupted Yi dynasty into the open.[28] In 1785 King Chongjo outlawed Catholicism, prohibiting the importation of Christian books from China and decreeing death for any one who neglected ancestral worship. In spite of the ban--and because of the work of Chou Wentoo, a Chinese priest (d. 1801), and the sympathy to Catholicism of Southerner Ch'oe Che-gong, a high-positioned government official--Catholic converts grew to four thousand by 1800. But with the death of Chongjo in 1800, the regent for child King Sunjo (1800-1834), Queen Dowager Kim, launched the Catholic Persecution of 1801.[29] Many died, including Chinese priest Chou Wenmo.[30] In addition to factional disputes among the Neo-Confucians, the interception of a Catholic's "Silk Letter," calling for Western nations to dispatch military forces to compel the Korean government to grant religious freedom, triggered the persecution.

After a lull--during which French priests entered Korea and the first native Korean priest practiced--a second persecution, the Catholic Persecution of 1839, erupted out of the same factional politics as provoked the Persecution of 1801. The government executed three French priests and many Korean native Catholics.[31] Although another persecution followed in 1846, the Catholic Church in Korea grew to twenty thousand around mid-century.[32]

Although initially Catholic converts had come from the Sip'a branch of the Southerner faction of the Practical Learning movement, persecution brought a decline in their numbers and by the turn of the nineteenth century most converts came from the lower classes. The lower classes found the Christian teaching that all children of God are equal to be especially attractive--women and commoners rejoiced in that notion of the kingdom of God.[33] The Catholic faith represented a judgment upon corrupted late Yi dynasty culture. Catholicism bore the seeds of reform.

### **THE HEAVENLY WAY (EASTERN LEARNING)**

In addition to the direct influence upon the Practical Learning movement, upon women and upon the lower class Korean men, Catholicism influenced the creation of an indigenous religion--the Heavenly Way (Ch'ondogyo), or "Eastern Learning" (Tonghak).[34] A disenfranchised son of a yangban's (i.e., aristocrat) concubine, Ch'oe Che-u (1824-1864), sought answers to the corruption of nineteenth-century Yi dynasty Korea.[35] Impressed with, and distressed by, the military victories of the European nations in China, he studied Catholic doctrines which he believed were the source of those nations' power. He also poured over the Confucian classics, and the practice and the thought of Buddhism, Shamanism, and Taoism.[36] In April 1860, Ch'oe allegedly received a revelation from God (Chongju) to revive Confucianism and that Catholicism represented a false way.[37]

In spite of Ch'oe's condemnation of Catholicism, he incorporated the Christian concept of equality as the children of God and the notion of the Kingdom of God into his reformed Confucianism. During his brief four-year ministry (1860-1864), Ch'oe gained four thousand followers, mostly among the poor, oppressed farmers of southern Korea. In 1864 the throne approved the execution of Ch'oe on the charge of preaching and practicing Catholicism, which had been outlawed again.[38] Although forced underground, Ch'oe's cousin, Ch'oe Haewol, took over

leadership of the fledgling Heavenly Way movement, bringing steady growth to the Catholic-influenced Confucian reform movement.[39]

In 1894, the Tonghaks, an unauthorized splinter group of the Heavenly Way, instigated a rebellion that had momentous significance for East Asia.[40] Displaying characteristics similar to the Boxers in China,[41] the Tonghaks triggered the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, permitting Japan to make the first concrete step toward colonization of Korea.[42]

### **THE CATHOLIC PERSECUTION OF 1866**

The Korean throne, with the installment of child king Kojong (1864-1907), again persecuted Catholics. Kojong's father (Hungson Taewon'gun) took over the reigns of government for his son. The Taewon'gun feared the spread of Catholicism which appealed to the poor and oppressed low-classed commoners, women, and farmers in Korean society. As previously noted, twenty thousand Koreans adhered to the Catholic faith by 1864. In 1866, the Taewon'gun inaugurated a massive persecution of Catholics in which an estimated eight thousand to ten thousand faithful perished, including French priests.[43] The French navy attacked the Kangwha Island fortresses near Seoul in reprisal but met with little military success.[44] As a result of the three persecutions--1801, 1836, and 1866--Korea is second only to Italy in the number of canonized saints in the Roman Catholic Church with 103.[45]

### **THE ERA OF PROTESTANT INFLUENCE IN KOREAN POLITICS AND SOCIETY (1876-1910)**

#### **MEIJI JAPAN'S "PROTESTANT" INFLUENCE UPON KOREA (1876-1910)**

Korea had inherited much of its cultural treasures from China, passing them on to Japan. Whereas Korea historically had a little brother/big brother relationship with China, the Middle Kingdom, Korea had experienced a bitter, distrustful relationship with Japan.[46]

In 1853-1854, Commodore Matthew Perry's display of naval firepower shook Japan's Tokugawa (Edo) government (1600-1867), intimidating them into signing a treaty of amity, commerce, and trade with the United States in 1858.[47] The Japanese, quickly recognizing the need to learn and develop Western technology, especially military technology, overthrew the Tokugawa rule and restored the emperor to the throne. The Meiji Restoration spawned the Meiji Era (1868-1912), an era of modernization, political reform, and social reform that transformed Japan into an imperial power and captured the appreciative attention of the Western world.[48]

Meiji Japan, flexing its naval muscle in a Commodore Perry-type move, opened Korea to trade in 1876 with the signing of the Treaty of Kangwha.[49] Japan planted the seeds for the era of Protestant influence in Korean politics and society.[50]

In 1882, Admiral Shufeldt negotiated a treaty between the United States and Korea. Korean treaties with England (1882/1884), Germany (1882), Italy (1884), Russia (1884), France (1886), and other nations including Austria, Belgium, and Denmark followed soon thereafter.[51] Korea had finally emerged from centuries of seclusion.

#### **THE PROGRESSIVE OR INDEPENDENCE PARTY (1873-1885)**

In 1873, Kojong took the reigns of government from his father, the Taewon'gun, and together with his queen, Min, embarked upon a program along the line of the Enlightenment thinkers. During the initial stage of the Meiji Era, Kojong sent diplomats and students to study the transforming Japan.[52] Some Korean students converted to Protestantism through the work of American Protestant missionaries in the mission schools during those visits. The converted Korean students learned both the progressive reforms of Meiji Japan and the Protestant faith.[53]

Enlightenment thinkers took special interest in Meiji Japan's adoption of Western political reforms and the adoption of Western technology, especially military technology. They gained increasing influence in the Korean government from 1876, giving birth to the Progressive (Kaehwadang) or Independence Party, a movement which conservative Confucian yangban adamantly opposed. The Conservative Confucian yangban believed the opening of Korea through treaties would permit Catholicism to propagate widely.[54]

Two failed coups, the Military Mutiny of 1882 by Conservatives and the Coup d'Etat of 1884 (Kapsin Chongbyon) by Radical Progressives, rocked Korea.[55] The Taewon'gun, Kojong's father, seized upon widespread discontent in the military to launch a coup to remove his son from the throne. The attempt failed when China, fearing that Japan would use the turmoil as an excuse to send troops to Korea to colonize the country, captured the Taewon'gun, took him to Peking, and placed him under house arrest.[56]

In December 1884, Radical Progressives, dissatisfied with the pace of reform and frustrated by Conservative efforts to thwart reform initiatives, staged, with full backing from the Japanese government, a failed coup. Coup leaders either died in battle with Chinese troops which responded to Kojong's call for help, suffered execution along with their families, or successfully fled to Japan under escort of Japanese arms. Two leaders of the coup, Philip Jaisohn (So Jaepil) and Yun Tchiho, will be discussed below.[57]

## **PROTESTANT AMERICA'S INFLUENCE UPON KOREA**

Japan's backing of the Radical Progressive's failed coup attempt in December 1884 put Japan in extreme disfavor with the throne. Kojong redoubled efforts to secure promises of protection from the only two nations he trusted--Russia and the United States. But both Russia and the United States responded half-heartedly. In 1885, Russia, a fledgling Pacific power lacking the ability to project sufficient military force to challenge Japan, offered lukewarm support for Korean sovereignty. Kojong placed his confidence and hope in developing a close alliance with the United States.[58]

Kojong respected the prosperity and progressiveness of the United States. The United States of 1885, in the beginning of the Progressive Era (1876-1914), enjoyed an explosion of national wealth, technological advancement, and optimism. The Reconstruction (1865-1876) had ended. The United States exuded a confidence that God had ordained it to sound the bell of liberty and to carry the light of the Gospel to all the ends of the earth.[59]

Kojong had sent an embassy to the United States in 1883 that brought back glowing reports of a national train system, ports with streamliners plying the world's oceans, street car systems, electric lighting, wide streets, underground sewage systems with treatment plants, skyscrapers with elevators, hospitals, universities, houses and apartments, hotels, abundant food, factory systems, advanced mining techniques, international and interstate trade, advanced military weapons and training, farm machinery, postal services, public libraries, banks, department stores, churches, fire departments, police departments, sports, fashion, art galleries, museums, well-managed farms, telegraph systems, a sophisticated democratic system of national and state governments, religious plurality, and a free market economy.[60]

Of course, that impression overlooked the festering urban slums; the continued oppression of the liberated black; the long hours of unhealthy drudgery in factories for children, women, and men; the wars of genocide against the Plains Indians; discrimination against Chinese, Japanese, and Mexicans in the West and against the Italians, Irish, Jews, and Germans on the East coast; the struggle of labor against the owners; the struggle of women for rights; and the corruption of politics by the rich.[61] For Kojong--whose people faced poverty, a low life expectancy, famine, poor sanitation, epidemics, an animal and wind-based transportation system for people and goods, a village-centered market system, a lack of a national economy and currency, and, foremost, an inability to defend Korea against the technically superior weapons and better trained armies of Europe and Japan--the United States during the Gilded Age (1885-1914) looked irresistibly attractive.[62] The Korean name of America says it all--"Beautiful Country" (mikuk).

But, most importantly, Kojong believed that the United States lacked colonial designs upon Korea. That placed the United States in a class by itself, because he had witnessed with great anxiety the acts of England, France, and Germany in Asia. Japan had historically used Korea as the route to attack China and, from 1592 to 1597, brought such destruction upon Korea that the Yi dynasty (1392-1910) never recovered. Russia also earned a degree of Kojong's confidence: a recent Pacific power, Russia had never attacked Korea.[63]

Kojong reasoned that since the United States practiced the Protestant faith--a view which overlooked the Catholic, Jewish, Native American, and Black Muslim faith--the Protestant faith itself nurtured the way of life in the United States.[64] Kojong perceived correctly that the Calvinistic ethic, albeit in a partnership with Renaissance and Enlightenment thought, had guided the development of American society since the 1600s. Beginning in 1884, he welcomed American Protestant missionaries with open arms and a warm heart. He considered them representatives of the United States who could help forge a close relationship with Korea.[65]

Kojong hoped that the United States would help modernize Korea and protect it from the European powers and Japan. For that reason, he had signed the Treaty of Friendship and Trade with the United States in 1882.[66] Unfortunately for Kojong, the United States government had a closer relationship with Japan than Korea. The United States admired the progress of Meiji Japan and believed Japan would emerge as the Pacific power in Asia.[67] Although the United States government posted ambassadors in Korea from 1883, diplomats considered the assignment highly undesirable and the United States government seldom paid attention to the plight of the Korean people.[68] Indeed, Theodore Roosevelt's secret agreement with Emperor Meiji to permit Japan unopposed colonial rights to Korea if Japan permitted the United States unopposed colonial rights to the Philippines, which President McKinley annexed in 1898, demonstrated the weakness of the United States' commitment to Korea's sovereignty prior to the Korean War (1950-1953).[69]

In 1882, Kojong requested the United States government to send military and political advisors, teachers to establish schools, and doctors to establish hospitals. The United States sent several advisors during the 1882-1894 period and recruited three teachers for the Royal College in 1886.[70]

## AMERICAN PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES

American Protestant missionary societies responded to Kojong's request by sending several medical and educational missionaries in 1884 and 1885. The American missionaries became Kojong's only viable and trustworthy link with the United States.[71]

The impact of the American Protestant missionaries, and their Korean converts, transformed Korean government and society. The term "missionary" had a broad definition. Even American

diplomats lent their support to the evangelical efforts of the missionaries by utilizing American prestige and threat of force to protect their lives. They found that perfectly in harmony with the mission of the United States to Christianize the world. Horace Allen, who is considered below, represented a classic example of the missionary diplomat.

American Protestant missionaries transformed Korean society and politics in many of the ways spelled out by James Dennis in *Christianity and Social Progress*.<sup>[72]</sup> They improved the health and quality of life of the Korean people by founding hospitals and shelters, establishing schools for men and women of all classes, advocating the rights of the oppressed butcher, instituting sanitary practices to avoid cholera epidemics, introducing technology, supporting democratic reforms, printing literature in the language of the common people (han'gul), and establishing orphanages. They pioneered women's rights, especially through the mission schools for women.<sup>[73]</sup>

Three of those missionaries played key roles in transforming Korean society and politics during the 1884-1910 period: Horace N. Allen, Horace G. Underwood, and Henry G. Appenzeller.<sup>[74]</sup> Each of them took a radically different approach to political and social reform in Korea.

**Horace N. Allen: Diplomat Missionary.** Horace Allen came to Korea in October 1884.<sup>[75]</sup> A medical missionary with experience in China, Alfen gained the confidence of the royal family immediately by saving the life of a close relative of queen Min who had received dire sword wounds during the failed coup of December 1884. Allen became the king's personal physician and in 1885 opened the first hospital to use Western medicine, diagnosis, and surgical methods.<sup>[76]</sup>

In 1887, Allen left the Presbyterian mission and entered a career in diplomacy, serving first as an advisor to the Korean Embassy in Washington, D.C., then as an assistant to the United States ambassador in Seoul, and, finally, as the United States ambassador in Korea from 1897 to 1905. In the face of stiff opposition from the Chinese government, he helped engineer the sending of an embassy to Washington D.C. and helped them set up operations. Allen also directed the Korea exhibit at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago.<sup>[77]</sup> After Japan engineered the assassination of queen Min in 1895, Allen utilized his diplomatic powers to bring what political pressure he could upon the Japanese. "Protestant" Japan already had been out of favor with diplomat Allen. Allen, together with Horace Underwood, assisted Kojong in his successful escape from his Japanese captors in February 1896.<sup>[78]</sup> Kojong temporarily thwarted Japan's attempt to "Christianize" Korea through force by fleeing to the Russian legation. When Japan consolidated control of Korea after the defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Allen resigned his post in 1905 in protest over Theodore Roosevelt's refusal to aid Korea.<sup>[79]</sup>

Allen had three priorities: (1) protect Protestant missionaries in Korea; (2) advance United States commercial interests in Korea; and (3) protect Korea's independence from Japanese colonialism.

**Horace G. Underwood: Royalist.** Horace Underwood, a graduate of New Brunswick Theological Seminary, arrived in Seoul in April 1885.<sup>[80]</sup> Underwood sought, first and foremost, to create a Christian Korea one cover at a time. He and his talented wife, a medical doctor, Liliast Horton Underwood, believed that loyal support of Kojong and his queen, Min, constituted the best way to advance the agenda of Christianizing Korea.<sup>[81]</sup> Liliast Underwood served as queen Min's personal physician and Horace Underwood became a close confidant of the king and a familiar face around the royal palaces. In times of danger--particularly during the King's house arrest by the Japanese in 1895-96--Underwood, along with several other missionaries, stayed by the king's side night and day to protect him. Underwood knew that the Japanese feared American reprimand, so his presence deterred the Japanese from assassinating Kojong and the Crown Prince, as they had

assassinated queen Min in October 1895. Underwood and his companions carried pistols to defend the king, prepared his food in their homes, and served as food tasters to protect him from poisoning.[82] The Under-woods also founded a shelter for patients stricken with cholera during epidemics and an orphanage that eventually became Chosen Christian College and, today, Yonsei University.

**Henry G. Appenzeller: Progressive Movement Leader.** Henry Appenzeller arrived in Seoul, July 1885, a graduate of Drew Theological Seminary, and, like Horace Underwood, ready to create a Christian Korea one convert at a time.[83] An experienced school teacher, Appenzeller received royal permission to open a school in 1886. In 1887, Kojong bestowed the name Paichai Hakdang (Hall for Fostering Talented Men)[84] on the school, encouraging Koreans to attend.[85] By 1895, when Japan controlled the Korean government following its victory over China in the Sino-Japanese war, Appenzeller provided a basic liberal arts curriculum to Korean boys and men which included science, mathematics, geography, Western literature, political science, cultural anthropology, astronomy, and biology.[86] He and Ella Appenzeller also assisted Mary F. Scranton of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society in founding Ewha Hakdang (Pear Flower School), a school for girls which became Ewha Women's University.

At first, Appenzeller considered Paichai merely another way to evangelize Korea in the face of prohibitive laws. His concern for the political as well as the social transformation of Korea grew with an awareness of Korea's need for Christian political leaders. His vision for Korea developed from establishing clusters of Methodist communities into transforming Korea into a "City on a Hill" modeled on the late nineteenth-century evangelical Protestant vision of the United States.[87]

In 1894, Paichai became the center for the Progressive Movement--students cut off their top-knots, learned Western sports, received military drills from an American drill instructor, conducted debating societies, started a school newspaper, and openly espoused democratic thought. Paichai students, fiercely patriotic, became leaders in the Independence Movement, Syngman Rhee (Yi Sung-man) foremost among them.[88]

The students ran the Methodist mission's Trilingual Press, which published religious literature in han'gul, the native Korean script created by King Sejong in the early 1400s, rather than in Chinese characters, the language of the yangban. Sejong had also invented movable metal type for both Chinese characters and han'gul, but printing literature for the common people had failed to gain the support of the yangban. The Trilingual Press printed millions of pages of literature, including the New Testament, in han'gul, fostering a revival of the use of han'gul among the common people and of the use of movable metal type in han'gul.[89] The revival of the use of han'gul by the common people and printing facilitated the spreading of democratic ideas. Appenzeller also restarted the Korean Repository, writing editorials to advance the agenda of the Progressive movement and supporting the activities of the Independence Club from 1895 to 1899.[90]

In 1898, Appenzeller, who served as the Methodist mission treasurer, used mission funds without authorization to purchase the Independence Press Plant after Philip Jaisohn's departure from Korea, ostensibly to merge into the Trilingual Press. He quickly made his real intention known. Appenzeller, dedicated to the cause of progressive reform in Korea, intended to continue publishing the Independent. But Appenzeller's mission superintendent, W.B. Scranton, threatened him with disciplinary action for his unauthorized purchase of the Independent with mission funds and for his unapproved editorship of the Independent. Appenzeller publicly gave up his post as editor but continued to assist Yun Tchi-ho secretly until Kojong sent Yun into internal exile in December 1898. Appenzeller negotiated the sale of the Independent for Jaisohn, concluding the deal in 1900 and receiving a 10 percent commission for his efforts.[91]



## KOREAN CHRISTIAN REFORMERS

**Philip Jaisohn: Crusading Progressive.** Philip Jaisohn (So Jae-p'il), a principal leader in the failed coup of 1884, went into exile in the United States where he became a medical doctor, a Christian, a United States citizen, and married an American.[92] He returned with his wife to Korea at the end of 1895, after Japan defeated China and instituted a reform government. Jaisohn accepted Appenzeller's offer to teach political science at Paichai, his course gaining an enthusiastic following.[93]

The Progressive party took a new direction with Jaisohn's arrival. Kojong's escape to the Russian Legation in February 1896 spelled doom for the Radical Progressives who had assisted the Japanese in the assassination of queen Min and arrest of Kojong. Jaisohn took over the leadership of the Progressive party.[94] Although held in suspicion by the Conservative party for his leading role in the coup d'etat of 1884, Jaisohn's United States citizenship ensured his protection by the United States government. That failed to please diplomat Allen, who considered Jaisohn a troublemaker, but elated Appenzeller, who considered Jaisohn a clear voice calling for the creation of a Protestant Korea.[95]

While under protection in the Russian Legation from February 1896 to February 1897, Kojong appointed Jaisohn an official advisor and commissioned him to publish a newspaper, the Independent, for distribution throughout Korea. Jaisohn published his newspaper, the first in Korea, in both han'gul and English. He utilized the Independent to expose government corruption throughout the country and to attack Japanese and Russian colonial designs upon Korea. Jaisohn sounded the theme of Korean self-strengthening and Korean self-development.[96]

The Independent went to all eight provinces in Korea. Written in the language of the people, han'gul, common people wrote their complaints about government oppression in the letters to the editor. Jaisohn followed up the letters with editorials calling for justice and encouraging investigations into abuses. The paper brought results.[97]

In mid-1896, Jaisohn founded the Independence Club which, as its first project, erected an Independence Arch, replacing the torn-down Imperial Welcome Gate where the king traditionally had greeted Chinese ambassadors, and constructed Independence Hall on the site of the Welcoming Memorial Hall where the king traditionally had held audience with Chinese ambassadors. The Independence Club held weekly meetings in the Independence Hall to debate topics of progressive reform.[98]

The Independence Club attracted leaders of the Korean government to its meetings during the first year (1896-1897). The debates, conducted in a lively and orderly manner, treated economic issues, the desirability of democracy, social justice, health issues, and religious topics. Jaisohn established a student branch of the Independence Club in Appenzeller's school--the Mutual Friendship Debating Society--led by student Syngman Rhee. Jaisohn's work had a profound impact upon Korean politics and society.[99]

From 1897 to 1898, during the time of rising Russian influence in Korea, the Independence Movement centered activities out of Appenzeller's Paichai. After the Russian influence had been broken in early 1898, in great measure due to the demonstrations of the Independence Club, the Conservative Party-- supported by Kojong--crushed the Independence Club. Kojong dismissed Jaisohn from his adviser's post and removed support for the publication of the Independent, leading Jaisohn to decide to return to the United States in May 1898.[100]

After Japan colonized Korea in 1910, Jaisohn played an active role in the Independence Movement abroad until the liberation of Korea in 1945, but he never returned to take another official position in the Korean government.[101]

**Yun Tchi-ho: Within-the-System Reformer.** Yun Tchi-ho, son of a prominent official in Kojong's government, learned that his friendship with key leaders of the coup d'etat of 1884 implicated him in that coup and endangered his life.[102] In 1885 he fled into exile in Shanghai and the United States. While in the United States, Yun earned a Bachelors of Arts from Vanderbilt and a Masters of Theology from Emory University.[103] He then returned to Shanghai, taught in the Southern Methodist Anglo-Chinese College, and married Sieu Tsung, a Chinese Christian. When he learned of the progressive reforms in the Korean government following Japan's defeat of China in 1894, Yun returned immediately to take part in the establishment of a Progressive government in Seoul.[104] Like Jaisohn, Yun returned to Korea a Protestant Christian and married to a foreign wife.[105]

Yun's father's prominent position in the Korean government ensured him of important posts. He immediately received cabinet level appointments from Kojong, serving first as Vice Minister of Education and then as Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs. Appenzeller worked closely with Yun, taking pride in having a Methodist in key positions in the Korean government. Appenzeller especially enjoyed Yun's tenure as Vice Minister of Education during 1895, working closely with him to advance Paichai.[106]

In 1897, Yun accepted a position teaching physical geography in Paichai. Yun, possessing a Masters of Theology from Emory and having served on the faculty of the Southern Methodist Anglo-Chinese College in Shanghai, wished to take a key position in Paichai after his arrival in Seoul but, to his disappointment, Appenzeller never offered him a full-time position.[107]

Yun quickly rose to leadership positions in Jaisohn's Independence Club. During the time of growing Russian influence in Korea after the assassination of queen Min and Kojong's stay in the Russian legation, important Korean officials left the Independence Club. Yun, determined to stick with the progressive agenda of the Independence Club in spite of the growing opposition from the re-entrenched Conservative party and Russian diplomats, stood out as the only respected government official in the Independence Club. He led the drive for moderation in what had become an association of out-of-power politicians, common people, and students. His father persistently pleaded with him to resign from the Independence Club, warning him of an increasing danger of assassination. But Yun refused to resign.[108]

Yun inherited Jaisohn's role as leader of the Independence Club and editor of the Independent after Jaisohn's departure from Korea in 1898. Following Jaisohn's wishes, Yun took responsibility for the han'gul section and Appenzeller for the English section. Yun continued to edit the han'gul section until Kojong sent him into internal exile in December 1898.[109]

In November 1898, Yun led the Independence Club in submitting a list of reforms, including the establishment of a Privy Council, to Kojong. Kojong accepted the reforms as a delay tactic, but he had every intention of denying any move toward a parliamentary and constitutional government. The next month, December 1898, Kojong struck the Independence Club by arresting all of the leaders of the reform committee, except Yun. When the Independence Club demonstrated peacefully in front of the gate to the royal palaces, Kojong crushed the demonstrations, arresting and killing many of the demonstrators. Yun, warned of his impending arrest and execution, fled for his life to Appenzeller's home. The Appenzellers provided Yun with sanctuary.[110]

Kojong served Yun with an ultimatum. Either take a post as governor of a province far from Seoul or suffer dire punishment. Yun agreed to go into internal exile. Kojong's exile of Yun from

Seoul at the end of 1898 concluded Yun's leadership of the crushed Independence Club, ended the publication of the Independent, and marked the end of the Independence Club.[111]

Yun continued to hold government positions even after the Japanese colonization of Korea in 1910. He attempted to bring benefits to the Korean people in spite of Japanese occupation. The charge that Yun collaborated with the Japanese from 1910 to 1945 is difficult to substantiate. Rather than a traitor, Yun, as during the 1876-1910 period, sought ways to bring Independence Club reforms by working within the Korean government.[112]

**Syngman Rhee: Radical Progressive Turned President.** Syngman Rhee entered Appenzeller's Paichai in 1894 immediately after Japan's victory over China.[113] He quickly learned English, presenting the keynote address, entitled "Independence," at the Paichai commencement ceremony of 1897.[114] He founded a student newspaper and emerged as the student leader of the Mutual Friendship Debating Society, the student branch of the Independence Club.[115] Jaisohn served as advisor to that society, working closely with student leader Rhee.[116]

In November 1898, Kojong (by then declared emperor) deceitfully accepted, then rejected, reforms petitioned by the Independence Club. Kojong covertly planned the arrest of key members of the Independence Club, among them Rhee. Rhee fled to Appenzeller's home for sanctuary and remained in the protection of the American missionary community. While walking outside the missionary compounds with Dr. Avison, Korean police arrested Rhee. He landed in prison for seven years (1898-1905).[117] While in prison, the American missionary community sent Rhee blankets, clothing, food, provided translation work to earn money, and sent food and clothing to Rhee's parents. Underwood, Allen, and Appenzeller petitioned unsuccessfully for his release, but at least they helped avoid his execution.[118]

Rhee used his time in prison for reflection. He converted to Christianity, beginning a ministry that led to the conversion of forty prisoners. Korean prisons at that time held children as well as adults. Rhee instituted a school for the children. In addition, he wrote his program for reform--"The Spirit of Independence"--a program he followed when president of South Korea from 1948-1960.[119]

The Japanese released Rhee from prison in 1905 after they seized control of the Korean government in the wake of their victory over Russia. Rhee departed Korea, traveling to the United States where he earned a Ph.D. in Political Science at Princeton while Woodrow Wilson served as the university's president.[120] Rhee developed a close friendship with Wilson. After graduating from Princeton, Rhee became president of the Korean government in exile, serving as a key leader of the Independence Movement abroad.[121] When Woodrow Wilson declared his famous Fourteen Points, which included the liberation of all colonies, Rhee seized the opportunity to help stage the 1 March 1919 Independence Demonstration against Japanese colonialism. Rhee had hoped that his friend, President Wilson, would come to Korea's aid but Wilson, by that time, suffered from opposition in the United States Senate and in Europe to his Fourteen Points.[122] On 25 September 1919, Wilson suffered a stroke while speaking in Pueblo, Colorado, ending any hope that the United States would come to the aid of Korea through the League of Nations.[123] Korea's peaceful demonstration for independence, paid at the high cost of thousands of lives, went practically unnoticed by the United States. Japan owned Korea.

Rhee continued to served as leader of the Independence Movement abroad until the liberation of Korea in 1945. Returning to Korea, Rhee became president of the Republic of Korea from 1948-1960. He led South Korea through the trying time of struggle for national unification against the Soviet Union's program to communize the north from 1945-1948. When the Soviet Union refused to permit the United Nation's called free elections in the North, Rhee won the election, as president in the South in 1948. Kim Il-sung emerged as the communist dictator in the north.[124]

Rhee struggled with Kim throughout his tenure as president, the bloodiest time of that struggle coming during the Korean War (1950-1953) when Kim attacked the South on 25 June 1950. The United Nations came to Rhee's aid, ending in a stalemate at the 38th parallel that has remained until this day.[125] Rhee continued to guide post-Korean War Korea until a student demonstration, like the one he had led against Kojong, unseated him in April 1960.[126]

## CONCLUSION

From the early 1600s until the 1940s, Korea experienced two phases of Christianity's influence--the Catholic Era of Influence (1600-1876) and the Protestant Era of Influence (1876-1945). Christianity, embraced by the out-of-power and the oppressed from the 1600s, continually acted as a reform movement within Korean society, as seen in the Sirhak movement, the oppressed farmers and women, the Enlightenment movement, the Heavenly Way and Tonghak movement, Japanese Meiji reforms, and American Protestant reforms.

From 1885-1910, the period focused upon in this essay, the American Protestant influence and the Japanese "Protestant" influence made the greatest impact upon Korean political and social life. Three American Protestants--Horace N. Allen, Horace G. Underwood, and Henry G. Appenzeller--and three Korean Protestants--Philip Jaisohn (So Jae-p'il), Yun Tchi-ho, and Syngman Rhee (Yi Sung-man)--played important roles during this period. Allen can be characterized as a Diplomat Missionary, Underwood as a Royalist, Appenzeller as a Progressive Movement Leader, Jaisohn as a Crusading Progressive, Yun as a With-in-the-System Progressive, and Rhee as a Revolutionary Progressive.

Although the Korean Protestant reformers discussed in this essay differed in their approach to reforming Korean society, they had several striking similarities. They all earned graduate degrees in the United States--Jaisohn at Columbia Medical College (now George Washington University), Yun at Emory University, and Rhee at Princeton. They all spoke fluent English. They all embraced the Protestant faith. They all took foreign wives-- Jaisohn an Anglo-American, Yun a Chinese, and Rhee an Austrian. They all hated corruption in Korean government and society. And, finally, they all held Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism responsible for corruption in Korean government and society; they all preferred Protestant American government and society and sought to build Korea in that image.

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DANIEL M. DAVIES (B.A., University of Washington; M.Th., Southern Methodist University; M. Phil., Ph.D., Drew University) is instructor at the University of Maryland, Asian Division, Korea Branch. He is author of *The Life and Thought of Henri Gehard Appenzeller (1858-1002): Missionary to Korea and The Complete Works of Henry G. Appenzeller* (forthcoming). His articles have appeared in *Church History*, *Methodist History*, *Royal Asiatic Society Transactions*, *Korea Branch*, *Journal of Korean Studies*, and *Journal of Education* (Yonsei University). Special interests include the influence of American Protestantism upon Korean society; reform movements in Korea; Korean studies; and American history. This article is a revised version of papers delivered at the Annual AAR/SBL meeting in Kansas City in 1991 and the Regional Pacific Northwest AAR/SBL meeting in Seattle, Washington in 1992.

Under these provisions Korea lost its right to conduct diplomatic exchanges with other countries and the Korean Foreign Affairs Office was dismantled. [2][3][4][11] Daniel M. Davies, "The impact of Christianity upon Korea, 1884-1910: Six key American and Korean figures," *Journal Of Church & State* 36, no. 4 (1994). [5][6][7] Chung Shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (University of Washington Press, 2003) 123, 124, 126. [8] Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires* (Columbia University Press, 2002). [9] In-Sok Yeo and Yoon, Do-Heum, "Allen (Horace N. Allen, 1858-1932)" *Yonsei Medical Journal* 58, no. 4 (2017): 685-688. [10] Young Park, *Korea and the Imperialists: In Search of a National Identity* (AuthorHouse, 2009) 115-116. Less than 30% of the South Korean population is Christian. Nevertheless, you cannot understand Korea's modern religious culture unless you take into account the impact Christianity has had on how religion in general is defined today and on how modern religious communities, both Christian and non-Christian, express their beliefs and values. In addition, Christianity has had impact on the secular realm as well. The increased visibility of women in the public sphere today compared to the cloistered lives most of them lived in the Chosŏn dynasty is partially the result of Christianity both providing more formal education for women and also assigning women important tasks outside of the home.

7. NATIONALISM 1: Patriotism and Enlightenment Movement Daniel M. Davies, "The Impact of Christianity upon Korea, 1884-1910: Six Key American and Korean Figures," *Journal of Church and State* (Autumn 1994): 795-821. Kenneth M. Wells, "The Rationale of Korean Economic Nationalism under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1922-1932," *Modern Asian Studies* 19-4 (Oct. 1985): 823-859. January 29.

8. NATIONALISM 2: Anti-Japanese Independence Movements Jacqueline Pak, "Cradle of the Covenant: Ahn Changho and the Christian Roots of the Korean Constitution," *Christianity in Korea*, 116-148. Kang Wi-Jo, "Christianity, Nationalism, and Japanese Colonialism," *Christianity in Korea*, 97-115. You've reached the end of your free preview. Want to read all 8 pages? 1. Christian teachings were first brought to Korea in 1603. The faith was brought not by foreign missionaries, but by Korean diplomats who came in contact with Roman Catholicism in Japan and Manchuria. In 1758, King Yeongjo of Joseon officially outlawed Catholicism as an "evil practice," and a mass persecution of Korean Catholics was ordered by queen great-grandmother Queen Jeongsun in 1801. 2. In 1884, Dr. Horace Allen, a medical missionary under the American Presbyterian Board, became the first resident Protestant missionary in Korea. Three months after his arrival, Allen was called on to treat Min Yong-ik, a high-ranking official and cousin of the Empress.