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Providence and Politics: Horace N. Allen and the
Early US-Korea Encounter, 1884-1894

By

Andrea Yun Kwon

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

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of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

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Fall 2012

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Abstract

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by

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This dissertation examines the career of Horace Newton Allen, an American physician who became the first Protestant missionary to reside in Chosŏn Korea. It focuses specifically on the initial decade of his tenure on the peninsula (1884-1894), the period when he transitioned from a participant of the Protestant foreign mission movement to a member of the American diplomatic service. These years also comprised the formative era of relations between the United States and Korea. Through a close look at Allen's work and activities, this study uses his story as window into the broader dynamics of the early American-Korean encounter. In particular, it challenges previous characterizations of Horace Allen as an exemplar of US expansionism, and argues instead that his career was shaped in large part by the divergence in American interests vis-à-vis Korea during the late nineteenth century.

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To

Hea Gyung Kim

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Introduction

Few names are more recognizable to students of early American-Korean relations than that of Horace Newton Allen. And for good reason. During the twenty years the angular, bespectacled physician from Ohio lived in Chosŏn Korea, he supervised the kingdom's first Western-style hospital and medical school, cultivated close ties with the monarch, helped secure gold mining and other concessions for American business, played a central role in Korean migration to Hawaii, and, for nearly a decade, served as the United States ambassador in Seoul. As historian Wayne Patterson summarizes, "In the one hundred years since Korea was opened to the West no foreigner became more involved in Korea's affairs than Horace Allen."¹

Yet despite Allen's significance to the late-nineteenth-century encounter between the United States and Korea, little has been written in depth about this missionary-turned-diplomat. Fred Harvey Harrington's *God, Mammon, and the Japanese*, published more than half a century ago (and at a moment, Harrington later noted, when there was so paltry an interest in Korea that he decided to omit its name from the main title), remains the single, classic work.² At the same time, however, Allen continues to be the favored reference in general discussions about early US involvement on the peninsula. It is as if he has been cloaked, one could say, in a kind of superficial ubiquity.

A few reasons might account for these trends. On the one hand, though part of Allen's historical importance lies in his having been the first Protestant missionary to reside in Korea, his record is not exactly the stuff of missionary hagiography. His fewer than five years as a Presbyterian mission agent shrink when compared to the multiple decades others gave to the mission endeavor. But it was not only time; it was also the contentiousness of his tenure. In fact some of the most biting criticism of Horace Allen—for example, that he was never a "real" or genuine missionary—have come from those directly involved in or sympathetic to the Protestant mission cause.³

On the other hand, Allen has also been portrayed, often in broad strokes, not as an exception but as an exemplar—as a representative embodiment of America's growing

¹ Wayne Patterson, "Sugar-Coated Diplomacy: Horace Allen and Korean Immigration to Hawaii, 1902-1905," *Diplomatic History* 3 (winter 1979): 19.

² Fred Harvey Harrington, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese: Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American Relations, 1884-1905* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1944). Fred Harvey Harrington, "An American View of Korean-American Relations, 1882-1910," in *One Hundred Years of Korean-American Relations, 1882-1892*, ed. Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press), 46. As far as I am aware there are only two other longer-length works (in English) that address the topic of Horace Allen, both of which are theses: Wi Jo Kang, "Horace Newton Allen's Contribution to Korea, 1884-1905" (Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1962); Henry Hyunsuk Kim, "Horace N. Allen: Expansionism and Missions in Korea and Hawaii" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 2010). The best Korean-language work on Allen is Kyŏng Bae Min, *Allen ūi sŏn'gyo wa kŭndae Han-Mi oegyo* [Dr. Horace N. Allen and His Mission in Korea, 1884-1905] (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1991).

³ See for example James S. Gale, *Korea in Transition* (New York: Laymen's Missionary Movement, 1909), 163; Martha Huntley, *To Start a Work: The Foundations of Protestant Mission in Korea, 1884-1919* (Seoul: Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1987), 68, 111; Daniel M. Davies, *The Life and Thought of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller (1858-1902)* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988), 131.

reach abroad during the post-Civil War decades. In particular he has attracted arguments about how the United States' outward religious, economic, and political impulses were intimately, even indistinctly, interconnected. One of the consequences of this assumption has been a flattening of Allen into a single-dimensional figure, and one not always entirely believable. In turn his range of activities, too, can collapse into a monolithic illustration of American expansionism.⁴

This dissertation is an attempt to begin reconstructing and reexamining Horace Allen's remarkable career. It concentrates on the first ten years of his connection to Korea (1884-1894), the period when he transitioned from a participant of the Protestant foreign mission enterprise to a member of the American diplomatic service. These were foundational, at times greatly unsettling, years for Allen. They are also, I believe, the most misunderstood. Indeed in contrast to impressions that from the outset Allen was a freewheeling opportunist—someone who, as one historian described, “nicely combined his Presbyterian missionary dedication with a robber-baron passion for making money”—the evidence reveals a more complicated story.⁵

Allen himself was a person of varied characteristics. He was ambitious and self-conscious, cantankerous and persevering, adroit and evasive. He seemed to make enemies almost as easily as he made friends. The primary concern here is not, however, Allen's personality, though intriguing in its own right and obviously fundamental to his decision-making. While its focus lies on one person, this study is intended to be less a biography than an exploration of the circumstances, events, and ideas that shaped Allen's choices and actions. A fresh look at his first decade, I would argue, will allow us not only a clearer picture of his career on the peninsula, but also greater insight into the early US-Korea relationship.

Horace Allen arrived in Seoul, the capital of the Chosŏn dynasty, during one of the most turbulent periods in modern Korean history. The last of the major states in East Asia to sign treaties with the West, the kingdom also faced peculiar challenges as it confronted a collapsing Sinocentric world order. Like other countries in the region, Korea witnessed firsthand the manifestations of the Western intrusion into Asia starting in the mid-nineteenth century. Yet in part because of its ideological resilience, the peninsula was able to avoid entering into the modern international system—a system based, in theory, on individually equal states—until the century's last quarter. When it did, the impetus came not from the barrel of a Western gunboat, but from pressures exerted by Korea's neighbors, the Qing dynasty and Meiji Japan.⁶

⁴ See Richard W. Van Alstyne, *Rising American Empire* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1960), 184; Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion: 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 57; Edward P. Crapol, *James G. Blaine: Architect of Empire* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2000), 115-116; David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Involvement: American Economic Expansion Across the Pacific, 1784-1900* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 193, 206. All of these assessments took Harrington's book as their main source. For more positive depictions of Allen, see Kenneth B. Lee, *Korea and East Asia: The Story of a Phoenix* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1997), 129; Wi Jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea: A History of Christianity and Politics* (Albany: State University of New York, 1997), 21.

⁵ Walter LaFeber, *The American Age: United States Foreign Policy at Home and Abroad*, vol. 1, *To 1920*, 2d ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), 182.

⁶ See for example Key-Hiuk Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Chaibong Hahm, “Civilization, Race, or Nation? Korean Visions of Regional World Order in the Late Nineteenth Century,”

The beginnings of Allen's career also coincided with immense changes in American society. By the early 1880s, new technologies in transportation, communications, and resource production were laying the foundations for a rapidly industrializing economy, while at the same time the US embarked on a jolting transformation from an agrarian to an urbanized nation. These changes helped spur a growing attention to areas beyond America's shores. As traders, missionaries, adventurers, diplomats, and travelers, Americans were coming into greater contact than before with outside nations and societies. Yet internationally, the United States in the post-Civil War decades was not one of the great powers. Both deliberately and out of necessity (the American military, for one, was weak compared to European capabilities), until the turn of the twentieth century, the US was to stay a minor player in the imperialist contests emerging around the globe.⁷

In this context, how are we to understand the particular dynamics of American-Korean relations? Fred Harvey Harrington's book, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese*, established perhaps one of the most enduring models for answering that question. Through an eloquent account of Horace Allen's activities on the peninsula, Harrington suggested that the "gospel and the dollar" were the main pillars of American engagement with Korea, and that the two poles were necessarily linked. Allen himself, Harrington described, was an unwavering "realist" driven throughout his career by a desire to make money, and who was not afraid to use "imperial diplomacy" for personal gain. As a Protestant missionary, according to Harrington, Allen combined "intrigue with soul-saving," and would eventually wield almost unquestioned influence over the Korean monarch.⁸

Although Harrington pointed out, and as historians have examined in more recent works, that Washington's official attitude toward Korea was cautious and passive, his portrayal of Horace Allen has been taken up by some as reflecting the nascent or proto-imperialistic nature of US foreign policy during the late nineteenth century.⁹ Harrington himself never explicitly defined what he meant by Allen's "imperial" behavior. But even if Allen had remained only a missionary, he might have fit into the "cultural imperialism" paradigm that has become common in interpretations of America's nonstate or informal involvement overseas. The fact that Horace Allen's career extended into the economic and diplomatic realms has made him, it seems, all the more tempting a target.

in *Korea at the Center: Dynamics of Regionalism in Northeast Asia*, ed. Charles K. Armstrong et al. (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2006), 35-50.

⁷ See Robert L. Beisner, *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900* (Wheeling, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1975), 37.

⁸ For example, Harrington, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese*, 20, 42, 109, 144, 205. As historian Robert R. Swartout has noted, Harrington's negative portrayal of King Kojong as weak and indecisive had a longlasting effect on how later Western historians viewed the monarch. See Robert R. Swartout, *Mandarins, Gunboats, and Power Politics: Owen Nickerson Denny and the International Rivalries in Korea* (Honolulu: the University Press of Hawaii, 1980), 58-60.

⁹ For a critique of this approach, see Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 6-8. One of the best recent works on US-Korea diplomatic relations is Jongsuk Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry: Korean-American Relations to 1910* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990). For an earlier work that emphasized the US's reticence toward Korea, see Harold Joyce Noble, "Korea and Her Relations With the United States Before 1895" (Ph.D. diss, University of California, Berkeley), 1931.

The limitations of such an approach have already been exposed in studies of Western missionaries and the modern mission movement. As the historian Lamin Sanneh noted two decades ago, much of the literature on the subject was relegated “to a subcategory of colonial history. Mission acquired the status of Western religious mischief in the wider context of European and American imperialism.” But when scholars “look closely at the facts,” Sanneh contended, “there seem to be glaring discrepancies between interpretation and evidence.”¹⁰ More recently, historians like Dana Robert and Ryan Dunch have argued for the need to move beyond the imperialism framework itself. Concepts like cultural imperialism, according to Dunch, are not only ill-defined and problematically versatile, but can also result—ironically—in a “denial of agency or autonomy to non-Western populations.” As Dunch puts it, the “popular image of the finger-wagging missionary condemning a host culture wholesale and seeking to replace it in its entirety is, to say the least, implausible as a general type.”¹¹

This dissertation, likewise, aims to disentangle Horace Allen from his older, sometimes facile representations. A close examination of his first decade on the Korean peninsula suggests that Allen’s career owed as much to his failures as to his successes. It shows someone who was prone both to bouts of self-doubt and to streaks of inflated confidence, who was sure of a providential role in his circumstances yet could feel trapped by them. These years reveal that economic considerations were peripheral to Allen’s major decisions, and that his move to the diplomatic arena had been an unforeseen development. They also point to a genuine (though not always selfless) attempt by Horace Allen to act as a broker between home and host countries. Like many of his compatriots, Allen held paternalistic and sometimes deeply condescending views of Asia.¹² Yet only a staunch cynicism would dismiss his repeated expressions of appreciation, conveyed both during his residence in Seoul and for decades afterward, for the Korean people, culture, and society.

More broadly, this study argues that Horace Allen did play a significant role in the formative era of US-Korea relations, but that he was able to do so because of the divergence—rather than confluence—of American interests. While the foreign policy of the US toward the peninsula initially displayed signs of activism, its overriding posture throughout Allen’s career was characterized by neutrality and disengagement. Yet many of the Americans who lived in Korea would advocate a quite different orientation, and for different reasons. The Chosŏn leadership, moreover, pursued their own agenda in regard to the United States, and would attempt to enlist Horace Allen’s services toward their particular goals.

¹⁰ Lamin Sanneh, “Mission and the Modern Imperative—Retrospect and Prospect: Charting a Course,” in *Earthen Vessels*, eds. Joel A. Carpenter and Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 301-316.

¹¹ Dana Lee Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996); Dana L. Robert, introduction to *Converting Colonialism: Visions & Realities in Mission History, 1706-1914*, ed. Dana L. Robert (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 1-20; Ryan Dunch, “Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity,” *History and Theory* 41 (2002): 322.

¹² As Dunch convincingly argues, one of the problems with the concept of “cultural imperialism” is the lack of differentiation between intentions or attitudes, and their effects: “The distinction is not always kept as clear as it should be in literature criticizing the missionary impact on culture, in which the *intent* of missionaries to change a culture is frequently confused with the *actuality* of doing so.” Dunch, “Beyond Cultural Imperialism,” 310.

None of this is to suggest that the American-Korean encounter in the early period was essentially or merely sanguine. That was not the case. Allen's very presence on the peninsula reflected the power imbalances inherent in the Western treaty system. It is to propose, however, the need for a reevaluation of this relationship, one that takes into account not only the larger forces of geopolitics and modernization that were affecting Korea and the United States alike in the late nineteenth century, but also the specific, local contexts in which the two countries met face to face. A focus on Allen provides an opportunity to push beneath the familiar generalizations—to see how the inequalities perpetuated by the modern international order existed alongside concrete instances of accommodation, negotiation, and exchange between Gilded Age Americans and late Chōson Koreans.

Horace Allen was not a profound theorist, but he did seem to enjoy writing. Though not heavily involved in translation or other literary endeavors like his missionary colleagues, during his career he published a handful of articles for newspapers and periodicals, as well as three larger works (including a compilation of traditional Korean folktales, probably one of the first English-language books of its kind).¹³ Even more fortunate for the historian, Allen was a keen self-chronicler. Before his death in 1932, he deposited an extensive collection of his diaries, letters, articles, speeches, images, and other material at the New York Public Library.¹⁴ In addition to Allen's personal papers, this study relied on the archival records of the Presbyterian and Methodist mission boards and their missionaries (a key source that was unavailable to Harrington); US State Department correspondences, instructions, and reports; and a range of published primary sources.¹⁵ It is regrettable, one should note, that there does not appear to exist many records by Frances Messenger Allen, who also spent two decades in Korea. Overshadowed in the historical literature by her more famous husband, she nevertheless deserves recognition as a pioneer missionary and cultural mediator in her own right.

If Horace Allen's story provides an important window into the dynamics of the early US-Korea encounter, it is, after all, one aperture. Space abounds for additional scholarship on the political, cultural, and economic aspects of this topic, especially those that more fully incorporate perspectives from the Korean side. In this dissertation I have paid special attention to "the *dailiness*," to borrow historian Marilyn B. Young's phrase, of Allen's career—that is, I have tried to give a glimpse of what his experiences were really like.¹⁶ I have also taken as a cue James West Davidson's argument for a more

¹³ H. N. Allen, *Korea Tales: Being a Collection of Stories Translated From the Korean Folk Lore, Together With Introductory Chapters Descriptive of Korea* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1889). His other major works include *A Chronological Index: Some of the Chief Events in the Foreign Intercourse of Korea From the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Twentieth Century* (Seoul: Press of Methodist Publishing House, 1901) and *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908). His *Fact and Fancy* (1904) was a compiled republication of *Korean Tales* and *A Chronological Index*.

¹⁴ Allen included an explanatory preface to his press copy books: "In looking over my papers I find that I kept copies of every letter of any consequence, written by me during the twenty two years of my residence in China and Korea and during the period of my service in Washington. . . . Naturally this plan of saving all, leaves much matter that may perhaps be considered of a trivial nature." Horace N. Allen Papers, The New York Public Library.

¹⁵ Harrington, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese*, viii.

¹⁶ Marilyn B. Young, "The Quest for Empire," in *American-East Asian Relations: A Survey*, ed. Ernest R. May and James C. Thomson Jr. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 138.

narrative approach to history. One of the potential values of the narrative form, as Davidson says, is a specificity whose justification lies in a “primitive human response—simple curiosity about specific things, in and for themselves.”¹⁷ This study arose from a question borne of a like curiosity: How did an obscure doctor from an obscure place become one of the most conspicuous Westerners in Korea?

I begin answering this question by sketching, in Chapter 1, the history of American-Korean contact; the domestic and geopolitical backdrop of Korea’s “opening” to the West; and the resurgence of American foreign missions after the Civil War. These contexts are necessary, I think, for understanding Horace Allen’s arrival in Korea in the first place. Chapter 2 looks at the 1884 coup d’état in Seoul and the founding of the royal government hospital, both of which were pivotal events for Allen. In Chapter 3, I document his first years as a Presbyterian missionary in Korea and the disputes that would eventually lead to his fallout with the mission. Chapter 4 then follows Allen to Washington, DC, where he spent two years in the service of the Korean government before returning to the peninsula. His path back and his transition to an employee of the US legation in Seoul are the subject of the final chapter.

Note: Korean names and terms have been romanized according to the McCune-Reischauer system, except in instances where other renderings are more familiar (for example, “Seoul”), and in original quotations where spellings may have differed.

¹⁷ James West Davidson, “The New Narrative History: How New? How Narrative?” *Reviews in American History* 12 (September 1984): 327. For other discussions on the uses of narrative history, see Lawrence Stone, “The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History,” *The Past and Present Society* 85 (November 1979): 3-24; David Carr, “Narrative and the Real World: An Argument for Continuity,” *History and Theory* 25 (May 1986): 117-131; and Robert Middlekauff, “Narrative History and Ordinary Life,” *Pacific Historical Review* 60 (February 1991): 1-13.

Prologue

Departure

All told, the passage would stretch nearly two months.

It began in August 1883 in the town of Delaware, just west of the Olentangy River in the central plains of Ohio. A settlement established by whites in the 1810s, and named after the Native peoples who had moved westward into Ohio Country a century earlier, Delaware was to become the home of Horace Newton Allen.¹ He was born there in 1858, into what appeared to be a family of middle economic means. His father was a newcomer to Ohio with New England roots; his mother, Jane, was the daughter of an Irish immigrant.² Horace grew up in the years surrounding America's wrenching Civil War. Like almost all of Ohio, Delaware lay outside the actual theater of battles. And while the community's residents had contributed to the war effort (on the side of the Union), the young Allen would have grown up observing not so much the immense physical destruction wrought by that war, but rather a landscape changing in other ways.

Railroads were the central, inexorable factor. Two weeks after Horace's eleventh birthday, celebrations rippled east and west at the hammering of the "golden spike" in Utah, the ceremonial link symbolizing—and in fact molded, for the very occasion, of gold—completion of the transcontinental railway.³ But closer to home, local lines had already begun to alter the feel of Delaware. With the coming of its first trains in the 1850s, what had hitherto been a remote village of coarse pasturelands (a place, said one observer, "chiefly noticeable on account of its dullness") would be transformed over the next decades into a town expanding with new industries, and with access to major cities across Ohio and beyond.⁴ Horace left behind little detail about his upbringing. Yet one might conclude that his later fascination with the uses and technology of the locomotive were rooted here in these early, impressionable years.

The other influential force in Allen's hometown was the local college, Ohio Wesleyan University (OWU). Opened in the mid-1840s by the Methodist Episcopal Church, it stood on the southeast end of town, on the site of a luckless sulfur-springs hotel that Delaware citizens had purchased and donated for the new school.⁵ The

¹ Amy C. Schutt, *Peoples of the River Valleys: The Odyssey of the Delaware Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 104; Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio In Two Volumes: An Encyclopedia of the State*, vol. 2 (Columbus: Henry Howe & Son, 1889), 554.

² Horace N. Allen to American Publisher's Association, 13 April 1901, Horace N. Allen Papers, The New York Public Library. Allen noted here that his father, also named Horace Allen, was born Bennington (Vermont) in 1804 and moved to Ohio at the age of twelve. He also counted on his paternal side a relation to the Revolutionary War hero Ethan Allen. See also "The New American Minister," *The Korean Repository*, 4 (September 1897): 348-351; Henry Kim, "Horace N. Allen: Expansionism and Missions in Korea and Hawaii" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 2010), 43, f.n. 194.

³ See Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 274-299.

⁴ *History of Delaware County and Ohio* (Chicago, O. L. Baskin & Co. Historical Publishers, 1880), 332.

⁵ The Methodist Episcopal Church was the "northern" Methodist church, as distinct from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. References to the Methodist missionaries in this dissertation pertain to the northern Methodists.

founding of Ohio Wesleyan reflected not only the phenomenal spread of Methodism—the largest Protestant denomination in Ohio, and soon to be the largest in all the US—but also the mid-century explosion of small, church-affiliated and often locally supported colleges. Some of these would be all-female institutions, such as Delaware’s own Ohio Wesleyan Female College, established some ten years after her “brother institution,” and a short half-mile away. The two would merge into the coeducational OWU in 1877, just before Horace entered his first year there.⁶

Horace’s college experience was doubtless a pivotal one for him. Like American higher education as a whole, Ohio Wesleyan was then undergoing exploratory changes to its curriculum, shifting from the traditional “classical” instruction that had long occupied the core of college learning in America (at OWU, the classical—and originally only—course involved mainly the study of Greek and Latin, with a sprinkling of other subjects like mathematics, rhetoric, and philosophy) toward a more varied program.⁷ When Horace graduated in 1881, he would be awarded Bachelor of Science, a relatively new degree at the school. The latest “experimental sciences,” one professor would explain of the revised curriculum, “have opened up new, attractive, and profitable lines of study suitable for collegiate work.” Though the “old educational form” remained valuable, OWU could now “offer more subjects of knowledge, more and various avenues to learning, and culture, and practical fitting for life’s occupations.”⁸

That approach seems to have suited Allen, or at least appealed to him more than the aura of the classics. As future years attested, he was in many ways of the “practical” mold. It was no surprise he might have preferred the earthiness of the sciences to the scholasticism of the past. But there appeared to be in Horace, too, an idealistic side. For while studying at OWU he had determined that he would become a physician—and more, a missionary physician. He would join the movement to spread the Christian gospel, in the words of the eminent missions leader Rufus Anderson, to “the whole heathen world.”⁹

Precisely how Horace arrived at this commitment is unclear, though according to one acquaintance’s account it was sometime after freshman year that he definitively

⁶ E. T. Nelson, ed., *Fifty Years of History of the Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Printing and Publishing Co., 1895), 8, 49-60. On the growth of colleges, see for example James Findlay, “Agency, Denominations, and the Western Colleges, 1830-1860: Some Connections Between Evangelicalism and American Higher Education,” in *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Roger L. Geiger (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 115-126; Colin Burke, *American Collegiate Populations: A Test of the Traditional View* (New York: New York University Press, 1982), 37-38. On Methodism, see Nathan O. Hatch, “The Puzzle of American Methodism,” *Church History* 63 (June 1994): 175-189; Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002), 59-62.

⁷ Regarding these larger curricular shifts, see Roger L. Geiger, “The Era of Multipurpose Colleges in American Higher Education, 1850-1890,” in *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, 127-153.

⁸ Nelson, *Fifty Years of History*, 67. See also *Quinquennial Catalogue of the Ohio Wesleyan University, 1842-1886*, ed. Edward T. Nelson (Delaware, Ohio: Ohio Wesleyan University, 1886), xvi. Only five students out of Allen’s class of thirty-nine elected the classical course, though by then the classical course had also undergone changes, mostly in the addition of a modern language and the opportunity to take electives.

⁹ Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York: Charles Scribner and Company, 1869), 1.

attached himself to the cause.¹⁰ The atmosphere at Ohio Wesleyan would not have discouraged it. While adherence to Methodism was not required of students, school leaders expected “religious influence” to pervade life at OWU.¹¹ By this was meant the influence of evangelicalism—the style of Christianity that had so burgeoned during the antebellum period that by the 1860s it characterized the overwhelming majority of American churches, and which emphasized, among other theological aspects, the authority of the Bible, personal conversion, and an active religiosity.¹² At Ohio Wesleyan, such tenets would have been made conspicuous. There were the mandatory chapel services, the religious clubs, the devotions led by faculty. The current and past presidents of the college were all ordained Methodist ministers. Half of the male members of Horace Allen’s graduating class, in fact, would go on either to join the clergy or study theology at other institutions.¹³

Nevertheless, Horace’s decision to join the mission enterprise placed him in a small minority among his classmates; in relation to the American population generally, it put him into an even tinier cohort. At the time of his departure overseas, only a fraction of one percent of Americans could be counted on the roll of Protestant foreign missionaries.¹⁴ What was true since the beginnings of the movement earlier in the century had stayed thus: its aims were always loftier than the number of willing emissaries.

But signs pointed to an upswing. The dampened interest missions saw during the war and for some years afterward was dissipating, as fresh missionary-sending organizations were being formed, and as existing boards and societies began enlarging their activities abroad. These were stirrings of a revitalized American enthusiasm for overseas missions, one that was to climb to unprecedented heights over the coming four decades.¹⁵ Horace stood at the threshold of this new era. And though he could not have known it, many of the men and women who were to fill the rank-and-file of the revived movement would look strikingly like him—native born, Midwestern, middle class, highly educated, relatively young, and convinced of a calling to the missionary vocation.¹⁶

¹⁰ Rev. William Futey Gibbons, n.d., quoted in Kim, “Horace N. Allen: Expansionism and Missions in Korea and Hawaii,” 48.

¹¹ According to the university’s charter, Ohio Wesleyan was “forever to be conducted on the most liberal principles, accessible to all religious denominations, and designed for the benefit of our citizens in general.” *Charter of the Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio, and By-Laws of the Board of Trustees, Published by the Board* (Delaware, Ohio: The F. T. Evans Printing and Publishing House, 1889).

¹² On the definitions of evangelicalism, see Mark A. Noll, “What is ‘Evangelical?’” in *The Oxford Handbook of Evangelical Theology*, ed. Gerald R. McDermott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19-32. For an overview of evangelicalism in America, see George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), 1-61.

¹³ See “Alumni Record” for the Class of 1881 in *Quinquennial Catalog*, 73-76; Nelson, *Fifty Years of History*, 60-62.

¹⁴ See James A. Field, Jr., “Near East Notes and Far East Queries,” in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 36-38.

¹⁵ Much of this growth came from the increased participation of women. See especially R. Pierce Beaver, *American Protestant Women in World Mission: History of the First Feminist Movement in North America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 87-115.

¹⁶ Valentin H. Rabe, *The Home Base of American China Missions, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 77-107. See also Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 28-32.

Already much had changed, to be sure, since the first wave of American foreign missionaries had rippled outward in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Enlivened by the example of British mission societies, yet compelled by a belief that America held a special, divinely appointed task to take the Gospel worldwide, the “pioneer” missionaries who set out primarily from New England to places like India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and Burma had done so backed by fledgling institutional support from home, and with scanty assurance of ever returning.¹⁷ Horace almost surely would have been aware of stories of these initial forays, tales that by now were enshrined in a budding literature of hagiography and missionary periodicals. But there would have been elements that Allen knew were simply outmoded. Missionary candidates of his time, for instance, could count on newer forms of transportation, faster communication channels, and the more organized, business-like operations of their sending agencies.¹⁸ Some candidates, like Allen initially, would head to countries where predecessors had already established missions, and where the transition for neophytes to the “field” might hence be eased.

Yet if time had burnished some of the more severe features of the foreign mission endeavor, the choice to enlist in the first place remained a solemn one. Service for life was still the standard for missionary applicants; so was a careful screening process intended to affirm, as far as board officers could tell anyway, that the applicant indeed matched the calling. Horace seems to have undergone this process sometime in the early part of 1883, just after completing a two-year physician’s degree at Miami Medical College in Cincinnati. It was also in the spring of 1883 that he married Frances (Fannie) Messenger, a fellow native of Ohio and a former classmate at OWU. By summer of that year, both had been accepted and appointed (Fannie as an “assistant” missionary, the designation commonly given to wives) by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions in the USA, or the “northern” Presbyterian Board, one of the largest of the American sending agencies.¹⁹ Their assigned field, they were told, was China.

* * *

In mid-August 1883, recently graduated and even more recently married, Horace and Fannie packed their belongings and left Ohio. One generation earlier and they likely would have embarked on an eastern course, departing from the Atlantic seaboard and sailing to the Cape of Good Hope, then around the tip of Africa and through the Indian

¹⁷ R. Pierce Beaver, “Missionary Motivation Through Three Centuries,” in *Reinterpretation in American Church History*, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 135; Rabe, *The Home Base of American China Missions*, 106. As James Field notes, initially the American “missionary effort was projected from an Atlantic-oriented United States by an East Coast ecclesiastical establishment.” Field, “Near East Notes and Far East Queries,” 26. See also Oliver Wendell Elsbree, *The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America, 1790-1815* (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1928).

¹⁸ Rabe, *The Home Base of American China Missions*, 4-5, 40-48.

¹⁹ There were two main Presbyterian bodies—the “northern” Presbyterians, and the Presbyterian Church in the US (the “southern” church). The Presbyterian missionaries discussed in this dissertation were all from the northern church. The four American mission boards sending out the most missionaries in the late nineteenth century were the northern Presbyterian board, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregationalist), the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church (northern), and the American Baptist Missionary Union.

Ocean before reaching southern China. This was the route the first American missionaries to China, David Abeel and E. C. Bridgman, had taken in 1829, back when the water voyage alone could last well over a hundred days.²⁰

Now, however, the Allens turned in the opposite direction. The availability of the cross-country rail—and equally monumental, the advent of regular steamship service from California to Asia via the Pacific Ocean, something that also had not existed until the late 1860s—meant that Horace and Fannie could choose a more efficient, westward route. By early September they had reached San Francisco. From there, they boarded the *City of Peking*, one of the flagships of the American-owned Pacific Mail Steamship Company. The vessel was enormous. Iron-hulled and 5,000 tons, more than 400 feet in length with a capacity of nearly two thousand passengers, the *City of Peking* ranked among the world's largest ships when it was constructed in 1874. Over the next quarter century it would help Pacific Steamship grow a lucrative business of carrying people, mail, and a host of goods between the US, China, and Japan.²¹

If the sheer spectacle of the steamship impressed Horace Allen, as it did thousands of other Americans who celebrated the seaward behemoth, the ride apparently did not. Horace's brief account of the voyage spoke mostly about seasickness, which he and Fannie attempted to thwart with a good dose of "bromide of soda."²² Many years later, Horace would remember the experience as "the worst" of his trips across the Pacific. "A full passenger list had compelled us to accept a cabin right in the stern of the vessel," he wrote.

It was large and more inviting than the others while the ship lay in dock, and we congratulated ourselves upon our good fortune, until we realized what it meant to try to be comfortable at the end of that tetering [*sic*] ship, where we got all the motion up and down side ways and corkscrew, as though we were sitting upon the tail of some great water serpent that was lashing the elements in anger.... The whole passage was one long delirious nightmare from which relief seemed only temporary.²³

Relief came three weeks later, when the ship made anchor at Yokohama, the first of its route destinations. This was Horace and Fannie's stop (the *City of Peking* would continue on to Hong Kong, then back to San Francisco), and for Horace at first glance, not at all what he had expected. "We had read much of the new Japan...our anticipations were high," he recalled. "When we found our ship surrounded by scores of little sampans sculled about by men dressed only in a loin cloth, it seemed there must be some mistake."²⁴

²⁰ Two decades later, those headed to China could still expect to spend somewhere around six months in transit. See Michael C. Lazich, *E. C. Bridgman (1801-1861), America's First Missionary to China* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 61-65; Adrian A. Bennett, *Missionary Journalist in China: Young J. Allen and His Magazines, 1860-1883* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1983), 16.

²¹ E. Mowbray Tate, *Transpacific Steam: The Story of Steam Navigation from the Pacific Coast of North America to the Far East and the Antipodes, 1867-1941* (Crabury, New Jersey: Cornwall Book: Rosemont Publishing and Printing Co., 1986), 21-31.

²² Horace N. Allen diary, 4 September 1883, Allen Papers.

²³ Horace N. Allen, *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 34-35.

²⁴ Allen, *Things Korean*, 35.

The stopover was welcomed nonetheless, for it gave Horace and especially Fannie, still drained by all the tossing of the transpacific sail, a few days of much needed respite.²⁵ As Westerners in Yokohama, the Allens would not have been too rare a sight. A varied patchwork of several thousand non-Japanese resided at the outer edges of the treaty port—the majority Chinese, but also a sizable swath of British and Americans, as well as those of German, French, Russian, Portuguese, Dutch, Italian, Norwegian, and other nationalities. Within the group of Americans, moreover, were a handful of missionaries from the same Presbyterian mission board as Horace and Fannie. The most veteran among them, Dr. J. C. and Clara Hepburn, had been living in Yokohama for more than twenty years.²⁶

Still, the Ohioans seemed to feel more than a touch out of place. When a hotel clerk asked Horace whether his unwell wife needed an “ammah,” a term Horace only later realized referred to a “lady’s maid,” his response belied his utter freshness. “This was a new word,” Horace remembered of the near comical scene, “but as he [the clerk] offered no explanation and as it sounded so like llama, I thought he was speaking of this mammalian.” The confusion eventually cleared up, but only after Allen, concluding to himself that “in this strange land... llamas might be used in the place of cows,” inquired whether “someone would be furnished to do the milking.”²⁷

The journey picked up again in early October. From Yokohama, Horace and Fannie boarded another vessel, the *Nagoya Maru*, a coastal steamer owned by the Japanese Mitsubishi Steamship Company and bound for Shanghai, on the central eastern coast of China. This time the trip promised to be shorter—five days, as the *Nagoya Maru* plowed westward toward the East China Sea, passing to the south of the Korean peninsula. The ship made port on October 11. Whether because of simple exhaustion or other reasons, Allen recorded no immediate observations of Shanghai, or what one former American missionary to China described as “a triple city, native, foreign, and mixed.”²⁸ Like Yokohama, the Chinese treaty port teemed with foreign commerce and people, most who lived in designated areas set off from the native city. In Shanghai, too, these outsiders made up a motley assortment, including almost three hundred American citizens (slightly more than in Yokohama); although here, it was the British presence that dominated the foreign community.²⁹

Whatever his initial thoughts, Horace was to become more familiar with Shanghai in the coming months—much more, certainly, than he would have anticipated. For now, he and Fannie again were on the move. In mid-October, following another brief stay at port, they started on the last leg of their route, a short sail up the Yangtze River. Though

²⁵ Allen diary, 4 September 1883, Allen Papers; Allen, *Things Korean*, 21.

²⁶ See Robert E. Speer, *Presbyterian Foreign Missions: An Account of the Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, 1901), 146.

²⁷ Allen, *Things Korean*, 21.

²⁸ I. W. Wiley, *China and Japan: A Record of Observations Made During a Residence of Several Years in China, and a Tour of Official Visitation to the Missions of Both Countries in 1877-78* (Cincinnati: Walden and Stowe, 1879), 157.

²⁹ There were two designated foreign settlements in Shanghai—the French Settlement and the International Settlement (the latter was a combination of the original British and American settlements). See Albert Feuerwerker, “The Foreign Presence in China,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, *Republican China, 1912-1949, Part I*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 131.

not yet inured to sea travel (bromide would continue to come in handy in the future), Horace enjoyed the cruise on the prodigious waterway, not least for the several “luxuries” offered en route. “Travel on the British coasting vessels and river ships in the early days was delightful,” he later described. The foreign passengers were “well-to-do and hospitable.” Especially memorable was Horace and Fannie’s “giant bedroom,” complete with a “four-post double bed and mosquito curtains. It was like an admiral’s quarters.”³⁰ Horace would hardly have considered himself genteel (he was by no means wealthy). And yet, for a swift moment perhaps, he might have reveled in its possibilities.

At daybreak on October 17, 1883, the Allens pulled into their final destination. Originally assigned to the Shantung and Peking Mission, a fair ways up north, they had been diverted to Nanking instead, in part because of Fannie’s continued illness from the travels.³¹ Some years later, Horace would confess to his sister, Jennie, the uncertainty that had struck him on the eve of his departure from home. “I had worked myself up,” he explained of his resolution to proceed anyway, “to believe it my duty, and go I must.”³² Indeed from Ohio to the eastern territory of the Qing Empire, Horace Allen had now come more than ten thousand miles, close to halfway around the globe, to carry forth that duty.

As it turned out, he would not stay for long.

³⁰ Allen, *Things Korean*, 44.

³¹ *The Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: Mission House, 1884), 100.

³² Horace N. Allen to Jennie Everett, 3 June 1889, quoted in Fred Harvey Harrington, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese: Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American Relations, 1884-1905* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1944), 6.

Chapter One

Arrival

Less than a year into his missionary service in China, Horace Allen was ready to consider other options. “I understand,” he wrote to a Joseph Haas in early June 1884, “that the foreign residents in Corea want a physician.”¹ Having heard rumors about the opportunity and referred to Haas for further information, Horace now wished to obtain some basic facts of the matter. Was there any real desire, he asked, for a medical doctor in Korea? Where would that doctor live? What kind of salary might be guaranteed? Not least, what steps needed to be taken to secure the work? As for his background and qualifications, Horace shot to the point: He was an American, he said, he had graduated from Ohio University and the Miami Medical College, and he had had “the usual hospital experience.” The brief letter closed with the names of several doctors in Shanghai who could serve as references if needed. Nowhere did it mention, however, Horace’s vocation as a Presbyterian missionary.

Horace Allen was twenty-six that summer. He was a tall man, noticeably lean in stature, with eyes set behind a strong brow, and whose apparent case of premature balding made him look older than his true years. Just eight months earlier, he and his wife Fannie had arrived in Nanking, China, to join the American Presbyterian mission there, but their inaugural year on the field proved more than a little trying.² Whatever the reasons for omitting mention of his missionary connection, Horace was hardly in high spirits when he penned his inquiry to Haas.

American missionaries as a whole were relatively new to Nanking.³ At one time the capital of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), it was here that the Treaty of Nanking was signed in 1842, bringing to an end the first Anglo-Chinese War (1839-1842) and marking the beginning of the “unequal” treaty system in China.⁴ A decade later, the ancient

¹ Horace N. Allen to Joseph Haas, 6 June 1884, Horace N. Allen Papers, The New York Public Library. Haas appears on a list of Customs Officers in Allen’s *A Chronological Index: Some of the Chief Events in the Foreign Intercourse of Korea From the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Twentieth Century* (Seoul: Press of Methodist Publishing House, 1901, 59. According to this list, Haas served as the Customs Commissioner at Chemulpo from 1883-1884.

² Nanking was the newest of the northern Presbyterian board’s missions in China. By 1876, when the Nanking mission was established, the Presbyterians had stations in Canton, Ningpo, Hangchow, Shanghai, Suchow, Chefou, Tungchow, Peking, Chinanfou, and Wei Hien (spellings are those used by the mission board). *The Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: Mission House, 1884).

³ The Jesuits, by contrast, had first established a residence there in the late sixteenth century. See Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579-1724* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 43-46.

⁴ The Western or “unequal” treaty system refers to the structure and administration of treaty agreements that were imposed by Western nations first on China in the mid-nineteenth century, and then later on Japan and Korea (though Korea’s first treaty of this kind was signed with Japan in 1876). The unequal features of these treaties included extraterritoriality, low tariffs, a most-favored-nation clause, and foreign settlements at designated ports. See especially John K. Fairbank, “The Creation of the Treaty System,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10, *Late Ch’ing 1800-1911, Part I*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 213-263.

metropolis became the base of the Taiping Rebellion, a massive peasant uprising whose ideology fused elements of Christianity with indigenous religious traditions, and which sought to overthrow the ruling Qing dynasty. Though a few curious American missionaries had visited Nanking during the rebellion, it was not until well after Qing forces had crushed the movement that Presbyterians founded a mission in 1876.⁵ But growth remained stilted. When Horace and Fannie arrived in the fall of 1883, the Presbyterians were the only Protestant group living in the city.⁶

They had had a terrible beginning. In the span of three years, the original band of missionaries, stricken by death and sickness, had vacated the station altogether, and efforts at home to find replacements kept coming up dry. “Nanking can scarcely be said to have been occupied,” Presbyterian board leaders worried. “The appeals of the mission and the Board have been in vain for recruits.”⁷ Nearly two years passed before missionaries began trickling back to the city, and it was only thanks to “Elder Huise,” a Chinese Christian, that preaching in the meantime had been carried on at the mission chapel.⁸ Though Horace and Fannie had come to Nanking somewhat by accident, the floundering Presbyterian camp would have surely embraced the fresh faces.

At first, all appeared destined to cooperation. Horace quickly filled in at the mission’s dispensary, recently left empty by another turnover (the previous doctor, J. E. Stubbert, had returned home out of ill health, whereupon he promptly resigned). In its annual report for 1883, the Presbyterian board cheerfully noted that “the medical work performed by Dr. H. N. Allen, during a part of the year, has exerted a good influence. Many prominent persons have been attracted to the mission.”⁹ The image was misleading. From the start the Presbyterians, in fact, had held a contentious relationship with authorities in Nanking, particularly over the acquiring of property inside the city’s walls.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it was true that Horace had begun to receive medical calls from a few officials—even once, he later noted, from “the secretary of foreign affairs, who ranks next to the Viceroy.”¹¹ The experience would have a lasting effect on how Horace viewed missionary activity.

⁵ On the Taiping Rebellion, see for example Jonathan D. Spence, *God’s Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997). The most well-known American figure associated with the rebellion was a former Baptist-turned-independent missionary named Issachar Roberts, an acquaintance of the Taipings’ leader, Hong Xiuquan. Regarding the American missionary reaction, see John B. Littell, “Missionaries and Politics in China—the Taiping Rebellion,” *Political Science Quarterly* 32 (December 1928): 566-599; Adrian A. Bennett, *Missionary Journalist in China: Young J. Allen and His Magazines, 1860-1883* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1983), 20-21.

⁶ *The Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions*, 62. The first Protestant missionary to Nanking seems to have been George Duncan, a Scottish member of the China Inland Mission. Duncan stayed in Nanking from 1867 until 1872, when ill health forced him to return to England. He died not long afterward. Alwyn Austin, *China’s Missions: The China Inland Mission and Late Qing Society, 1832-1905* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 106, 108.

⁷ *The Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions*, 65.

⁸ *The Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions*, 104.

⁹ *The Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions*, 100, 104.

¹⁰ “Missionary News,” *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 13 (March-April, 1882): 156; Robert E. Speer, *Presbyterian Foreign Missions: An Account of the Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work, 1901), 122.

¹¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 29 January 1884, Allen Papers.

At Nanking Allen also jumped into one of the fundamentals of missionary life: studying the vernacular.¹² In this regard, he appears to have been only a mediocre student. Learning foreign languages, as Horace admitted in later years, was probably not his strong suit, and he had no problem giving credit to those colleagues who possessed a better knack—and tenacity—for linguistic conundrums. Here, as in other areas of Horace’s career, he would show a tendency to learn on the go, to acquire the knowledge he needed sometimes by experiment, sometimes through forced circumstances. Either way, his perceptiveness, in certain ways at least, would prove useful in the coming years.

There was not much time to immerse himself in the language anyway, for suddenly the mood within the Nanking station began to turn awry. Horace was vague about what exactly went wrong, but before the year’s end he and Fannie felt they had been somehow misused. The situation grew awkward enough that by the following January, the Allens decided to retreat to the coast. “Because of the unkindness of Mr. Abbey,” a missionary coworker, Horace complained in his journal, “we started for Shanghai against the entreaties of all, even Abbey himself.”¹³

It was a welcome change for the Allens. They had stopped in Shanghai, China’s main commercial entrepôt, before; but after spending the past three months in Nanking, where Westerners were few and the Presbyterians were struggling to establish an existence, Shanghai must have seemed now like a temporary refuge. At the port were gathered some three dozen missionaries from more than half a dozen American and British mission societies (continental European missionaries would soon add to that number).¹⁴ Inside the International Settlement, where many of the missionaries lived, a gothic-style Anglican cathedral peered over a square mile of consulate buildings, recreational clubs, gardens, libraries, racetracks, hotels, merchant firms, banks, chapels, theatres, and a wide “bund” or quay that ran along the eastern embankment.¹⁵ As one American traveler remarked, it all looked like “a New York or London in miniature.”¹⁶

For the moment, the Allens roomed with the Presbyterian Rev. J. N. B. Smith, who was one missionary that resided outside of the settlement. “[We are] as happy as we could be, considering the circumstances,” Horace confided in his diary.¹⁷ Despite its seeming conveniences, however, Shanghai was not a long-term solution in Horace’s view. For one, there were already Western physicians working at the port, and he likely felt this would curb his opportunities as a medical missionary. But there was also a recent development that now made him anxious to head north, where the climate was more salubrious: Fannie was pregnant.

As it was, the following few weeks brought another round of dismay. Horace wrote to the Presbyterian station up at Chefoo, inquiring whether it might have space to

¹² Allen diary, 15 October 1884, Allen Papers.

¹³ Allen diary, 7 January 1884, Allen Papers.

¹⁴ “List of Protestant Missionaries in China, Japan and Siam,” *The Chinese Recorder* 15 (January-February 1884).

¹⁵ See Albert Feuerwerker, “The Foreign Presence in China,” in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 12, *Republican China, 1912-1949, Part I*, ed. Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 131-132.

¹⁶ Lucy Seaman Bainbridge, *Round the World Letters: A Graphic Portrayal of Scenes, Incidents and Adventures of a Two Years’ Tour of the World* (New York: C. R. Blackwell and Company, 1882), 114.

¹⁷ Allen diary, 7 January 1884, Allen Papers.

house him and Fannie, yet word came back that at present “it was scarcely advisable.”¹⁸ Going back to Nanking was theoretically an option but not one that Horace preferred, and because of Fannie’s condition, he was unwilling to try other inland stations. By late January 1884, Horace was beginning to sound desperate. “This whole affair has cost us no little pain and agony,” he confessed to F. F. Ellinwood, the Presbyterian board secretary in New York.¹⁹ Horace regretted troubling the mission board so early on, especially as he had “hoped and determined to quietly drop into a place and do all the good I could.” And yet circumstances had not turned out the way he had anticipated. “Will you let me know,” he requested, “of any alternative that remains for me.”²⁰

Months later and still biding his hours in Shanghai, Horace himself came across a possible alternative, though it was one that would require him to strike out from China altogether. Writing again to Ellinwood on June 9, 1884, three days after his letter to Joseph Haas, Allen spoke plainly about the idea of moving to the Korean peninsula.²¹ He explained that the foreign legations and the customs service in Korea appeared “badly in need of a physician,” and that his medical friends were encouraging him to take the position. Not only that, but his colleagues in the Presbyterian mission, too, thought it “a grand opportunity.” Horace was aware that the board had rejected an earlier request by two other Presbyterian missionaries interested in going to the peninsula, and he expressed his willingness to stay in China if need be. Still, if board leaders did sanction his plans—if they transferred him to the neighboring kingdom—Allen promised to “stay true” to his “trust as a missionary” and hand over to the mission treasury any fees he earned for medical services.

To his astonishment, the board accepted. In late July 1884, Horace received a telegram from Ellinwood granting him permission to proceed. By then Horace had all but relinquished the scheme, since it appeared that the physician job he hoped for was no longer available.²² With the latest news from the board, however, Allen now decisively changed his course. He responded to Ellinwood’s cable at once, informing the secretary he would go to Korea the following month (the few weeks’ delay, he explained, was because Fannie had just given birth to a baby boy). And as if to reassure the board that it had made a prudent choice, Horace beamed with optimism. “I can go in [to Korea] without molestation,” he declared, “and have work to do among the foreigners at once while having the way for an aggressive native work.”²³ After a less than satisfactory beginning to his missionary calling, Horace was anxious for a second start.

¹⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 29 January 1884, Allen Papers.

¹⁹ Frank F. Ellinwood served as a Presbyterian mission board secretary from 1871 to 1907. He would have administrative supervision over the Korea mission from 1884 to 1902. John F. Piper, Jr., *Robert E. Speer: Prophet of the American Church* (Louisville: Geneva Press, 2000), 151-153; Sung-Deuk Oak, “The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea, 1884-1910” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2002), 110.

²⁰ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 29 January 1884, Allen Papers.

²¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 June 1884, Allen Papers.

²² It is unclear whether Allen ever received a response from Joseph Haas, though Allen noted by mid-summer that “the position as official physician had been taken.” This may have been the Japanese legation doctor, since there was no Western physician in Seoul when Allen arrived there later that year. See Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 July 1884, Allen Papers.

²³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 July 1884, Allen Papers.

* * *

The board's decision to reassign Horace Allen to Korea relied upon more than mere sympathy for his restlessness. As was generally true of other American sending agencies, the Presbyterian mission board expected long-term commitments from the workers it financed and dispatched abroad. According to an 1882 manual for Presbyterian missionary candidates, "all sincere applicants" were supposed to be, among other things, "willing to accept a life of steady, unnoticed labor, expecting to continue therein until death, and looking for rest in the world to come."²⁴ Clearly missions were not for the capricious. But neither were they—and here the definitions could become more complex—for persons unable to manage the difficulties that might arise in the course of missionary life. In order for foreign missionaries to "do the vital spiritual work, which is our supreme business," wrote the Presbyterian leader Robert E. Speer, "they must have qualifications of character and capacity, assured and vindicated here before they go."²⁵ These included, Speer argued, not only spiritual fitness, a healthy physical constitution, and the determination to acquire another language, but also "good, grave sense; solid, clear, unexcited action; quiet, steady will."²⁶

Speer's point was not that such qualifications would free missionaries from potential obstacles, but that only the qualified missionary possessed "the ability to stand" against a host of challenges he or she was bound to face on the field—not least, perils to the self: "dictatorialness, dogmatic assertiveness, slothfulness, spiritual indolence, mere formality of service, weakening of moral fibre and tone, degeneration of standard and ideal for self and others, a general professionalism of work touched with kindness and forced conscientiousness and a little despondency."²⁷ However well Horace Allen's record thus far might have fared against such criteria, his superiors at home would have expected him to weather his early troubles on the field.

The approval of Horace's request, as it happened, owed much to sheer timing. Horace was not the first to suggest that the Presbyterian board send someone to Korea. Since the conclusion of the 1882 Korean-American treaty, the board had received a handful of appeals from mission advocates, both at home and abroad, clamoring for work to be started on the peninsula. Initially the board showed little interest.²⁸ The leadership was aware, if only vaguely, of the past persecution of Catholics in Korea. They knew, as

²⁴ *A Manual for the use of missionary candidates and missionaries, in connection with the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church*, 4th ed. (New York: Mission House, 23 Centre Street, 1882).

²⁵ Robert E. Speer, "Qualifications Desired in Missionary Candidates as Indicated by a Tour of the Fields," in *The Call, Qualifications and Preparation of Candidates for Foreign Missionary Service* (New York: Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, 1901), 43.

²⁶ Speer, "Qualifications Desired in Missionary Candidates," 46. Arthur J. Brown, the board secretary who would succeed Ellinwood in overseeing the Korea mission, put the point more bluntly: "If any one imagines that weaklings or milksops can be appointed," he wrote in 1907, "he might apply for appointment and see." He went on to outline eleven categories of qualifications for missionary candidates. Arthur J. Brown, *The Foreign Missionary: An Incarnation of a World Movement* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1907), 67-84. For a discussion of some of the characteristics American missionaries shared across denominations, see Valentin Rabe, *The Home Base of American China Missions, 1880-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 77-107.

²⁷ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 June 1884, Allen Papers.

²⁸ Horace G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea: Political—Social—Religious* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 133.

well, that Christianity remained an illegal teaching and that the treaty contained no provisions for religious tolerance.²⁹ In spite of these reservations, and largely due to the persistence of the ambitious Secretary Ellinwood, in the spring of 1884 the board agreed to launch a Korea mission and appointed John W. Heron, an English-born physician from Tennessee, as its first agent. Still cautious about the undertaking, however, it directed him first to Japan, where he might get a start on the Korean language.³⁰ It was precisely at this juncture—just after the appointment of Heron—that Horace’s request for reassignment unwittingly landed at board headquarters in New York.

That Horace was a physician also helped his case. Insofar as the practice of Western medicine had become, by the closing decades of the nineteenth century, a significant part of what American missionaries were doing overseas, the selection of a doctor for the Korea mission would not have been that unusual.³¹ Neither, though, was it coincidental. In choosing John Heron for the task, the board had taken into account the piecemeal information it received on Korea, including advice from missionaries in Japan and China that a physician should be part of any initial force sent there.³² These recommendations did not necessarily stress the same arguments Horace presented. The Rev. George W. Knox, for instance, writing from Japan in 1883, had declared in even more grandiose terms that a missionary doctor in Korea “would have a virgin field, with a people eager to receive his aid.”³³ But they did share Allen’s assumption that medicine could be one avenue for missionaries to enter the country and obtain a footing.³⁴ For Horace, the situation had thus turned out to be doubly fortuitous: not only was his timing uncanny, but he also happened to be the right type of worker for the venture.

²⁹ L. George Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910* (Pyeng Yang: Union Christian College Press, 1929), 67-68; Allen D. Clark, *A History of the Church in Korea* (Seoul: The Christian Literature Society, 1971), 73.

³⁰ John Heron would not arrive in Korea until June 1885. See Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 84-85.

³¹ David Hardiman notes that “until the 1870s, no hard and fast distinction was made between the evangelical and the medical missionary.” As he points out, the emergence of a clear separation between the Western “medical missionary” and other types of missionaries paralleled the increasing professionalization of medicine in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. David Hardiman, introduction to *Healing Bodies, Saving Souls: Medical Missions in Asia and Africa*, ed. David Hardiman (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2006), 5-58. The practice of medicine would also come to play a central role in American women’s participation as missionaries. Historian Dana Robert has noted, for instance, that medical missions “became the most universally-acclaimed aspect of women’s missionary work in the late nineteenth century.” Dana Lee Robert, *American Women in Mission: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1997), 162.

³² Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 66-67; Everett Nichols Hunt, Jr., *Protestant Pioneers in Korea* (New York: Orbis Books, 1980), 15.

³³ George W. Knox, *The Foreign Missionary* 43 (January 1884): 336, quoted in Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 67.

³⁴ The designation “evangelistic” typically referred to activity directly related to the witnessing and dissemination of the Gospel. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, mainline mission boards had also commonly incorporated “educational” and “medical” as categories for missionary work, as well as in some cases “literary” and “industrial.” See for example Arthur T. Pierson, *Evangelistic Work in Principle and Practice* (New York: Baker & Taylor, 1887), 13-14; James S. Dennis, *Foreign Missions After a Century*, 3rd ed. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1893), 228. Regarding the Presbyterian mission board’s initial hesitance to begin evangelistic efforts in Korea, see Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 76.

The very categorization of mission work into various branches—by Horace’s time, typically evangelistic, medical, and educational—reflected the goals that were coming to characterize the American Protestant enterprise. To be sure, the core rationale behind foreign missions, as it had been since the movement’s beginnings earlier in the century, remained a religious one. The “declared and earnest purpose” of the “modern development of the missionary spirit,” Rufus Anderson, senior secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, summarized in 1869, was the “universal diffusion of the gospel.”³⁵ And yet while mission thinkers in later decades would have agreed, many of them also began celebrating the kinds of “civilizing” activities that would lead, they believed, to a wide range of intellectual, economic, cultural, technological, and political changes in “heathen” nations. This emphasis on what would generally be labeled “social progress” was not new. (Rufus Anderson had spent years painstakingly advocating the “Christ alone” approach). But its late-nineteenth-century manifestation was more popular, more emphatic, and palpably more enthusiastic than ever before.³⁶ Hence in the 1890s James Dennis, a leading missions spokesperson, would proclaim in his massive apologia that though “the evangelistic aim is still first, as it ever will be... a new significance has been given to missions as a factor in the social regeneration of the world.”³⁷

Much of the momentum the American foreign mission movement would gather at the turn of the century drew from this logic. Theologically, the movement was never monolithic. Differences in views about the end of times, for instance, could deeply affect how one understood the ultimate aim of missions.³⁸ Yet across the spectrum was growing a shared confidence in a future, world-encompassing victory, even as the number of reported conversions often failed to live up to the ebullient rhetoric. For the rallying cry now hailed not only Christ, but also the onward advance of Western civilization.³⁹

³⁵ Rufus Anderson, *Foreign Missions: Their Relations and Claims* (New York: Charles Scribner and Company, 1869), 19. Rufus Anderson, the leading theorist of foreign missions in the mid-nineteenth century, served as secretary of the ABCFM from 1826 to 1866.

³⁶ On Rufus Anderson’s missiology, see Charles Forman, “A History of Foreign Mission Theory in America,” in *American Missions in Bicentennial Perspective*, ed. R. Pierce Beaver (South Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1977), 77-80; William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 77-90.

³⁷ James S. Dennis, *Christian Missions and Social Progress: A Sociological Study of Foreign Missions*, vol. 1 (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897), vii, 23. Dennis represented the more theologically liberal perspective on missions. On the major shifts in American mission theory over the course of the nineteenth century, see especially R. Pierce Beaver, “Missionary Motivation Through Three Centuries,” in *Reinterpretation in American Church History*, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 113-151.

³⁸ The main divide had to do with the timing of Christ’s Second Coming. Postmillennialists believed that Christ would return only after a millennial period of peace, flourishing, and widespread conversion, and tended to emphasize human cooperation in establishing the kingdom of God on earth. Premillennialists, who were usually theologically conservative, believed that the millennium would not occur until after Christ’s return. The majority of American evangelicals and missionaries in the late nineteenth century were postmillennialists, though as Robert Handy and others have noted, premillennialists also advocated world missions and shared in the confidence of Western civilization’s triumph. See Timothy P. Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875-1982* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Booke, Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 65-81; Robert Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 111-120.

³⁹ This is not to say that the missionaries held uniform notions of civilization, or that they necessarily shared the same definitions as other Americans. For most, however, the term usually assumed a civilization

By his choice of vocation, Horace Allen undoubtedly subscribed to these notions in some measure. But exactly how the particular mission theories being elaborated upon at home might be applied in Korea was a question that neither he, nor the Presbyterian board, could have answered in the summer of 1884. Indeed when Horace landed on the peninsula that September, he did so with virtually no plan at all.

* * *

Horace Allen's ruminations about going to Korea would have been inconceivable if not for the recent developments in US-Korea diplomatic relations. In the late spring of 1882, Washington and Seoul concluded a treaty that for the first time established formal relations between the two countries. Though the fourteen-article convention, unlike the US's treaties with China (1844, 1858), contained no mention of religion, it allowed for Americans to reside, lease land, and trade at Korean ports open to foreign commerce.⁴⁰ The treaty thus opened up the possibility for missionaries like Horace to enter the peninsula, since as citizens of the US they could, in theory, claim the privileges guaranteed by this international pact of "perpetual peace and friendship."⁴¹

From an American foreign policy perspective, the 1882 treaty marked the culmination of several decades of intermittent interest in Korea. Two main objectives consistently underlay that interest. The first was the desire to expand American commerce in East Asia. In 1845, for example, the New York congressman Zadock Pratt, chair of the House Committee on Naval Affairs, introduced a resolution that "immediate measures be taken for effecting commercial arrangements with the empire of Japan and the Kingdom of Corea."⁴² Encouraged by the recent treaty between the US and China

based on or derived from Christian principles, and of which the American manifestation was the highest form. See Handy, *A Christian America*, 90-100; Dana L. Robert, *Occupy Until I come: A. T. Pierson and the Evangelization of the World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003), 138-144; Akira Iriye, *From Nationalism to Internationalism: US Foreign Policy to 1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 84-90.

⁴⁰ Though not specifically named in the document, the treaty ports were to be those that had been opened to the Japanese by the 1876 Kanghwa Treaty: Pusan, Wönsan, and Chemulpo (Inch'ön). US diplomatic representatives, in addition, were allowed to reside at the capital, Seoul. Frederick T. Frelinghuysen to Lucius H. Foote, 17 March 1883, *Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, Volume I: The Initial Period, 1883-1886*, ed. George M. McCune and John A. Harrison (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 27 (hereafter cited as *KAR*). For the an English translation of the treaty, see "Treaty of Amity in Commerce," in *Korean Treaties*, comp. Henry Chung (New York: H. S. Nichols, Inc., 1919), 197-204. On the reasons for the absence of a religion clause, see Jongsuk Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry: Korean-American Relations to 1910* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 50; Dae Young Ryu, "Treaties, Extraterritorial Rights, and American Protestant Missions in Late Joseon Korea," *Korea Journal* 43 (spring 2003): 175-178.

⁴¹ Article I in "Treaty of Amity and Commerce," *Korean Treaties*, 197.

⁴² US Congress, House, 28 Cong., 2 Sess., No. 138, 1-2, quoted in Woong Joe Kang, *The Korean Struggle for International Identity in the Foreground of the Shufeldt Negotiations, 1866-1882* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2005), 80. Probably the first American to advocate an official interest in Korea was Edmund Roberts, a New Hampshire merchant who negotiated the US's treaties with Siam and Muscat in 1833. In an 1834 report to Secretary of State Louis McLane, Roberts suggested that a treaty with Japan would also open the way for possible trade relations with Korea. He died two years later in Macao, while en route to Japan to attempt treaty negotiations. Tyler Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia: A Critical*

(the 1844 Treaty of Wanghia), Pratt evinced confidence in the prospects of an American future in the Far East. “The day and the hour' have now arrived,” he announced, “for turning the enterprise of our merchants and seamen into the harbors and markets of those long-secluded countries.” While Pratt failed to convince Congress—Washington was then preoccupied with imminent war with Mexico—his argument for extending American commerce to Korea was to resurface in later years.

The second major policy objective was the protection of American citizens abroad. This goal was made explicit after the 1866 *General Sherman* incident, when an American-owned schooner, chartered by a British company in China and carrying a crew of British, Malays, Chinese, and Americans, sailed into the northwestern part of Korea and was destroyed during an altercation with P'yŏngyang residents.⁴³ News of the complete loss of both ship and crew set off a series of investigations by the US State and Navy departments, including two fact-finding missions, led by naval captains Robert W. Shufeldt (1867) and John C. Febiger (1868).⁴⁴ Around the time of the Febiger mission, George F. Seward, US consul general to Shanghai and nephew of Secretary of State William H. Seward, proposed an expedition both to seek an official account of the *General Sherman's* demise and to attempt treaty negotiations with the Korean government. His proposal was approved by the elder Seward but never materialized.⁴⁵

The State Department revisited the matter two years later. In the spring of 1870, the new secretary of state, Hamilton Fish, authorized US Minister to China Frederick F. Low to go to Korea and obtain a treaty that would secure “good treatment to such seamen of the United States as may unhappily be wrecked upon those shores.”⁴⁶ Opening trade was also desired, Fish stated, but not as a primary goal. The following year, accompanied by Admiral John Rodgers of the US Asiatic squadron, and backed by a more than one-thousand-man contingent, Minister Low and a fleet of five gunboats left China for Korea's western coast. Once again, violence erupted.⁴⁷ No treaty was produced, and not

Study of United States' Policy in the Far East in the Nineteenth Century (1922; reprint, New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1963), 128-134, 246.

⁴³ For a discussion of the *General Sherman* incident, see Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 18-23.

⁴⁴ On the unsuccessful results of the Shufeldt and Febiger missions, see Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 23-26; Charles O. Paullin, “The Opening of Korea by Commodore Shufeldt,” *Political Science Quarterly* 25 (September 1910): 471-473; Frederick C. Drake, *The Empire of the Seas: A Biography of Rear Admiral Robert Wilson Shufeldt, USN* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), 103-107.

⁴⁵ The catalyst for the younger Seward's proposal was a rumor he had heard in Shanghai that the Koreans were now considering entering into treaties with Western countries. When Febiger returned from his mission, however, he reported that the Koreans appeared uninterested in such negotiations. See Ching Young Choe, *The Rule of the Taewŏn'gun, 1864-1873* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 119-121. This was not the first time Secretary of State Seward had supported action in Korea. See enclosure no. 1 in Anson Burlingame to William H. Seward, 12 December 1866, *Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), 420 (hereafter cited as *FRUS*). For William Seward's stance on Korea, see Tyler Dennett, “Seward's Far Eastern Policy,” *The American Historical Review* 28 (October 1922): 51-59. On the proposed expedition of George F. Seward, see Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 27; Choe, *The Rule of the Taewŏn'gun*, 119-122.

⁴⁶ Hamilton Fish to Frederick F. Low, 20 April 1870, reprinted in “The Naval Expedition to the Korean Coast,” *New York Times*, 7 August 1871, 1

⁴⁷ The first shots were exchanged when an American surveying party entered into a defense zone along the Han River and received fire from nearby protective forts. In response to what they believed was an unwarranted attack, Low and Rodgers dispatched a punitive expedition whose goal was to gain redress “for the wrongs and insults which our flag has suffered.” Over the span of two days the punitive force captured

for another decade would the United States again try establishing official contact with Korea.⁴⁸

That next attempt came in the spring of 1880, when Admiral Robert W. Shufeldt, who almost fifteen years earlier had carried out the first fact-finding expedition for the *General Sherman* incident, returned to Korean waters as part of a larger naval tour around the globe.⁴⁹ According to his orders from the Navy Department, the purpose of Shufeldt's cruise was to "visit the unfrequented ports of Africa, Asia, and islands of the Persian Ocean. . . with a view to the encouragement and extension of American Commerce."⁵⁰ Shufeldt, in fact, had for some time harbored personal ambitions to "make a treaty with this Hermit Nation," as he later stated, and beginning with his visit in 1880 he relentlessly followed that goal over the next two years.⁵¹ His efforts would not go unrewarded: On May 22, 1882, Shufeldt finally placed his signature on the Korea-US "Treaty of Amity and Commerce," Korea's first treaty with a Western nation.

To his chagrin, however, the recognition he expected for his persistence was not to be. President Chester Arthur made no mention of the admiral in congressional speeches regarding the treaty, nor was Shufeldt made commander of the Asiatic squadron as he had hoped.⁵² At home, the press, too, offered him little in the way of approbation, and on the whole remained indifferent to news of the diplomatic breakthrough with the kingdom.⁵³ Shufeldt's tepid reception notwithstanding, the Korean-American treaty received Senate approval in early 1883 and was signed by Arthur the following month.

five Korean forts and engaged in hand-to-hand combat on land, leaving in its wake three Americans and more than two hundred Koreans dead. Frederick F. Low to Hamilton Fish, 2 June 1871, *FRUS* (1871), 122.

⁴⁸ For a recent analysis of the Low-Rodgers expedition, see Gordon Chang's "Whose 'Barbarism'? Whose 'Treachery'? Race and Civilization in the Unknown United States-Korea War of 1871," *The Journal of American History* 89 (March 2003): 1331-1365. For an earlier examination of the *General Sherman* and Low-Rodgers incidents based on both US and Korean documents, see E. M. Cable, "The United States-Korean Relations, 1866-1871," *Transactions of the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28 (1938), 1-221.

⁴⁹ Two years prior to Shufeldt's 1880 voyage, California Senator Aaron A. Sargent introduced a resolution that would have authorized the sending of a mission to Korea to negotiate a treaty. The resolution seems to have been at least partly influenced by the news of the recent Korea-Japan treaty. Echoing the sentiments that Zadock Pratt had presented three decades earlier, Sargent argued that it was "the duty of Congress to provide means to develop our foreign commerce." As in the case of Pratt, no further action was taken on the bill. See David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Involvement: American Economic Expansion Across the Pacific, 1784-1900* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001), 184.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Drake, *The Empire of the Seas*, 176-177.

⁵¹ "The Opening of Korea: Admiral Shufeldt's Account of It," *The Korean Repository* 1 (February 1892): 59. As the article notes, the manuscript of this account was originally dated January 29, 1887.

⁵² One reason for Shufeldt's cool reception was a letter he had written to former Senator Aaron Sargent in 1882, shortly before negotiations for the Korea-US treaty got underway. In the letter, the admiral launched into a diatribe against the Chinese, disparaging specifically the empress and the official Li Hongzhang. The letter was subsequently published by Sargent and effectively put an end to Shufeldt's chances of receiving the Asiatic squadron appointment. See Drake, *The Empire of the Seas*, 279-282, 305-311; Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 462-464.

⁵³ The press had mixed reactions to Shufeldt's involvement in the treaty and to the treaty itself. Some took note, for instance, of the harsh criticism Shufeldt was receiving in Japanese papers. "It is learned here," read one piece in the *New York Times*, "that the Japanese native newspapers are pulling Commodore Shufeldt's Korean treaty to pieces savagely, and at the same time criticizing his method of securing it." Other articles referred to rumors that the admiral failed to negotiate any treaty at all. "Commodore Shufeldt's Recall," *New York Times*, July 6, 1882, 2; "The News at Washington," *New York Times*, August 11, 1882, 1; "Corea," *Los Angeles Daily Times*, November 24, 1882; "Corea and Shufeldt," *The*

As had been the case with the earlier Low-Rodgers mission, two main policy imperatives characterized the US's interest in the 1882 treaty. The first and more important of the two was acquiring a shipwreck convention that would provide for the protection of American vessels and mariners. If possible, Shufeldt was to look into securing commercial rights, though to that end, he was told by the State Department, much would have to depend on his own discretion and the disposition of the Koreans.⁵⁴ These objectives the admiral obtained—and more. In addition to a shipwreck clause and permission to trade at Korea's open ports, the agreement granted to the US other such privileges as a most-favored-nation status, extraterritoriality, and fixed tariff rates. It was, in other words, an unequal treaty of the type Western countries had already concluded elsewhere in East Asia.

Yet there were also other, if less tangible, strains that ran through Shufeldt's doggedness, and which were doubtless shared by some Americans at home. One of these was nationalism. Though US policymakers as yet neither wanted nor were prepared to emulate the aggressive ambitions of the European powers in Asia, their interest in negotiating a treaty with Korea—indeed, to employ gunboats if necessary—showed not only a willingness to play a role in the Pacific, but also a desire to build prestige for the nation. For Shufeldt, too, notions about the development of human history shaped his visions for an American presence abroad. The admiral may have shared nothing of a missionary's zeal for the gospel, but on the superiority of Western civilization and the US's duty to spread its blessings abroad, the two would have found common ground.⁵⁵

If in a broad sense the Korea-US treaty reflected a growing American attention to the Far East, it also involved, however, a nexus of geopolitical shifts in the region that had little to do with Washington's foreign policy aims—or for that matter, Shufeldt's near obsessive quest to become the Commodore Perry of Korea.⁵⁶ Over the ensuing years, the admiral and other Americans, Horace Allen included, would go on believing that the US had pried open the doors of the reclusive kingdom. Yet the events leading to Korea's "opening" were much more entangled than what would survive in the American imagination.⁵⁷

Washington Post, July 18, 1882, 2; "A Stupid Diplomat," *The Washington Post*, July 12, 1882, 1. In general, however, the treaty garnered little attention from the American public. See for example Paullin, "The Opening of Korea," 498.

⁵⁴ Shufeldt received two sets of instructions from the State Department, both of which emphasized a shipwreck convention as the first priority. The first set of instructions was written in November 1881 by the outgoing secretary of state, James G. Blaine; in January of the following year, Secretary of State Frederick T. Frelinghuysen added his own directions regarding the treaty. See Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 49-50, 56-57.

⁵⁵ "The Opening of Korea: Admiral Shufeldt's Account of It," 62.

⁵⁶ See Drake, *The Empire of the Seas*, xiii, 247, 251. As Shufeldt's writings revealed, his ambitions were also influenced by ideas about the superiority of Western civilization. "I am glad for the sake of our country," he later proclaimed, "that we were the pioneers in accomplishing the feat of bringing the exclusive countries into the pale of Western Civilization." "The Opening of Korea: Admiral Shufeldt's Account of It," 62.

⁵⁷ For example, see Shufeldt's correspondence published in "Corea's Troubles: Affairs in the Hermit Kingdom," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 30, 1887, 2.

For Korea's Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), the unequal agreements it signed with the West in 1882—first with the United States, then Great Britain and Germany—signaled the end of its long-standing policy of seclusion. Implemented in the seventeenth century following the Hideyoshi invasions (1592-1598) and Manchu attacks (1627, 1636) on the peninsula, seclusion for more than two centuries had served as the basic framework for Korea's contact with the outside world. External relations consisted of, on the one hand, the continued observance of tributary obligations to the China, which were primarily symbolic and ceremonial in nature, and on the other hand a limited trade and diplomatic exchange with Japan.⁵⁸ It was a strategy that allowed the kingdom to minimize contact with these two neighbors while maintaining peaceful relations in the region, as well as independence from outside control. As for other countries, the Chosŏn court held no official ties. When a growing number of Western ships began to land on Korea's shores in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Korean government responded by adhering to its posture of isolationism, providing kindly treatment to shipwrecked seamen but rebuffing requests for trade and other contact.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ The principles that defined these two relationships—*sadae* (“serving the great”) toward China and *kyorin* (“neighborly relations”) with the Japanese—were adopted by the Koreans in the early years of the Chosŏn period, when the dynasty's founders undertook the process of making Neo-Confucianism the political, intellectual, and ethical basis of the Korean state and society. Embracing a Confucian worldview that placed China at the center of civilization, early Chosŏn rulers had readily accepted their tributary status vis-à-vis the Ming court (1368-1644) not only out of strategic considerations, but also from the belief that the Ming were the rightful leaders of the civilized world. Interactions with the Japanese, in contrast, the Chosŏn government had viewed in terms of equality at best, and had tended to regard Japan as a culturally and morally inferior state to Korea. Following the incursions of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's armies in the 1590s, the Korean government considerably diminished its ties with the Japanese. From 1609 to the 1870s, Korea-Japan relations were governed by a strict trade agreement that allowed the Japanese, for instance, only one port of entry on the peninsula, and no Japanese was permitted to travel to Seoul, the capital. But of equal significance to Korea's turn to isolation was the experience with the Manchus. The humiliating surrender of the Chosŏn court to Manchu forces in 1636 and the subsequent Manchu conquest of Ming China in 1644 deeply affected Korean perceptions of the world order, for Chosŏn leaders saw the new Qing (Manchu) dynasty in China as one ruled by northern “barbarians.” Nonetheless forced by defeat to acknowledge Manchu suzerainty, Korea resumed the rituals and practices signifying its junior status to the Middle Kingdom, such as the sending of annual tribute embassies to Peking; yet it was largely for self-defense that the Chosŏn court would continue to perform these observances. Though Korea would remain in a tributary relationship with China for the next two and a half centuries, that relationship until its very last decades was characterized by ceremonial obeisance: the Qing followed a policy of non-interference on the peninsula, while Korea fulfilled its tributary duties but exercised full autonomy over both its internal and external affairs. For discussions of Korea's relations with China and Japan during the early to mid-Chosŏn period, see Hae-Jong Chun, “Sino-Korean Tributary Relations in the Ch'ing Period,” in *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 90-111; Etsuko Hae-Jin Kang, *Diplomacy and Ideology in Japanese-Korean Relations From the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997); JaHyun Kim Haboush, “Constructing the Center: The Ritual Controversy and the Search for a New Identity in Seventh-Century Korea,” in *Culture and State in Late Chosŏn Korea*, ed. JaHyun Kim Haboush and Martina Deuchler (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 46-90; James Bryant Lewis, *Frontier Contact Between Chosŏn Korea and Tokugawa Japan* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003).

⁵⁹ In 1832, for example, the British ship *Lord Amherst* landed on the western coast of the peninsula and attempted (unsuccessfully) to initiate trade. It was during the mid-1850s and 1860s that the first handful of Americans also reached Korea's shores, though chiefly as a result of shipwrecks or other navigational

This policy of seclusion underwent a heightened intensity under the rule of the Taewŏn'gun, father of King Kojong (r. 1864-1907) and de facto regent from 1864 to 1873.⁶⁰ During these years the Taewŏn'gun confronted what seemed a disturbing Western menace to the peninsula by ordering the persecution of Catholicism, taking up armed defense of the peninsula's borders, and refusing to countenance demands for treaties and trade. Several encounters gave palpable proof of the Western threat. When, in 1866, the Taewŏn'gun launched a large-scale suppression of Catholics, as a result of which nine French priests secretly living in Korea were executed, a French force of six hundred troops attacked Kangwha Island, lending only further credence to suspicions that Catholicism and foreign invasion went hand-in-hand.⁶¹ That same year, shortly before the French punitive expedition, the *General Sherman* had forcibly voyaged up the Taedong River, despite repeated warnings along the way that its presence was illegal.

Two years later, in 1868, a Prussian adventurer named Ernest J. Oppert raided the tomb of the Taewŏn'gun's father in a bizarre attempt to force the Koreans into trade (the scheme failed). And in 1871, Minister Low and Admiral Rodgers followed up professions of the peaceful purpose of their mission by laying waste to Korean defenses along the Han River. In both the conflicts with the French and the Americans, the Taewŏn'gun chose military resistance over negotiation. In both, he also claimed victory. After the 1871 battle, the regent ordered stone markers to be erected in cities throughout the country, bearing the inscription, "The Ocean barbarians have invaded. Not to fight is to advocate peace. To advocate peace is to sell out the country."⁶²

The Taewŏn'gun's unyielding stance toward the West derived not only from concerns about territorial security, but also from a determination to preserve the neo-Confucian orthodoxy of the Chosŏn state. In this conviction he attained strong support from the Confucian intelligentsia in Korea, who agreed that Westerners were barbarians and that their teaching, Christianity, was a dangerous heterodoxy.⁶³ In the view of the

mishaps. The first of these wrecks to be reported to the State Department was the *Surprise*, an American merchant ship that sank off the coast of Pyŏng'an in June 1866. As in previous incidents in 1855 and 1865, and per Korean policy, the Americans were rescued and escorted to the northern border for repatriation in China. See S. Wells Williams to William H. Seward, 24 October 1866, *FRUS* (1868), 414-416. For a discussion of these first encounters based on Chosŏn court records, see Byong-kie Song, "The Perceptions of the United States During the Period of National Seclusion," in *Korean Perceptions of the United States: A History of Their Origins and Formation*, ed. Young Ick Lew et al., trans. Michael Finch (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006), 61-66.

⁶⁰ Kojong succeeded King Ch'ŏlchong in 1864 at the age of twelve.

⁶¹ Since its institutional beginnings in the late eighteenth century, Catholicism in Korea underwent a series of official persecutions by the government, the last of which was the Great Persecution of 1866. Three French priests managed to escape this purge. One of them, Felix-Clair Ridel, made his way to China where he reported the events to French authorities. See James Huntley Grayson, *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea: A Study in the Emplantation of Religion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 72-83; Wi-Jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar*, 1-8.

⁶² Quoted in Yŏng-ho Ch'oe, Peter H. Lee, and Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol. 2, *From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 222.

⁶³ For a discussion of early intellectual debates over Catholicism and the meaning of heterodoxy, see Don Baker, "A Different Thread: Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy, and Catholicism in a Confucian World," in *Culture and State in Late Chosŏn Korea*, 199-230. Chai-sik Chung also examines the arguments against heterodoxy in his study of the Korean scholar Yi Hang-no, a leading defender of the Confucian tradition during the Taewŏn'gun's rule. Chai-sik Chung, *A Korean Confucian Encounter with the Modern World: Yi Hang-no and the West* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1995), 131-167.

Taewŏn'gun as well as much of the literati, Korea remained the only stronghold of true (Confucian) civilization. The Qing, they believed, had unsuccessfully defended that civilization, and Japan's adoption of Western-style reforms after the 1868 Meiji Restoration showed that it, too, had been affected by inimical influences.⁶⁴

It was only after King Kojong assumed personal rule in 1874 that the seclusion policy underwent a transformation. The first rift came in 1876, after several years of strained relations with the new Meiji government. Under the pressure of a flotilla of Japanese warships and troops, Korea signed the Treaty of Kangwha, its first modern treaty. The agreement contained provisions typical of the unequal treaties Japan had earlier signed with the West, including extraterritoriality and the opening of ports to trade. But whereas the Korean leadership understood the agreement as merely a conciliatory measure meant to avoid war, from the Japanese perspective the treaty was made between two sovereign states, and thus signified the end of Korea's tributary relationship with China.⁶⁵

While neither the Chosŏn court nor the Qing accepted that interpretation, in the late 1870s China also began reexamining its policy toward Korea.⁶⁶ The Qing official who would take charge of this reevaluation was the influential reformer Li Hongzhang, governor general of Zhili province and commissioner of the Northern Ports. Li's concern about Korea lay less in any threat posed by the western European powers than by the peninsula's immediate neighbors. Encroachment into Korea by either Japan to the east or Russia to the north, Li feared, would directly endanger China's own eastern provinces. In 1879, the viceroy formulated a new strategy: Korea should enter into treaty relations with the West. Li believed that this would create an international interest on the peninsula, which in turn would deter any single country from taking aggressive action.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ The rigid policy the Taewŏn'gun took toward the Japanese—from 1868 to the Taewŏn'gun's retirement in 1873, Korea refused to recognize the new Meiji government—was in part shaped by his disdain for Japan's borrowing of things Western. On the Taewŏn'gun's policy toward Japan and the West, see James B. Palais, *Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea* (1975; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1991), 19-22, 177-178, 252-261; Kim, *Opening of Korea*, 13-33.

⁶⁵ During the regency of the Taewŏngun, officials in Korea had rejected outright Japanese notifications announcing the Meiji Restoration on the grounds that these messages deviated from the established protocol of communication between the two countries. On the 1876 Kangwha Treaty, see Palais, *Politics and Policy*, 252-271, 261-267; Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 45-48; Akira Iriye, "Japan's Drive to Great-Power Status," in *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 291-293; and Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000), 361-364.

⁶⁶ As Martina Deuchler has argued, up until the late 1870s China had "not yet developed a policy that exerted much influence on the developments in Korea." The Chinese Foreign Office, when necessary, had reiterated the argument that while Korea was subordinate to China, it acted independently in its internal and external affairs. Martina Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys: The Opening of Korea, 1875-1885* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 50, 86. This was the case when the Americans appealed for China's assistance in investigating the *General Sherman* incident. See Anson Burlingame to William H. Seward, 15 December 1866, *FRUS* (1867), 426; Letter from the Foreign Office, 28 March 1871, enclosure no. 1 in Frederick F. Low to Hamilton Fish, 3 April 1871, *FRUS* (1871), 112-113.

⁶⁷ Already in the mid-1870s, Li had expressed to the Chinese Foreign Office his concerns about the prospect of a Japanese attack on the peninsula, and had argued that such action would directly endanger the security of China's three eastern provinces. When in 1879 Japan annexed the Liu-ch'ui Islands, a small kingdom over which the Qing had claimed suzerainty, the Foreign Office memorialized the throne and asked that Li be assigned the role of convincing the Koreans to make treaties with the West. See Frederick

By then, King Kojong had also been moving toward the decision to end the kingdom's seclusion and to begin, as part of a "self-strengthening" movement, on a moderate program of military and technological modernization.⁶⁸ The Korean monarch had kept abreast of recent events in the region, mainly through reports by tributary missions returning from Peking, and had become convinced that isolation from the outside world was no longer a viable strategy. From the start, however, Kojong faced immense internal challenges. One of these came from the Confucian literati, who called for strict adherence to seclusion and whose protests coalesced in a movement to "defend orthodoxy and reject heterodoxy" (*wijǒng ch'ōksa*).⁶⁹

But it was China that would ultimately force the end to Korea's seclusion. After learning about Shufeldt's failed attempts in early 1880 to meet with Korean officials regarding a treaty, Li Hongzhang had invited the admiral to Tientsin for further talks.⁷⁰ The result was the 1882 Korea-US treaty. Negotiated entirely in China and between Li and Shufeldt, without any Korean representative present, the 1882 treaty not only at last opened Korea to the West, but also signaled a fundamental break from China's centuries-old policy of noninterference in Korea's affairs. That break was evident not only in Li's supervision of the treaty, but also in his attempt to insert a clause stating that the peninsula was a dependent state of the Qing dynasty. Shufeldt refused, insisting that the US should be able to treat with Korea independently. But after pressing the US State Department for further instructions and receiving none, the admiral settled on a compromise: a separate letter was to be sent from the Korean monarch to the American president in which Korea acknowledged its tributary relationship with China.⁷¹ The letter, when it reached Washington later that year, was conveniently ignored.

Foo Chien, *The Opening of Korea: A Study of Chinese Diplomacy, 1876-1885* (Hamden, Conn.: The Shoe String Press, 1967), 63-64; Kwang-Ching Liu, "Li Hung-chang in Chihli: The Emergence of a Policy, 1870-1875," and Key-Hiuk Kim, "The Aims of Li Hung-chang's Policies Toward Japan and Korea, 1870-1882," in *Li Hung-chang and China's Early Modernization*, ed. Samuel C. Chu and Kwang-Ching Liu (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 49-75.

⁶⁸ This first phase of self-strengthening included the establishment of the T'ongnigimu Amun (Office for the Management of State Affairs), the sending of Korean students to China to study modern weaponry, a secret inspection mission to Japan, and a reorganization of the Korean military. Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, 92-104.

⁶⁹ Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, 90-104; Young Ick Lew, "The Perception of the United States During the Enlightenment Period," in *Korean Perceptions of the United States*, 108-114; Key-Hiuk Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 289-300; "Yi Manson and Others: Memorial Submitted by Ten Thousand Men," in *Sources of Korean Tradition*, 243.

⁷⁰ Before Shufeldt left for his voyage, he had been advised by the State Department, which mistakenly believed there existed close relations between Japan and Korea, to seek Japan's good offices in his effort to make contact with the Korean government. The Japanese were reluctant to comply with this request, but they eventually agreed to provide accompanying letters to Shufeldt's own letter to the Korean king. When both attempts to relay his letter in early 1880 failed, Shufeldt again sought Japan's assistance. The third time, however, the Japanese declined. On these events, see Tyler Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 455-457; Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 40-45; Drake, *The Empire of the Seas*, 238-248.

⁷¹ Paullin, "The Opening of Korea," 491-493; Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 459-464; Yur-Bok Lee, *Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Korea, 1866-1887* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), 39-42.

As for China's newly intrusive turn, it would have been impossible for Korea to oppose its more powerful neighbor.⁷² Nor did the Korean leadership necessarily desire that step. The dominant faction in the government, controlled by Queen Min and her family clan, would soon adopt a pro-Chinese policy, even as other officials began to chafe at the Qing's heightened interference.⁷³ Within a few years, these internal political rivalries would explode into a bloody revolution. Already in the summer of 1882, just after the first Western treaties were concluded, a domestic riot had pushed the peninsula to the brink of an international crisis. What became known as the 1882 Soldiers' Mutiny (*Imo gullan*) began as a local disturbance that turned into an attack on the Min family and the Japanese legation in Seoul. In response, and for the first time since the seventeenth century, both Japan and China dispatched troops to the peninsula. Though no bloodshed resulted, the incident not only cemented the roots of the Sino-Japanese contest over the kingdom, but also set a precedent for future military action.

More immediately, the 1882 upheaval led to in an increasingly vigorous attempt by China to strengthen its authority in Korea. To whatever degree Li Hongzhang had intended to rely on Western treaties and the balancing of powers as a way of securing the peninsula, by the end of 1882, the Qing approach had clearly shifted toward one of explicit intervention.⁷⁴

* * *

Horace Allen left Shanghai for Korea in mid-September 1884. He went alone, as Fannie had decided to stay behind for now with the baby. The trip was Horace's most jolting yet. It was supposed to be a fairly easy voyage, from Shanghai east to Nagasaki,

⁷² While the Korean government acquiesced to China's intervention in both the 1882 Korea-US treaty and the treaties concluded with Great Britain and Germany later that year, it had already reached a consensus in late 1880 to open treaty negotiations with the West, especially the United States. The strength of the *wijŏng ch'ŏksa* movement, however, likely contributed to Korea's stalled response to Li Hongzhang's request for a Korean plenipotentiary to be sent to Tientsin for negotiations with Shufeldt. For details on the events surrounding the US-Korea treaty, see C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 21-24; Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, 114-122; Drake, *The Empire of the Seas*, 282-298; Kang, *The Korean Struggle*, 116-144.

⁷³ By the early 1880s, Queen Min and her relatives of the Yŏhŭng Min clan had become the dominant faction in the Korean court. According to historian Key-Hiuk Kim, it seemed at first that both Kojong and Queen Min were beginning to lean toward Japan "as a model for reform and modernization." In 1881, for instance, the king and queen had supported the sending of an inspection mission to Japan—what became known as the "gentlemen's sightseeing tour" (*sinsa yuramdan*)—which because of anti-Japanese sentiment in Korea had been largely kept a secret, even from Korean government officials. Kim, "Opening of Korea," 67. Following the Soldiers' Mutiny of 1882, however, Queen Min would clearly turn toward the Chinese for assistance in modernizing efforts, while Kojong continued to sympathize with those officials who favored reform based on Japan's model. See Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, 150-158, 199-205; In K. Hwang, *The Korean Reform Movement of the 1880s: A Study of Transition in Intra-Asian Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1978), 83-92.

⁷⁴ In the fall of 1882, for instance, China promulgated a set of trade regulations for Korea that granted commercial privileges exclusively to the Chinese. A large military contingent, moreover, remained stationed in Seoul. See "Regulations for Maritime and Overland Trade Between Chinese and Korean Subjects" in *Korea Treaties and Agreements* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1921), 1-6. On the Soldiers' Riot, see Kim and Kim, *Politics of Imperialism*, 326-327.

and then almost straight north to the southeastern end of the Korean peninsula. At Nagasaki came news, however, that a typhoon was barreling up Japan's coast. Instead of laying anchor and waiting "like a rat in a hole," according to the captain, for the cyclone to whip through, the steamer pushed out and took its chances on the open seas.⁷⁵ The sailing was violent. Horace and the two other passengers on board were glued to their bunks nearly the entire time—what should have been a thirteen-hour passage that dragged on for a day-and-a-half—but at last the ship reached the Korean port of Pusan. Passing again through Nagasaki sometime later, Allen was surprised to see how much damage the typhoon had inflicted. "We had occasion to thank our intrepid captain," he remembered, "for his sagacity and courage in getting out where we would have a chance to fight."⁷⁶

The port call at Pusan was brief, but Horace stayed long enough to get a rough sketch of the harbor's layout. "Fusan is a wholly Japanese town," he scribbled in his journal. He was referring to the Japanese Settlement, which was situated between the western shoreline of the harbor and a bluff that receded further back into a range of imposing hills. The Korean section of the port, a walled town of some two thousand residents, lay several miles away. Horace's observations were not entirely wrong. Under Korea's seclusion policy, Pusan for more than two centuries had functioned as the only port for contact with the Japanese. After 1876, when Pusan was opened as a treaty port, the old Japan House (*waegwan*)—a sequestered compound for Japanese traders and envoys—began to evolve into a small town that included not only residences but also its own bank, courthouse, school, post office, telegraph, shops, and municipal council.⁷⁷ It was not unlike the International Settlement Horace had seen in Shanghai—except that in Pusan, scarcely a Westerner was to be found. Horace counted zero Americans and five Europeans, one of whom was the harbor master, another an employee of the Korean customs service.⁷⁸

But it was Seoul, the capital of Korea and the largest city in the kingdom, that Allen intended as his destination, and he continued on the steamer as it sailed around the western bend of the peninsula and then up the coast toward the treaty port of Chemulpo (Inch'on).⁷⁹ Once anchored, Horace again swiftly skimmed his surroundings. He noted the presence of Japanese and Chinese residents, but also a small minority of some eighteen Westerners, including customs officers, traders, the British and German consuls, and even "two or three adventurers."⁸⁰ All in all, he was not impressed. "I looked at Fusan and Chemulpo," he would write in a report to the Presbyterian mission board, "but

⁷⁵ Horace N. Allen, *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 42; Allen diary, 14 September 1884, Allen Papers.

⁷⁶ Allen, *Things Korean*, 43.

⁷⁷ Lewis, *Frontier Contact*, 179-180; Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword*, 328-329; Carter J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 10-11.

⁷⁸ Allen diary, 14 September 1884.

⁷⁹ Chemulpo (present day Inch'on), was the name of the Korean village located at the port. Inch'on referred to the prefectural town that was situated several miles away. Foreigners at the time used the two names interchangeably, but for the purposes of this study I will refer to the port as Chemulpo.

⁸⁰ Allen diary, 20 September 1884.

found them of little missionary importance. Fusan is a Japanese town, Chemulpo a distinctly foreign settlement.”⁸¹

From Chemulpo inland to Seoul was approximately thirty miles, a winding course of undulating terrain that could be covered in a day at a swift marching pace. Horace went by pony instead, and after a ride that “nearly killed” him, he arrived at the capital on the evening of September 22, 1884.⁸² The very next morning he called on Lucius H. Foote, the American minister in Seoul. Foote was older in his years, a New Yorker by birth and a lawyer by trade who had spent much of his life in California, then a few years abroad as a diplomatic consul. In early 1883, he had received appointment as the US’s first representative to Korea, and had been living in Seoul with his wife, Rose, since June of that year.⁸³ Horace’s first impressions were fairly positive. A “handsome and elegant elderly couple,” he wrote in his diary.⁸⁴ He quickly discovered as well that the American minister could be a valuable resource. Within only a couple of days, Foote offered not only to make Horace physician of the US legation, but also to help him purchase property next to the legation site, on the western side of the capital.

From the beginning Horace realized, quite rightly, that Foote’s assistance involved more than an act of mere generosity. Aside from the US minister and his wife, only five or so other Americans were living in Seoul, and none of these, as Foote pointed out to Allen, was a physician. “Was gladly received [by Foote] because of the great need of a Dr.,” Allen tersely noted in his diary.⁸⁵ Yet Horace had already anticipated that his medical services might come in handy among the foreign community, and he seemed not to mind much the solicitation. On the contrary, in his report to the Presbyterian board in October, Allen acknowledged that Foote had “done all he could for me,” including “loaning” to him a Korean-speaking Chinese steward to help oversee house repairs, a task that Allen found exceedingly frustrating given his ignorance of the Korean language.⁸⁶ More importantly, by appointing Horace to the quasi-official position of doctor to the American legation (the job came with no salary), Foote had provided him with a cover of sorts for his presence in the capital. “Our minister General Foote,” Horace explained to the board, “had an audience with the King of Corea, telling him of my coming and my intention to buy property. The King asked if I were a missionary and got for [an] answer, ‘He is physician to the Legation.’”

Such an introduction, “if a little misleading,” Horace would later admit, suggested that Foote was none too keen about trumpeting the arrival of an American mission

⁸¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, Allen Papers.

⁸² Allen diary, 22 September 1884, Allen Papers.

⁸³ Frederick T. Frelinghuysen to Lucius H. Foote, 9 March 1883, *KAR*, 23. Prior to coming to Korea, Foote (who was then in his mid-fifties) had pursued a successful law practice in California and had also spent four years as US consul in Chile. At the time of his Korea appointment he was working in the US diplomatic service in Colombia. See Everett Frazer, *Korea, and Her Relations to China, Japan, and the United States* (Orange, New Jersey: Chronicle Book and Job Printing Office, 1884), 4; Lee, *Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Korea*, 52. For an account of Rose Foote’s time in Korea, see Mary V. Tingley Lawrence, *A Diplomat’s Helpmate: How Rose F. Foote, Wife of the First U.S. Minister and Envoy Extraordinary to Korea, Served Her Country in the Far East* (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker Company Publishers, 1918).

⁸⁴ Allen diary, 23 September 1884, Allen Papers.

⁸⁵ Allen diary, 23 September 1884, Allen Papers.

⁸⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, Allen Papers.

agent.⁸⁷ There was the obvious limitation—the existence in Korea of an official proscription against Christianity. And though the recently revised British and German treaties had added the right of the “free exercise” of religion for their subjects, a privilege US citizens could claim by the most-favored-nation clause, that provision still offered Foote few answers for how to deal with American missionaries if, and when, they began to arrive on the peninsula.

Indeed the missionary question was a complicated one for Foote, and the stance he took would have much to do with political considerations. Ever since taking up residence in Seoul in mid-1883, Foote had become a kind of informal adviser to King Kojong, offering information and advice on various internal and foreign policy matters.⁸⁸ The relationship was cultivated on both sides. Even before Foote came to Seoul to assume his post, Kojong had already begun to adopt a favorable view of Americans; his cordial reception of Foote and the deliberate seeking of the minister’s advice were part of a larger effort to develop strong connections with the US, a country that Kojong saw not only as a potential political ally, but also as a possible source of assistance for Korea’s modernization efforts.⁸⁹ Thus when Foote, in an audience with the king in July 1883, suggested that “my Government would be pleased to receive an envoy from His Majesty,” Kojong immediately took up the proposal.⁹⁰ (A special embassy to the US was dispatched that summer.) Several months later, Kojong informed Foote that he wished to hire two Americans to work for the Korean government—one as an adviser for the Office of Foreign Affairs, and the other, a military officer, as an instructor for Korean troops.⁹¹ Further inquiries were made the following year, after the special embassy returned from

⁸⁷ Allen, *Things Korean*, 167.

⁸⁸ Two months after arriving in Korea, Foote informed Secretary of State Frelinghuysen that the Korean king had begun to ask for his advice “upon even minor matters.” These inquiries, Foote explained, “pertained particularly to the methods of raising revenue in the United States.” In his response Frelinghuysen made clear to Foote that “while there is no objection to your giving to the King personal suggestions in such matters, they are to be regarded as personal only when not expressly covered by instructions here.” Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 19 July 1883, *KAR*, 31; Frederick T. Frelinghuysen to Lucius H. Foote, 18 September 1883, *KAR*, 31.

⁸⁹ Lew, “The Shufeldt Treaty,” 10-15; Lee, “Korean-American Diplomatic Relations, 1882-1905,” 12-15; Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 68.

⁹⁰ Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 13 July 1883, *FRUS* (1884), 244. Following Foote’s invitation, in the summer of 1883 the Korean government dispatched a special mission to the US (*Pobingsa*), the main purpose of which was to observe various types of institutional structures and systems. The embassy arrived in San Francisco in September 1883 and visited the cities of Chicago, Washington, DC, New York, and Boston before departing for Korea in October. While on tour, it met twice with President Chester Arthur and also made requests to the State Department for American advisers to be sent to Korea. Frelinghuysen provides a description of the embassy’s activities in his 16 October 1884 dispatch to Lucius Foote, *KAR*, 32-34. See also Harold J. Noble, “The Korean Mission to the United States in 1833: The First Embassy Sent by Korea to an Occidental Nation,” *Transactions of the Korean Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 18 (1929): 1-21; Donald M. Bishop, “Policy and Personality in Early Korean-American Relations: The Case of George Clayton Foulk,” in *The United States and Korea*, ed. Andrew C. Nahm (Kalamazoo, Mich.: The Center for Korean Studies, Western Michigan University, 1979), 29-30; Wŏn-mo Kim, *Han-Mi sugyosa: Chosŏn pobingsa ūi Miguk sahaeng (1883)* [History of Korean-American Relations: The 1883 Chosŏn Embassy to the U.S.] (Sŏul: Ch’ŏrhak kwa Hyŏnsilſa, 1999), 43-109.

⁹¹ Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 19 October 1883, *KAR*, 53.

its American tour. In early September 1884, the king asked that Foote secure three school teachers, as well as an agricultural expert to oversee an experimental model farm.⁹²

Foote was at once gratified by these requests and perplexed by the lack of responsiveness from home. From the start he had professed to Kojong that in negotiating a treaty with Korea, the US had been “actuated only by the highest motives”; he had even taken occasion to welcome the king to “the brotherhood of nations.”⁹³ Later, when Kojong began to ask for assistance in acquiring American advisers, Foote thanked him for “the confidence which he had manifested in the U.S.,” offered appreciation for his esteem, and promised to pass along the requests to the American government. Whatever rhetorical flourishes Foote may have used during his audiences with Kojong, he seemed to have genuinely liked the monarch and was convinced that the US should pursue an active role on the peninsula.⁹⁴ That goal reflected not only a personal desire to fulfill Kojong’s requests, but also concerns about securing commercial markets in Korea, extending Western-style progress, and enhancing America’s prestige. For all these reasons it was imperative, Foote believed, that the US secure a favored position in Seoul.⁹⁵

On this point he fully expected Washington to agree. Part of his original instructions from Secretary of State Frelinghuysen, after all, had included the general mandate to apply his “intelligence and zealous attention” to advancing the interests of the United States. It was “so much the desire of the President,” Frelinghuysen had said, “that friendly relations between the two countries be maintained and strengthened.”⁹⁶ And yet as Foote saw it, the State Department was paying only slight attention toward that end.⁹⁷

⁹² Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 10 September 1883, *KAR*, 55. The establishment of this American-style farm was one direct result of the 1883 embassy, which had observed a model farm while visiting Massachusetts and had brought back seeds supplied by the US Department of Agriculture. See Lee, *Diplomatic Relations*, 61-62.

⁹³ “Address of Mr. Foote to the King of Corea,” enclosure no. 1 in Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 25 May 1883, *FRUS* (1884), 243.

⁹⁴ After his first audience with Kojong in May 1883, for instance, Foote reported to Frelinghuysen that “the presence of the King was pleasing, and his manner most gracious, and I am informed that he manifests special interest in the treaty made with the United States.” Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 23 May 1883, *FRUS* (1884), 243. See also Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 19 October 1883, *KAR*, 53.

⁹⁵ For example, see Lucius H. Foote, “Report on Corea, by Lucius H. Foote, United States minister, August 21, 1883,” enclosure no. 24 in Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 21 August 1883, *FRUS* (1884), 247-248.

⁹⁶ Frelinghuysen outlined four major objectives for Foote: to exchange the ratifications for the 1882 Korea-US treaty; to cultivate a friendly relationship with the government and the people of Korea; to report on the relations between Korea, China, and Japan so that “proper steps” could be taken to secure the same commercial privileges as what the Chinese had obtained in their 1882 trade regulations; and to inform the State Department of “all matters of political importance or of interest to those engaged in commerce.” Frederick T. Frelinghuysen to Lucius H. Foote, 17 March 1883, *KAR*, 24-29.

⁹⁷ Beginning in the fall of 1883, Foote repeatedly urged the State Department to answer his dispatches regarding the matter of the American advisers. “I was confident,” Foote would write almost one year after the first of these dispatches, “that its importance would strike you and that my suggestions would be considered.” Foote was all the more anxious because he believed that those foreigners who secured political appointments in “these Oriental countries” would become particularly influential. Hence he pleaded, “men of other nationalities...are seeking these positions, and I would earnestly ask you to take immediate action in the matter.” Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 3 September 1884, *KAR*,

Almost fully one year after urging Frelinghuysen to comply with Kojong's invitation for a foreign affairs adviser and military instructor—and receiving no reply—Foote again entreated the State Department to take action. “The long delay,” he wrote to the secretary of state on September 3, 1884, “has both embarrassed and mystified me. It seemed to me particularly desirable that the influence of the United States should be felt in the regeneration of Korea, and that that influence should become a permanent factor in her progress.”⁹⁸ Besides, Foote pointed out, had not members of the Korean special embassy been told during their visit that the US would provide “all aid” in the matter of advisers?⁹⁹

No issue would more deeply vex Foote during his time as minister than Washington's delay on the adviser requests. But there were other ways that Foote had attempted to extend American “influence” on the peninsula. As he informed Frelinghuysen in the late summer of 1884, since arriving in Korea he had, for instance, occasionally expressed to King Kojong his “opinion in regard to religious liberty, saying that it was one of the fundamental principles of our Government that every man should have the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.”¹⁰⁰ Or as he put it somewhat differently to F. F. Ellinwood, secretary of the Presbyterian mission board:

I have, in a quiet way, sought to impress upon officials and people that the western nations permitted religious liberty, and that only good resulted there from, as the people were taught by religious teachers to respect the Rulers, obey the laws, and to be honest, truthful and moral.¹⁰¹

Still, whatever beliefs Foote, who was not a church member himself, held about religious freedom, he was not about to welcome American missionaries outright. In fact in the fall of 1883, he had specifically warned Henry Loomis of the American Bible Society that mission agents should not be sent to the peninsula. “The time will come shortly,” he wrote to Loomis, who was based in Yokohama, “when the good people who desire to visit Corea in the interests of the church can do so without injury to the cause they desire to promote. At present it would greatly embarrass this [Korean] government.”¹⁰² Ever conscious of his delicate position as the US representative (some of the other foreign officials, he suspected, were jealous of the attention being shown to him by Kojong),

55. See also Foote's dispatches for 26 April 1884; 10 September 1884; 17 September 1884; 15 November 1884, *KAR*, 55-57, 73.

⁹⁸ Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 3 September 1884, *KAR*, 54.

⁹⁹ Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 10 September 1884, *KAR*, 55. “It was by my mouth,” George C. Foulk later noted, “that the Secretary of State made the promises to the Korean government through the embassy.” George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 4 June 1885, *America's Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887*, ed. Samuel Hawley (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2008), 108 (hereafter cited as *AMK*).

¹⁰⁰ Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 1 September 1884, *KAR*, 127.

¹⁰¹ Lucius H. Foote to F. F. Ellinwood, 12 November 1884, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Board of Foreign Missions, *Correspondence and Reports, 1833-1811, Korea* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996), microfilm.

¹⁰² Lucius H. Foote to Henry Loomis, 16 November 1883, quoted in Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 105.

Foote was hardly willing to risk suspicion of American motives by receiving religious workers.¹⁰³

By the time Horace reached Seoul in late September 1884, however, Foote's sentiments had changed somewhat. He was now more amenable to missionary prospects—willing, even, to extend a hand. The shift was no coincidence. Only a few months earlier, the Rev. Robert Maclay, superintendent of the American Methodist mission in Japan, had made a short trip to Seoul and while there had submitted a petition to Kojong expressing his society's desire to begin work on the peninsula. The petition was presented not by Maclay but by the Korean official Kim Ok-kyun. Prominent among an emerging group of young reformers, Kim had previously met Maclay in Japan and had formed a friendly acquaintance with the reverend.¹⁰⁴ Once in Seoul, Maclay sought out Kim's help. "I forwarded the letter to Mr. Kim," Maclay later recalled, "requesting him to lay it before the king at his earliest convenience, stating also that our time was limited, and that we must soon return to Japan." Several days passed before an anxious Maclay called on Kim. "He received me very cordially," Maclay wrote, "and at once proceeded to tell me that the king had carefully examined my letter the night before, and in accordance with my request had decided to authorize our society to commence hospital and school work in Korea."¹⁰⁵

Lucius Foote was well aware of these events. He had allowed Maclay, after all, to board as a guest at the US legation and had "freely discussed" with the Methodist superintendent the purpose of his visit. Not long after Kim Ok-kyun submitted Maclay's petition, moreover, Foote had heard directly from Kojong on the matter. "Since [Maclay's] departure," Foote reported to Washington in September 1884, "I have received the assurance of His Majesty that not only will no obstacle be thrown in the way, but that the establishment of a mission school and hospital at Seoul will be tacitly encouraged."¹⁰⁶

Despite Foote's newly cooperative attitude toward his missionary compatriots, the US minister was still unwilling, however, to give an absolute sanction to missionary work.¹⁰⁷ As he informed the American mission interests in the fall of 1884, including the freshly arrived Allen, Foote thought it injudicious for missionaries to attempt too rapid or conspicuous a start. "It is well that the missionaries have waited patiently, as nothing has been lost thereby," he wrote to Ellinwood in November. "I would still advise prudence

¹⁰³ For example, on the strained relationship between Foote and P. G. von Möllendorff, see Yur-Bok Lee, *West Goes East: Paul Georg Von Möllendorff and Great Power Imperialism in Late Yi Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 90-92.

¹⁰⁴ See Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 21.

¹⁰⁵ Robert S. Maclay, "Korea's Permit to Christianity," *Missionary Review of the World* 9 (April 1896): 289.

¹⁰⁶ Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 1 September 1884, *FRUS* (1885), 127.

¹⁰⁷ One month after Maclay had returned to Japan, Foote followed up with an optimistic letter. "I have received renewed assurances from His Majesty," he wrote to Maclay, reiterating what he had told the State Department, "that not only will no obstruction be thrown in your way, but that you will be tacitly encouraged in founding a school and hospital in Seoul." While "I may not be here and see you firmly established," Foote added, "I shall do all I can to prepare the way for you. Mr. Kim Ok Kuin and one or two others are doing what they can to aid me quietly." Lucius H. Foote to Robert S. Maclay, 8 September 1884, quoted in Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 106.

and proper restriction as to numbers and places.”¹⁰⁸ He issued a similar warning to Maclay: “If in coming here you carry out your intention, as expressed to me, of making haste slowly,” Foote explained, “I feel that the door will not be closed.”¹⁰⁹ Specifically, and in line with what he believed had been authorized by the king, Foote preferred that medical or educational agents be sent first. This he made clear to Horace Allen. “Had I been a preacher,” Horace noted, “[Foote] flatly declared he would not have helped me.”¹¹⁰

That statement was perhaps less an admonition than a remark made to a fellow sympathizer, for Horace had already assured Foote that he would not try preaching or “any like work till the proper time came.”¹¹¹ It was a shared understanding that helped the two Americans pass the autumn months of 1884 on friendly, if not mutually beneficial, terms, the US minister pleased at the arrival of a physician, the missionary-doctor appreciative of the diplomat’s assistance in getting established in an unfamiliar place.

But Foote, in any case, was on his way out. Back in mid-September, while Horace was rounding the peninsula en route to Seoul, Foote had received notice from the State Department that by congressional action his position was downgraded from Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Minister Resident and Consul General.¹¹² Within days of the news, he penned his resignation. “I must feel that Congress has to some extent shorn me of my strength,” he wrote to Frelinghuysen.¹¹³ As envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, Foote had held the same rank as the American diplomats stationed in neighboring Tokyo and Peking; moreover, the US had been the first Western country to send an accredited representative to Korea, and the only one, at that, to have commissioned a full minister.¹¹⁴ To have to inform the Korean government of his reduction in rank was for Foote one final, crowning act of humiliation. “These people,” he averred, “were proud that the United States should have sent to them a minister of the first rank,” and now he felt it utterly “impossible to explain the reasons for the change, without leaving the most unfortunate impressions.”¹¹⁵

In Foote’s mind there remained only one alternative: to decline the reduced post and leave the country altogether. Since no other American diplomat was stationed in Korea, however, he assured Washington that he would stay in Seoul until further instructions arrived. But his embarrassment went unabated. When Foote finally did leave Korea in early 1885, he would go without ever informing the Koreans of the true reasons for his departure.

¹⁰⁸ Lucius H. Foote to F. F. Ellinwood, 12 November 1884, *Correspondence and Letters*.

¹⁰⁹ Lucius H. Foote to Robert S. Maclay, 18 November 1884, quoted in Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 106.

¹¹⁰ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, Allen Papers.

¹¹¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, Allen Papers.

¹¹² Frederick T. Frelinghuysen to Lucius H. Foote, 14 July 1884, *KAR*, 36.

¹¹³ Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 17 September 1884, *KAR*, 37.

¹¹⁴ Neither Great Britain nor Germany commissioned full ministers to Korea. The British appointed a consul general who was to be responsible to the British minister in Peking, while the Germans sent a consul responsible directly to Berlin. See Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 474-475.

¹¹⁵ George C. Foulk, the naval attaché to the US legation, also remarked on the personal effect the reduction had had on Foote. “Mister Foote is terribly humiliated,” Foulk wrote to his family on October 26, 1884, “and very justly thinks himself badly treated.” George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 26 October 1884, *AMK*, 68.

* * *

“A cold crisp day,” Horace Allen wrote in his diary on November 27, 1884. It was the American holiday of Thanksgiving. The ground had frozen several inches underneath the surface and the temperature hovered below freezing. The unfavorable elements, however, proved no deterrent for an active day. It began with Horace dismissing his Korean teacher after less than one of week of instruction. “The reason he was discharged,” Horace grumbled privately, “was that he always has a lot of friends coming to see him and I could do no studying.” Next, accompanied by Foote’s private secretary, Charles Scudder, Horace visited the Japanese legation and made calls to its physician and representative. The building itself he found impressive. “A fine affair,” Allen noted, “built on foreign plan and furnished up in foreign style.” It was a contrast to the house his family now occupied—Fannie and the baby had come to Seoul in late October—and even to the American legation building, both of which were modifications of existing native structures.¹¹⁶ Then, back at their new home, Horace and Fannie celebrated the holiday with familiar reminiscences: “by singing ‘My Country Tis’ of Thee,’ and by eating ‘Boston Baked Beans.’”¹¹⁷

The previous two months had been a busy time for Horace, with much of it consumed by the everyday tasks of settling into the capital. Foremost was finding a place to live. Toward that end Horace, of course, had received help from Minister Foote, thanks to whom he was quickly able to secure two adjacent plots of land next to the US legation and “within a stone’s throw” of the English consulate.¹¹⁸ One of these plots Foote had purchased prior to Allen’s arrival and was holding for another party, but when “you came,” Foote later confessed, “we were so anxious to have the physician near that I turned it over to you.”¹¹⁹ That other party turned out to be none other than the Methodist Rev. Maclay, but by the time Foote had admitted to Allen the details of the case, the transaction had already taken place. “I objected but it was too late,” Horace noted. “The bargain was made and I could not back out.”¹²⁰

A third plot of land Horace managed to acquire by his own initiative. This parcel also adjoined the other two and had attracted several potential buyers. Determined to try his hand at obtaining the property, Horace sent a steward to negotiate a price. The bid was successful. “I secured it by fair means,” Horace later reported to the mission board. “Everyone here congratulates me on my bargain.”¹²¹ These three tracts, which Allen purchased on behalf of the board, totaled one and a half contiguous acres and included three sets of buildings, one of which he immediately began fixing up to be his residence. The remaining buildings, he believed, would easily house two more missionary families, and the grounds seemed spacious enough besides for a future school, hospital, and chapel.¹²² As he proudly informed Secretary Ellinwood that fall, he had obtained in sum a

¹¹⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, Allen Papers; Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 29 June 1883, *FRUS* (1884), 244.

¹¹⁷ Allen diary, 27 November 1884, Allen Papers.

¹¹⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, Allen Papers.

¹¹⁹ Allen diary, 24 September 1884, Allen Papers.

¹²⁰ Allen diary, 24 September 1884, Allen Papers.

¹²¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 12 November 1884, Allen Papers.

¹²² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, Allen Papers.

“choice piece of property, surrounded by legations, commanding a view of the whole city, plenty of pure air.”¹²³ Here lay the foundations of the American Presbyterian compound in Seoul.

While attending to matters of real estate and repairs, Horace had also begun meeting some of the Westerners in the capital. It was a small group, like in the treaty port of Chemulpo numbering less than twenty, but in contrast consisting almost entirely of diplomats or other officials, and their families.¹²⁴ Conspicuous among these was P. G. von Möllendorff, a former German diplomat to China whom the Korean government had hired in 1883 as one of its first foreign advisers. Although by the fall of 1884 von Möllendorff had been pushed out of the Korean Foreign Office, he was still serving the government in other capacities, including as head of Maritime Customs.¹²⁵

Horace was ambivalent about von Möllendorff. Appreciative of the friendly reception he received from “the man who at one time occupied so high a place in Corea,” Horace nevertheless was not sorry to hear about von Möllendorff’s recent dismissal from the Foreign Office. “It is a good thing for us,” Horace explained to the Presbyterian board, “for he is more opposed to missions than the Coreans themselves. I have this on the best authority.”¹²⁶ There were others with whom Horace became better acquainted—the Footes, of course, as well as British Consul General William G. Aston and his wife. For some time, too, Horace and Fannie even took in the British trader J. T. Mitchell, who had come to Seoul after a trip into the interior in search of timber. Maintaining such associations, as Allen hinted in his diary, showed that he was determined to avoid the problem that had so distressed him back in Nanking: not getting along with others. “We can at least be kind,” he wrote. “I am having some practise.”¹²⁷

As for contact with Koreans, Horace’s interactions were limited, in large part because of his inability to speak the language. He had discovered early on that this was a liability—and in literal ways too, for he was convinced that the expenses he was incurring for house repairs would not have run so high had he been able to deal with the Korean parties directly. These financial outlays became a major source of frustration for Allen (“I am squeezed,” he would complain to Ellinwood on more than one occasion), and he expected to get a better handle on his affairs once he had acquired some of the

¹²³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, November 12 1884, Allen Papers. Allen later informed Ellinwood that the property had been bought in his own name, and that he was advised by George Foulk not to transfer the title because P. G. von Möllendorff might “use it as material against” Allen. Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 23 February 1885, Allen Papers.

¹²⁴ Lucius H. Foote to Secretary of State Frelinghuysen, 17 December 1884, *KAR*, 99; Allen, *Things Korean*, 71.

¹²⁵ Paul Georg von Möllendorff was recommended to the Korean government by Li Hongzhang. The German had originally gone to China in 1869, at the age of twenty-two, to work in the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service. He left the customs service in 1874 and entered the German consular service, for which he worked variously in Canton, Shanghai, and Tientsin. In 1882, shortly after joining Li Hongzhang’s staff, he accepted the appointment to work in Korea. According to his contract with the Korean government, Möllendorff’s main duties were to provide assistance in foreign relations affairs and to establish a Korean Maritime Customs Service. A talented linguist (he was well versed in the Chinese language and had already begun studying Korean before his arrival in late 1882), Möllendorff would soon become involved in a wide range of activities on the peninsula. Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, 158-164; Lee, *West Goes East*, 43-49.

¹²⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, Allen Papers.

¹²⁷ Allen diary, 22 September 1884, 12 November 1884, Allen Papers.

language. A basic speaking competency, moreover, Horace thought necessary for attempting any regular medical work among the local Koreans. Hence he informed the mission board in November that while he had begun to book appointments with a few of the foreigners, he had resolved not to “work for the common people till I am able to talk to them.” He assured the board that such a time was not far off. Come the spring, Horace predicted optimistically, he would be able to do much of his “own speaking and interpreting.”¹²⁸

Notwithstanding this moratorium on engaging with the “common people,” Horace did, however, meet some officials from the Korean government. These encounters were only brief, but they seemed to have left a distinct impression on the newcomer. At the least, they confirmed in Horace’s mind a belief that had begun to take shape during his former days in China—that medical work was pivotal to a successful missionary enterprise. “Those native [Korean] officials whom I have met at dinners,” Horace reported, “assure me that their people appreciate foreign medical sciences and that I will have more than I can do.” What was more, he added, “those same officials are desirous of starting a medical college such as they have in Japan.”¹²⁹ To Allen this was evidence that the Presbyterian mission in Korea must be centered in the kingdom’s capital—and must be focused, initially at least, on the medical branch of mission work. He lost no opportunity to impress this upon his superiors. “Now is the time for you to get your hold,” Horace told the board. “Secure the confidence of the people by a well organized and officially recognized medical work and everything else will follow without hindrance.”¹³⁰

The claim was not entirely new. In fact, Horace had presented a similar argument when he first requested transfer to Korea in the early summer of 1884. But he spoke now with even greater certainty—for one thing had become clear to him during his first two months in Seoul: he was more desired as a physician than as a representative of a mission organization. Indeed as certain events began to unfold around him, Horace would come to emphasize more and more the importance of medical work to the larger Presbyterian effort. But that lay in the months ahead. In the meanwhile, for the rest of 1884 and well into the following year, Horace and Fannie would remain the only Protestant missionaries living on the peninsula.

¹²⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, 12 November 1884, Allen Papers.

¹²⁹ Though Allen’s report does not mention the names of these officials, they were likely those associated with the “enlightenment party,” the group that favored reforms on the Japanese model.

¹³⁰ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 October 1884, Allen Papers.

Chapter Two

Coup

It was around nine o'clock when Horace Allen returned home the night of December 4, 1884. He had stepped out that night to see a patient—since arriving in Seoul several months earlier, Allen had begun to provide medical services to the small community of Westerners there—and as he rounded his way back through the city, something about the surroundings left a particular impression upon him. The moonlight was bright, he later described, and the streets “so peaceful and homelike” that he resolved to take a walk with his wife Fannie “some evening before the moon ceased shining.”¹ Moments earlier Horace would have heard the familiar, thrice-repeated boom of the central bell, the signal for the closing of the city’s outer gates. With the “dry snow crunching under foot,” he made his way through the quiet, veering westward as he climbed the hill near his residence inside of the walled capital.

By half past ten, Horace and Fannie had retired for the night when they were heard a loud commotion outside. “Our gate bell was violently rung,” Horace recalled, “and a foreigner kept calling my name.” The visitor was Charles Scudder, the private secretary of US Minister Lucius Foote, and he had come to relay an urgent request for Horace’s assistance. Scudder explained that the foreign officials had been attending a dinner party earlier in the night; that during the party a fire alarm was sounded; and that when the queen’s relative Min Yōng-ik rushed out to investigate, he was attacked by an unknown assailant.² After listening to Scudder’s account, and under the escort of fifty Korean soldiers whom he found waiting outside his premises, Horace hurried to the residence of P. G. von Möllendorff, where Min had been moved following what appeared to be an attempted assassination.³

Horace arrived there to find the victim in “a horrible condition, all blood and gore.” Min had sustained multiple and extensive injuries, including one gash that had severed a branch of his temporal artery and another that had laid bare part of the humerus. Horace worked into the night, closing some of the wounds with silk sutures, cleaning and leaving others to be cared for more fully when the sun’s rising would offer better light. Early the next morning he sent a message to the physician of the Japanese legation, asking for his help with treating the cuts, and together the two continued the

¹ Horace N. Allen diary, 5 December 1884, Horace N. Allen Papers, The New York Public Library. For a later account, see Horace N. Allen, *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 68. Horace wrote in *Things Korean* that he had been dining across the city that with two American friends, but in his diary he mentioned only that he had gone out to see a patient.

² Foote and Scudder were among the guests attending the banquet that night. It was Foote who sent for Allen’s help. See Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 5 December 1884, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), 331-332 (hereafter cited as *FRUS*).

³ Allen diary, 5 December 1884, Allen Papers. P. G. von Möllendorff was also among the banquet guests. On von Möllendorff’s experience during the first night of the coup, see Yur-Bok Lee, *West Goes East: Paul Georg von Möllendorff and Great Power Imperialism in Late Yi Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 73-74.

stitching and bandaging, putting in a total of twenty-seven sutures and one ligature. All told “there were seven different wounds,” Horace recorded in his catalog of Min’s injuries, “five of which must have been made by different blows either from the same or different instruments.” When he had finished the dressings, Allen cleaned his tools and prepared to go home, offering to come back if needed.⁴

Over the next twenty-four hours he would attend to Min three more times, twice on the evening of December 5 and once the following morning. On the afternoon of December 6, the Allens were again “quietly enjoying” their new home when a message arrived from Minister Foote, requesting that they come to the American legation at once. They promptly did so (the building was practically next door) and found huddled there most of the Western residents of Seoul, including the British consul general William G. Aston, who aside from Foote and the German representative Otto Zembsch was the only other Western diplomat stationed in the capital.⁵ A battle between Chinese and Japanese soldiers had broken out at the royal palace that afternoon, Horace learned, and it was this fighting that was causing the panic. Preparing to “do duty all night,” he armed himself with a Winchester rifle and that evening stood guard over his own property, “much against the desire of the Legation people,” Horace noted, who “seemed to think my property not worth guarding.”⁶ When morning came, his belongings had emerged untouched.

That afternoon, Horace heard a spate of firing near the Japanese legation and then witnessed the “magnificent and costly” building that he had so admired go up in flames. When evening came he again prepared to mount guard, this time at the front gate of the US legation, but was called instead to come to the Chinese camp and once again attend to Min Yǒng-ik, who had been transferred there from von Möllendorff’s home. Once inside the “imposing fort” of the Chinese, Horace treated Min, took a nap (in the past four days he had slept fewer than ten hours total), and in the morning helped some of the wounded Chinese soldiers. Afterward he returned home and spent a relatively quiet night, only to go again to the camp early the next day to provide further medical assistance.⁷

When Horace trudged back home later that day, December 9, he was stunned to discover that the Footes and Astons were already packed and planning to leave for the treaty port of Chemulpo.⁸ He was urged to take his family there as well, for it was likely that there would soon be a general exodus of Westerners from the capital. “Fannie and I talked it over and decided not to leave for these reasons,” Horace confided in his diary.

⁴ Allen diary, 5 December 1884.

⁵ Foote, Aston, and Zembsch were the three accredited Western representatives stationed in Seoul. Other members of the Western community (not counting P. G. von Möllendorff, who was in the employ of the Korean government) included American subjects Mrs. Foote, Charles Scudder (Foote’s private secretary), Ensign George C. Foulk (US naval attaché), Ensign J. B. Bernadou (attaché to the Smithsonian Institution), and Walter D. Townsend (of the American Trading Company); British subjects Mrs. Aston, E. S. B. Allen (consular assistant), and T. E. Halifax (English language instructor) and family; and the German Hermann Budler (vice consul), who appears to have been in Chemulpo when the coup broke out. Zembsch was not among those who had gathered at the American legation on December 6-7. See Lucius Foote’s report to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 17 December 1884, *FRUS* (1886), 333-334; Allen diary, 11 December 1884, Allen Papers.

⁶ Allen diary, 11 December 1884, Allen Papers.

⁷ Allen diary, 11 December 1884, Allen Papers.

⁸ See also Allen’s account published in “From Corea,” *Heathen Woman’s Friend* 16 (March 1885): 208-209.

First we had come here for just this very work and could not leave for we were comfortable here with plenty to eat. While at Chemulpo we would have *no* accommodation and but little to eat. Also the baby would probably fare badly there and thirdly we had such sort notice that as all the available chairs had been taken we might not be able to go if we desired. We decided to stay and do our duty and trust all to God.⁹

Learning of this decision, Minister Foote offered for Horace to come and live temporarily at the US legation, an invitation that became the breaking point in what until then had been an amicable relationship. “I soon learned from [Foote’s] remarks,” Horace would complain, “that he cared not a bit for our safety but simply desired someone to look after his own effects.” Already exhausted from the week’s events, and now feeling a tinge of betrayal, Horace informed Foote that he and his family would remain in Seoul until they “saw more cause for fleeing.”¹⁰

* * *

But by then the coup d’état of 1884 (*Kapsin Chǒngbyǒn*) was over. It had started on the night of December 4, when a group of Korean officials used the occasion of a banquet celebrating Seoul’s new postal office to initiate a series of political assassinations. Their plan was to interrupt the banquet, hosted by Hong Yǒng-sik, the postmaster general and himself part of the cabal, by setting fire to a nearby building, thereby creating an atmosphere of confusion and allowing the conspirators to begin eliminating their targets, among whom was the queen’s nephew, Min Yǒng-ik.¹¹ Hence when, as the dinner party drew to a close, a fire alarm was heard and Min went out to check on the blaze, he was attacked by assassins in waiting. The ghastly figure of Min stumbling back into the banquet hall abruptly brought the festivities to an end. The party scattered, while in the meantime several of the coup’s leaders—Kim Ok-kyun, Pak Yǒng-hyo, and Sǒ Kwang-bom—made their way to Ch’angdǒk Palace, informed King Kojong and Queen Min that a disturbance had broken out, and convinced them to move to the smaller, more defensible Kyǒngu Palace. Once there, the conspirators summoned the Japanese minister Takezoe Shinichirō, who promptly responded by going to Kyǒngu with two hundred of his legation soldiers in tow. Over the course of the night the conspirators proceeded to execute six prominent government officials, including the powerful head of the Home Office and father of Min Yǒng-ik, Min T’ae-ho.¹²

⁹ Allen diary, 11 December 1884, Allen Papers.

¹⁰ Allen diary, 11 December 1884, Allen Papers.

¹¹ The attendees of the banquet numbered eighteen or nineteen total and included both Korean and foreign officials. For a detailed discussion of the planning behind the coup, see Harold F. Cook’s *Korea’s 1884 Incident: Its Background and Kim Ok-kyun’s Elusive Dream* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 1972).

¹² Those assassinated were Min T’ae-ho, Min Yǒng-mok, Yun T’ae-jun, Yi Cho-yǒn, Han Kyu-jik, and Cho Yǒng-ha. A palace eunuch, Yu Chae-gyǒn, was also killed. Pak Yǒng-hyo sent a letter to Takezoe that was allegedly written by the king, and which requested Japanese assistance. See Yong-ha Shin, *Formation and Development of Modern Korean Nationalism*, trans. N. M. Pankaj (Seoul: Dae Kwang Munhwasa, 1990), 48-106; In K. Hwang, *The Korean Reform Movement of the 1880s: A Study of Transition in Intra-Asian Relations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1978), 121-124; Hyǒn-gang Ha, “Kapsin Political Upheaval,” *Korea Journal* 6 (May 1966): 10-15.

All of this—the assassinations, the calling on Japanese guards, the occupation of the palace—had been planned in advance by the architects of the coup. And with their main political enemies now extinguished, they swiftly moved to the second phase of the overthrow: the establishment of a new government. On December 5, the Council of State, the highest political organ, was reorganized to include the rebels' core leadership: Kim Ok-kyun was to be vice-minister of finance; Pak Yŏng-hyo, commander of the front and rear palace battalions; Sŏ Kwang-bŏm, acting president of the Foreign Office and commander of the left and right palace battalions; Hong Yŏng-sik, the right state councillor; and Sŏ Chae-p'il, the vice-minister of war.¹³ That same day, the new state council drafted a manifesto outlining an extensive program of political, social, and economic reforms. These policies called for such measures as putting an end to the tributary relationship with China, the abolishing of class privileges and the establishment of equal rights for all persons, a thorough revision of the land tax system, and the cancellation of grain loan debt owed to the government.¹⁴

When the policies were proclaimed the following day (December 6), Kojong, Queen Min, and the coup leaders were back in the larger Ch'angdŏk Palace, ensconced by a perimeter of Japanese guards. That afternoon, the Chinese general Wu Zhaoyu, commander of the Qing troops that had remained on the peninsula following the 1882 Soldiers' Mutiny, informed Takezoe of his intention to enter the palace and offer the king protection. Receiving no response, Wu and his colleague Yuan Shikai marched a force of over one thousand Qing troops to the palace grounds.¹⁵ Fire was exchanged between the two sides, and while a number of Korean soldiers had taken up defenses on the side of the coup, they too were badly outnumbered.¹⁶ Faced with sure defeat, Takezoe and his guards retreated to the Japanese legation, as did most of the primary leaders of the plot,

¹³ Positions were allotted as well to several relatives of the former regent (the Taewŏn'gun), which may have reflected an effort to bolster the authority and credibility of the new council. See Shin, *Modern Korean Nationalism*, 70; Martina Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys: The Opening of Korea, 1875-1885* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 208.

¹⁴ A summary of these reforms appeared in Kim Ok-kyun's diary account of the coup, which he wrote after he went into exile. The fourteen articles that were outlined in the diary, according to Kim, represented only part of the original reform program. For an English translation of the fourteen articles, see "Kim Okkyun: *Kapsin Reform Edict*," *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol. 2, *From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Yŏng-ho Ch'oe, Peter H. Lee, and Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 255-256.

¹⁵ The 3000 Qing troops that had been sent to the peninsula during the 1882 Soldiers' Mutiny were reduced to approximately 1500 in the spring of 1884. General Wu, with the assistance of Yuan Shikai, commanded these troops, which were stationed in camps within and outside Seoul. The battalion they brought to the palace included a contingent of Korean soldiers. See Kirk W. Larsen, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Chŏson Korea, 1850-1910* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 96-103.

¹⁶ According to historian Yong-ha Shin, approximately 500 Korean soldiers were stationed in the middle and outer defense perimeter of the palace. They dispersed after sustaining a number of casualties during the palace battle. Shin, *Modern Korean Nationalism*, 72. Lucius Foote, who went to the palace on December 5 along with the British and German representatives, noted that "Corean soldiers were amassed around the entrance, outside; within, Japanese soldiers were guarding the gateways." Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 17 December 1884, *FRUS* (1886), 333.

including Kim Ok-kyun, Pak Yŏng-hyo, Sŏ Kwang-bŏm, and Sŏ Chae-p'il. Hong Yŏng-sik stayed with the king and was subsequently killed.¹⁷

Outside the palace walls, riots had erupted in the capital as crowds took to the streets, destroying property and assaulting Japanese residents. On the afternoon of December 7, the embattled revolutionaries, along with Takezoe and his guards, took flight from the Japanese legation and fought their way out to Chemulpo. It was also on December 7 that the former Korean government was reconstituted. The officials ousted by the coup resumed their positions, and the reforms that had been promulgated just the day before were annulled. On December 9, members of the state council submitted a memorial to the king in which they denounced the coup's leaders as the "Five Bandits." "Never have there been such men as Kim Okkyun and his followers," the memorial read, "who, calling on an enemy power, have murdered the highest ministers, caused a blood bath within the palace, and led the royal carriage astray."¹⁸

On the morning of December 11, only one week after the bloody upheaval had begun, Kim Ok-kyun and his co-conspirators were smuggled on board the Japanese steamer *Chitose Maru*, on which they sailed for Japan and ignominiously into exile.¹⁹ As Sŏ Chae-p'il later recalled, they were "thrown into the hole at the bottom of a small Japanese steamer and carried to Nagasaki," then "sent to the shore without much ceremony and told to shift along best we could." Though Pak Yŏng-hyo, Sŏ Kwang-bŏm, and Sŏ Chae-p'il would all eventually return to Korea, Kim Ok-kyun would never set foot on the peninsula again: he died abroad ten years later, himself a victim of assassination.²⁰

* * *

The coup of 1884 originated as a struggle over both power and ideas. It was an attempt at instituting sweeping change from the top down, engineered and carried out by a coterie of younger officials who had become convinced that drastic measures were necessary if they were to have any chance of implementing their reform agenda.²¹ In their conviction that the country required not only the incorporation of modern skills and

¹⁷ Hong Yŏng-sik chose to remain with the king and was killed at the palace along with a number of other coup participants, including the brother of Pak Yŏng-hyo, Pak Yŏng-gyo. See Andrew C. Nahm, "Kim Ok-kyun and the Reform Movement of the Progressives," *Korea Journal* 24 (December 1984): 53.

¹⁸ Quotation from Yŏng-ho Ch'oe, "The *Kapsin* Coup of 1884: A Reassessment," *Korean Studies* 6 (1982): 109. See also Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 17 December 1884, *FRUS* (1886), 332-335; Philip Jaisohn, *My Days in Korea and Other Essays*, ed. Sun-pyo Hong (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1999), 21; Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 56; Hwang, *The Korean Reform Movement*, 123.

¹⁹ Jaisohn, *My Days in Korea*, 21.

²⁰ In the spring of 1885, Pak Yŏng-hyo, Sŏ Kwang-bŏm, and Sŏ Chae-p'il left Japan for the US. All three would return briefly to Korea in the mid-1890s. Kim Ok-kyun chose to remain in Japan, where he would spend most of the next ten years in exile. In 1894 he was killed in Shanghai by a Korean assassin allegedly sent by the Korean government. See Nahm, "Kim Ok-kyun and the Reform Movement of the Progressives," 55.

²¹ At the time of the coup, Kim Ok-kyun (b. 1851) was the oldest of the core coup leaders as 33, while Sŏ Chae-p'il (b. 1864) was the youngest at 20. The ages of the other three fell in between: Hong Yŏng-sik (b. 1855), Sŏ Kwang-bŏm (b. 1859), Pak Yŏng-hyo (b. 1861). See Ch'oe, "The *Kapsin* Coup of 1884," 115.

technology but also a fundamental reworking of political, economic, and social systems, these officials represented the more radical element in a larger debate on Korea's modernization and self-strengthening. It was when their aims seemed increasingly fleeting, and their position conspicuously precarious, that they decided to make a preemptive strike at their opponents.

Those who would become the principle planners of the coup shared more in common than a similarity in age. All of them came from *yangban* (aristocratic) families, and most had been acquainted with each other since at least the mid-1870s, when they had regularly gathered and engaged in *sirhak* (practical learning), an intellectual movement that emphasized pragmatic, as opposed to metaphysical, approaches to various fields of inquiry.²² In addition to *sirhak* scholarship, which seemed to have fostered at least in Kim Ok-kyun a rejection of Confucianism, Kim and his associates had also been exposed to information and literature regarding the West. By the late 1870s, the nucleus of what was to be called the "enlightenment party" (*kaewhadang*) had begun to take shape, with Kim Ok-Kyun as its putative head.²³

In the early 1880s, moreover, all five of the future coup leaders had at one time or another traveled overseas to Japan.²⁴ This connection was important to the shaping of the enlightenment party's platform, for its members looked upon Japan's rapid adoption of Western institutions and techniques as a model for the changes they hoped to inaugurate in Korea. Kim Ok-kyun was particularly influenced by the prominent Meiji intellectual and promoter of Western learning Fukuzawa Yukichi, with whom he frequently met during his visits to Tokyo. Although in later years Fukuzawa would argue in favor of colonizing the peninsula, his earlier emphasis on seeing Korea become "completely independent" spurred Kim's own belief in the necessity of extricating the kingdom from Chinese involvement.²⁵

²² *Sirhak*, which emerged in Korea in the seventeenth century from within the neo-Confucian tradition, was certainly not monolithic. In general, however, *sirhak* scholars shared a common focus on investigating the reality of conditions, in contrast to a concern with metaphysical principles, as well as a methodology based on empirical evidence. These scholars also generally occupied places outside of the central political power structures. For overviews of *sirhak*, see Ki Baik Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1984), 164-171; JaHyun Kim Haboush, "The Sirhak Movement of the Late Yi Dynasty," *Korean Culture* 8 (summer 1987): 20-27.

²³ The former state councillor Pak Kyu-su (1807-1877), the grandson of the renowned eighteenth-century *sirhak* scholar Pak Chi-wŏn (1737-1805), played an important role in the intellectual development of Kim and his associates. The younger Pak served as right state councillor in 1874 (the first year of Kojong's personal rule) and was a leading proponent of rapprochement with Japan during the crisis of the mid-1870s. See James B. Palais, *Politics and Policy in Traditional Korea* (1975; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1991), 260-270; Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, 12-13. On Pak's influence on Kim Ok-kyun and other future enlightenment party leaders, see Nahm, "Kim Ok-kyun and the Reform Movement of the Progressives," 39-40; Cook, *Korea's 1884 Incident*, 29-32.

²⁴ In 1881 Hong Yŏng-sik was a member of the secret inspection tour sent by Kojong to observe Japan's modern facilities; in early 1882, Kim Ok-kyun and Sŏ Kwang-bŏm made an unofficial trip to Japan and later that year (following the Soldiers' Mutiny) accompanied Pak Yŏng-hyo there on Korea's mission of apology; and in mid-1883, Sŏ Chae-p'il was part of a small group of Korean students who entered military training at the Japanese Rikugun Toyama Gakkō (Toyama Military School). See Key-Hiuk Kim, *Opening of Korea: A Confucian Response to the Western Impact* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1999), 65-66; Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, 101-102. Regarding Kim Ok-kyun's visits to Japan, see Cook, *Korea's 1884 Incident*, 39-100.

²⁵ Quoted in Hwang, *The Korean Reform Movement*, 104. On Fukuzawa Yukichi's association with the enlightenment party leaders, see Hwang, *The Korean Reform Movement*, 97-128. As Hwang noted,

Even as the enlightenment party began to gather momentum, it remained, however, more or less on the margins of political power. Neither Kim Ok-kyun nor the others reached positions at the highest strata of government, and while King Kojong showed clear signs of being in sympathy with them, his royal prerogatives had to contend with the influence of the Min family and their allies. By the early 1880s, members of the Min clique had not only secured key political offices in the central bureaucracy, but following the 1882 Soldiers' Mutiny they had also moved to establish control over the direction and substance of Korea's self-strengthening efforts. Along with other moderate reformers in the government, the Min adopted a gradualist approach that focused on material improvements, such as in the areas of machinery and military training.²⁶ It was primarily to China, moreover, that the Min continued to look for the backing of their reform policies.

Still, members of the enlightenment group did hold a number of mid-level positions in the Min-dominated government, and for a brief period they attempted to pursue their goals from within that structure. After being appointed commissioner of Seoul in February 1883, for example, Pak Yŏng-hyo had initiated a series of new municipal projects, including the establishment of a police system and a newspaper publication office. The king's explicit interest in hiring American advisers and the sending of the 1883 special embassy to the US (of which Sŏ Kwang-bŏm and Hong Yŏng-sik were members) gave further impetus to the enlightenment party's ambitions. There even appeared the possibility that Min Yŏng-ik, who served as head of that embassy, might lend his support to the kinds of reforms espoused by the party.²⁷

That such was not to be the case became evident by the middle of 1884. By then not only had a personal antagonism developed between Min Yŏng-ik and Kim Ok-kyun, but Min's actions also showed that his loyalties ultimately lay with his family faction.²⁸ When a disheartened Kim Ok-Kyun returned to Korea in May 1884 after a third visit to Japan, during which time he failed to secure a loan he believed crucial for funding his party's initiatives, he found the Min firmly entrenched in the central organs of government, and the presence of Chinese troops and officials, increasingly overbearing.

Fukuzawa's primary concern in promoting Korean independence through a "civilizing" policy (in other words, Western learning) lay in Japan's own security and interests.

²⁶ This approach was encapsulated in the concept "eastern ways, western machines" (*tongdo sŏgi*). See Michael Finch, *Min Yŏng-hwan: A Political Biography* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 19; T'ae-jin Yi, *The Dynamics of Confucianism and Modernization in Korean History* (Ithaca: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2007), 358. The moderates included officials such as Kim Hong-jip and Kim Yun-sik, both of whom had played important roles in the earlier treaty-making process with Western countries. See James B. Palais, "Political Leadership in the Yi Dynasty," in *Political Leadership in Korea*, ed. Dae-Sook Suh and Chae-Jin Lee (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 21-28.

²⁷ Won-mŏ Kim, *Han-Mi sugyosa: Chosŏn pobingsa ūi Miguk sahaeng* (1883) [The History of Korea-U.S. Relations: the 1883 Korean Embassy to America] (Seoul: Ch'ŏrhak kwa Hyŏnsilsa, 1999), 146-148.

²⁸ For instance, shortly after resigning from the Foreign Office in August 1884 and taking up military duties, Min pushed out from their posts Sŏ Chae-p'il and others who had received training in Japan, replacing them with Chinese officers. For a contemporary account, see George C. Foulk's "Report of information relative to the revolutionary attempt in Seoul, Corea, by Ensign George C. Foulk, December 4-7, 1884," enclosure no. 128 in Lucius H. Foote to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 17 December 1884, *FRUS* (1886), 340-341.

As he confided to the official Yun Ch'i-ho that summer, Kim had even begun to fear for his own life.²⁹

Whether there was any truth behind Kim's fear of extermination, by the fall of 1884 the enlightenment party felt pushed onto the defensive. Not only did the likelihood of having their reform ideas implemented by the government, Kojong's continued sympathy notwithstanding, appear more and more slim, but Kim Ok-kyun and his associates had also arrived at the conclusion that as long as the Min remained in power and condoned China's influence on the peninsula, there would be little chance of establishing Korean autonomy. According to Sō Chae-p'il, one of the objectives Kim Ok-kyun "passionately pursued" leading up to the coup was "to eliminate Chinese sway."³⁰

Designs for a putsch were underway by October 1884. Two months earlier, news had arrived of the outbreak of hostilities between China and France over Annam (Vietnam), a development that enlightenment party leaders hoped might occupy China's attention and thus provide a window for carrying out their plans. Believing, however, that the staging of a coup would require outside help, they had enlisted the assistance of the Japanese minister Takezoe Shin'ichirō, who had recently begun to express a supportive attitude toward the enlightenment party and its goals. In late November, and without approval from Tokyo, Takezoe gave assurances to Kim that the Japanese legation guards would provide military protection during the coup. This mobilization of Japanese troops, Kim and the others anticipated, would sufficiently help to repel the possibility of an armed Chinese response.³¹

That the enlightenment party underestimated the potential forcefulness of that response became abundantly clear as the coup's events unfolded. It became obvious, too, that the uprising lacked the support of the general population in Seoul, whose response suggested disapproval not only of the conspirators' actions, but also of the complicity of the Japanese. Indeed far from engendering any broad-based, popular movement for reform, the coup resulted in widespread condemnation of both the enlightenment party and its platform.³² Even Yun Ch'i-ho, a close associate of the party leaders, lamented

²⁹ Nahm, "Kim Ok-kyun and the Reform Movement of the Progressives," 49. On the expansion of the Qing military and economic presence on the peninsula, see Larsen, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade*, 95-123. Kim Ok-kyun's efforts to secure a loan in Japan are detailed in Cook, *Korea's 1884 Incident*, 75-100.

³⁰ Quoted in Sin, *Modern Korean Nationalism*, 77. The private letters of George Foulk, who was acquainted with several of the enlightenment party leaders and was particularly close to Sō Kwang-bom, illustrates something of the political tensions that existed in the fall of 1884. In a letter to his family on October 26, 1884, just before leaving for an extended journey through the peninsula, Foulk wrote that he was "glad of the prospect to leave the capital soon": "While I may be the only person to think so, I think there are evidences of an insurrection to come off soon here.... So Kwang Pom has openly said to me that he advocates strongly the assassination of ten persons, six of whom are very high officers." George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 26 October 1884, *America's Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887*, ed. Samuel Hawley (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Book, 2008), 66 (hereafter cited as *AMK*).

³¹ See C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 48-49; Frederick Foo Chien, *The Opening of Korea: A Study of Chinese Diplomacy, 1876-1885* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1967), 148-150, 156; Hilary Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea: A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 144-145; and Nahm, "Kim Ok-kyun and the Reform Movement of the Progressives," 51.

³² Ch'oe, "The *Kapsin* Coup of 1884," 108-113. In later years, Sō Chae-p'il noted that one of the chief mistakes the coup planners made was that they "did not make a sufficient preparation for such a radical

what he saw as the short-sightedness of their scheme. “Oh, what a foolish act Kim Okkyun and his gang have committed!” Yun wrote in his diary on December 7, 1884. “They have brought a total defeat and disaster to the enlightenment movement and have caused tragedies for many families. With a single misstep they have brought us all to ruin.”³³

Yun presaged what was to be a central irony of the coup: that it would contribute to circumstances vastly different from what its planners had envisaged. The upheaval did weaken the power of the Min, as had they lost some of their most important leaders to assassination; but the Min and their allies would soon reemerge as the dominant faction in the government. Equally disastrous to the aims of the enlightenment party, however, would be the escalation of Qing involvement in Korea’s affairs. If the participants of the coup had hoped to rid the peninsula once and for all of Chinese claims of suzerainty, the coming years would demonstrate the extent to which the Qing were determined to solidify those claims.

More immediately, the December incident left in its wake demands for accountability. Korean leaders denounced the involvement of Takezoe, insisted that he be held responsible for his actions, and called for the prompt extradition of Kim Ok-kyun and the other conspirators who had fled to Japan.³⁴ The government in Tokyo, for its part, found itself in a thorny position. Since the 1870s, Meiji leaders had viewed Korea’s independence vis-à-vis China as congruent with Japan’s own interests, but in regard to the enlightenment party they had taken an ambivalent stance. Though some, most notably Foreign Minister Inoue Kaoru and the soon-to-be prime minister Itō Hirobumi, had at one time suggested providing the party with direct assistance, on the eve of the coup, the consensus was on a cautious policy toward Korea, one that would not risk an open confrontation with the Qing.³⁵ Restraint was thus what Tokyo had advised Takezoe in late November 1884, when he had requested instructions for how to approach the political situation in Seoul. But those directions had reached Takezoe too late, and now the Meiji leadership faced the problem of how to clear the Japanese representative from charges of collusion.³⁶

On that question, careful avoidance would be the order of the day. When Foreign Minister Inoue arrived in Korea in early January 1885 to obtain a settlement, he skirted the issue of Takezoe’s culpability by focusing instead on the damages suffered by

change. The people did not understand what the reformers were trying to accomplish. Therefore, they did not get any sympathy or support from the masses.” Jaisohn, *My Days in Korea*, 22.

³³ Quoted in Ch’oe, “The *Kapsin* Coup of 1884,” 110.

³⁴ Kim and Kim, *Politics of Imperialism*, 51; Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, 208-209.

³⁵ Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: the Japanese Penetration of Korea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 54-57.

³⁶ On November 12, Takezoe sent a correspondence to Tokyo in which he outlined the political situation in Seoul and proposed two courses of action. His “plan A” stated that since it was difficult for both China and Japan to maintain a dual, cooperative position in Korea, it would be best to assist the “Japan party” (the enlightenment party) in an uprising against the Chinese. “Plan B,” in contrast, suggested that Japan focus on maintaining peace in the region by avoiding confrontation with China and letting “nature take its course” in Korea. In addition, the second plan proposed that Japan provide some measure of protection for the enlightenment party. The Japanese government indicated their choice—plan B—in a dispatch issued on November 28, but the telegram did not reach Takezoe until either late December 3 or on December 4, just hours before the coup was to take place. See Kim and Kim, *Politics of Imperialism*, 48-49; Harold Cook, 162-163, 214-216.

Japanese citizens during the incident. His tactic was for the most part successful. According to the Treaty of Seoul (January 1885), Korea agreed to send an official apology to Japan, pay an indemnity for the victims affected by the violence, and contribute to the rebuilding of the Japanese legation. During the talks the Korean negotiator Kim Hong-jip also pressed for the surrender of the coup leaders, but Inoue refused to concede on extradition. He was, however, more willing to compromise on Takezoe: Inoue promised to recall the Japanese minister if the Korean government dropped demands for an explicit admission of his role in the coup.³⁷

With the settlement completed, Inoue departed for Japan on January 11, 1885, leaving behind roughly half of the more than two thousand Japanese soldiers that he had brought with him to the negotiating table. Accompanying Inoue on his return was one of the two escort battalions, as well as the disgraced Takezoe.

* * *

True to his decision, Horace Allen remained in Seoul in the days and weeks following the December disturbance. He had had multiple opportunities to join in the withdrawal to Chemulpo, but despite the fast dwindling number of Westerners in the capital, and despite moments of real fear about his family's safety, Horace was determined to stay where he was. In a later report to the Presbyterian mission board, he would admit that he and Fannie had "repeatedly gone to sleep at night with doubts as to our seeing the morn." Yet they had felt it their duty to stand their ground, Horace wrote, and they had resolved in any case to trust God for their protection. "We were unharmed through it all," he told the board, "although we were the only foreigners who remained here continuously through it all."³⁸

But there were also concrete reasons why Allen felt obliged to stay at the capital. He was, first of all, still providing medical care to Min Yŏng-ik, who had been making a slow but definite recovery from his near fatal injuries. Throughout the month of December, Horace continued to see Min not once but twice daily, a task that he found both obligatory and at times exasperating. "[Min] is very impatient," he complained in mid-December. "I am getting disheartened and wish I were out of it."³⁹ Yet treating so prominent a figure as the queen's relative, Horace soon learned, did have its rewards. From Min came gifts and offers of friendship, and even more gratifying were the expressions of appreciation from King Kojong and Queen Min.⁴⁰ "We received a nice present from the King this week in return for my services," Horace wrote in his diary on

³⁷ Chien, *The Opening of Korea*, 156-162.

³⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 February 1885, Allen Papers. By the closing days of December 1884, George Foulk (who returned to Seoul on December 14 after a six-week-long trip and was thus absent during the actual coup), Ensign Bernadou (who had escorted a group of Japanese citizens from Seoul to Chemulpo on December 9, returning afterward), and the Allens seem to have been the only remaining Westerners in the capital (not counting von Möllendorff). The others had either temporarily or permanently withdrawn from Seoul. See Allen diary, 20 December 1884, Allen Papers; George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 20 December 1884, 5 January 1885, *AMK*, 78, 81.

³⁹ Allen diary, 11 December 1884, Allen Papers.

⁴⁰ Allen diary, 27 January 1885, Allen Papers.

December 26, 1884.⁴¹ Two weeks later he received another encouraging sign from the court, and one that could not come soon enough, for he discovered that Min Yǒng-ik had been defying his medical orders by receiving other treatment. “Today the Queen sent me a pleasant message,” he noted, “assuring me of her confidence in me and her desire to have me alone attend to her royal cousin.”⁴²

Horace, secondly, was also still treating the Chinese troops that had been wounded during the December 6 palace battle. As in the case of Min Yǒng-ik, Allen continued to visit these soldiers regularly during the post-coup weeks; and as with Min, his efforts were to pay unanticipated dividends. By early February 1885 he could inform the mission board of several auspicious developments. “I have had such opportunities as I longed for in vain in China,” Horace wrote in his first lengthy report since the coup. Not only had he been asked by Qing officials in Seoul to care for their twenty or so injured soldiers, but some of these patients had also made “most astonishing recoveries”—recoveries, he was sure, that had come “in answer to prayer.” While he possessed only a minimal knowledge of the Chinese language, Horace believed that the little he did know had allowed him to get along with the Qing troops, and equally important, to be identified with “the respected party” in the Korean government. For “it is no credit here,” he noted, “to speak the language of the universally detested Japanese.” Horace could hardly grasp all that had changed for him in the past several weeks. “My professional efforts,” he declared to the board, “have been crowned with far greater success than my experience deserves!”⁴³

These calls to Min Yǒng-ik and the Chinese troops kept Horace’s hands full in the days following the coup (though he was doing his best, he assured the board, to learn some Korean words when he could). But Horace Allen could be shrewd, and he began to consider other ways of capitalizing on the recent events. Indeed it seemed to him that his skills as a physician were only increasing in demand—in addition to Min and the Chinese, he was also starting to receive requests for treatment from Koreans “of all ranks”—and he soon came up with a plan he thought would simultaneously give his medical work an institutional basis and link that institution to the Presbyterian mission board.⁴⁴

In late January 1885, Horace drafted his “Proposal for founding an Hospital for the Government of His Majesty the King of Korea in Seoul.” In it, he suggested that if the Korean government supplied a building and annual appropriations for a new hospital, he would be willing to take charge of the facility and could secure another American doctor to come work there in the next six months. Both he and this other physician, Horace stated, “would work together without pay, drawing our living from a benevolent society in America that at present supports hospitals in Peking [*sic*] Tientsin Shanghai Canton and other Chinese cities, two of which are furnished by Li Hung Chang himself.” Such an institution in Korea, Allen wrote, would be a place where the sick could be “cared for according to Western Science.” Further, the hospital would be a “means for instructing young men in Western Medical and Sanitary Science.” He closed the proposal

⁴¹ Allen diary, 26 December 1885, Allen Papers.

⁴² Allen diary, 11 January 1885, Allen Papers.

⁴³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 February 1885, Allen Papers.

⁴⁴ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 February 1885, Allen Papers.

with a laconic explanation for why he was personally interested in the matter. “As an American citizen,” he said, “I would be glad to do all I can for the Korean people.”⁴⁵

Horace’s interest in establishing a hospital was doubtless motivated by a humanitarian impulse. As he informed the mission board secretary F. F. Ellinwood, the idea of making the proposal had been prompted by a desire to provide what medical service he could for the local Korean residents. “I have been crowded daily,” Horace noted several weeks after the coup, with “Coreans begging for assistance. I have done what time would allow.”⁴⁶ But the hospital proposal itself, if not intentionally misleading, was at least in some measure contrived. Neither Horace’s commitment to overseeing the proposed institution or his assurances about acquiring a second doctor to work there, which he intended to be a fellow missionary, had been authorized by the Presbyterian board. Nor was Allen exactly forthcoming that the source of his livelihood—the so-called “benevolent society”—referred to a Christian organization. His mention of the Chinese official Li Hongzhang, too, was calculated, as almost certainly was Allen’s allusion to the goodwill of the United States.

There was valid cause for this maneuvering, Horace would explain to Secretary Ellinwood. In the first place, he argued, circumstances had necessitated immediate action. In mid-January 1885 Minister Foote had permanently left the peninsula, and he had done so without notifying Korean officials that the previous year the State Department had downgraded his post from a full minister to minister resident and consul general.⁴⁷ Given the necessity of squeezing in the hospital idea before it became “known to the King that the rank of the American representative has been reduced,” and given the lengthy time required to exchange communications with mission offices in New York, Horace had thought it imperative to submit the proposal first and seek board approval later.

The promise of bringing in a second American doctor he likewise saw as unavoidable. “I had to do it after a talk with Mullendorf,” Horace told Ellinwood. “I saw he regarded [the hospital] as an impossibility for one man to carry on successfully and intimated that if I had another, they could start a college. I wished to head him off in case of any future opposition as well as to make the claim stronger.” Von Möllendorff, the German national who had been working in the Korean service since late 1882, was a close ally of the Min family and himself a strong proponent of Korea’s modernization. In the wake of the December coup he had been called back to the Korean Foreign Office and apparently had plans of his own for starting a medical college. Horace was not only aware of these plans, but he was also suspicious that von Möllendorff was out to get him “under his thumb,” a belief that made him all the more anxious about submitting the hospital proposal.⁴⁸ As for the use of the term “benevolent society” and the reference to Li Hongzhang, Horace thought that the first was a subtle way of making “the missionary feature evident,” while the latter was relevant because of Li’s status as the “patron saint” of Korea.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ A copy of the proposal appears in Allen’s diary. Allen diary, 22 January 1885, Allen Papers.

⁴⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 February 1885, Allen Papers.

⁴⁷ As noted in the previous chapter, Foote had received news of his reduction in rank in September 1884 but chose not to inform the Korean government either at the time or prior to leaving the peninsula.

⁴⁸ Allen diary, 22 January 1885, Allen papers.

⁴⁹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 February 1885, Allen Papers. See especially the appended “Explanation” to this report.

That portrayal of Viceroy Li, the Qing official in charge of China's policy for Korea, was more than a slight exaggeration. But the very mention of the viceroy—in fact the hospital proposal as a whole—showed that Horace had not only learned something about the political scene in the capital, but that he was willing to try applying those lessons to his advantage. His knowledge of the regional dynamics affecting the peninsula was at best still minimal; nevertheless, the events of December had compelled him to pay closer attention to Korea's diplomatic relationships. By early 1885 Horace had observed, and not incorrectly, that the Qing remained the dominant presence on the peninsula, while what pro-Japanese sentiment existed among Korean officials prior to the coup had been largely discredited.⁵⁰ In private, Horace had begun to take notes, too, on the king, the Min family, the history of the dynasty, the various administrative offices, and whatever else he could ascertain about the Chosŏn government.

Of particular concern to Horace, however, was what he feared might be the waning position of the United States. He placed much of the blame for this on Minister Foote, whose departure had left the US legation without of an accredited representative, and certain commercial agreements in limbo.⁵¹ “American interests are in jeopardy here,” Allen informed the mission board in early March 1885. “General Foote had had the ear of the King and had been doing business on a confidential but risky basis.”⁵² It was not that Horace wanted to get in on these dealings, or that he thought it was his job to cultivate them—that was a stance he was to take only in later years. But neither did he assume that the prospects for a missionary enterprise could be separated from the larger tenor of relations between the US and Korea. For the moment, what seemed plain to him was that a downturn in those ties, commercial or otherwise, could have negative consequences for the future acceptability of missionaries. It was hardly a coincidence that in crafting the proposal for the government hospital, Allen not only placed emphasis on his identity as a US citizen, but that he also linked that identity to the very purpose behind the proposal.

This careful, calculated approach earned the approval—and surely bore the influence—of George C. Foulk, the American naval officer who would become chargé d'affaires of the legation following Foote's departure. Foulk's connection to Korea went back to the fall of 1883, when, as a twenty-six-year-old ensign working at the US Naval Library, he had been assigned to escort the Korean special embassy while they toured various cities and sites along America's eastern coast.⁵³ When the mission ended, Min Yŏng-ik, the chief envoy, invited Foulk to accompany the embassy back to Korea. Foulk then received appointment from Washington as naval attaché to the US legation in Seoul, and together with three of the embassy members—Min Yŏng-ik, Sŏ Kwang-bŏm, and

⁵⁰ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 December 1884, Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., Board of Foreign Missions, *Correspondence and Reports, 1833-1811, Korea* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996), microfilm; Allen diary, 26 December 1885, Allen Papers.

⁵¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 5 March 1885, Allen Papers.

⁵² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 23 February 1885, Allen Papers. Allen did not elaborate on what these “many contracts” were, but he may have been referring to verbal exchanges between Foote and Kojong regarding the granting of railway and telegraph concessions to American companies. See Yur-Bok Lee, *Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Korea, 1866-1887* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), 69-70.

⁵³ See Donald M. Bishop, “Policy and Personality in Early Korean-American Relations: The Case of George Clayton Foulk,” in *The United States and Korea*, ed. Andrew C. Nahm (Kalamazoo, Mich.: The Center for Korean Studies, Western Michigan University, 1979), 29-30.

Pyŏn Su—he made an extended, six-month-long return passage aboard the *USS Trenton*, stopping in Egypt, India, Ceylon, England, and other places along the way.⁵⁴

When Foulk finally reached Korea in the summer of 1884, he became only the second US official to take up residence there. The first, of course, was Lucius Foote, who had preceded the naval attaché by a full year. Foote and Foulk were in some ways a study in contrasts. The former was in his mid-50s with a background in law and prior diplomatic experience overseas; the latter was in his mid-20s and possessed no experience in diplomacy, but had shown potential for a promising naval career, as well as a talent for linguistic studies.⁵⁵ In fact by the time Foulk arrived in Seoul, his comprehension of the Korean language already surpassed that of Foote.⁵⁶ Foulk's acquaintance with the Korean special embassy, and particularly the journey he spent with Min, Sŏ, and Pyŏn, no doubt provided him a unique window to learn the language. But he was also an eager student, and he took advantage of the opportunity to soak in all that he could from the envoys. "In my long close life with the Korean embassy," Foulk later recalled, "I plunged earnestly and deeply into a study of Korea, its government, people—all."⁵⁷ After settling into Seoul (and against Foote's advice, moving out of the legation so that he could live "among the Koreans proper"), Foulk continued his "study" through two extensive trips he took into the interior.⁵⁸ His private travel journal would comprise some of the earliest and most poignant observations of Korea by a Westerner.⁵⁹

Foote and Foulk did share an important commonality, however: both favored an active US policy for the peninsula. Like Minister Foote, not long after coming to Seoul Foulk began to be called upon by the Korean government, and in particular by King

⁵⁴ Foulk's appointment was somewhat of an anomaly. As Donald Bishop has noted, naval attachés were new at the time, and "their exact positions as diplomats and naval officers, responsible to two executive departments, had not yet been settled." As a result, Foulk received concurrent appointments from both the navy and state departments, as well as two sets of instructions. Bishop, "Policy and Personality," 30. See also Tyler Dennett, "Early American Policy in Korea, 1883-1887: The Services of Lieutenant George C. Foulk," *Political Science Quarterly* 38 (March 1923): 88. Foulk himself would find this dual appointment confusing. Just after arriving in Korea in late May 1884, Foulk wrote to his family, "I have instructions from both the Navy and State Departments, and each orders my reports to be sent in. If I obey one, I offend the other, for both claim my services, and thus I am placed in a great quandary." George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 15 June 1884, *AMK*, 28.

⁵⁵ After graduating from the US Naval Academy in 1876 (third in his class), Foulk was commissioned on two cruises in East Asia, during which time he cultivated his proficiency in the Chinese and Japanese languages. At the end of the second cruise in 1882, Foulk also briefly stopped in the Korean ports of Pusan and Wŏnsan. Bishop, "Policy and Personality," 29.

⁵⁶ See for example George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 2 July 1884, *AMK*, 40.

⁵⁷ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 17 December 1884, *AMK*, 73.

⁵⁸ As Foulk informed his parents, his goal was to "get as near the heart of their [Korean] life as my time will let me." Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 2 July 1884, *AMK*, 32.

⁵⁹ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 22 July 1884, 29 September 1884, 26 October 1884, *AMK*, 41, 56, 65. According to his instructions from the Navy Department, Foulk was to collect and report "all such information on Korea as may be useful and interesting to this government and the public at large." A separate set of instructions from the State Department stated that his "duties will primarily be to report all matters of naval interest to the Secretary of the Navy," and that this would likely include visiting "parts of the Korean Peninsula hitherto unknown or little visited." Quoted in Hyun-chan Kim, "George C. Foulk in Korea: A Sailor on Horseback," *Korea Journal* 26 (December 1986): 29. On Foulk's travels, see Samuel Hawley, ed., *Inside the Hermit Kingdom: The 1884 Travel Diary of George Clayton Foulk* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2008).

Kojong, to render assistance on various matters.⁶⁰ And like Foote, the naval attaché responded positively to these requests for reasons that were neither simply self-serving nor entirely altruistic.

From the beginning Foulk evinced, on the one hand, a genuine desire to offer aid where he could. He had fast realized that few of the Westerners in Seoul knew the Korean language, and he willingly took up the role of unofficial intermediary between some of the native officials and the Western foreign community.⁶¹ He also soon became involved in several Korean government-sponsored projects. “My travel into the interior has been obstructed by the odd work often asked of me by the Korean government,” Foulk wrote to his family in July 1884, less than two months after his arrival. “I am entirely alone in these jobs, and am the only foreigner to communicate directly with the Koreans.”⁶² Before the summer’s end, Foulk had become involved in a number of unexpected tasks, including helping with the planting of foreign vegetation at the government’s “model” farm; providing direction on how to store Western military arms; arranging for the purchase of an electric plant from the Thomas Edison Company; and ordering breeding animals for a newly planned stock farm.⁶³

And yet as with Foote, Foulk was also prompted, on the other hand, by a desire to expand American involvement for its own sake. Though he knew that his participation in the various Korean undertakings fell outside his instructions as naval attaché, Foulk felt that as an official of the US he was obligated to look out for American interests. “The King of Korea,” Foulk wrote in August 1884, “wanted an electric light in his palace, to establish a stock breeding farm, and to obtain certain goods from abroad, and in these things I have taken the lead. I know such matters are far removed from the nautical profession,” he admitted, “but had I not taken them in hand they would all have flowed into English hands while I believe it the duty of American representatives here to see that such things should be turned to the account of their country.”⁶⁴ That same logic also underlay Foulk’s attitude toward the prospects for trade. “It is an aggravating thought to me,” he said, “that first class Americans can do so little for foreign trade or at least evince so little energy toward establishing it.” While he conceded that there currently seemed to be “no outlook for a retail or even wholesale business in small commodities of any sort,”

⁶⁰ Martina Deuchler notes, however, that although both Lucius Foote and George Foulk were close to Kojong, “they seem not to have had more than a working relationship with the Min.” Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, 167.

⁶¹ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 22 July 1884, 12 August 1884, *AMK*, 43, 51. Aside from Foulk and von Möllendorff, British Consul General Aston was probably the only other Westerner who possessed some degree of proficiency in the Korean language. See Bishop, “Policy and Personality,” 34; Yur-Bok Lee, *West Goes East*, 48.

⁶² George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 22 July 1884, *AMK*, 43.

⁶³ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 22 July 1884, 12 August 1884, 31 August 1884, *AMK*, 43, 51, 52; George C. Foulk to Thomas F. Bayard, 2 September 1885, 4 September 1885, *FRUS* (1886), 352-354. On the Edison plant and Korea’s implementation of electricity, see especially Min Suh Son, “Electrifying Seoul and the Culture of Technology in Nineteenth Century Korea” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2008).

⁶⁴ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 31 August 1884, *AMK*, 52. In an earlier correspondence, Foulk confessed that his involvement in the various Korean government-related activities was “out of a sailor’s line!” and that his “working in them may not be very satisfactory to the Navy Department.” George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 22 July 1884, *AMK*, 43.

still he was confident that “there will be some day, and if American influence can be maintained until then, Americans may profit by it.”⁶⁵

In the coming years Foulk would grow increasingly dispirited about the lack of interest in Korea on the part of Americans, and he became especially frustrated with the government in Washington (“a corrupt, ungrateful institution,” he later railed), for the same reason that had earlier distressed Minister Foote: its reticence toward Korea’s requests for military and civil advisers.⁶⁶ Foulk confessed to feeling “greatly embarrassed” by this delay, particularly as he was the one who had personally relayed the promises for such personnel from the State Department to members of the Korean special embassy.⁶⁷ But in early 1885, he was still hopeful that the US could build a concrete presence on the peninsula, and not simply in the arena of commerce and concessions. From the start of his tenure in Korea, the promotion of Western civilization was for Foulk an important aim; and in the months leading up to the December coup, he had become an enthusiastic, if not open, supporter of those Korean officials whom he believed most strongly advocated that civilization.⁶⁸ In this group—he called them the “progressives” or the “progress” party—Foulk had counted not only his close friend Sō Kwang-bōm, but also several of Sō’s associates, “chief among whom was one Kim Ok Kiun.”⁶⁹

Sō Kwang-bōm and Kim Ok-kyun would of course be among the principal leaders behind the December 4 overthrow, and though Foulk was absent from Seoul when the coup erupted (he was traveling and would return to Seoul in mid-December), like the Allens, he refused to join the Western residents in their withdrawal from capital.⁷⁰ He remained despite being tormented with the thought that by association his own “name might be attached... to the awful crimes committed in Seoul,” a fear that was

⁶⁵ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 31 August 1884, *AMK*, 53.

⁶⁶ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 24 April 1886, *AMK*, 153. Foote’s frustrations with Washington would become a constant theme in his private correspondences until his departure from Korea in 1887. See for example George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 4 May 1885, 14 May 1886, 3 October 1866, *AMK*, 101, 155, 171.

⁶⁷ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 4 June 1885, *AMK*, 108.

⁶⁸ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 22 July 1884, *AMK*, 44.

⁶⁹ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 17 December 1884, *AMK*, 73. Of the enlightenment party leaders, Foulk clearly felt closest to Sō Kwang-bōm, whom he had first met during the 1883 Korean special embassy to the US. It was during the embassy’s visit and the subsequent return journey on the *Trenton* that Foulk developed a friendship with Sō: “I spent days and nights with him talking on Korea and its future, devising plans for development, etc.,” Foulk wrote of that experience. “Naturally I got to know him thoroughly, and he me. We became very close friends.” After the failure of the December coup and Sō’s flight to Japan, Foulk for some time secretly provided monetary support to Sō’s family in Korea. George C. Foulk to Father, 3 April 1885, 4 May 1885, *AMK*, 94, 102-103.

⁷⁰ Foulk was on his way back to Seoul from a 900-mile journey into the interior when he first heard news of the coup. On December 13, still some twenty-five miles from the capital, he was picked up by Korean officer who apparently had been sent by Kojong to find Foulk. When Foulk reentered Seoul the next day, he found his home “sadly emptied of its contents,” and he suspected that during the recent disturbance his belongings had been burned or stolen by local rioters. “I have lost nearly everything I have owned,” he wrote to his family on December 20. “I only care much for books and papers, every one of which is gone.” Aside from Foulk’s residence (which was located outside of the area where the Footes, Allens, and Astons resided), Westerners and their property seem not to have been targeted by the rioters. Foulk himself would later note that the “U.S. and other Western legations were never in the least bit of danger. This legation is a mile where there was any trouble at all and only two miles from the scenes of the trouble, but not the slightest attempt was made in Seoul to molest any foreigner.” George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 20 December 1885, *AMK*, 74.

ultimately unfounded. But equally important to his decision to stay was the departure of Minister Foote. “My remaining here has been, mind you, purely voluntary,” Foulk confided to his family on January 18, 1885, several days after Foote had boarded the *USS Ossipee* for Japan, never to return. “Had I wished to leave I could have done so, but it is a sure thing to my conscience that this is just the time when a foreign representative is most needed.” Recent events had “destroyed every vestige of American influence in Korea,” Foulk thought, and he argued that it was the “plain duty of an American public servant to build up on the ruins.”⁷¹ This was all the more imperative given what he viewed as the precipitous actions of Foote. “General Foote has turned out to be the boss coward of the age,” Foulk later fumed. While “in time of peace and no work, he spent many quiet days, receiving gifts and honors from Korea; in the time of work he skips out, a traitor to his country almost, at least to his duty.”⁷²

Whatever the merits of this criticism, Foulk likely shared his opinions about Foote and other aspects of the political scenario in Seoul with his newly found friend, Horace Allen.⁷³ Though the naval attaché and the missionary doctor had likely crossed paths sometime in the autumn of 1884, it was in the aftermath of the December coup that they began to develop what was to become a firm and loyal association. In part that relationship was the result of circumstance. Aside from the Allen family, Foulk was the only other American who consistently stayed in Seoul during the closing, chaotic days of 1884. Yet Foulk and Allen also showed a sincere liking for one another, and in the idea of establishing a hospital they would find common cause. For while the two did not necessarily share the same goals—Horace’s primary aim was to establish a foundation for the Presbyterian mission—both believed that the hospital might contribute toward rehabilitating the image and influence of the US, and both saw it as a possible conduit of Western civilization.⁷⁴

It was Foulk, in fact, who would translate and submit Horace’s hospital proposal to Cho Pyŏng-ho, president of the Korean Foreign Office, in early 1885. “In requesting the favorable consideration of Doctor Allen’s scheme,” Foulk wrote in an accompanying letter, and in a tone similar to Horace’s, “I would assure your excellency that it may be regarded as a token of the friendly regard for the well being of the people of Corea by those of the United States.”⁷⁵

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⁷¹ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 18 January 1885, *AMK*, 85.

⁷² George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 23 February 1885, *AMK*, 92. One month later, Foulk had still not heard from Foote: “I have received no word from General Foote since he got off to Japan,” Foulk wrote on March 12, “no instructions of any kind nor funds on which I may keep up the legation. I have managed so far to hold out on my slim pay and can do so in a gingerly way for a little time yet.” George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 12 March 1885, *AMK*, 92-93.

⁷³ For example, see Allen diary, 14 February 1885, Allen Papers.

⁷⁴ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 7 May 1885, Allen Papers; George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 19 April 1885, *AMK*, 99; George C. Foulk to Thomas F. Bayard, 30 May 1885, *FRUS* (1886), 347.

⁷⁵ Allen diary, 22 January 1885, Allen papers; George C. Foulk to Cho Piung Ho, January 1885, copy in Allen’s letter to Ellinwood, 4 February 1885, Allen Papers. See also George C. Foulk to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 5 March 1885, *FRUS* (1886), 346.

Within several weeks of submitting the proposal, Horace received auspicious news. “We were... rejoiced today,” he wrote on February 14, 1885, “by hearing that the hospital is in a fair way to be started.”⁷⁶ To Horace this was doubtless a moment of relief, for in spite of the nerve required of him to make the proposal in the first place, he had not taken for granted that it would actually obtain approval. There had been some encouraging signs. Aside from the personal recommendation of George Foulk, now chargé d’affaires of the US legation, it appeared early on as if Min Yǒng-ik would also lend his support. “Min sent two officials here today to confer with me,” Allen noted shortly after submitting the proposal. Not only was Min inclined toward the hospital idea, according to Horace, but he also “made no objection to the Benevolent clause.”⁷⁷ This was just the kind of response that Foulk and Horace had hoped for: that Min would come out in favor of the scheme, and in turn use his political prominence to help see it through.⁷⁸

The proposal did meet with a generally positive reception by the Korean government, though perhaps not on the strength of Min Yǒng-ik’s influence alone.⁷⁹ Kojong had already shown approval of medical and educational activity by missionaries when, the previous summer, he had acknowledged Maclay’s request to begin such work in the future. And while Horace had left a positive impression at court with his successful treatment of Min Yǒng-ik, the government’s swift approval of the hospital suggested that not only the king but also others in the central leadership already favored the adoption of Western medical practices and knowledge. If Horace had ingratiated himself to important figures, he was also proving to be an expedient resource.⁸⁰

On the surface, all may have appeared well for Horace in the early spring of 1885. Preparations for the hospital building had gotten underway, Min Yǒng-ik was nearly fully recovered from his injuries, and the king and queen had started to make personal requests for Horace’s medical treatment.⁸¹ In late February 1885, Allen had also received an encouraging letter from the Presbyterian mission board, approving of his recent actions. “I am both pleased and astonished at your clear appreciation of my position here,” Horace responded. “I have distinctly to state that I was not a preacher and I am sorry to say the professional has become prominent at the expense of the spiritual in one or two cases. However, I know what is right and am perfectly sure of the correctness of my motives.”⁸²

Yet underneath that veneer of confidence lay signs of mounting frustration. Privately, Horace complained that his missionary salary was insufficient to cover his living expenses, that not much progress had been made in getting the language. “I am not

⁷⁶ Allen diary, 14 February 1885, Allen Papers.

⁷⁷ Allen diary, 27 January 1885, Allen Papers.

⁷⁸ Allen diary, 22 January 1885, Allen Papers.

⁷⁹ Yun-jae Pak, *Han’guk kǔndae ūihak ūi kiwǒn* [The Origin of the Korean Modern Medical System] (Seoul: Hyeon, 2005), 40-41.

⁸⁰ See Kyoung Bae Min, *Allen ūi sǒn’gyo wa kǔndae Han-Mi oegyo* [Dr. Horace N. Allen and His Mission in Korea, 1884-1905] (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1991), 147-148. Sang-ik Hwang, “Ku Hanmal kǔndae sǒyang ūihak ūi suyong kwajǒng yǒn’gu” [Introduction of the Modern Western Medicine in the late Chosǒn Period], *Korean Journal of Medical History* 7 (1998): 18-19.

⁸¹ Allen received his first medical call from Kojong and Queen Min on March 27, 1885. Allen diary, 27 March 1885, Allen Papers.

⁸² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 23 February 1885, Allen Papers.

an enthusiastic student anyway,” Allen confessed privately.⁸³ He was starting to entertain doubts, moreover, about the prospects for the new hospital, regarding which disparaging rumors had begun to circulate among the recently returned Western officials in Seoul. “The hospital is to be finished tomorrow, and just as every thing begins to look lovely a new trouble arises,” Horace noted in late March 1885. “This man [Hermann Budler, the German vice-consul] has lived in China and dislikes the missionaries. He talked against the hospital, described it to be a ‘hotbed of trouble’ and a ‘proselytizing scheme.’”⁸⁴

Horace presumed another hand at work behind Budler’s opposition: that of P. G. von Möllendorff. It was a suspicion several months in the making, for from the time he first submitted his hospital proposal back in late January, Allen had had the nagging feeling that von Möllendorff might put up some form of resistance to the scheme—that he would, more precisely, “so expound the benevolent clause as to effectually squelch the whole matter.”⁸⁵ Horace gave too much credit to von Möllendorff’s clout in the government—whether the German could have single-handedly blocked the hospital was doubtful—but he was right in acknowledging that von Möllendorff wielded significantly more influence than he did. And on the eve of the hospital’s opening, Horace’s fears about his project coming under attack, about his status as a mission agent being explicitly used against him, seemed on the cusp of reality. Only an eleventh-hour discussion diffused his anxieties. “I had a long talk with Von Mollendorf yesterday,” Horace recorded in his diary on April 6, 1885, only days before the hospital was scheduled to open. “[He] first declared he would crush the hospital but after a long talk he became very friendly and promised to help me all he could.” These assurances were only partially comforting. With von Möllendorff back in the Foreign Office, Horace noted to himself, “I will have to go slowly.”⁸⁶

But what exacerbated Horace’s nervousness about the hospital, indeed added to his frustrations more generally, was the appearance of a new group of mission agents. On April 5, 1885, the same day that Allen and von Möllendorff hashed out their compromise, three American missionaries landed at Chemulpo: the Methodists Henry G. Appenzeller and his wife, Ella Dodge Appenzeller, and the Presbyterian Rev. Horace G. Underwood. Allen had been expecting Underwood. Both were representatives of the same Presbyterian mission board, and Allen had been in communication with Underwood prior to the latter’s arrival. He was not prepared, however, for the Methodists.⁸⁷ “There is a

⁸³ Allen diary, 20 February 1885, 25 February 1885, 11 March 1885, 18 March 1885, Allen Papers.

⁸⁴ Allen diary, 31 March 1885, Allen Papers. Hermann Budler went to Korea in June 1884 as the German vice-consul and served as acting consul general in Seoul until the arrival of Captain Otto Zembach in October of that year.

⁸⁵ Allen diary, 27 January 1885, Allen Papers.

⁸⁶ Allen diary, 6 April 1885, Allen Papers.

⁸⁷ Underwood first went to Japan, where he would spend several months before continuing on to Korea. When he first landed in Yokohama in late January 1885, he found that Allen had already written to the Presbyterian J. C. Hepburn (who was stationed in Japan), requesting that Underwood come to Korea as soon as possible. In the following months, however, Underwood noted that he had since been advised by Allen that married missionaries would have more influence in Korea than unmarried ones, and that if possible he should remain in Japan and be married first, before coming to Korea. Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 26 January 1885, 16 February 1885, in *Horace Grant Underwood Papers: The First American Missionary to Korea and the Founder of Yonsei University*, vol. 1, 1885-1892, transcribed by Sung-Deuk Oak (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2005), 349-350. See also Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 7 May 1885, Allen Papers.

Methodist man at Chemulpo with a sick wife,” Allen noted on April 5. “I don’t know what they will do there is no place for them. We are full and Mr Foulk insists he will not entertain them.”⁸⁸ While Allen had looked forward to the addition of missionary reinforcements, the timing of the Methodists, he thought, could not have been worse.

George Foulk was just as irritated. Like Horace, he wanted to see the royal hospital have a successful start, and the surprise appearance of new missionaries only foreboded complications. But as the sole US official in the capital, Foulk was also concerned about ensuring the safety of Americans citizens. He had carefully presented his position in a letter to Rev. Maclay in early April 1885. “I regret to say,” Foulk explained, “that the present state of affairs in this country presents many features wholly unfavorable to your work.” Both Japanese and Chinese troops remained stationed in the capital, and while hostilities between the two sides had been suspended there was “no suitable guarantee that trouble may not at any time break out.”⁸⁹

But there was another reason for Foulk’s annoyance. Since the departure of Foote several months earlier, Foulk had been running the US legation single-handedly—without any staff, without provisions for upkeep, without even any clear instructions of his duties. “I am still living alone,” he confided to his parents and brothers, “the only American officer in Seoul, perplexed and anxious over the unsettled state of affairs and the heartless negligence and wretched condition of our diplomatic machinery.”⁹⁰ He hardly possessed the funds to entertain missionaries—or any other guest, for that matter—at the legation; nor, frankly, did he wish to act as interpreter for future missionary people, for he was sure he would become “in reality a sort of slave to them.” “I think you will understand,” Foulk summed up, “why I think a band of perfectly helpless missionaries, with no homes prepared and no knowledge of language or customs, ought not to come to Korea.”⁹¹

He was too late. In late March, just before he penned his letter to Maclay, the Methodist missionaries Henry and Ella Appenzeller had already departed for Seoul, boarding the monthly steamer that operated between Japan and Korea. The *Seirio Maru* reached the Korean peninsula on April 2, stopping briefly at Pusan before plying up the western coast.⁹² It was a difficult passage, Henry Appenzeller described; the weather was

⁸⁸ Allen diary, 6 April 1885, Allen Papers.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Robert S. Maclay, “Commencement of the Korea Methodist Episcopal Church,” *The Gospel in All Lands* 22 (November 1896): 500-501.

⁹⁰ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 19 April 1885, *AMK*, 98-99. After assuming the duties of chargé d’affaires of the US legation, Foulk was authorized by the State Department to draw the salary of a chargé but declined to do so, as he believed “such an act to be unconstitutional” as long as he held a commission with the US navy. See George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 25 May 1885, 21 June 1885, 30 June 1885, 4 August 1885, *AMK*, 105, 111, 112, 119.

⁹¹ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 19 April 1885, *AMK*, 99.

⁹² The Appenzellers’ passage involved several stops and covered roughly two weeks total. On March 23 they boarded a steamer at Yokohama and proceeded to Kobe, then from Kobe to Nagasaki, then finally from Nagasaki across the Korea Strait to Pusan, stopping along the way at a couple of small islands. Interestingly, during the first leg from Yokohama to Kobe, the Appenzellers were co-passengers with the Korean embassy that had been sent to Japan to apologize for the December 1884 incident. Henry Appenzeller recorded his impressions of the embassy (which included von Möllendorff) in an account that originally appeared in his personal notes and was later published in the Annual Report of the Methodist mission board. “1885,” MRL 8: H. G. Appenzeller Papers, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 2, Notebook 7, The Burke Library Archives (Columbia University Libraries) at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York.

rainy, the “seasickness long & severe.”⁹³ And for more than one reason he was glad when anchor was finally dropped at Chemulpo. “U.S.S Ossipee with stars & stripes in sight,” he recorded in his journal on April 5. “It did me much good to see our flag in those distant waters, as it insures us all protection needed.”⁹⁴ The cheer was short-lived. The following day, while still at port, the Appenzellers were visited by Captain John McGlensey of the *Ossipee* only to be told “not to proceed to Seoul, as the country is not open to missionaries & we would be almost beyond the protection of our flag.”⁹⁵ With similar admonitions coming from the Japanese and British consuls at Chemulpo, and with Chargé Foulk refusing to provide lodging at the US legation should they attempt coming to Seoul, the Appenzellers decided it imprudent to push the matter further. By the end of the month they would be on a return steamer to Japan.⁹⁶

As for Horace Underwood, who had also taken passage on the *Seirio Maru*, things went more smoothly. From Chemulpo he made his way overland to the capital, and then straight to Horace’s residence.⁹⁷ It was a transition made easier by the fact that Allen had obtained prior consent from Foulk to have Underwood come as “my guest and assistant.”⁹⁸ But Allen did not exactly like what he saw. He had specifically warned Underwood “not to enlarge upon his missionary character but to come here quietly as a man.” Instead, the young reverend had shown up in flamboyant style, donning a “black coat buttoned close up to his white tie and a tall pipe hat on his head.” “Mr. Underwood seems smart and business like but he is rather conceited and rash,” Allen observed privately. “I am afraid he will get us into trouble.”⁹⁹

By now, Horace Allen had come to believe that divine providence had played a role not only in the timing of his own arrival in Korea, but also in his inadvertent involvement with the December coup. When everywhere seemed “blood and fire” during the upheaval, he had vowed that “our trust is in the One who sent us, and we know we shall not die till he wills.”¹⁰⁰ But the previous few months had also entailed on his part difficult, often exacting work. The sleepless nights, hours of medical calls, carefully forged relationships—such had comprised for Horace an intensely trying period. And he was not about to let it all be for naught.

⁹³ “1885,” Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 1, Box 1, Fol. 2, Burke Library.

⁹⁴ “Korean Notes,” 5 April 1885, Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 1, Box 1, Fol. 2, Notebook 8, Burke Library.

⁹⁵ “Korean Notes,” 6 April 1885, Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 1, Box 1, Fol. 2, Notebook 8, Burke Library.

⁹⁶ “Korean Notes,” 7 April 1885, Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 1, Box 1, Fol. 2, Notebook 8, Burke Library.

Appenzeller noted in his journal that Consul Kobayashi (Japan) warned against going to the capital primarily “from a sanitary point of view,” while Consul Scott (Britain) thought the Appenzellers should not proceed to Seoul until at least the fall. See also Henry G. Appenzeller to Dr. G. R. Crooks, 1 May 1885, Henry G. Appenzeller to Bro. Sanders, 15 May 1885, Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 2, Box 2, Fol. 1, Burke Library.

⁹⁷ Drs. Scudder and Taylor of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) were also aboard the same steamer as Underwood and the Appenzellers, and had come to prospect for their society. The ABCFM, the largest of the American foreign mission organizations, would ultimately decide not to start a mission in Korea.

⁹⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 3 April 1885, Allen Papers.

⁹⁹ Allen diary, 6 April 1885, Allen Papers; Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 7 May 1885, Allen Papers.

¹⁰⁰ “From Corea,” *Heathen Woman’s Friend*, 208.

Chapter Three

Crucible

The royal hospital (*Kwanghyewŏn*), Korea's first modern medical institution, officially opened its doors in early April 1885.¹ By then preparations for the building and premises had reached completion, and the rules and regulations for the new establishment had been issued by the Foreign Office. Horace Allen received a copy of these regulations one week ahead of time, and in his diary promptly recorded its main elements: One Korean commissioner and two other Korean officials were to oversee the running of the hospital; four Korean students were to assist Doctor Allen, administer medicines, and learn to use the medical equipment; two secretaries, two gate keepers, and two additional employees were to manage the record-keeping, grounds maintenance, and orderly receiving of patients; and five servants were to assume cooking and cleaning duties. In-patient fees were divided into four categories and priced according to room type, with private wards being the most costly. General wards for the poor were free, while house calls would be priced at five times the rate of private rooms. All bills, Horace likely noted with surprise, were to be paid only upon the patient's recovery.²

Although in later years the management of the hospital would be transferred to the American Presbyterians, at the beginning it was an affair explicitly established under Korean government auspices.³ As such the facility attained an important degree of symbolic legitimacy, especially as it was intended to inherit the function of the former official medical center (*Hyeminsŏ*) in providing "widespread relief" to the public.⁴

¹ Though Allen recorded April 9 as the opening day, according to Korean records the hospital was officially established on April 14 (2.29 lunar). Horace Allen diary, 10 April 1885, Horace N. Allen Papers, the New York Public Library; *First Annual Report of the Korean Government Hospital, Seoul, For the Year-Ending April 10th, 1886* (R. Meiklejohn & Co.: Yokohama, Japan, 1886), 3; George C. Foulk to Secretary of State Thomas F. Bayard, 30 May 1885, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886), 347 (hereafter cited as *FRUS*); Kyŏng Bae Min, *Allen ūi sŏn'gyo wa kŭndae Han-Mi oegyo* [Dr. Horace N. Allen and His Mission in Korea, 1884-1905] (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1991), 148. The hospital was renamed *Chejungwŏn* in late April 1885.

² According to Allen's notes, inpatient classes were divided into private wards (class 1) at 1000 cash per day; one or more in a room (class 2) at 500 cash per day; three or more in a room (class 3) at 300 cash per day; and general wards (class 4) for the poor at no pay. Although Allen did not receive a salary for hospital work, house calls were to be paid directly to him at 5000 cash. Allen diary, 3 April 1885, Allen Papers. "Cash" referred to a Korea coin unit (*p'un*), which at the time of the hospital's opening exchanged at a rate of approximately 1600 to 1 to the American dollar. Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 3 April 1885, Presbyterian Church in the USA., Board of Foreign Missions, *Correspondence and Reports, 1833-1811, Korea* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996), microfilm.

³ This transfer occurred in the mid-1890s. See L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910* (Pyeng Yang: Union Christian College Press, 1929), 228-229.

⁴ Yun-jae Pak, *Han'guk kŭndae ūihak ūi kiwŏn* [The Origin of the Korean Modern Medical System] (Seoul: Hyeon, 2005), 40-41. On the government's receptivity of the hospital, see also Sang-Ik Hwang, "Ku Hanmal kŭndae sŏyang ūihak ūi suyong kwajŏng yŏn'gu" [Introduction of the Modern Western Medicine in the late Chosŏn Period], *Korean Journal of Medical History* 7 (1998): 18-19. Allen was aware of the existence of the older institution but mistakenly believed that it had been dissolved to make way for the hospital. It was disbanded in 1882, prior to his arrival. Allen diary, 13 April 1885; Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 2 June 1885, Allen Papers.

Knowledge of the sciences of the West was not new to the Chosŏn dynasty. Since at least the mid-eighteenth century, texts on Western medicine had been imported into Korea from China, and had received attention especially by intellectuals of the *sirhak* (practical learning) school.⁵ The new medical facility, moreover, was only one of a number of Western-style innovations that had received official sanction starting in the early 1880s. But to Horace Allen, it signified a momentous advance for the kingdom, an event for which he believed he was owed a good deal of the credit. And now, upon his shoulders, tottered the “great responsibility of making this first institution of civilization a success.”⁶

With the government hospital formally opened, Horace assumed the post of head (and only) physician, and almost immediately he was overwhelmed with the workload attendant upon the job. On day one, he saw twenty outpatients; two weeks later the daily average of visitors, not counting the constant “sight-seers” who squeezed in for a look, had increased to three times that number.⁷ The treatments offered at the hospital also included surgeries, and by the end of the first month Horace was performing these procedures regularly. “Dr. Allen has been working very hard,” his missionary coworker Horace Underwood sympathized. “He is at the hospital every morning for operations, of which he has from 4 to 6 every day.”⁸ Underwood, coincidentally, had taken a year’s course in medicine prior to coming to Korea and was helping Allen in the dispensary. Yet there was only so much the preacher could do. Doctor Allen, Underwood insisted, “feels very much the need of the aid and advice of another physician.”

To be sure, Horace Allen viewed this growing busyness with both enthusiasm and appreciation. “The hospital progresses favorably,” he noted with satisfaction after its opening.⁹ Yet between his existing commitments—including, not least, increasingly frequent calls to the palace—and now the hospital job, it was becoming apparent that he had perhaps overextended himself. “The hospital is a success,” he assured the Presbyterian mission board in early May 1885. “But I have too much to do.... I manage to get through my work but tis in a mechanical manner.”¹⁰ Privately, he confessed more. “I am much rushed and the responsibility and vexations weigh heavily upon me,” Horace wrote. “I often wish I could get out it. My stomach also makes me cross & irritable and not a good missionary.”¹¹

⁵ See *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol. 2, *From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Yŏng-ho Ch’oe, Peter H. Lee, and Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 117-124; Jong-Chan Lee and Chang-Duk Kee, “The Rise of Western Medicine and the Decline of Traditional Medicine in Korea, 1876-1910,” *Ŭisahak* 5 (1996): 1-9.

⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 7 May 1885, Allen Papers.

⁷ Allen diary, 10 April 1885, 2 May 1885, Allen Papers.

⁸ Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 26 April 1885, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers: The First American Missionary to Korea and the Founder of Yonsei University*, vol. 1, 1885-1892, transcribed by Sung-Deuk Oak (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2005), 353.

⁹ Allen diary, 2 May 1885, Allen Papers.

¹⁰ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 7 May 1885, Allen Papers. Allen’s “outside duties” included private calls to the royal family as well as to other Korean patrons. In mid-April 1885, Allen also signed a contract to work on the medical staff of the Japanese legation. He kept the mission board apprised of this outside work and as previously promised, turned over his earnings to the mission treasury. His goal, as he told Ellinwood, was to make the medical work of the mission “self-supporting.” Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 23 February 1885, Allen Papers.

¹¹ Allen diary, 12 May 1885, Allen Papers.

Ironically, it was the unexpected arrival of another Methodist missionary, William B. Scranton, that offered Horace the hope of relief. Scranton was a colleague of Henry and Ella Appenzeller, a member of the same cadre of Korea-appointed American Methodists who had been waiting in Japan since early 1885. There they were supposed to receive the advice of Rev. Robert Maclay, observe the workings of their fellow Methodist missionaries, and if possible to begin studying the Korean language. “Every moment of your time,” J. M. Reid, secretary of the Methodist mission board, had instructed Henry Appenzeller, “should be diligently employed in securing equipment for your future work, and when it is in the judgment of Dr. Maclay that the time has arrived, you should repair to Korea, and open the mission.”¹²

When the Appenzellers set out for their ill-destined trip to Korea earlier in the year, however, William Scranton opted not to join them. He had heard reports about the political uncertainties in Seoul, and thought it unwise just then to attempt entering there with his family.¹³ But the other reason for delaying his departure, as he explained to Secretary Reid, was that he had found “an efficient Korean teacher” by the name of “Pak Young Hio.” Pak Yŏng-hyo, of course, had been a central figure in the 1884 coup d’état and was among the group of Korean exiles who had fled to Japan following the failed overthrow. Scranton was introduced to him in Yokohama and felt that under Pak’s instruction he was making sound progress on the language. He was also personally fond of Pak, and if not for Maclay’s insistence that he proceed to Korea, Scranton would have preferred to continue his tutelage longer. It was with reluctance that he departed Yokohama in late April. “All our friends in the mission and in missionary work advised against my going at this time, while I had so good opportunity with the language,” Scranton would complain to Reid. “Dr. Maclay alone deemed it advisable for me to go at this time. As he so deems it advisable, I am on my way, tho’ I confess it is only because of his opinion and not my judgement [sic].”¹⁴

Despite his misgivings, Scranton was in luck. Like the Appenzellers, when he landed at the port of Chemulpo he was warned off by some of the foreigners not to continue to the capital. But by chance Horace Allen happened to be at port on a call, and after learning about Scranton’s arrival he invited the newcomer—a physician, no less—to stay at his home in Seoul. The next several days were spent touring the royal hospital, where Scranton found “Dr. Allen’s hands more than full; and great responsibility on his shoulders.”¹⁵ His interest was electrified. “One could scarcely expect or hope to gain a better opportunity,” Scranton averred, “for showing Korea what we bring to them of help

¹² J. M. Reid to Rev. H. G. Appenzeller, 15 January 1885, Appenzeller Papers, Series 2, Box 3, L25, Burke Library.

¹³ Much of the information Scranton gathered about the situation in Seoul came from Walter Townsend of the American Trading Company. Townsend had come to Japan in March 1885, and in his conversations with Scranton advised that the missionaries, and particularly the women, not proceed to Korea for the time being. William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 23 April 1885, Missionary Files (Microfilm Edition), United Methodist Church Archives—GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

¹⁴ Though Scranton left Yokohama before hearing from the Appenzellers, he did eventually catch up with them in Nagasaki, where the steamers departed from Japan. Despite the Appenzellers’ “adverse criticisms on Korea,” Scranton by then thought it was too late and too expensive to return to Yokohama, and decided to continue on to the peninsula where he could “see and judge for myself.” William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 1 June 1885, GCAH.

¹⁵ William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 1 June 1885, GCAH.

in the shape of medical skill.”¹⁶ When Horace then suggested that the Methodist doctor temporarily join the hospital staff, Scranton accepted. For though “very much perplexed to know what to do,” Scranton admitted, it seemed “to me to be almost a Providential opening for at least a time.”¹⁷ These plans tentatively laid, Scranton returned to Chemulpo to gather his belongings, while in the meantime Allen prepared a petition to the Foreign Office, requesting permission for the doctor to receive employment at the hospital.¹⁸

Horace liked the new missionary almost instantly. “The Methodist brethren have tried again,” he reported to the Presbyterian board that May. “This time they sent Dr. Scranton, a physician of good judgment and rare common sense.... [He] is not like ordinary missionaries.”¹⁹ Scranton had not, for example, arrived displaying the pretentious garb of Underwood; he had not openly sung gospel songs while at Chemulpo, as rumor had it of the Appenzellers; and unlike Rev. Maclay, he had not insisted on being entertained at the US legation in Seoul. Scranton, in other words, had come exhibiting just the sort of prudent conduct that Allen believed appropriate for the situation. He was “a sensible man and behaves well,” Horace noted privately.²⁰

The sentiment would not last. While back at Chemulpo, Scranton underwent a change of heart regarding the hospital work. It was not that he thought he had made a poor decision. “I believed my reasons for my course were good, and still believe them such,” he would explain to the Methodist board. Yet somehow he “was not quite satisfied.” After a long discussion with Chaplain Holway of the *USS Trenton*—“a good Methodist, and what I wanted most was a good Methodist adviser at that crisis”—Scranton decided it would be in the best interest of both the board and himself to back out of the agreement with Allen.²¹ His new idea, he said, was to send for the rest of his family, and then to stay not in Seoul but at Chemulpo, where they could help him “in planning and the work, by becoming as soon as possible familiar with the language, the people and their needs, and in getting settled.”²²

Horace bristled at the news. The problem with this sudden reversal, as he saw it, was not merely the loss of the extra help at the hospital, though that was surely disappointing; the problem was also that the matter had already been elevated to an

¹⁶ William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 1 June 1885, GCAH.

¹⁷ William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 1 June 1885, GCAH.

¹⁸ Allen submitted the petition on May 7, 1885.

¹⁹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 7 May 1885, Allen Papers.

²⁰ Allen diary, 12 May 1885, Allen Papers.

²¹ The *USS Trenton* and *USS Ossipee* were then serving on the US Navy’s Asiatic station and on various occasions visited or made calls to the port of Chemulpo.

²² William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 1 June 1885, GCAH. Scranton summarized the reasons for changing his mind about the hospital: “(1) The Methodist Episcopal Missionary Board sent me out here to start a Methodist medical mission and not to serve in a government hospital as a medical man purely. (2) They sent me to *start* a work for the *Board*, and I should be rather starting myself than starting a mission. I am an agent of the Board and not an independent worker; and so tho’, what ever I do and however I succeed or fail, effects the work which the Board is striving to do, yet in so far as I am, as their agent, I should follow as closely as possible their instructions and the spirit of them. I could see no harm to say the least in devoting myself entirely to starting work on our own account. (3) I would have no time to study the language and *begin* to fit myself in the *best* way for future work, because the work at the hospital is so great. (4) It would not be advisable for my family to join me in *Seoul* until the state of the country was a little more settled. Now my family will of course be of very great assistance to me always in the work, and will be able to do much that I could not do alone, and hence as fellow workers ought to be considered.”

official level. “The petition which I sent in regarding the M. E. [Methodist Episcopal] Dr. Scranton,” Allen complained to the Presbyterian board, “was most kindly received by the Foreign Office.... Since then he has refused to play second fiddle and may decline a course which will forever ruin him in Seoul.”²³ What was more, he been told by Scranton that the government “hospital was not enough a missionary hospital and that as he had the money he proposed to open one of his own.”²⁴

That last argument prodded Horace’s frustration even further. Prior to the government hospital’s opening he had had to fend off whispers by some of the foreigners that the institution was merely a pretense for Christian proselytizing, and now, it seemed, he was being challenged from the other side. “Some missionary people,” Horace wrote in exasperation to Ellinwood, “try to run down this hospital by saying that it is not a mission affair. But when we consider the fact that it is the first step in advanced Western civilization, that no mission work is allowed in the country yet the Gov’t found and gave over this institution into the hands of a known missionary and accept the services of another of the same sort, I think it is worth the while of any mission to supply the physicians.”²⁵ It was not the last time Horace would find himself on the defensive regarding his work.

For the moment, the issue was settled by the intervention of *chargé d’affaires* of the US legation, George Foulk. Foulk, who had poured his support into the hospital idea from its inception, agreed with Horace that the Methodist missionary was making a fool’s mistake. Foulk’s tactic of subtle but firm persuasion would prove effective. “In his letter to me on the subject,” Scranton later noted, “Mr. Foulk suggested that perhaps I had better accept the invitation [of the Foreign Office] for the time present, to avoid any cause for embarrassment which a refusal... might entail upon myself and Dr. Allen as well as the legation.”²⁶ Scranton complied, and before the end of May he had returned to Seoul and taken up duties at the hospital while boarding at Horace’s residence.

Help, at last, had come. Yet for Horace Allen the situation remained less than ideal. His relationship with Doctor Scranton grew increasingly awkward. Quarrels here and there intervened. And by the time Scranton’s temporary assignment at the hospital ended later that summer, Horace had come to think that his houseguest lacked somewhat the “missionary spirit.”²⁷ It was just the kind of unpleasant insinuation that would resurface among the missionary community over the ensuing months—though this time, with Allen as one of its targets.

²³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 19 May 1885, Allen Papers.

²⁴ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 July 1885, Allen Papers. See also Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 2 June 1885, Allen Papers.

²⁵ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood 2 June 1885, Allen Papers.

²⁶ William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 1 June 1885, GCAH.

²⁷ One of the more provoking arguments between Allen and Scranton had to do with some horses sent by Kojong for the use of the hospital doctors. According to Allen’s account, Scranton claimed one as his own and subsequently refused to surrender it after John Heron arrived. The matter was eventually brought before Foulk, who, not surprisingly, sided with Allen. To Allen this was another example of Scranton’s apparent jealousy of his relationships with the court and the US legation, a suspicion Allen would later level at Heron as well. Allen diary, 17 June 1885, 28 June 1885, Allen Papers; Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 July 1885.

* * *

The summer of 1885 saw the arrival of several new additions to the American missionary force in Korea. To the Presbyterians the Allens and Horace Underwood added John and Hattie Heron, while on the Methodist side William Scranton was joined by wife Loulie, his mother Mary, and Henry and Ella Appenzeller.²⁸ The newcomers reached Chemulpo en masse on June 20, 1885. Earlier that month, Scranton had sent a letter to his family in Japan, inviting them to come to the peninsula as it appeared that the atmosphere was “becoming very quiet and settled.”²⁹ For the Appenzellers this virtually amounted to a summons to them as well. The rejection of the previous April had hit Henry hard; he had grown tired of waiting, and he interpreted the news from Scranton as meaning that the time had come for another attempt at entering Seoul.³⁰ Hence he and Ella, along with the Scranton women and the Herons (recently arrived in Japan on their way to Korea), assembled on the same mid-June steamer at Nagasaki. “We have moved again,” Ella quipped in a letter home to her father, after landing on the peninsula for the second time in four months. “If we are not veritable Methodists,—I do not know who is.”³¹

The ten members of this force—the “pioneers” of the Korea mission field, in the parlance of the day—bore characteristics similar to their compatriots in other fields abroad. Like many of them, the Korea missionaries were highly educated and of middle-class backgrounds; they were convinced of a personal call to missions; and with the exception of Horace and Fannie Allen, who had the advantage of a year in China, they were all first-time appointees. They were also noticeably similar in age. Only six years separated Horace Underwood, the Scranton couple, the Allens, the Appenzellers, and the Herons, with Ella Appenzeller the oldest among them at thirty.³²

The one anomaly was Mary Scranton, William’s mother. An agent of the Methodist Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society (WFMS)—what would become the largest and most successful women’s sending boards in America at the turn of the century—Scranton the elder was an unusual case even by WFMS standards.³³ As a

²⁸ The Scranton family included a young daughter, Augusta (b. 1883), who was also aboard the steamer from Nagasaki to Chemulpo.

²⁹ William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 1 June 1885, GCAH.

³⁰ Henry G. Appenzeller to Byron, 13 June 1885, Henry G. Appenzeller to Father, 13 June 1885, Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 2, Box 2, Folder 1, Burke Library.

³¹ Ella D. Appenzeller to Father, 23 June 1885, Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 2, Box 2, Folder 1, Burke Library.

³² For more on the background of the missionaries, see Henry G. Appenzeller, William B. Scranton, Mary F. Scranton, Mission Biographical Series, GCAH; “John W. Heron, M.D.,” *The Korean Repository*, 4 (December 1897), 441-443; 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), 15-38; Daniel M. Davies, *The Life and Thought of Henry Gerhard Appenzeller (1858-1902)* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1988). For an analysis on the middle-class character of the missionaries, see Dae Young Ryu, “Understanding Early American Missionaries in Korea (1884-1910): Capitalist Middle-Class Values and the Weber Thesis,” *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 113 (2000): 93-118.

³³ The WFMS was founded in 1869. Although it maintained connection to the Methodist mission board, or the “parent” board, the WFMS functioned independently, appointing its own missionaries and having control over its own budget and finances. On the history of the WFMS, see Frances J. Baker, *The Story of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1869-1895* (Cincinnati: Curtis & Jennings, 1898). On the emergence of women’s boards in the post-Civil War decades, see R. Pierce

widow she was technically a single woman, as WFMS candidates were required to be; but at fifty-two years she fell conspicuously outside the desired window of twenty-two to thirty. Deviations to this rule, however, could be made if the applicant possessed such qualities as “a thorough intellectual training” and “a remarkable ability for Christian work,” and in the eyes of the WFMS Mary proved a worthy exception.³⁴ She had become a Christian at the age of twelve and was a graduate of Norwich Female Academy in Connecticut. Methodism ran in the family; her father, brother, and nephew were all members of the clergy. She had also been deeply involved with the WFMS at the “home base,” having served as a conference secretary for the New England and New York branches of the society. When in late 1884 her only child, William, received appointment to Korea and Mary decided to accompany him, the WFMS requested that she go as one of its own agents. “The call of my son,” Mary later said of her decision to become a missionary, “was a call to me also.”³⁵

The arrival of Presbyterians John and Hattie Heron buoyed Horace Allen’s spirits. “We are very much pleased with our new friends, the Herons,” Horace reported to the board in late June, two days after their landing, “and it is very refreshing to find them so appreciative.”³⁶ Refreshing indeed—for his earlier problems with William Scranton seemed to have left Horace feeling, for all his labors, distinctly underappreciated.³⁷ It was Horace, after all, who early on had secured enough grounds and property to accommodate additional missionaries, saving future Presbyterians the trouble of having to search for their own housing. Moreover, it was through Horace’s efforts that there was a position waiting for John Heron, a medical doctor, at the government hospital. “[The Herons] seem very grateful,” Horace said, “that it so happened that I got in here and had a place open for them, and do not seem to blame me for being here first.”³⁸

Horace’s cheer, however, was tempered somewhat by the simultaneous arrival of the Scranton women and the Appenzellers, none of whom he had been expecting. Though he knew that William, who was still boarding at his home, would eventually send for his family, he had not counted on it being so soon. The return of the Appenzellers was simply a surprise. “We are worried about the Scrantons,” Horace noted privately. “Mr. Foulk is disgusted by their actions and by their bringing the Appenzellers who were sent away. He says he will stand by me till the skys [sic] fall but he will have no more to do with missionaries.”³⁹

Beaver, *American Protestant Women in World Mission: A History of the First Feminist Movement in North America* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), 87-115.

³⁴ “Requirements of Missionary Candidates,” *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year 1885* (Columbus: Ohio State Journal Printing Establishment, 1886), 113-114.

³⁵ Scranton had been widowed for more than ten years when she accepted the WFMS appointment. “Mary Fletcher Benton Scranton,” “The Roll Call,” Mission Biographical Files, GCAH. William Scranton resigned as a missionary in 1907 and went into private practice first in Korea and then in Japan. Mary Scranton served until her death in 1909.

³⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 June 1885, Allen Papers.

³⁷ Allen diary, 21 June 1885, Allen Papers.

³⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 June 1885, Allen Papers.

³⁹ Allen diary, 21 June 1885, Allen Papers. William Scranton had also not expected the Appenzellers. In early June 1885, he wrote to them and advised that they not return to Korea until at least the fall. William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 1 June 1885, GCAH.

Disgust may have been right. In a letter home later that summer, Foulk upbraided the new missionary crowd (save the Allens) for its callowness. “All these missionaries are the greenest, most useless people in a way I have ever seen, though very respectable and nice in many ways,” he wrote.⁴⁰ He continued his diatribe in another letter the following month, this time also indicting the boards at home. “Oh, fools, double fools are the jackasses who sent such people here,” Foulk railed. “They do no good, can speak no Oriental languages, are gawky, ignorant of the world at large.... Had the mission board sent missionaries of Japan or China, who have had some experience with Oriental people, it would have been better. As it is, these are new, from America, and know nothing but the small gossip of their homes.”⁴¹ Horace’s sentiments scarcely went that far (and Foulk’s assessment would eventually lose some of its acerbity). But even while Horace invited the Methodists to stay at his house until they secured a place of their own, he could not shake the sense that trouble lay ahead.⁴²

As before, Horace’s concerns about the influx of new missionaries had partly to do with the political atmosphere in Seoul. Earlier that year, Japan and China had finally sealed a settlement over the involvement of their soldiers in the 1884 coup (the Convention of Tientsin).⁴³ But other events had since added to the international tensions over Korea. In mid-April 1885, while the terms of the Sino-Japanese agreement were still being negotiated, several British warships had seized Port Hamilton (*Kōmundo*), a group of Korean islands off the southern tip of the peninsula.⁴⁴ Two months later, the Russian official Alexis de Speyer came to Seoul with demands that the Korean government hire

⁴⁰ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 18 August 1885, *America’s Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887*, ed. Samuel Hawley (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Book, 2008), 122-123 (hereafter cited as *AMK*).

⁴¹ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 15 September 1885, *AMK*, 126-127.

⁴² The Appenzellers chose to board in Chemulpo until they could find permanent accommodations in Seoul. Ella D. Appenzeller to Father, 23 June 1885, Appenzeller Papers, GCAH. Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 July 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁴³ According to the convention, which was negotiated between Li Hongzhang and Itō Hirobumi, both China and Japan agreed to withdraw troops from Korea within four months, and henceforth neither country was to dispatch military instructors to the peninsula. Instead, the two powers were to invite the Korean monarch to engage officers from a third, outside country for the purposes of training Korean forces (Americans were the preferred choice). The agreement also stipulated that in case of a future conflict where China or Japan wanted to deploy troops to Korea, each must provide the other advanced notice. See Young-Ick Lew, “American Advisers in Korea, 1885-1894: Anatomy of Failure,” in *The United States and Korea: American-Korean Relations, 1886-1876*, ed. Andrew C. Nahm (Kalamazoo, Mich.: The Center for Korean Studies, Western Michigan University, 1979), 67-68; Frederick Foo Chien, *The Opening of Korea: A Study in Chinese Diplomacy, 1876-1885* (Hamden, Conn.: The Shoe String Press, 1967), 162-168.

⁴⁴ The principal catalyst for this move lay less in any vested British interest in Korea than in growing tensions between Great Britain and Russia, and particularly in concerns about Russia’s recent encroachment into Central Asia. Fearing the imminent possibility of an Anglo-Russian war, British leaders wanted to secure a base near Korean waters from which operations could be launched on Vladivostok in case hostilities did break out. On April 15, and without notifying the Korean Foreign Office, the British navy landed at Port Hamilton, beginning what it claimed would be only a temporary occupation of the territory. The occupation would last for more than two years. For discussions of the Port Hamilton affair, see George Alexander Lensen, *Balance of Intrigue: International Rivalry in Korea & Manchuria, 1884-1889*, vol. 1 (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1982), 54-68; Yur-Bok Lee, *West Goes East: Paul Georg Von Möllendorf and Great Power Imperialism in Late Yi Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 113-125.

Russian instructors for its military.⁴⁵ These developments only further convinced Horace Allen of the vital role of the United States. “You may be positive,” he told F. F. Ellinwood, “that the recent trouble [with Russia] was due to the negligence of America in not sending help when asked for. . . . If now Korea becomes decimated and absorbed by Russia [*sic*] the blame will rest upon us again.”⁴⁶ Horace was not opposed per se to expanding the number of American missionaries on the peninsula—as long as they stayed quiet and out of trouble. So far, he was not convinced that all of them would.

Yet what Horace seemed to take for granted was how much the past year had shaped his approach to the mission endeavor. Back in Nanking, he had noted that the local people “cordially despise” clerical missionaries but were more accepting of Western medicine; doctors, he had told the Presbyterian board, were “the one thing people demand.”⁴⁷ He had come to a similar conclusion about the efficacy of medicine shortly after arriving in Seoul. But the December coup and its aftermath had also honed Horace’s perspectives. In his view, it was imperative that the Korea missionaries not only show restraint with evangelizing or other outwardly religious activities, but that they also establish good ties with the Korean court and government. To Allen this meant that mission people should be mindful not to offend the native authorities. It also meant they must be willing to accommodate to existing laws and regulations.

Horace’s colleagues would not have disagreed about the need for discretion, as even the mission boards had warned. “You are sent out with the understanding that the country is not formally opened to Christianity,” the Methodist Reid told Henry Appenzeller.⁴⁸ Secretary Ellinwood had likewise urged prudence: “I think that it is evident from what Dr. Allen says,” he advised Horace Underwood, “that you will not be permitted to enter upon regular missionary work, but I think that for two or three years

⁴⁵ Alexis de Speyer was a secretary in Russia’s legation at Tokyo, and had been sent to Korea in the late spring of 1885 to follow up on talks regarding the sending of Russian military instructors to the peninsula. The negotiations on this subject had been spearheaded by P. G. von Möllendorff and were part of his larger scheme to secure an ally for Korea, one that could not only counterbalance the nascent Sino-Japanese rivalry over the peninsula, but could also reliably provide the kingdom with assistance in military and other matters. Though von Möllendorff had first entered the Korean service on the recommendation of Li Hongzhang, the German had begun to see himself, as historian George Lensen notes, as more of an agent of the Korean government than of the Chinese, and thus “intrigued to secure the independence of Korea from China as well as other powers.” Lensen, *Balance of Intrigue*, 31. By the close of 1884 von Möllendorff had determined that Korea should make Russia an ally. With the tacit approval of King Kojong, who after the December coup had grown interested in the idea of a strong Russo-Korean relationship, von Möllendorff had begun actively, but secretly, to solicit the cooperation of the Russian government. When de Speyer arrived in Seoul in mid-June 1885, however, he found the pro-Chinese Kim Yun-sik, president of the Korean Foreign Office, adamantly opposed to the hiring of Russian instructors. Taken aback by this resistance, de Speyer attempted over the next several weeks to force Kim’s hand, brandishing at times threatening language. He was unsuccessful: Kim stood his ground, while Kojong appeared unwilling to contravene openly the position of the Foreign Office. From virtually all sides the blame for the intrigue was placed on von Möllendorff, and before the close of the year he would be dismissed altogether from his employment in the Korean service. See Lee, *West Goes East*, 102-105; Lensen, *Balance of Intrigue*, 52-53; C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 61-62.

⁴⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 June 1885, Allen Papers.

⁴⁷ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 29 January 1884, Allen Papers.

⁴⁸ J. M. Reid to Rev. H. G. Appenzeller, 15 January 1885, Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 2, Box 3, L25, Burke Library.

you might engage in education work in the English.”⁴⁹ But the boards also acknowledged that they could offer only limited counsel. “In regard to your work,” Ellinwood told John Heron, “I cannot give you much information beforehand...you will have to feel your own way.”⁵⁰ Such statements hardly amounted to a complete letting go—Heron and the others remained accountable to the home boards—but they did indicate that the Korea missionaries would be expected to exercise an ample amount of their own judgment.⁵¹ Herein lay the potential for both cooperation and conflict.

* * *

Though the Americans became the first Protestant missionaries to live inside Korea, the kingdom’s contact with Christianity extended back almost three centuries. The earliest encounters seem to have been nominal. During the Hideyoshi invasions of the late sixteenth century, for instance, Gregorio de Cespedes, a Spanish Jesuit and missionary to Japan, went to the peninsula to serve as chaplain for some of the Japanese Christian soldiers.⁵² In the mid-1650s, the crown prince Sohyōn was returned to Korea after being held hostage by the Qing court, and brought back in his entourage several Chinese Catholics (the prince died shortly afterward). By then, knowledge of Jesuit teachings had already come into the hands of Korean Confucian scholars via China, but interest in Catholicism remained minimal. It was not until the late eighteenth century, when a young Korean scholar named Yi Sūng-hun was baptized in Peking and began evangelizing his scholar friends after returning to Korea, that Christianity began to take root. A century of suppression followed—the last and most vicious purge, carried out by the Taewōn’gun, King Kojong’s father, lasted from 1866 to 1871—but by the 1880s a population of more than ten thousand Catholic believers had survived.⁵³

As with the history of Korean Catholicism, the acceptance and spread of Protestant Christianity on the peninsula was from the start an indigenous effort. There had been at least one attempt by a foreign missionary, Robert J. Thomas of the London Missionary Society, to enter Korea in the mid-nineteenth century; but that ended abortively when he decided to sail with the *General Sherman* and was killed during the schooner’s infamous 1866 expedition.⁵⁴ More significant was John Ross, a Scotch

⁴⁹ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace G. Underwood, 25 May 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁵⁰ F. F. Ellinwood to John W. Heron, 2 April 1884, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁵¹ See for example the instructions from J. M. Reid to Rev. H. G. Appenzeller, 15 January 1885, Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 2, Box 3, L25, Burke Library.

⁵² Though de Cespedes seems to have had no contact with Koreans, he was likely the first European to set foot on the peninsula. Some of the Koreans taken back as slaves by Hideyoshi’s armies would later convert to Christianity in Japan. Among these was “Vincent” Kwōn, one of the earliest known Korean Christians and martyrs. See Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 2, 1500-1900 (New York: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 2005), 143-146.

⁵³ Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, 317; James Huntley Grayson, “A Quarter-Millennium of Christianity in Korea,” in *Christianity in Korea*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr., and Timothy S. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006), 12.

⁵⁴ Thomas had visited the coast of Korea the year before, during which time he learned some of the language and attempted to distribute books. In the 1830s, the China missionary Karl Gützlaff had also briefly visited the peninsula, but his impact was insignificant. For other early attempts, see Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 38-46.

Presbyterian missionary in Manchuria. In the early 1880s, and with the assistance of a group of border-crossing Korean merchants, Ross had begun to translate parts of the Bible into the Korean language. One of these merchants, Sō Sang-ryun, converted to Christianity and carried to Korea copies of the newly translated Gospel of Luke. He began evangelizing in his hometown of Sorae, and along with a number of other Koreans who had converted in Manchuria, was responsible for establishing the kingdom's first Protestant communities.⁵⁵

In time, both Sō Sang-ryun and the village of Sorae were to become familiar names to the American missionaries in Korea. But it was another Korean convert, Yi Su-jōng (or "Rijutei") that initially sparked the attention of American mission advocates. Yi Su-jōng was an aristocrat and reformer who had converted to Christianity during a visit to Japan in the early 1880s.⁵⁶ In 1883, while still in Japan, Yi was approached by Henry Loomis of the American Bible Society and asked to assist in preparing a Sino-Korean version of the New Testament.⁵⁷ Loomis introduced Yi to an American audience in a report home later that year. "As a Chinese scholar he is pronounced an equal of almost any man in Japan," Loomis effused. "He writes poetry in Chinese.... He is said to be a superior artist also. And best of all, he is a most zealous Christian."⁵⁸ Even more captivating were the letters Yi would directly address to American churches in 1884, requesting that missionaries and especially females be sent to Korea. "I think a girls' school to be very important," read one of his letters published in *Woman's Work for Woman*, a Presbyterian magazine, "wherefore I desire that a lady missionary be sent to my country."⁵⁹ These "petitions," some mission supporters began to argue, served as evidence of the pressing need to extend the Protestant foreign missionary enterprise to the peninsular kingdom.

The more common response at the home base, however, was indifference. The oldest and most prestigious of the boards, the Congregationalist American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), thought the venture dangerous, and would eventually decide against sending any missionaries to the peninsula at all.⁶⁰ The chief obstacle to the idea of Korea missions was the continued existence of the anti-Christianity law. Yet while the Presbyterian and Methodist boards were aware of that

⁵⁵ The first known Korean Protestant convert was Yi Ŭng-ch'an, who assisted Ross with the translation work and was baptized in 1876, two years before Sō Sang-ryun. Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, 531. See also James Huntley Grayson, *Early Buddhism and Christianity in Korea: A Study in the Implantation of Religion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 101-103; and documents in Sung-Deuk Oak, *Sources of Korean Christianity, 1832-1945* (Seoul: The Institute for Korean Church History, 2004), 14-25.

⁵⁶ Rijutei was the Japanese rendition of Yi's name. He was baptized by the Presbyterian missionary George W. Knox in April 1883. See Martha Huntley, *To Start a Work: The Foundation of Protestant Mission in Korea (1884-1919)* (Seoul: Presbyterian Church of Korea, 1987), 62-63.

⁵⁷ See Yi Su-jōng's 1883 address in Oak, *Sources of Korean Christianity*, 175-176.

⁵⁸ *Bible Record*, vol. 28, July 19, 1883, 101-103.

⁵⁹ "A Call for Korea," *Woman's Work for Woman* 15 (January 1885): 8-9. An excerpt was also printed in the Methodist *Heathen Woman's Friend* 16 (January 1885): 158-159. A fully copy of one of Yi Su-jōng's translated letters, dated August 8, 1884, can be found in *Correspondence and Reports*. According to historian Theodore Jun Yoo, Yi was "one of the first reformers to recognize the urgent need to create girls' schools in Korea." Theodore Jun Yoo, *The Politics of Gender in Colonial Korea: Education, Labor, and Health, 1910-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 41.

⁶⁰ The ABCFM did send agents to scout Korea, but ultimately decided against a mission. See Allen diary, 6 April 1885, Allen Papers; Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 75-76.

fact, their interest in the peninsula had also been catalyzed by particular events. For the Presbyterians it was initially the acquaintance their missionaries in Japan made with several Korean Christians, including Yi Su-jǒng; for the Methodists, it was a chance meeting with Koreans in the US. In the summer of 1883, the Methodist minister John F. Goucher, later president of Goucher College in Baltimore, happened to be traveling on the same cross-country train as the Korean special embassy. His conversations with Min Yǒng-ik, head of the embassy, piqued Goucher's interest in the kingdom, and that year he donated to the Methodist board a hefty sum to start a Korea mission. When that elicited no response, Goucher wrote to Robert Maclay in Japan, urging him to make a scouting journey. It was Goucher's persistence that persuaded Maclay to visit Seoul in the summer of 1884, and that would soon convince the board to commission its first Korea missionaries.⁶¹

If the Presbyterian and Methodist leadership at home thought the time fit to establish a presence in Korea, the circumstances the missionaries encountered were to prove, by their own admission, confounding. In a letter home to a mentor, Henry Appenzeller confessed that "there are so many perplexing questions arising continually that it is exceedingly difficult to always do the right and best thing for the good of the work."⁶² One of these questions had to do with the relationship between the missionaries and the US legation. "How far do you think," Appenzeller asked, "I ought to follow the advice of the government officials in entering or leaving Korea?" Over the ensuing years, and perhaps to the surprise of the missionaries, the posture of the American officials in Seoul would become a major source of frustration. George Foulk and others at the legation did assist missionaries with various matters, from acquiring passports to purchasing property; but they would also repeatedly urge the missions to limit their proselytizing activity.⁶³ "Our representatives continually tell us we must not do any work," William Scranton would complain in 1887, "that if we go slowly and do nothing, in ten years we can do work such as we desire. We have had inaction drummed into us with our hands tied, until we have little patience left to hear any more of their judgement [*sic*]."⁶⁴

By then both the Presbyterians and Methodists would have administered their first baptisms, but in the early period most agreed to abstain from conspicuous evangelism. "We were counseled by our United States representatives," Mary Scranton later remembered, "to use the utmost caution in manner and speech. We were not expected to

⁶¹ See E. M. Cable, "Beginning of Methodism in Korea," in *Within the Gate*, ed. Charles A. Sauer (Seoul: The Korea Methodist News Service, 1934), 7-8; and Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 73-75.

⁶² Henry G. Appenzeller to G. R. Crooks, 1 May 1885, Ser. 2, Box 2, Folder 1, Burke Library. See also Henry G. Appenzeller to Bro. Hixson, 1 May 1885, Henry G. Appenzeller to Bro. Wadsworth, 2 May 1885, Henry G. Appenzeller to Mother, 30 May 1885, Ser. 2, Box 2, Folder 1, Burke Library.

⁶³ For example, see W. W. Rockhill to Thomas F. Bayard, 5 February 1887, Hugh A. Dinsmore to Thomas F. Bayard, 21 April 1888, Hugh A. Dinsmore to Thomas F. Bayard, 3 October 1888, Hugh A. Dinsmore to Thomas F. Bayard, 1 April 1889, in *Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States*, vol. 2, *The Period of Growing Influence*, ed. Spencer J. Palmer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 205-206, 206-208, 217, 221-222 (hereafter cited as *KAR II*); Lillias H. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 March 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁶⁴ William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 13 August 1887, GCAH. See also Yur-Bok Lee, *Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Korea, 1866-1887* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), 118-119.

make manifest in any way the designs we have in coming to the country.”⁶⁵ As Hattie Heron also noted in August 1885, shortly after her arrival, “we cannot teach Christianity yet, as it is against the law...[but] by the time we have learned the language we hope the way will be opened for the Gospel.”⁶⁶ Likewise, William Scranton, despite Horace Allen’s initial suspicions that he would try to establish a more religious-oriented hospital, told the Methodist board that “it is for the future good of the missionary work here that work should be entered upon very cautiously.” “If the doctors are allowed to gain a good footing here in the eyes of the government and the people,” Scranton argued, in words that sounded a lot like Allen’s, “all will progress well.”⁶⁷

With the consensus to avoid open evangelizing, the two missions at first focused on the medical and educational arenas.⁶⁸ John Heron joined Horace Allen at the royal hospital, relieving Scranton of his temporary duties; meantime, Horace Underwood began teaching English to a few students. The Methodists, who had decided to settle on the same hill as the Presbyterians and the US legation, embarked on similar work. In September 1885 William Scranton started a makeshift dispensary out of his home, while Henry Appenzeller, along with Mary Scranton, attempted to gather students for separate boys’ and girls’ schools. That undertaking floundered for nearly two years. At the boys’ school, Appenzeller suspected this had something to do with fears of association with Christian missionaries. “Last Thursday the whole school waited on me in a body,” he wrote in his diary in late 1886, “[and] requested that my school be put on a government basis as the report had gone forth that this is a mission school. Three students left, one permanently & the other two for a short time because they are afraid they will be persecuted.”⁶⁹ The students’ preference would soon be realized: in 1887, King Kojong and Queen Min would bestow special names upon each of the schools, signifying official endorsement of the institutions.⁷⁰

Not surprisingly, the emphasis on medical and educational activities suited Horace Allen just fine. And in the summer of 1885, as far as the Presbyterians were concerned at least, Horace viewed the prospects for the missionary enterprise with renewed optimism. He had since gotten over his initial qualms about Horace Underwood,

⁶⁵ Mary F. Scranton, “Woman’s Work for Woman,” *The Korean Repository* 3 (January 1896): 2-3.

⁶⁶ Letter published in “Korea,” *Woman’s Work for Woman* 1 (February 1886): 37.

⁶⁷ William B. Scranton to J. M. Reid, 1 June 1885, GCAH.

⁶⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 12 April 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁶⁹ Appenzeller suspected that the fear of association with missionaries and Christianity was a major deterrent for students. On December 4, 1886, he noted in his journal that “the whole school waited on me in a body & requested that my school be put on a government basis as the report had gone forth that this is a mission school. Three students left, one permanently & the other two for a short time because they are afraid they will be persecuted.... I shall do all I can to give the school a proper standing, but it seems to me that the very thing which ought to distinguish it is what gives the offense.” Ser. 1, Box 1, F3, Notebook 1, Burke Library. See also Henry G. Appenzeller to J. M. Reid, 13 December 1886, GCAH.

⁷⁰ All three of the early Methodist institutions would receive official names: *Si Pyŏngwŏn* (Universal Relief Hospital), *Paejae Haktang* (Hall for Rearing Useful Men), and *Ewha Haktang* (Pear Blossom School). See “Korea,” *Eighteenth Annual Report of the Woman’s Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year 1887* (Boston: C. M. Barrows & Co., 1887), 50-51; Mary F. Scranton, “Woman’s Work for Woman,” *The Korean Repository* 3 (January 1896): 3-4; Henry G. Appenzeller to J. M. Reid, 26 March 1887, GCAH. The most famous of these institutions would be Ewha haktang, the first school for girls in Korea and progenitor of Ewha Woman’s University, now the largest women’s university in the world.

called him now a “great peace man,” praised him for his dedication to studying the Korean language. “Mr. Underwood disappointed us just a little at first,” Allen admitted to the board, “but that has all passed away and we like him very much.” With “such a good agent,” too, as John Heron joining the mission, Allen looked toward a promising future. “We think we are to be congratulated upon having such companionable workers,” he averred, “and are hoping great things from added wisdom and sympathy.”⁷¹

Within a year, the Presbyterian mission would be on the verge of implosion. Clashes in personality were partly to blame, but the missionaries would also collide on issues of method and policy. For not everyone was as determined as Horace to prioritize good relations with the Korean government. Nor were all as keen on cultivating ties with the foreign officials in the capital. From Horace’s perspective, the latter relationships were not necessarily detrimental or contradictory to the interests of the mission, as some were beginning to suggest. On the contrary, they could be potentially beneficial. They made Horace privy to certain information of which he suspected even the US State Department was unaware, allowed him to stay abreast of events that he believed could in some way affect the mission effort.⁷²

Theological differences would also impinge on the conflict. Though Horace Allen never articulated his approach to mission in high doctrinal terms, his clearest missiological statement reflected a belief that “soul-saving” should not be the only, or even the most important, aim of missionaries. “It is better in my mind,” he would tell the Presbyterian board in early 1886, “to instruct a gov’t in these institutions of modern civilization and secure their objective than to carry out a feeble proselytizing scheme. Christianity always goes with the missionary even if he be serving an institution where if not proscribed it is taught with more or less secrecy.”⁷³ Here, too, not all would accede to Horace’s opinions.

In a sense, Korean Christians were also to play an inadvertent role in the emerging discord. In 1886, Horace Underwood would receive a personal visit from Sŏ Sang-ryun, requesting that he make a trip to Sŏ’s hometown of Sorae and baptize a small band of Christians there. “This we were unable to do at the time,” Underwood later recalled. But when several Korean converts from the same northern province appeared in early 1887, Underwood agreed to baptize them secretly in Seoul.⁷⁴ By that time, both Underwood and Appenzeller had come into contact with other inquirers in the capital who either sought out the missionaries individually, or had begun to attend the foreigners’ Sunday meetings.⁷⁵ The initiative taken by these Koreans, and the realization that there existed groups of Protestant Christians in other parts of the peninsula, was an unanticipated turn for the Presbyterians and Methodists alike. It would be interpreted by

⁷¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 23 June 1885, Allen Papers; Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 July 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁷² For example, Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 27 October 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁷³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 12 February 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁷⁴ One of the three baptized was Sŏ Sang-ryun’s brother, Sŏ Sang-u. The latter would become one of the first ordained Presbyterian ministers in Korea. Horace G. Underwood, *The Call of Korea: Political—Social—Religious* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 107-108, 136-137.

⁷⁵ For example, see Henry G. Appenzeller Journal, 27 December 1886, Ser. 1, Box 1, F3, Notebook 1, Burke Library; Henry G. Appenzeller, 2 April 1886, Henry G. Appenzeller to J. M. Reid, 13 July 1886, GCAH; Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 27 January 1887, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 405-406.

some, despite Horace Allen's rising unease, as one sign to take mission work in a more evangelistic direction.

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The beginning of the mission troubles came as a shock to Horace Allen. "We have had a most surprising and provoking disagreement with Dr. Heron," he wrote in his diary in September 1885. "It arose from my talking over in a friendly way his remaining home from the hospital when not needed and working on the language as the Board had urged. I also objected to his servant emptying our ice water bottles before meals and not refilling them." This rather mundane conversation, according to Horace's account, quickly spiraled into an ugly exchange, with Horace announcing that he would resign from the mission, and Hattie Heron impugning his true motives. "Mrs. Heron had taken it up," Horace continued, "and denounced me as unfit for a missionary and that I simply used this as a pretext to resign and work for money. This really and rightfully angered me and wears heavily on Mrs. Allen." Shaken by the confrontation, he immediately wrote to the board, asking either to be reassigned at once to another port, or to be granted leave to come home.⁷⁶

Nothing came of that outburst. "I do not think," Secretary Ellinwood wrote in response, "that we [the board] should feel inclined to sanction it unless reasons of health." Yet it suggested just how deeply this latest feud cut Allen.⁷⁷ There had been inter-missionary disputes before—during his earlier days in China, of course, and here also in Korea with the Methodist William Scranton. And yet this instance was the most wounding. After all he had done for the Presbyterian cause—including continuing his medical practice among other foreigners so as to add funds to the mission treasury—was he to stand for the accusation of being ill-suited as a missionary? It was, besides, one thing for him to contemplate self-doubts about his fitness for the vocation; it was another for those doubts to come from the outside. And not just from the outside, but from the Herons, whose arrival Allen had so keenly welcomed. "Their coming just now," he had declared back in June, "seems providential."⁷⁸

By his own record and from later complaints leveled by his coworkers, it was clear that Horace did not possess the most felicitous temperament. His criticism of others could be caustic, and in disagreements he would not always prove the model of equanimity. But the fact that the Herons reacted so strongly suggested the existence of a deeper-seated grievance. It may have seemed to them bad form, for instance, that Horace should be the one lecturing about the importance of learning the language when he spent so little time on it himself. Over the following year the conflict worsened, and by the late summer of 1886 tensions reached the point of rupture. In mid-September that year, John Heron formally submitted a letter of resignation to the Presbyterian board, citing as the principal cause the impossibility of working any longer alongside Allen.⁷⁹ If the board

⁷⁶ Allen diary, 1 September 1885, Allen Papers.

⁷⁷ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 19 December 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁷⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 June 1885, Allen Papers.

⁷⁹ John W. Heron to F. F. Ellinwood, 11 September 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*.

did not object, Heron asked that he be given a recommendation to join the Methodists instead.

He would not be alone. One week after Heron's letter, Horace Underwood penned his own resignation, expressing his desire to go over to the Methodist mission as well. "I have been led to take this step," Underwood said, "after sincere and prayerful consideration of the status of affairs in your mission in Korea and see no other way to a Christian settlement of the difficulties out here." It was not right, Underwood argued, to stay in a mission where "the only way to get along with a certain fellow missionary is to have nothing to do with him, nor with any work with which he is connected, and yet this is the only way to get along with Dr. Allen." Not only that, but Allen was also "two-sided"; he was duplicitous and could not be trusted. Lest the board think that an easy reconciliation might be possible, Underwood remonstrated otherwise: "The condition of affairs now in your mission here is a disgrace," he declared, "... and were there no other method of a settlement, would warrant the entire withdrawal of the Presbyterian Board from this field."⁸⁰

In retrospect, the divisions within the mission may have appeared almost inevitable to Heron and Underwood alike. Both charged Horace Allen with self-aggrandizement—of treating the government hospital work as virtually his own province and failing to consult the mission about hospital-related decisions. Both objected, too, to his spending so much time in the company of the foreign officials. "I know little of politics," Heron wrote in obvious reference to Allen. "My time has been fully employed for me to be able to find sufficient time to keep up with the ever changing aspect of political affairs, and besides in order to keep up with politics it is necessary to mix a great deal with a class of men who are not, so far as my observation goes, well fitted for improving one morally or perhaps even mentally."⁸¹ Moreover, neither Heron nor Underwood, though they both acknowledged the imperative of proceeding carefully with mission work, any longer agreed with the kind of strictly non-evangelistic method advocated by Allen. Just two months before submitting his resignation, Underwood administered his first baptism to a man named "Mr. No" (No Ch'un-gyǒng).⁸²

Horace seems not to have objected to this inaugural sacrament, perhaps because he was already acquainted with No Ch'un-gyǒng. No was one of Horace's early language teachers, and back in late 1884 had borrowed a copy of a Chinese New Testament he spotted in the doctor's office.⁸³ The baptisms of the northern visitors in early 1887, however, were a different story. Days before the ceremony, Horace shot off a warning to his colleague. "In regard to the men being baptized," he wrote to Underwood,

I have been carefully considering the subject since our meeting and have concluded that, in view of their confession, you would be safe in baptizing them

⁸⁰ Horace G. Underwood to the Board of Foreign Missions of Presbyterian Church of America, 17 September 1886, *Underwood Papers*, 385-386, 391.

⁸¹ John W. Heron to F. F. Ellinwood, 19 October 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸² See John W. Heron to F. F. Ellinwood, 20 January 1886, 11 September 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸³ Regarding No Ch'un-gyǒng's conversion and baptism, see Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 July 1886, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 380-385; Henry G. Appenzeller Journal, 24 July 1886, Ser. 1, Box 1, F3, Notebook 1, Burke Library; Allen diary, 29 January 1885, Allen Papers; *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year 1886* (Boston: Joseph W. Hamilton, Printer, 1886), 46-48.

as far as that is concerned. Yet you must bear in mind that in doing so you are in danger of totally ruining our present work and future prospects of yourself and others, and of laying the men liable to persecution and destruction.⁸⁴

Underwood fired back his own salvo. “While I realize that it will lay the men to be baptized open to persecution and perhaps martyrdom,” he responded to Allen, “when they came to me, as they have done in this case, seeing this danger plainly before them and yet requesting to be baptized, it is not for me to say them nay.... I trust that you will realize the force of my reasons and that on a second consideration you will agree that I am right.”⁸⁵ Allen would not only remain unconvinced, but he would grow even more doubtful about such displays of “unwise zeal.”⁸⁶

Yet even before the baptism controversy, Horace sensed acutely the discontent brewing among his colleagues. After his first row with Heron, which he seemed never fully to overcome, he had begun to feel uneasy not only around his medical coworker but also around Underwood, and he feared that “in the ordinary course of events” he was “continually treading on their toes.”⁸⁷ Even so, Allen continued on as before, working at the government hospital, maintaining his practice among the foreigners, treating the royal family, keeping his ear to the ground for diplomatic developments. He was even getting along reasonably well with the Methodist missionaries. Proximity naturally led to encounters, but Horace also saw the Methodists on Sundays when the two denominations held a joint foreigners’ service; he saw them on special occasions such as at the births and baptisms of the missionary children; and in the spring of 1886, when Mary Scranton came to Allen and asked for his help in requesting government approval for a women’s hospital, he obliged (he also immediately wrote to the Presbyterian board, warning them that if they did not hurry and send out a woman physician, the Methodists would gain the advantage in the female medical work).⁸⁸

As for his mission strategy, Horace saw no reason to deviate from the status quo. As the veteran of the group, he naturally felt he occupied a unique position vis-à-vis the other missionaries—not that he was superior to them, but that he plainly possessed more knowledge about the goings on in Seoul. No one would have denied that among the missionary contingent Horace was the most informed, the most influential in his connections, the most experienced. And had he himself not been so confident in his

⁸⁴ Horace N. Allen to Horace G. Underwood, 26 January 1887, Allen Papers.

⁸⁵ Horace G. Underwood to H. N. Allen, 27 January 1887, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 407-410.

⁸⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 25 April 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸⁷ Horace G. Underwood to the Board of Foreign Missions of Presbyterian Church of America, 17 September 1886, *Underwood Papers*, 386.

⁸⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 April 1886, Allen Papers. The Presbyterian and Methodist missions demonstrated at times a clear sense of competition, even as the two denominations engaged in cooperative action. As Underwood explained to Secretary Ellinwood, “I think that a little rivalry is not out of place, and I do want our mission to keep ahead.” See for example Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 17 February 1886, 22 January 1887, 8 March 1887, 8 April 1887, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 378, 402-404, 410-413, 413-417. Allen’s attempt to assist Mary Scranton in receiving approval for a Methodist woman’s hospital did not pan out, in part because of the apparent objections of Underwood and Heron. Instead, a woman’s department was opened in connection with the existing government hospital, and in the summer of 1886 Annie Ellers arrived in Korea as the Presbyterian board’s first female medical missionary. See Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 12 April 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*; Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 16 April 1886, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 379-380; Annie Ellers to F. F. Ellinwood, 13 July 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*.

special status, had he not be so sure of the correctness of his actions, some of what ensued might have been avoided.

For there was some truth to Underwood's later claim that Allen did not always grasp the view from the other side, that he did not understand why certain of his actions were objectionable to his colleagues. When, for instance, Allen successfully petitioned the Foreign Office in late 1885 to have a medical college attached to the government hospital, he negotiated the arrangements himself, without fully informing the mission of the details. To Underwood and Heron, this was one of the more egregious cases of Allen "arrogating to himself powers and right we cannot concede to him"; to Allen, it was another instance in which he applied his connections to the benefit of the Presbyterians.⁸⁹ "The new medical and scientific school of the Royal Korean Hospital commences today, with Rev Underwood Dr Heron & myself as professors," Allen noted in his diary on March 29, 1886. "The scheme originated with me and I got it through. Had the antagonism of my co-workers to deal with."⁹⁰

Even when all the recriminations came to a head in the fall of 1886, with the double resignations of Underwood and Heron, Allen could not quite see the point. From the beginning Horace had been convinced that jealousy—jealousy of his close relationship to the court, jealousy of his standing with the foreign representatives—underlay much of the infighting, and he viewed himself more often than not as the injured party. He used the same logic when defending himself against the charges leveled at him in the resignations. "I entered the mission work from conscientious motives," Allen would state in his official response to the mission, "but while I have been much favored in Korea I know that I have been the cause of constant contention because of the position my opportunities have caused me to fill."⁹¹ With characteristic certitude, Allen refused to admit both in this and in his later defense to the mission board that he had been in the wrong. As far as he was concerned, he declared to Secretary Ellinwood, "both of these men have acted like children."⁹²

The resignations nevertheless stunned Horace. He was "completely dumbfounded at the intelligence," he admitted, and was particularly taken aback by Underwood's joining in on the exodus. It was not that Allen had taken the mission disagreements lightly. At least one other time over the past year, following a run-in with Heron, he had again contemplated asking the board for permission to go home on leave.⁹³ And yet he had also maintained that in spite of the quarrels, he would stay with the mission so long as he was useful to it, so long as he was needed.⁹⁴ The revelation from Heron and Underwood at once tipped the balance. "I sat up all night on problem," Allen explained to Ellinwood, and after much "prayerful consideration" had "decided upon the happy plan of...clearing out." "It is hard now to think of and will be harder when the time comes," he said, "but it will secure the work to you, save me from slander, and I may yet be of service to you in another field." Losing Underwood, Allen added, would be especially detrimental to the mission as the preacher was clearly "the best Korean scholar here" and

⁸⁹ Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 17 September 1886, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 386.

⁹⁰ Allen diary, 29 March 1886, Allen Papers.

⁹¹ Horace N. Allen, "To the members of the Presbyterian Mission in Korea," 13 December 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 25 April 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹³ Allen diary, 20 December 1885, Allen Papers.

⁹⁴ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 27 October 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*.

was destined to be a valuable agent for the board.⁹⁵ Either way, Allen himself must be removed. “If you insist on keeping me,” he predicted, “I will be bound to be the cause of trouble.”⁹⁶

The drama would last well into 1887, in part because it took several months simply for a full exchange of letters with mission board offices in New York. When the responses did arrive, they urged all of the aggrieved parties to reconsider their resignations, but were notably supportive of Allen. “Your leaving the field,” Ellinwood counseled, “would be well nigh fatal to the mission...you would regard it as the great error of your life.”⁹⁷ By resolution of the board, Horace was to be given full charge of the government hospital and “be considered the Physician in Chief” by the mission; if Heron did not like the arrangement, he had permission to move to another open port. The directives from New York only further inflamed the conflict. Even George W. Gilmore, an American teacher recently hired by the Korean government (and himself an ordained Presbyterian minister), observed as an outsider that the board was unfairly siding with Allen. “Unless the Board revises its action,” Gilmore protested, “it will by its own action have marred the results of the hard work” of the mission.⁹⁸

And yet even as leaders at home continued pleading with Horace to stay, he sensed he was becoming more and more the pariah of the American missionary community in Seoul. In late 1886, when the Presbyterians and Methodists formed an interdenominational Union church, he was the only (male) mission agent not to be elected an officer.⁹⁹ His disappointment was palpable. “[I] was down in the depths,” Horace wrote, “and was the only one not given official connection with the institution.” The irony of it all, he told Secretary Ellinwood, was that “whereas the Legation and great companies here, as well as the Priests seek my assistance, which they seem to find of some use, the missionaries (especially of our own church)...are just the ones who do not want my help.” It was clear to Horace that he had been cast “outside the whole mission circle.” “I am boycotted now by the missionaries,” he ruefully noted in his diary.¹⁰⁰

As 1887 trudged into mid-year, Horace was still requesting that the board allow him to return to the United States to “safely lay off for a time.” Not only would his absence be good for the Presbyterian mission, he insisted, but it would also allow him to recuperate some of his ebbing physical strength. “I can’t stand it long and would be entitled to a health certificate now,” he confessed. “The place is too wearing for a young man.”¹⁰¹ The climate was tolerable enough, and though he admitted that all the missionaries, with their house servants and time to spare for leisure, lived “as well as any

⁹⁵ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 13 December 1886, 25 April 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 17 January 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹⁷ See F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 7 March 1887; F. F. Ellinwood to John Heron, 7 March 1887; F. F. Ellinwood to Horace G. Underwood, 7 March 1887; F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 4 May 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹⁸ The three teachers, Delzell A. Bunker, George W. Gilmore, and Homer B. Hulbert, arrived in Korea in the summer of 1886. See Yur-Bok Lee, “A Korean View of Korean-American Relations,” in *Korean-American Relations, 1866-1997*, ed. Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1999), 26. Gilmore was particularly critical of F. F. Ellinwood, arguing that he was “blind to the extreme, most decidedly, prejudiced.” George W. Gilmore to Dr. Wells, 2 May 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹⁹ See Appenzeller Journal, 6 November 1886, Appenzeller Papers, Ser. 1, Box 1, Folder 3, Burke Library.

¹⁰⁰ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 25 April 1887, 21 May 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹⁰¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 15 June 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

of the foreigners here,” he grumbled that his native-style house had deteriorated to the point it was “abominable.” “It is the cause of our constant illness as everyone will tell you,” Horace complained, “and if I don’t go home I intend to ask for a house.”¹⁰² There was, too, his lingering financial burdens. He had never found his missionary salary to be quite enough to cover expenses, and now that he and Fannie had two children to think of—another son, Horace Ethan, had since joined the family—Horace worried about what seemed an ever present debt. “We will simply have to economize a little,” he ruminated.¹⁰³

Horace would not have considered his situation wholly desperate. He was too resilient for that. And inquisitive—between his medical work, social calls, mission obligations, and family life, Horace had also begun to try his hand at inventing. His interest was drawn mostly to railroads. He drew up plans for track switches, streetcar brakes, windmills, even a heated railroad car using the Korean *ondol* method (transferring smoke from an external fire to heat the flooring).¹⁰⁴ Still, Horace yearned for some kind of change. Indeed he was already awaiting an exit plan when an opportunity to leave Seoul arose in the late summer of 1887. But it was to come from an unexpected source, and it would have little to do with his commission as a Protestant foreign missionary.

¹⁰² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 August 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹⁰³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 August 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹⁰⁴ See his various applications for patents in Allen Papers, Press Copybook No. 2 (Reel 2).

Chapter Four

Washington

The imbroglio between Horace Allen and his Presbyterian colleagues had a profound effect on the doctor. There had been moments of difficulty before, times when Horace had wished to throw off the encumbrances of some obligation or scenario at hand. Yet frustration on the mission field was a sentiment hardly unique to his experience as a foreign missionary. And in his case, besides, his early disappointments had been mitigated by a determination to get the Presbyterian venture off the ground. The current impasse was different. For though Horace was not ready to cut loose his religious calling altogether, a calling that was supposed to entail “service for life,” the ongoing wrangling with his colleagues seemed to contribute to a growing disenchantment with the missionary endeavor itself.¹ “I am boycotted now by the missionaries,” Horace confided in his diary in late 1886, following the news of his coworkers’ resignations. All of a sudden it seemed to him that the missionaries had a little too much spare time for their own good, that they were not taking their duties seriously. “I am of the opinion,” he ruminated, “that mission work [here] is a farce.”²

These were heated words—uttered, as Horace later admitted, during a painfully low moment—but they reflected a real sense of dismay that was perhaps lost on some observers both at the time and in later years. In his 1909 work, *Korea in Transition*, the prominent Presbyterian missionary James Scarth Gale would even draw a distinction between Allen and the rest of the pioneer Protestant missionaries to Korea. “In the mind of the writer,” Gale wrote, “[Allen] is disassociated from the missionary list. He was a diplomatist, from his first entry till the close of his distinguished career.”³

In the sweltering Seoul summer of 1887, however, Horace was still grasping for a sense of direction. There were a couple of “diplomatist” avenues he did briefly pursue. Earlier that year, for one, he had written to Secretary of State Thomas F. Bayard, asking to be considered for the post of consul at Chemulpo should an American consulate open there in the near future.⁴ And yet the possibility of continuing in a missionary career remained much on Allen’s mind. If only he could be granted a short leave, he told F. F. Ellinwood, the Presbyterian mission board secretary, he would be willing to come back to

¹ *Manual of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., For the Use of Missionaries and Missionary Candidates* (New York, 1889), 7-8.

² Horace Allen diary, 10 October 1886, Horace N. Allen Papers, The New York Public Library.

³ James S. Gale, *Korea in Transition* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1909), 163.

⁴ Horace N. Allen to Thomas F. Bayard, 7 March 1887, Allen Papers. Although a brief effort had been made by Lucius Foote, the former US minister in Seoul, to open a consulate at Chemulpo, the project suffered from lack of funds and personnel. A consulate there would not be established until after World War II. See Allen’s consular list in his *Chronological Index: Some of the Chief Events in the Foreign Intercourse of Korea from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Twentieth Century* (Seoul: Press of Methodist Publishing House, 1901), 51-52. In the spring of 1887, Allen also briefly contemplated working at the US legation as secretary after having been “voluntarily recommended” for the position by William Rockill (charge d’affaires *ad interim* from December 1886 to April 1887) and Foulk.

Seoul and take up his regular duties again there. Or better yet, perhaps upon his return to the field the board could have him start a new mission station elsewhere in Korea.⁵

It was in the midst of this aching uncertainty about his future that Horace happened upon an opportunity to leave Korea. Sometime in late July or early August, he received a request from King Kojong to join an official embassy soon departing for the United States. The purpose of the embassy was to establish a Korean legation at Washington, DC; and Horace Allen, if he accepted, would go as the embassy's foreign secretary. "The King seems to think," Horace explained to Ellinwood, "...that it is necessary that the [embassy] be accompanied by a foreigner who understands the condition of affairs and their wants. He says I am the only person."⁶ The position was to last for one year and came with a salary—\$3000 as it turned out, more than twice Horace's annual missionary salary.⁷ Here was a chance, he believed, not only to stay in the good graces of the Chosŏn court, but also to take a much needed break from the mission, and at no financial cost to the board. Here, too, was a possible solution to the troubles plaguing the Presbyterians in Seoul—a convenient means to remove, as Horace referred to himself, "the bone of contention."⁸

Ellinwood was startled at the proposal. "I dislike...your withdrawing," he said. "I regret it exceedingly. I do not know just what shape things would take in the mission if you were to withdraw."⁹ Neither Horace Underwood nor John Heron, Allen's colleagues in the mission, had officially withdrawn their resignations. And as Annie Ellers, the newest member, had unexpectedly married one of American teachers recently hired by the Korean government (D. A. Bunker), her future status was also now in question. Horace's departure could thus mean the complete abandonment of the Presbyterian undertaking. Nevertheless it was for Allen to judge what was wisest for himself, Ellinwood said, and though he would have to formally resign his connection to the board should he go to Washington, the leadership hoped that he would "not relinquish the mission work, but will confidently plan to purpose and resume it at the close of this temporary commission."¹⁰ The path back to the missionary enterprise, in other words, remained open.

Allen would, in fact, later rejoin the Presbyterians on the peninsula. But for now the king's offer proved too compelling, and by mid-September 1887 he had decided accept the secretary post with the embassy.¹¹ After several months' delay in getting started, a stop in Japan, and then a stormy, nearly two-week journey across the Pacific,

⁵ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 17 January 1887, 30 April 1887, Allen Papers; Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 25 October 1887, Presbyterian Church in the USA., Board of Foreign Missions, *Correspondence and Reports, 1833-1811, Korea* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996), microfilm.

⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 2 August 1887, Allen Papers.

⁷ See Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, in *Horace Grant Underwood Papers: The First American Missionary to Korea and the Founder of Yonsei University*, vol. 1, 1885-1892, transcribed by Sung-Deuk Oak (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2005), 397. Underwood's letter lists Allen's base salary as \$1,200.

⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 2 August 1887, Allen Papers.

⁹ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 7 September 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹⁰ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 7 September 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*; also F. F. Ellinwood to John W. Heron, 9 September 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹¹ Allen submitted his letter of resignation on October 25, 1887. "To the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America," Allen Papers.

the Allens and the ten-member Korean delegation reached Honolulu in mid-December.¹² The unloading of six tons of opium was the “cause of our coming to the islands,” Horace observed, and because smallpox had been discovered on board, no one was allowed to disembark. Only from a distance did he notice the silhouettes of factories and the vast fields of sugar cane surrounding them.¹³

The layover was brief in any case, and leaving Hawaii they sailed on to San Francisco, where to Horace’s embarrassment they met several more days of quarantine. Once landed, and after a short stay in town, the party proceeded eastward via the transcontinental railway, boarding first the Central Pacific line and along the way enduring stoppages and frozen heaters due to the snowy, inclement weather. More delays followed on the connection to the Union Pacific. At Chicago the Allens parted ways, Fannie and the children heading temporarily to Ohio, Fannie and Horace’s home state, while Horace continued on with the Korean envoys.¹⁴

When the embassy at last reached Washington, DC, in early January 1888, Horace immediately set about attending to various tasks. The most pressing order of business was making contact with the State Department. Here, the doctor confronted his first serious challenge as foreign secretary. Prior to the embassy’s departure from Seoul, the Qing government had imposed on Korea a set of rules that were to govern its overseas legations, and which were intended to demonstrate China’s superior status to the peninsula. According to these regulations, the Korean representative to a foreign country was required to call first on the Chinese legation before officially calling on the host government. Moreover, he was to show deference to the Chinese minister in all social and official occasions, as well as to consult with the latter on any important decision related to the Korean legation.¹⁵

Though Horace was aware that Qing officials had stalled the embassy’s departure from Seoul, he was ignorant of both the prescribed regulations and the Korean government’s agreement to follow them. Nor did it appear that Pak Chŏng-yang, Korea’s minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary to the US, had at any point apprised the doctor of this information. (Decades later, Horace still clung to the mistaken belief that the Korean envoys had made a dramatic escape from the peninsula, only narrowly

¹² The embassy included five officials and several secretaries and servants. Allen diary, 21 November 1887, 9 December 1887, Allen Papers. See Wŏn-mo Kim, *Han-Mi oegyo kwan 'gye 100-yŏnsa* [100 Years Korean-American Diplomatic Relations] (Sŏul: Ch’ŏrhak kwa Hyŏnsilsa, 2002), 263.

¹³ Allen diary, 26 December 1887, Allen Papers.

¹⁴ Horace Allen Diary, 26 December 1887, 13 January 1888, Allen Papers.

¹⁵ Hugh A. Dinsmore to Thomas F. Bayard, 17 November 1887, *Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States*, vol. 2, *The Period of Growing Influence*, ed. Spencer J. Palmer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 205-206, 217, 221-222 (hereafter cited as *KAR II*), 108. For a detailed treatment of these events, including Dinsmore’s role, see Yur-Bok Lee, “Establishment of a Korean Legation in the United States, 1887-1890: A Study of Conflict Between Confucian World Order and Modern International Relations,” in *Illinois Papers in Asian Studies* (Urbana: Center for Asian Studies, University of Illinois, 1983); Jongsuk Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry: Korean-American Relations to 1910* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 81-85; Charles Callan Tansill, “The Corea Question,” in *The Foreign Policy of Thomas F. Bayard, 1885-1897* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1940), 443-449.

evading a Chinese warship that was spotted in nearby waters.)¹⁶ So that when, upon the embassy's arrival in Washington, the Chinese minister indicated that introductions to the State Department must be made through China's offices, Horace balked.¹⁷ With Minister Pak's approval, he and the junior embassy officials arranged a direct meeting with Secretary of State Bayard; four days later, on January 17, Bayard introduced the Koreans to President Grover Cleveland. "Upon the appointed day," Bayard described, "Mr. Pak Chung Yang, with his secretaries and suite, was received by me at this Department and the delivery of his credentials for the 17th instant, when, at 11 o'clock, the Korean envoy was presented by me to the President, and the customary ceremonial addresses were made."¹⁸ In spite of the tense buildup, Horace thought the meeting turned out to be "very pleasant"—though Pak, he noted somewhat amusingly, had "expected to see the great American King in uniform and was thrown off guard by seeing simply a man in ordinary dress."¹⁹

The week continued with a flurry of activity. Horace secured a large house to function as both the legation and the permanent residence for the Korean officials. He purchased furniture to outfit the place and employed domestic servants to work there. Diplomatic protocol demanded his attention as well: on the afternoon following their audience with Cleveland, Allen and the Korean envoys made nearly fifty calls to diplomats, judges, cabinet members, and other officials in the Washington circle.²⁰ Then there was the press. "I [am] on good terms with newspaper men," Horace wrote in his diary, "and am using them well."²¹ By then he had already given several interviews with reporters inquiring about the embassy, and he took the occasion to emphasize, among other things, the friendly disposition of Koreans toward the United States, the abundance of natural resources on the peninsula, and the growing interference of China in Korea's affairs.²² Such were to be the themes Horace would sound repeatedly over the next year and a half, as he tried to promote a stronger American interest in the peninsular kingdom. It was a goal that would prove more intractable than he had anticipated.

But for the moment, he was exhausted. After helping the embassy members settle into their building in the northwestern end of the city—1513 O. Street—Horace took a

¹⁶ See for example "The Corean Embassy," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 2, 1888, 8; Horace N. Allen, *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), 163-164.

¹⁷ As F. F. Ellinwood later explained to Horace Underwood, "Dr. Allen had a good deal of struggle in Washington to prevent the Chinese Minister from 'pocketing' the Korean Minister...making it appear that this mission was simply a wheel within a wheel, and that Korea was to be represented here as a dependent of China and not as an independent State." F. F. Ellinwood to Horace G. Underwood, 23 January 1888, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹⁸ Thomas F. Bayard to Hugh A. Dinsmore, 26 January 1888, Instructions, National Archives and Records Administration, San Bruno (hereafter cited as NARA SB). For the written exchanges between Pak and Cleveland, see the letters in Notes from the Korean Legation in the United States to the Department of State, Sept 18, 1883 to April 24, 1906, File Microcopies of Records in the National Archives, No. 166, Roll 1.

¹⁹ Allen diary, 28 January 1888, Allen Papers.

²⁰ Allen diary, 28 January 1888, Allen Papers.

²¹ Allen diary, 13 January 1888, Allen Papers.

²² For example, see "The Corean Embassy," *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 2, 1888, 8; "The Corean Embassy," *The Washington Post*, January 10, 1888, 3.

trip to Ohio to visit with family and old friends.²³ And somewhere en route, perhaps, as he recuperated from the recent travails of travel and adjusting to his new post, he might have paused to congratulate himself for having played a role—the definitive role, he claimed years later—of bringing to fruition Korea’s first legation in the West.²⁴

* * *

By mid-1887, when he was appointed foreign secretary to the Korean embassy, Horace Allen had become the longest residing American citizen in Seoul.²⁵ Since arriving there three years earlier, the doctor had witnessed US representatives come and go; he had seen the American missionary population, though still relatively small, steadily grow in number; and he had observed with keen interest the political news and rumors that continuously percolated through the foreign diplomatic community. Horace was in Seoul when the bloody coup d’état had erupted in the closing days of 1884. Over the next several years he had built a substantial medical practice with the foreign officials in the capital, contracting at one time or another his services to the American, Chinese, British, Japanese, Russian, and German representatives.²⁶ He had also kept busy with his supervisory role at the Korean government hospital and at the adjoining medical college.²⁷ And at court, he had become a familiar name. In the fall of 1886, King Kojong had decorated him with one of the ranks of the Korean nobility—an honor, Horace said, “entirely unsolicited and unexpected.”²⁸

All of this amounted to a prominence that Horace could have scarcely foreseen when he and Fannie left Shanghai in 1884, frustrated and hoping they would fare better in another mission field. Back then he had merely surmised that his medical background would help ease his transition to Korea. Now, he considered himself a person of no small importance in Seoul. This became even more evident to him after his close friend, George Foulk, left the peninsula for good in the summer of 1887. “Since Foulk’s leaving...and the newness of Minister Hugh Dinsmore,” Allen confided in his diary, “I have become

²³ Allen diary, 28 January 1888, Allen Papers. The location of the Korean legation was initially 1513 O. Street N.W. It moved one year later to 1500 13th Street N.W. Pak Chông-yang to Thomas F. Bayard, 18 January 1888, Yi Ha-Yông to Thomas F. Bayard, 13 February 1889, Notes from the Korean Legation, National Archives.

²⁴ See Allen’s notes for press copy book 1, Allen Papers. Also Allen, *Things Korean*, 159.

²⁵ As of 1887, probably the longest residing American in Korea was Charles Cooper, an American trader who took up residence at Chemulpo in September 1883 and died there in late 1889. See Harold F. Cook, *Pioneer American Businessman in Korea: The Life and Times of Walter Davis Townsend* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 1981), 20.

²⁶ Allen diary, 3 February 1885, 10 April 1885, 4 October 1885, Allen Papers; Horace N. Allen to Editor of the Chronicle, San Francisco, 28 April 1886, Allen Papers.

²⁷ The medical school opened on March 29, 1886, with Allen, Horace Underwood, and John Heron as instructors. Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 December 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*; Allen diary, 29 March 1886, Allen Papers.

²⁸ Allen was not the only missionary to receive such recognition. In June 1886, Kojong decorated both Allen and John Heron with the rank of “champan.” In October of that year, Allen received another, higher rank, and the Presbyterian Annie Ellers was at that time also given recognition by the king. See Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 20 June 1886, Allen Papers; Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 28 October 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*.

the most influential foreigner here. The King has consulted me on all matters and always takes my advice.”²⁹

Horace surely was not as significant as that statement claimed; still, he had good reason to believe that Kojong not only liked him personally, but also valued his input and contributions. Expressions of appreciation continued to be sent to Horace and Fannie from the royal couple, and by 1887 Allen’s medical calls to the palace had become almost routine.³⁰ In a number of non-medical matters, too, the doctor’s assistance had been sought. At Kojong’s request Horace inquired into obtaining Maxim machine guns for the Korean military and ordered Western-style furnishings for the palace.³¹ He was asked for his views on Catholicism (regarding which he gave a decidedly negative assessment) and his opinion on the purchase of a new arsenal.³² And when, in early 1887, Chinese officials began a campaign for the removal of George Foulk, Horace was called upon to help oppose the attempt. “A message came for me from his Majesty,” he noted in May 1887, “asking me to urge [Minister] Dinsmore and all other Americans here to stand by Mr. Foulk.”³³ (The effort would fail—Washington promptly recalled Foulk the following month.) While Horace may not have held the same kind of royal confidence as had Foulk, he no doubt possessed a usefulness of his own, and seemed too to have earned the trust of the king.³⁴

The cordiality was mutual. Both publicly and in private, Horace spoke of Kojong in overwhelmingly positive terms. “Their Majestys are about thirty years of age and are very intelligent,” he wrote in an article published anonymously in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. “It is often remarked with wonder and surprise how well posted the King is on foreign conventions, social customs, and political relations.... He has a kind look and

²⁹ Allen diary, 11 September 1887, Allen Papers.

³⁰ Allen diary, 7 May 1886, 5 September 1886; Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 20 August 1886, Allen Papers.

³¹ Allen diary, 17 January 1887; Horace N. Allen to Bywater Perry & Co., 2 April 1886; Horace N. Allen to Robert Shufeldt, 11 July 1887, Allen Papers.

³² Both Allen’s and Foulk’s views on Catholicism were solicited by Kojong at the time of the French-Korean treaty negotiations. See Allen diary, 9 May 1886, Allen Papers. On the arsenal, see Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 27 October 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*.

³³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 May 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*. See also George C. Foulk to Parents, 9 May 1887, *America’s Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887*, ed. Samuel Hawley (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Book, 2008), 197 (hereafter cited as *AMK*).

³⁴ By early 1887, with the arrival of William Rockhill as chargé d’affaires, Foulk had resumed his former position of naval attaché. By then he had also decided to accept Kojong’s offer to work for the Korean government, and had requested through Minister Parker to be given leave from the navy and the state departments. Though no response to that request arrived, Foulk remained determined through the early part of 1887 to enter the Korean service, at one point even contemplating desertion of his US government obligations. It was only later that year, in part because he feared for his own life in Seoul, that Foulk resigned himself to leaving Korea. On June 18, 1887, he was ordered by the navy department to report to the *USS Marion* at Chemulpo, and from there proceeded to Japan, where he would live out the remainder of his short life. He died there in 1893 at the age of thirty-seven. See his letters to his family, 10 July 1886, 10 September 1886, 3 October 1886, 15 October 1886, 3 December 1886, 8 March 1887, 6 June 1887, 28 June 1887, *AMK*, 162-163, 169-171, 174-175, 181, 190, 204-205. On the Foulk affair, see Tansill, “The Corea Question,” 436-442; Yur-Bok Lee, *Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Korea, 1866-1887* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), 154-159, 163-182.

manner.”³⁵ Elsewhere, Allen described the monarch as “very progressive,” “broad-minded,” “humane.”³⁶ “The King,” he noted privately, “is no fool.”³⁷

But if Horace was eager to attend to royal requests out of a respect and liking for Kojong, other impulses motivated him as well. One of these, of course, stemmed from the belief that maintaining favorable ties with Korea’s ruling powers would be the most effective strategy for the fledgling Presbyterian mission. “The difference between Dr. Allen and Mssrs. Heron and Underwood with regard to methods of working here,” George Foulk had summarized in December 1886, in a spirited defense of his friend, “may be explained as follows. Dr. Allen aimed at influencing the official class, the King & the nobles favorably to Christianity,” whereas the others “tend to direct their work among the people.” “He is brave,” Foulk effused, “energetic, skillful, broad in his views, thoroughly unselfish... Dr. Allen is the only missionary in Korea who has been a true pioneer.”³⁸

The past several years, however, had in a sense also politicized this pioneer missionary. It was not simply that he had formed acquaintances with the foreign officials in the capital, or even that he had begun to participate, often unexpectedly, in activities outside the usual parameters of mission-related work. In the summer of 1886, for instance, when Foulk was away in Japan and Horace discovered the newly arrived (but soon to be short-lived) US minister, William H. Parker, in a “maudlin drunken state,” he had briefly stepped in at the legation.³⁹ And yet over time, Horace had also grown increasingly intrigued by political matters in and of themselves. The shift was a subtle one. For from the start Allen had found it almost impossible to ignore the international developments unfolding around him, and neither did he think they should be ignored. The fortunes of the entire missionary enterprise, he had concluded, were inextricably tied to the diplomatic situation in Seoul, and not least to the position of the US government. A stronger American presence and involvement in Korea, Horace believed, would bring only greater benefit to the missionaries.

As the disputes within the Presbyterian mission began to mount, however, as doubts began to seep in about his prospects as a religious agent, Horace’s interest in Korea’s foreign relations appeared only to deepen. He would have agreed with the observation of George Foulk that these relationships comprised a “most complicated affair.” “Everybody,” Foulk had written in the months following the 1884 coup,

³⁵ “The Hermit Kingdom, Life in the Capital of Corea,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 2, 1887, 1. Segments of the article appear in Allen’s manuscript. See “Royal Pageant in Korea,” “The Korean Palace,” and “Korean Royalty,” Allen Papers.

³⁶ “Affairs in Korea,” April 1886, Allen Papers; “Corean Beliefs,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 23, 1887, 1; “Corean Criminals,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 4, 1887, 1.

³⁷ Allen diary, 11 September 1887; see also 3 April 1885, Allen Papers.

³⁸ George C. Foulk to Reverend Drs., 20 December 1886, *Correspondence and Reports*.

³⁹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 20 August 1886. Allen also from time to time provided Foulk with administrative assistance at the legation. See Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 27 October 1885, 10 November 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*. William H. Parker (1826-1896) was a graduate of the US Naval Academy and served in the Confederate army during the Civil War. He had no diplomatic experience when he arrived in Korea in early June 1886 and was recalled by the State Department after only three months, following reports of his “gross drunkenness.” George Foulk at the time was on health leave in Japan and was ordered back to resume responsibility for the US legation. He was chargé until the arrival of Rockhill in December 1886. On Parker’s tenure in Korea, see Lee, *Diplomatic Relations*, 136-137, 141-142.

“foreigners, Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans, are all keenly suspicious of each other.”⁴⁰ Though by mid-1887 fears of a Sino-Japanese war over the peninsula had somewhat dissipated, as had rumors of a territorial competition between Great Britain and Russia—earlier that year, the British finally had ended their occupation of Port Hamilton—Horace remained apprehensive about how such foreign rivalries would unfold in the future.

Of one thing, though, he was certain: that at present the greatest threat to the peninsula came neither from Japan nor from any of the European nations, but from China. “Chinese influence is immense in Korea,” Horace told the mission board in June 1887. “What Russia’s course will be is to be determined. England is all for China as opposed to Russia. Germany has through the Chinese received for her trade large advantages and will not oppose China. Much depends on the actions of the Americans.”⁴¹ In some respects, he was right. The past two years had seen a dramatic escalation in Chinese involvement in Korea’s internal and diplomatic affairs, a turn that reflected renewed concerns by the Qing about the security of the peninsula, or what was considered China’s “eastern shield.”⁴² As before, Qing leaders argued that their traditional suzerain-tributary relationship with Korea allowed for such involvement, and starting in mid-1885 they had begun to implement an even more interventionist policy. The most visible embodiment of this shift was the presence of the Chinese representative in Seoul, Yuan Shikai. Styling himself as “resident”—in the same manner, he intimated, as the British Resident General in India—Yuan had arrived in the fall of 1885 and swiftly embarked on an aggressive course, building alliances with pro-Chinese elements in the Korean government and using the threat of military action to intimidate the court. By 1887, Yuan had by and large succeeded in exerting his influence over the Korean Foreign Office, as well as over pivotal establishments such as the customs service and the telegraph network.⁴³

Horace first met Yuan, who was several years his junior, back in late 1884. Then an officer in the Qing garrison stationed in Seoul, Yuan had helped lead the assault on the Japanese guards during the 1884 coup, and had requested Allen’s medical assistance to treat the Qing troops injured in that palace battle. “I staid [sic] all night in his room once last winter and we conversed in Chinese,” Horace later explained to Ellinwood. “I took care of his wounded soldiers and he knows me well.”⁴⁴ After Yuan returned to Korea in late 1885, Horace carefully sought to maintain friendly relations with the now powerful resident, for a time even working as Yuan’s physician.⁴⁵ Personally, however, he had grown to dislike his patient. “The Chinese representative here is an overbearing, unscrupulous man,” Horace declared in August 1886, the summer Yuan attempted to have King Kojong deposed. The following spring, when the political atmosphere in the capital had turned even more somber, Horace complained that Yuan and the Qing

⁴⁰ George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 18 January 1885, *AMK*, 87.

⁴¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 15 June 1887, Allen Papers.

⁴² Key-Hiuk Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860-1882* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 342.

⁴³ For discussions of Yuan Shikai and his residency in Korea, see example Young Ick Lew, “Yüan Shih-k’ai’s Residency and the Korean Enlightenment Movement,” *Journal of Korean Studies* 5 (1984): 63-107; Kirk W. Larsen, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade: Qing Imperialism and Chōson Korea, 1850-1910* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 129-230.

⁴⁴ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 22 December 1885, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁴⁵ Allen diary, 4 October 1885, Allen Papers.

government were continuing “their high handed work.” “I am beginning to think,” he said forebodingly, “they will win.”⁴⁶

Those sentiments were also shared at the US legation. George Foulk was vociferous in his opposition to China’s policies on the peninsula; in private, he considered Yuan Shikai one of his most bitter enemies.⁴⁷ (Foulk’s final ousting from Korea at the hands of Yuan suggested that the ill feeling was, to some extent, mutual.) Hugh Dinsmore, too, who would serve as US minister to Korea from the spring of 1887 to early 1890, and despite assuring his superiors at Washington that he would not “in any wise interfere with matters arising between China or any other power with Korea when we are not concerned,” quickly betrayed where his sympathies lay.⁴⁸ “I venture to remark,” he wrote to Secretary of State Bayard one month after arriving in Seoul, “that in my opinion from all that I have seen and heard in the short time I have been in this Capitol, but for Chinese interference all... would go smoothly and well here.” While his social relations with Yuan were “the pleasantest,” Dinsmore warned that Yuan’s “views and ours are so incompatible touching his relations with the Korean Government, that naught but inharmony and confusion can be expected.”⁴⁹

Like Foulk and Dinsmore, Horace feared that the Qing might have as their ultimate aim the complete control of the peninsula. And like his friend Foulk in particular, he believed that the United States—not only because it was the first Western nation to conclude a treaty with Korea, but also because of Washington’s prior promise of aid to the Korean government—had a moral obligation to support the kingdom’s autonomy.⁵⁰ Yet Foulk’s nearly two-year ordeal as chargé d’affaires had embittered the

⁴⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 20 August 1886, May 1887, Allen Papers. See also Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 12 April 1886, PC Correspondence. Allen later published an article in *The North American Review* about his experience with Yuan Shikai. Horace N. Allen, “An Acquaintance With Yuan Shi Kai,” *North American Review* 196 (July 1912): 109-177. On Yuan’s failed attempt to depose Kojong, see Lew, “Yüan Shih-k’ai’s Residency,” 82-86. Lew calls the plot “the boldest imperialistic plan ever contemplated by the suzerain Ch’ing dynasty toward tributary Korea during their two-and-a-half century-old relationship.”

⁴⁷ See for example George C. Foulk to Frederick T. Frelinghuysen, 30 May 1885, 15 October 1885, *Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, Volume I: The Initial Period, 1883-1886*, ed. George M. McCune and John A. Harrison (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 118, 135 (hereafter cited as *KAR*); George C. Foulk to Parents, 3 December 1886, 28 June 1887, *AMK*, 179-182, 205-207.

⁴⁸ Hugh A. Dinsmore (1850-1930) worked as court prosecutor in Arkansas and had no diplomatic experience prior to his appointment to Korea. He arrived on the peninsula in the spring of 1887 and served as there until May 1890. “The New Korean Minister,” *Washington Post*, February 6, 1887, 5; Allen, *Chronological Index*, 51.

⁴⁹ Hugh A. Dinsmore to Thomas F. Bayard, 3 May 1887, *KAR II*, 70. On Dinsmore’s attitude toward Sino-Korean relations, see also his dispatches to Secretary of State Bayard, 27 May 1887, 2 May 1887, 3 May 1887, 30 May 1887, *KAR II*, 11-13, 65-70, 75-76. On his support for the embassy to Washington, see Lee, “Establishment of a Korean Legation in the United States,” 7-13. In early 1888, Dinsmore in fact asked the State Department to be relieved from his post as US minister so that he could take the place of O. N. Denny, who had decided to leave Korea if a suitable replacement could be found. Bayard rejected the request, however, and Denny stayed on as adviser to the Korean government for another two years. See O. N. Denny to Mr. Wetmore, 22 March 1888, in Robert R. Swartout, ed. *An American Adviser in Late Yi Korea: The Letters of Owen Nickerson Denny* (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1984), 48; Robert R. Swartout, *Mandarins, Gunboats, and Power Politics: Owen Nickerson Denny and the International Rivalries in Korea* (Honolulu: the University Press of Hawaii, 1980), 103-105.

⁵⁰ George C. Foulk to Parents, 28 June 1887, *AMK*, 205-207.

once idealistic naval officer. Ultimately he came to concede that policymakers at home neither shared his outlook, nor were likely to be persuaded to. It was a lesson that Hugh Dinsmore had begun to learn during his first few months in Seoul. It was one that Allen would be forced to accept in time.

But not quite yet. For though Horace was aware of the State Department's general passivity toward affairs in Korea, he also believed that it was not too late to turn the tides. The key, he thought, lay in economic incentive. If only enough Americans could be convinced to invest in franchises or other economic ventures on the peninsula, Washington would be bound to protect those concerns and to "help...the Korean government in case of trouble with China."⁵¹ Hence in July 1887, just after Foulk's recall, Horace proposed to Kojong that his majesty "intrust [sic] American capital in [Korea] as a means of exciting more interest on the part of our Gov't."⁵² The idea was not new to the king. Since the arrival of Lucius Foote, the first US minister, back in 1883, Kojong had shown a special interest in making business contracts with American companies.⁵³ Now, he authorized Horace to organize a group of Americans to mine Korean gold, an arena of concessions the Korean government had hitherto guarded from foreign investors.⁵⁴ "I shall turn the affair," Allen noted, "over to more competent hands."⁵⁵

As future events were to reveal, Horace would not be above using his connections with the Korean court for seemingly self-serving ends; nor would his later record on the peninsula be absent of a few questionable dealings. But in the summer of 1887, when he received the appointment with the Korean embassy, Horace assumed the assignment in earnest. He was no diplomat, and he knew it. And yet over time he had come to think that perhaps his influence could be of use in more than missionary matters—that he might play a valuable role, too, in the realm of foreign affairs. Discouraged by the ongoing troubles within the Presbyterian mission, but buttressed by a sense of duty to the king and a good dose of self-importance, the missionary doctor launched into his new duties with characteristic intensity.

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⁵¹ "Affairs in Korea," April 1886; "Memorandum on Korea," Allen Papers.

⁵² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 11 July 1887, Allen Papers.

⁵³ See Lee, *Diplomatic Relations*, 193; Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 78.

⁵⁴ In 1886, George Foulk submitted two reports on the subject of mining to the State Department, in which he forwarded information about the various kinds of minerals known to exist on the peninsula, the locations of the deposits, and the present methods being used for extraction. Foulk also noted that though both the Chinese and Germans had already applied for mining privileges, "it has been stated several times by the Korean Government that it is not prepared to consider propositions in regard to mining, but will do so when it shall have secured competent foreign advisers for its service." In Foulk's opinion the "disposition of the Government is to guard its mines jealously, and to be the actual proprietor of them in case they are to be developed after the Western methods of working." Allen later corroborated this belief when he wrote that the Korean government had rejected offers from the Chinese and European syndicates, but that it preferred to give mining privileges to the Americans. George C. Foulk to Thomas F. Bayard, 20 March 1886, 23 April 1886, *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States for the Year 1887* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), 215-219, 221-222. Allen, "A Memorandum on Korea," n.d., Allen Papers.

⁵⁵ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 11 July 1887, Allen Papers.

Horace Allen was now nearing the age of thirty. It had been some five years since he first enlisted in the American foreign mission movement, leaving his native town of Delaware, Ohio, and joining the movement's rank-and-file for a life of religious labor overseas. Five years would have been considered a mere modicum in the missionary world. Presbyterian agents were expected to serve continuously on the field for at least seven or eight years before even receiving a first furlough.⁵⁶ But the period had been a most eventful one for the doctor, and when he made his return to the United States in the winter of 1887, he did so as something of a novelty.

To most Americans in the late 1880s, Chosŏn Korea was an obscure and unfamiliar place. Although news about the kingdom had surfaced from time to time—the 1866 destruction of the *General Sherman*, the 1871 Low-Rodgers expedition, and the 1882 Korean-American treaty created the largest splashes—half a decade after its “opening” to the West, the peninsula garnered little attention from an American population more occupied with domestic challenges than with foreign policy.⁵⁷ Commercial trade with Korea had remained conspicuously small, and only one American trading house existed in all of the open ports, the establishment of Walter D. Townsend at Chemulpo.⁵⁸ Fewer than three dozen US citizens resided in Korea as of early 1888—not an insignificant number, but the vast majority of these were Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries, and their young children.⁵⁹ Literature regarding the kingdom was also sparse. The most well-known book then available by an American author was William Griffis' *Corea, the Hermit Kingdom* (1882), an ambitious work based mostly on information the author had culled from histories about Japan and China.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ *Manual of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.*, 7-8.

⁵⁷ See for example Robert L. Beisner, *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900* (Wheeler, Ill: Harlan Davidson, 1975), 60-71.

⁵⁸ Though some trade did exist between the US and Korea, all of the goods entering the peninsula came through indirect channels. In his March 1888 trade report to the State Department, Minister Hugh Dinsmore noted that “it is impossible to ascertain from the Commissioners report what proportion of the imports to the country are American. All are put down as coming from Japan and China, this cause from the goods having been purchased in the markets of these two countries though they are very largely bought from Europe and America.” Hugh A. Dinsmore to George L. Rives (Assistant Secretary of State), 5 March 1888, Despatches from United States Consuls in Seoul, 1886-1906, File Microcopies of Records in the National Archives, No. 167, Roll 1. As historian Jongsuk Chay has noted, the US treasury department did not even begin publishing statistics on the Korean trade until 1892. Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 1-2.

⁵⁹ “Register of American Citizens resident in Seoul and Chemulpo Corea,” enclosure in Hugh A. Dinsmore to George L. Rives, 1 January 1888, Despatches from Consuls, National Archives.

⁶⁰ William Griffis, *Corea, The Hermit Nation* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1882). In fact, Griffis' *The Hermit Nation* would remain the most widely read English-language book on the subject well into the twentieth century. See Shannon McCune's discussion in “American Image of Korea in 1882: A Bibliographical Sketch,” in *US-Korean Relations, 1882-1892*, ed. Tae-Hwan Kwak et al. (Seoul: The Institute for Far Eastern Studies, Kyungnam University, 1982), 141-156. Other works available in the mid-1880s was Griffis' *Corea, Without and Within: Chapters on Korean History, Manners and Religion* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1885) and Percival Lowell's *Chosŏn: The Land of the Morning Calm, A Sketch of Korea* (Boston: Ticknor and Company, 1886). Prior to writing his *Sketch*, Lowell served as foreign secretary for the 1883 Korean embassy to the US, and had subsequently spent several months living in Seoul. See G. R. Agassiz, “Percival Lowell (1855-1916),” *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 52 (October 1917): 845-847.

Nonetheless, the arrival of the embassy from the so-named hermit kingdom caused a small sensation in the American press. Some observers commented on the singular appearance of “the strangers,”

their black hats resembling immense dinner-plates, on top of which were arrangements looking like large tin cups, made of some stiff black material, this head-gear being held in place by a black ribbon under the chin, and who were attired in fine quilted robes of pale-blue, yellow and salmon color, and whose feet were encased in richly embroidered shoes, somewhat on the style of Chinese sandals.⁶¹

Others seemed just as curious about the American who had come with them. “Dr. Allen is a native of Ohio,” explained one article, “and has been very successful in Corea. . . . He is physician at the palace and has a large and lucrative practice, which he has been induced to abandon for the present and accompany the Minister to this country.”⁶² “He is a tall, fine-looking man,” another reporter described, “with clear blue eyes, and wears a short brown beard.”⁶³ It was as if Horace had assumed an exotic air of his own.

As foreign secretary to the embassy, Horace deemed it one of his responsibilities to disseminate knowledge and favorable views of Korea, and he was determined to get an early start. His first obstacle, he found, was to clarify misconceptions about the embassy itself. “My object in writing to the *Examiner* that letter published yesterday,” Allen said in an interview shortly after landing at San Francisco, “was to correct the impression which appeared to have gone out, to the effect that Pak [Chǒng-yang] was not an Ambassador and Minister Plenipotentiary. . . . but merely a chargé d’affaires.”⁶⁴ To Horace the distinction was essential. While in Seoul he himself had witnessed the attempts by Yuan Shikai to obstruct the embassy, and he was anxious to publicize the fact that the Korean king, despite this opposition, had persisted in sending a high-ranking envoy to Washington. This signified not only an act of defiance against China, Horace proclaimed, but also the high esteem with which Americans were regarded on the peninsula. “The country to which Corea looks most for counsel and aid,” he said, “is the United States.”⁶⁵

In making his case for the symbolic importance of the embassy, Horace appealed, on the one hand, to the notion of America’s distinctiveness as a nation. Unlike the European powers, he told the *Washington Post*, the US had “no axe to grind” in Korea, none of the “selfish interest” that motivated the countries of Europe in their foreign policies. It was precisely because of the US’s special character, its propensity toward benevolence, that the “Coreans were disposed to be very friendly toward the American people”; and it should be for the same reason, Horace suggested, that Americans in turn ought to lend the peninsula their support.⁶⁶

Such expressions about the specialness of the United States, about its destiny to stand as a model to the world community, were of course not new. By Allen’s time, the

⁶¹ “The Corean Embassy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 2, 1888, 8.

⁶² “The Corean Embassy,” *The Washington Post*, January 19, 1888. See also “The Hermit Nation,” *The Washington Post*, January 14, 1888, 9.

⁶³ “The Corean Embassy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 2, 1888, 8.

⁶⁴ “The Hermit Nation,” *The Washington Post*, January 15, 1888, 9.

⁶⁵ “The Hermit Nation,” *The Washington Post*, January 15, 1888, 9. See also “The Corean Embassy,” *Harper’s Weekly*, January 28, 1888, 67.; Underwood, “From Corea,” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, January 21, 1888, 5.

⁶⁶ “The Corean Embassy,” *The Washington Post*, January 10, 1888, 3.

self-image of the nation as a paragon of liberty had become deeply ingrained in the popular imagination.⁶⁷ Hence the *New York Times* would observe in December 1887 that “it is fitting, at all events, that the first Korean embassy should come to America. . . . Finally Korea has . . . learned that America is the one great country that does not colonize or seek to annex foreign lands.”⁶⁸ “The aim of Korea,” a later editorial read, “is simply that of independence, with which Americans might naturally sympathize.”⁶⁹

Yet Horace once again invoked, on the other hand, a broader ideology of progress and civilization, one that allowed him to voice at once both exclusionist and inclusionary visions of the Far East. What differentiated Korea from its larger and more powerful neighbor, China, he claimed, was that the peninsular kingdom was “making rapid strides” toward the higher, more advanced civilization of the West. According to Allen, the Qing Empire had “become intensely jealous of the independent spirit of progress lately shown by the Korean people,” and for that reason “threw every obstacle in the way of their sending representatives abroad.”⁷⁰ Such a portrayal of the Chinese, as despotic and unprogressive, no doubt reflected some of Horace’s personal biases; but it seemed, too, an attempt to take advantage of the anti-Chinese agitation that he knew had become pervasive at home.⁷¹ Only several years earlier, Congress had passed a sweeping ban on immigration from China, and since then calls for further restrictive measures had only increased.⁷² Korea, Horace wanted to make clear, was not the same as China.

But there were other, more tangible reasons why Americans should take an interest in the kingdom, Allen insisted. Here, again, he would attempt to draw a distinction between Korea and its neighbors. “The doctor declared that Korea is a most beautiful country,” reported the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Its area amounted to approximately 100,000 square miles, and its population of twelve million comprised “an extremely polite race” who “treat foreigners with great kindness and consideration.”⁷³ “The spring and fall,” Horace described in a later, travelogue-esque article on Seoul, “are unsurpassed, and leave nothing to be desired in the way of climate, while the winters are so equable as not to seem very cold”; the summers “do not produce the muggy atmosphere of China or Japan.”⁷⁴ For those with a penchant for natural scenery, botany, or hunting, a trip to Seoul and its environs would not disappoint. Already Korea was “beginning to receive its share of tourist inspection by the ‘globe trotters’ on their way from Japan to China or vice versa,” Horace added, and as a new line of steamers had

⁶⁷ For example, see Akira Iriye, *From Nationalism to Internationalism: US Foreign Policy to 1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 11-21.

⁶⁸ “The Korean Embassy,” *New York Times*, December 31, 1887, 4.

⁶⁹ “Editorial,” *New York Times*, December 3, 1888, 4.

⁷⁰ “The Korean Embassy,” *The Washington Post*, January 10, 1888, 3. See also “An Interview with Dr. Allen,” n.d., Allen Papers.

⁷¹ See Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 April 1886, Horace N. Allen to Editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, 28 April 1886, Allen Papers.

⁷² For treatments of this subject, see for example Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 19-46; Daniel Rogers, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 29-66.

⁷³ “The Korean Embassy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 2, 1888, 8.

⁷⁴ Horace N. Allen, “The Ex-Hermits,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, September 30, 1888, 8. See also Horace N. Allen, “The Chosen Land,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 14, 1888, 8.

recently opened between Kobe and Tientsin, a stop on the peninsula was now more accessible than ever.

There would also be no lack of reward for those less piqued by foreign travel than by commercial investment. The field of mining could be especially propitious. “Gold, silver, copper, iron, coal and other minerals are abundant in Korea,” Horace averred, “so much so that she is called ‘the Treasure Land’ in the East, and Chinese and Japanese have long tried in vain to get at her gold deposits.”⁷⁵ These minerals had the potential to yield substantial wealth, and were presently being extracted by native workers but only with crude instruments. Should American capitalists want to pursue mining enterprises they would not have a hard time, since citizens of the United States, Horace reiterated, were looked upon with unique favor.⁷⁶

Of all the messages Allen wished to publicize, this latter one about the richness of Korea’s mineral supply and the possibility of other profitable investments was perhaps the most urgent. For aside from his own ideas about the necessity of attracting commercial interest in Korea, Horace had been assigned by Kojong a specific monetary task: obtaining a \$2 million loan from American financiers. If necessary, he was told, franchises on the peninsula, including mining, could be offered as security for the loan.⁷⁷ It was a daunting amount—and Allen, who was not shy about lauding his own knowledge and accomplishments, could boast of little expertise in the ways of the business sphere. As before, he would have to learn by trial and error.

* * *

The early summer of 1888 found Horace Allen and family finally settled into their new residence in Washington, DC. It was a presidential election year. Weeks earlier, the two major parties had descended onto the host cities of their national conventions—the Democrats in St. Louis, the Republicans farther north in Chicago—to nominate their respective candidates. Like many Gilded Age Americans, Horace held strong political affiliations. He was an Ohioan, and he was a staunch Republican. As such he shared a common lineage with three of the previous five presidents: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, and James A. Garfield, all defenders of the party of Lincoln, all originally from

⁷⁵ “A Memorandum on Korea,” Allen Papers. See also “From Korea,” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, January 21, 1888, 5.

⁷⁶ “The Korean Embassy,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 2, 1888, 8; “A Memorandum on Korea,” Allen Papers.

⁷⁷ Allen diary, 17 November 1887; “Statement on Mining Business,” enclosure in Horace N. Allen to Min Yōng-ik, 19 January 1889, Allen Papers. Allen Papers. By the late 1880s, the Korean government had begun to turn to foreign loans as one way of confronting its mounting economic difficulties. The influx of foreign merchants and imports, primarily from Japan and China; government spending on modern institutions and projects; and widespread corruption by Korean officials in the collection of public taxes had contributed to growing disruptions in Korea’s economy and to a depletion of the treasury. Borrowing had become almost inevitable. The easiest and most accessible creditor was China, and by the middle of the decade several small loans had already been taken out from the Qing government and from Chinese merchant companies. For larger loans, however, Kojong attempted to try out other foreign sources, including from the French, Germans, and Americans. See Larsen, *Tradition, Treaties, and Trade*, 145-157, Lew, “Yūan Shih-k’ai’s Residency,” 91-100; C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 67-69.

the Buckeye State. (Cleveland, the incumbent, was an easterner and a Democrat.) Later, after the 1888 contest had yielded its victor—yet another member, as it happened, of the Ohio presidential dynasty—Horace would attempt to use that lineage to his advantage.

By now almost half of Horace's one-year appointment as legation foreign secretary had elapsed, and so too had passed much of the initial excitement surrounding the Korean embassy's debut. The requisite diplomatic calls had been paid, the press interviews given, the invitations to social events answered. That last aspect of Washington culture was unfamiliar territory to the doctor, and one that he would not have especially looked forward to. "I am not a society man," Horace confessed in his diary just before leaving for the US. "I don't see how I shall ever manage my future."⁷⁸ He had little choice but to practice.

There was, for instance, the dinner hosted by Secretary of the Navy William Whitney, which Allen attended with the Korean legation members, and another put on by Charles Fairchild, secretary of the Treasury. There was also the reception at the White House, a "brilliant event," the *Washington Post* enthused, "given in honor of the Army and Navy" but whose "sensation of the evening was the grand entrance of the Korean legation."⁷⁹ Making an appearance at such affairs, as Horace discovered, was a regular part of being associated with the foreign diplomatic corps. So was subjection to outside scrutiny. "Anything 'new under the sun,'" the *New York Daily Tribune* quipped, "delights official society, and the Coreans are new, curious, and interesting."⁸⁰

Despite what had seemed to Horace an auspicious start for the embassy, however, it soon became apparent that public opinion was not as sanguine as he would have liked. In February 1888, the *Washington Post* had published an article questioning the fiscal credibility of the Korean government. "Corean first-mortgage bonds," the *Post* said, "are regarded as extremely wild-catty in conservative financial circles." A few weeks later, another piece derided the Korean envoys for their lack of a competent English translator.⁸¹ More negative press had followed in the spring. "There is a right royal row in the Corean Legation," the *New York Times* announced in April. "The members of the legation are homesick, and say that they will return to Corea.... They are tired of America and are through with the country."⁸² Both Allen and the Korean officials swiftly denied the rumor. The reason, as Horace explained to the papers, for the impending departure of Yi Wan-yong, first secretary of the legation, was because of illness; two other legation members were merely accompanying Secretary Yi back to Korea.⁸³

Had all been progressing smoothly with Horace's other major task—finding investors for the \$2 million loan—the doctor might not have been as bothered by the more trivial chatter emerging about the legation. But all, in that regard, was not well. At first the prospects for the loan had appeared promising. Early on, Admiral Robert W.

⁷⁸ Allen diary, 6 November 1887, Allen Papers. Allen made this observation during a brief trip to Hong Kong, which he took at Kojong's request while waiting for the Korean embassy to meet him in Japan.

⁷⁹ Allen diary, 28 January 1888, Allen Papers; "Society," *The Washington Post*, February 10, 1888, 4.

⁸⁰ "Gossip at the Capital," *New York Daily Tribune*, January 22, 1888, 13.

⁸¹ "An Unpromising Task," *The Washington Post*, February 11, 1888, 3; "Forcible, If Not Diplomatic," *The Washington Post*, March 19, 1888, 4.

⁸² "The Corean Legation," *New York Times*, April 24, 1888, 5.

⁸³ "The Homesick Coreans," *The Washington Post*, April 25, 1888, 1. See also "Coreans Going Home," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 25, 1888, 1; letter from Minister Pak Chōng-yang to Secretary of State Bayard, April 18, 1888, Notes from the Korean Legation, National Archives.

Shufeldt—the same admiral who concluded the Korea-US treaty back in 1882—had shown a keen interest in the franchise-for-loan proposal.⁸⁴ Then, as now, the possibility of furthering American commercial activity in Asia attracted Shufeldt's attention, and he tried to convince Union Ironworks of San Francisco, a machinery manufacturer where he had connections, to put up the \$2 million credit in exchange for gold mining privileges. To his disappointment, Union turned down the offer. Korea was too unstable politically, and Washington's attitude toward that country too disinterested, a company representative said, for the proposal to have sufficient appeal. "No American syndicate," Shufeldt was warned, "will make this loan."⁸⁵

Horace was disappointed, too—and perhaps doubly so because he liked the old admiral and knew that Kojong had at one time considered him for the Korean service.⁸⁶ Pursuing his next lead, Horace then traveled to Wilmington, Delaware, to meet with James H. Wilson, a retired army general and a close acquaintance of the US Minister to China, Charles H. Denby.⁸⁷ Some years earlier, Wilson had tried to get into railroad construction in China, and he now took the liberty of accompanying Horace to New York and introducing him to financial heads on Wall Street.⁸⁸ But when that visit also proved fruitless—"none of them," Horace regretted in private, "would even consider making a Korean loan"—he took another cross-country trip, bringing with him a vial sample of gold to show to two interested businessmen in California.⁸⁹

The two Californians, W. B. James and Alfred King, were at least serious in their intentions: an offer was made and ready to greet Horace when he arrived in Los Angeles in April 1888. But the conditions turned out to be parsimonious. James and King agreed to a gold mining franchise but not the loan; moreover, they would give only a 10% royalty on the mines, half of what was being proposed to the Korean government by other foreign investors. Horace was doubtless embarrassed by the offer, if not exasperated for having trekked such a long way for it. Later, when he submitted James and King's offer to Kojong, Horace attached a separate memorial in which he suggested that the Korean government itself consider opening and developing the mines. And if the king so desired, Horace would be willing to assist personally in the undertaking.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Allen diary, November 17, 1887, November 21, 1887, Allen Papers; Frederick C. Drake, *The Empire of the Seas: A Biography of Rear Admiral Robert Wilson Shufeldt, USN* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1984), 326-328. Another interested party was James Morse of the American Trading Company. Allen noted in his diary in December 1887 that Morse had "also written his people very strongly" about the loan, but nothing came of it—though Morse would become intimately involved in Korean gold mining in later years. Allen diary, 7 December 1887, Allen Papers.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Drake, *The Empire of the Seas*, 328. Allen diary, November 17, 1887, Allen Papers.

⁸⁶ Horace Allen, "Affairs in Korea," n.d., Allen Papers.

⁸⁷ See Tansill, "The Corea Question," 422-424, 433.

⁸⁸ Allen seems to have been introduced to Wilson through R. B. Hubbard, the US minister to Japan. See Allen diary, 7 December 1887, Allen Papers.

⁸⁹ Allen diary, 23 August 1888, Horace N. Allen to W. B. King, 18 March 1888, 24 August 1888, Allen Papers.

⁹⁰ Allen diary, 23 August 1888, "Statement of Mining Business," Allen Papers. Another possible investor was John P. Jones, a Republican senator from Nevada and a former gold miner. In May 1888, Allen told James Wilson that "Senator Jones of Nevada is now interested in Korea and may take hold of the mines. I sincerely hope he will.... Jones would have just the influence here at Washington that we would need and I am sure he would not regret if he should go into the thing properly." Nothing appears to have come of the contact. Horace N. Allen to James H. Wilson, 31 May 1888, Allen Papers.

The late spring of 1888 thus found Horace Allen struggling with his duties as legation foreign secretary. But he was not daunted—or for that matter, bored. Though his efforts over the past year had not exactly yielded the results hoped for, still he believed that given the circumstances the Korean legation was faring decently. Plus, Washington had started to provide for him a new kind of education. He was becoming, for instance, more familiar with the basics of the mining industry—its techniques, machinery, and outlays. And, notwithstanding his failure so far to obtain backing for the loan, Horace seemed to be growing more comfortable with the essentials of business negotiation. He was not a “society man” quite yet; but he was learning to build contacts with financial and political people alike. Not least, his proficiency in the Korean language was improving markedly. He learned more of the language during his time in Washington, Horace would later admit to F. F. Ellinwood, than during his first three years in Seoul.⁹¹

Then, all at once, everything started to unravel. In early June, as Horace continued to pursue other avenues for the loan, the *New York Herald* ran an article about a smuggling episode involving the Korean legation. According to the story, the embassy members had sneaked in several cases of cigars without paying the proper duties on them, and then proceeded to sell the merchandise in Philadelphia.⁹² The allegations, which Horace believed to be at least partially true, threw him into a fit of indignation. “We are now having a circus for a fact,” he lashed against the Korean officials. “I am so chagrined that I almost wish I had never come with these folks.”⁹³ In order to resolve the situation, as he explained in a letter to Hugh Dinsmore, he had had to lie to Secretary of the Treasury Fairchild and say that Minister Pak’s servant was to blame for transporting the goods. The whole incident made Allen feel “cussed.” His temper was unforgiving. “To have to perjure myself to cover the contemptible dishonesty of the King’s representative,” he said without a trace of irony, “. . . is too mean.”⁹⁴

But the worst was to come. Just after the smuggling story broke, reports began trickling in from abroad that riots had again erupted in Seoul, and that this time they involved the foreign residents—American missionaries among them. “Coreans Attempt to Murder Missionaries,” the *Los Angeles Times* announced on July 27, 1888.

The steamship City of Peking . . . brings advices of a serious emeute in Seoul, the capital of Corea. It is stated that some Chinese residents in that capital circulated a story among the ignorant populace, to the effect that American missionaries in the country had purchased a number of Corean children, and after killing them, had boiled them down for medicines. This aroused popular feeling, and caused the authorities to take steps to preserve the lives of the missionaries.⁹⁵

As accounts of the so-called “baby riots” spread across the dailies, Horace’s spirits sank. “It is very hard to be here now,” he noted glumly. “We [the Korean legation] don’t seem to have a friend.”⁹⁶

⁹¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 26 March 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹² See Horace N. Allen to W. W. Rockhill, 3 August 1888, Allen Papers.

⁹³ Horace N. Allen to Hugh A. Dinsmore, 21 June 1888, Allen Papers.

⁹⁴ Horace N. Allen to Hugh A. Dinsmore, 21 June 1888, Allen Papers.

⁹⁵ “Foreign Fields,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 27, 1888, 5.

⁹⁶ Horace N. Allen to William Dye, 29 August 1888, Allen Papers. For articles on the baby riots, see for example “Trouble in Seoul,” *New York Times*, July 27, 1888, 3; “Boiled Babies for Medicine,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 27, 1888, 1; “A Curious Superstition,” *New York Tribune*, July 30, 1888; “The Corean

Horace had in fact learned about the disturbance weeks before reports hit the American press. As far as he knew, however, the anti-foreign rumors that had surfaced and spread in Seoul earlier that summer—that foreigners were snatching Korean babies for various pernicious purposes—had “nothing to do with the missionaries.” By the time the baby riots made headlines in the US one month later, moreover, the Korean government had already restored order. “A cablegram this morning,” Horace had reassured the Presbyterian board in late June, “announces that all is quiet.”⁹⁷ Even the American missionaries themselves, while not as immune to the anti-foreign agitation as Horace presumed, insisted there had been a return to normalcy. “Threats were made to tear down our school building,” William Scranton admitted in a report to the Methodist board. But the excitement has “all vanished into thin air.... We ourselves were for a few days somewhat disturbed in mind, but it has all passed away.”⁹⁸ Horace likewise had thought the disturbance a “thin,” “little affair.” The momentum it was now gathering seemed to him gratuitous—and terribly damaging. When “the letter reports came in concerning the ‘baby eating’ and ‘man killing’ business Korea got a ‘black eye’ for sure,” he lamented. “I tried to show that it was...no worse than [the embassy’s] continual lynching but explanations are never as quickly read as are accusations.”⁹⁹

For the first time since coming to Washington, Horace felt that the public relations campaign he had so assiduously tried to cultivate was slipping out of his control. Meanwhile, he bristled with accusatory ruminations of his own. Though the foreign community in Seoul could only speculate about the origins of the baby-killing stories, it was obvious to Allen, as some of the incoming reports insinuated, that the Chinese were behind the disturbance, that they had conspired to spark popular unrest in the capital.¹⁰⁰ Now, as he saw it, Korea’s “black eye” would make it even more unlikely that Americans, whether globetrotters or financiers, would want anything to do with the peninsular kingdom.

One last hopeful prospect brought to a close what was an agonizing summer for the doctor. In September, after more failed pitches to investors (“no one,” he again rued, “cared to make a loan”), Horace managed to grab the interest of a syndicate composed of several New York capitalists. The group boasted familiar names: Morton Bliss & Co., Dodge Phelps & Co., and “three others just as good,” as Allen wrote excitedly to Minister

Riot,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 2, 1888, 1; “A New Use for Babies,” *The Washington Post*, August 9, 1888, 5.

⁹⁷ Horace N. Allen to Dr. Lowrie, 22 June 1888, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹⁸ William B. Scranton, “Hospital Report,” *Seventieth Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year 1888* (New York, 1889), 340-341. See also later accounts by Geroge Gilmore and Lillias Horton, which reveal at least momentary fears by the missionaries that they would be targeted. Neither Gilmore nor Horton was attacked or harmed during the riots, however, and like most of the other missionaries, both viewed the outbreak as an isolated and short-lived incident. George W. Gilmore, *Korea From its Capital: With a Chapter on Missions* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1892), 83-85; L. H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years Among the Top-Knots, or Life in Korea* (New York: American Tract Society, 1904), 15-18.

⁹⁹ Horace N. Allen to William Dye, 29 August 1888, Allen Papers. See also Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 29 August 1888, *Correspondence and Reports*; Horace N. Allen, *Things Korean*, 226-228.

¹⁰⁰ The disturbance was alarming enough that Minister Dinsmore and other foreign representatives called on their ships at Chemulpo to send guards to the capital. At the time, Dinsmore thought that the agitation was aimed “chiefly against the American Missionaries and the Japanese generally.” Hugh A. Dinsmore to Thomas F. Bayard, 25 June 1888, 1 July 1888, *KAR II*, 211-215.

Dinsmore.¹⁰¹ In return for a gold mining concession, the syndicate tentatively agreed to a 33⅓% royalty and to subscribe \$10,000 toward the expenses of a mining expert, who was to be selected and sent to Korea by the syndicate itself. There was one glaring caveat. Only after the expert went to Korea and confirmed the wealth of the mines would the loan be put on the table. It was not the terms Horace had been instructed to obtain, but he felt it was by far the best offer he had encountered to date. He drew up a proposal and forwarded it to Seoul.

The scheme crumbled almost instantly. “[The] King,” Allen scratched in his diary in early November 1888, “declines to grant franchise.”¹⁰² Instead, Horace was wired a sum of money and given orders to personally search out and hire a mining expert on behalf of the Korean government. Once more he scurried around for an interested party. After making excursions to New York and St. Louis and having “great trouble in securing a good man,” as he confessed privately, he finally settled on an engineer by the name of Willard Ide Pierce.¹⁰³ Pierce would be on his way to Korea before the year’s end.

* * *

That winter, Horace Allen sat down and wrote to his old acquaintance Min Yǒng-ik. The queen’s nephew had been a key supporter of Kojong’s decision to send a permanent embassy to the US, and Allen, whose association with Min was one relationship that had not gone awry over the years, wished to apprise him of the latest developments in Washington. He was also, clearly, in the mood to gripe. The abortive agreement with the New York syndicate still fresh in his mind, Horace complained to Min that a prime opportunity had been lost, that it had been impossible to negotiate the multimillion dollar loan until “it was shown that the Korean government was responsible and that the mines were rich.”¹⁰⁴ Neither was he happy about the spate of personnel changes that had affected the legation as of late. The return to Korea of several more embassy members in mid-November, including Minister Pak Chǒng-yang, who took a leave of absence, was making “people laugh at us,” Horace grouched. Worse, it had provided additional fodder for “our enemies.” “I was sorry to have [Minister Pak] go,” he told Min, “because the Chinese said he would do so, and as soon as he left they published in the newspapers that he had been sent home by the Chinese Minister.”¹⁰⁵

At least one recent event seemed to go Horace’s way: the Republican victory in the presidential elections. Whatever his views of the great American controversy of the day—the tariff question—Horace was not quite ready to return to Korea, and he hoped to convince Min Yǒng-ik that he should be allowed to remain with the embassy longer. As he wrote to Min that December, “I am happy to say that I know the new President of the United States and his family.... My friends are strong republicans, so I can be of much help to you here during the next administration.”¹⁰⁶ Just how or in what capacity he

¹⁰¹ Horace N. Allen to Hugh A. Dinsmore, 22 September 1888, Allen Papers.

¹⁰² Allen diary, 1 November 1888, Allen Papers.

¹⁰³ Allen diary, 1 November 1888, Allen Papers.

¹⁰⁴ “Statement on Mining Business,” Allen Papers.

¹⁰⁵ Horace N. Allen to Min Yǒng-ik, 10 December 1888, Allen Papers.

¹⁰⁶ Horace N. Allen to Min Yǒng-ik, 10 December 1888, Allen Papers.

“knew” the incoming president and fellow Ohioan, Benjamin Harrison, Horace neglected to say, though given his knack for occasional embellishment it was possible he had taken liberties with the claim. But it was true enough that among his circle of associates Horace could now count a handful of Republican figures—and that if circumstances demanded, he would be willing to use those connections to his advantage.

Horace had other reasons, however, for wanting to prolong his stay. Several months earlier, he had received news that some of the American missionaries in Seoul had sent an appeal to Josiah Strong, secretary of the Evangelical Alliance and one of the most militant voices of the American mission movement, in which they complained about the restrictions on their proselytizing activities.¹⁰⁷ Horace was appalled. In a lengthy correspondence to Strong, he argued that the American agents in Korea, through their “ill-guided zeal,” were the ones endangering the missionary endeavor there.¹⁰⁸ “You may think me too strong, perhaps unwise in my belief,” he pleaded in separate letter to the Presbyterian board. “Yet I feel convinced that all will be well before long if only our people will be content with the abundant . . . opportunities they already have.”¹⁰⁹ To Minister Dinsmore, Allen confessed that he was “not at all anxious to get back” to Seoul, not when the missionaries were acting so imprudently, not when they were bent on following a course of “rashness.”¹¹⁰ It would be like walking into the same maelstrom he had come thousands of miles away to escape.

There was one other avenue that Horace could have taken back to the peninsula: mining. King Kojong, it seemed, had decided to take up Allen’s previous offer of assisting with the development of Korea’s mineral industry, and now invited him to spearhead the project. Horace agreed at first, then abruptly changed his mind.¹¹¹ In January 1889 he wrote again to Min Yǒng-ik, insisting that it was imperative he remain and help the Korean legation in Washington for a little while longer. In any case, Horace said, now that Willard Ide Pierce was on his way to Korea, another mining adviser would be extraneous.¹¹² Perhaps the thought of committing to this new line of work had caused for Horace some last minute trepidation. Perhaps, too, he had begun to entertain a different scenario altogether.¹¹³

In the spring that year, Horace informed the Presbyterian mission board that he was officially throwing his hat into the contest for US minister and consul general to Korea. In Washington, the recent changeover to Harrison’s administration had brought with it a fresh slew of political appointments. But the nominee for the position in Seoul, William O. Bradley—“the silver-tongued orator of Kentucky,” as the *Washington Post* described him—had declined the appointment. (“No Kentuckian,” another newspaper

¹⁰⁷ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 30 August 1888, Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, May 21 1888; Lillias Horton to F. F. Ellinwood, 13 August 1888, *Correspondence and Reports*. This had to do specifically with the injunction the Korean government issued in mid-1888 against Christian teaching. See the discussion in the following chapter.

¹⁰⁸ Horace N. Allen to Josiah Strong, 30 August 1888, Allen Papers.

¹⁰⁹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 30 August 1888, Allen Papers.

¹¹⁰ Horace N. Allen to Hugh Dinsmore, September 1888, Allen Papers.

¹¹¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 16 November 1888, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹¹² Horace N. Allen to Min Yǒng-ik, 19 January 1889, Allen Papers.

¹¹³ Allen later explained to Ellinwood that he had refused the mining project “for the single reason that I would be unable to do the work justice and my failure would injure me, as well as [Korea].” Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 24 September 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

sneered, “will ever consent to be exiled to a ‘hermit island.’”) ¹¹⁴ Horace’s own decision to go for the vacancy, as he explained to the mission board, had originated largely from outside persuasion—from the prodding of friends, as well as from members of the Korean legation who “have demanded that I use every effort to secure” the office. ¹¹⁵ But it was not as if he disagreed with the suggestions, either. For when it came down to it, Horace believed he was the most qualified person for the job. ¹¹⁶

The claim did have some merit. Within the span of a few years the doctor had compiled an impressive, if unusual, resume in his overseas experience. And though his time in Washington had produced mixed results, there was no denying that he had been of valuable assistance to the Korean legation there. Besides, none of the apparent shortcomings of his assignment—the loan failure, the unflattering media portrayals, the lackadaisical interest of the business sector—none of it could properly be labeled his fault. Or so he believed. Indeed if anything, Horace’s tenure as embassy foreign secretary had not only raised his confidence in his ability to navigate the world of diplomacy, but had also convinced him all the more of his significance to the Koreans. “This [US] Government,” he said matter-of-factly to the mission board, “could pay no greater compliment to Korea than in making me minister, and while I am young...I would not feel out of place in trying it alone.” ¹¹⁷

Over the ensuing months Horace busied himself with grooming his application. Much of his energies fell on the task of acquiring personal endorsements, and in short order he managed to pull together a respectable dossier, including recommendations by F. F. Ellinwood, Yi Ha-yōng (chargé d’affaires of the Korean legation), and a bevy of politicians and judges from his home state of Ohio. Most conspicuous was the endorsement by former president Rutherford B. Hayes—with whom Horace, this time, could claim a concrete connection. “In asking for your endorsement,” he entreated in a letter to Hayes, “I will state that I am a native of Delaware, Ohio, a graduate of the College at that place—as is also my wife who [is]...I believe, distantly related to yourself.” ¹¹⁸

All in all he had amassed, he was certain, “by far the greatest support” of any of the possible candidates. ¹¹⁹ Yet the summer of 1889 languished in silence regarding his application. Once again, Allen’s hopes ebbed into disillusionment. As he had learned with the press, so he was seeing first hand that politics could be an unpredictable creature. “[My] endorsements,” he recalled many years later, “were filed at [the] State Dept. with no one to give them personal attention.” ¹²⁰ By autumn, Horace had all but given up, candidly acknowledging to Ellinwood that he “was not very sanguine” about the nomination. In case the minister position did not come through would it be possible,

¹¹⁴ “He Refused an Office,” *Washington Post*, April 4, 1889, 2; *Atchison Daily Champion*, April 18, 1889, 6.

¹¹⁵ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 March 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹¹⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 13 April 1889, 23 April 1889, 24 April 1889, Allen Papers.

¹¹⁷ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 March 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹¹⁸ Horace N. Allen to Rutherford B. Hayes, 11 September 1889, Allen Papers. See also J. B. Foraker and John Sherman to Benjamin Harrison, 18 September 1889, and listing of Allen’s endorsements, Allen Papers.

¹¹⁹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood 24 September 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹²⁰ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 24 September 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*. Introductory notes to letter group 6, “First application for post of U.S. Minister,” Allen Papers.

he now asked, to be sent back to Korea as a missionary physician? Two weeks later, as Horace continued wringing his hands, a telegram arrived announcing his reappointment by the mission board. He quickly accepted, but on one condition: he refused to be sent again to the capital city. “I won’t go to Seoul for two reasons,” he explained. “First—I think the good people there would get along better without me. Secondly—I don’t wish to be at the King’s beck and call, or to have anything to do with politics.”¹²¹

In light of what was to become his future, decade-and-a-half career in the diplomatic arena, Horace’s decision to reenter the mission field might have seemed to later generations a disingenuous move, a “stopgap affair,” as one historian would put it.¹²² Yet at the time Horace viewed it as marking the end of his forays into non-mission matters. An unfettered missionary life, free from outside obligations and expectations, was what he now desired. “When I first went to Korea I had to practice some deception,” he explained to John Gillespie, another senior member of the Presbyterian board. “This time,” Horace declared, “it is different.”¹²³

As the Allen family readied for their return voyage, Horace set his mind on the southeastern port of Pusan. As yet all the American missionaries in Korea were still living inside Seoul, and of the three other treaty ports open to foreign residence—Pusan in the south, Wŏnsan to the east, and Chemulpo on the western coast—the first seemed to Horace the most favorable location to start a new mission station. He knew little about the city and its surroundings, having stopped at the port only briefly in the past. But he was hopeful for a fresh beginning nevertheless. As he said confidently to Ellinwood, “I am sure I would succeed there.”¹²⁴

It was a refrain that Ellinwood had heard more than once before. First Shanghai, then Seoul, then Washington, and now Pusan—Horace may have proved too finicky for many mission board leaders. And yet the good reverend had not lost faith in the doctor. Nor would he cast Horace aside even after it became clear, in the coming months, that Horace’s renewed pledge to the missionary vocation appeared to be fast dissolving.

¹²¹ Horace N. Allen to John Gillespie, 7 October 1889, Allen Papers.

¹²² Fred Harvey Harrington, *God, Mammon, and the Japanese: Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American Relations, 1884-1905* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1944), 85.

¹²³ Horace N. Allen to John Gillespie, 7 October 1889, Allen Papers. Also Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 7 July 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

¹²⁴ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 24 September 1889, Allen Papers.

Chapter Five

Return

Horace Allen returned to Korea in late 1889 resolved to give his religious calling another chance. The previous two years in Washington, DC, though they had further convinced the doctor of his capability of succeeding in the political realm, had also ultimately led him back to the missionary enterprise. It was his second choice, as he freely admitted to F. F. Ellinwood, the Presbyterian mission board secretary.¹ Had he been nominated for the position of US minister resident and consul general to Korea, Horace would have put aside, perhaps once and for all, the mantle of the foreign mission agent. But by now he was used to adjusting to unforeseen circumstances. If some took this as capriciousness, Allen might have retorted that he was merely following the biblical injunction often told to missionaries on the field: “be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.”²

For to Horace there was no hypocrisy in having re-embraced a missionary appointment after failing to receive the diplomatic one. In truth he may not have been as reconciled with the notion of lifelong service as some of his missionary compatriots (and voluntary attrition affected mission fields everywhere); but neither did he think a change in vocation meant abandoning his religious convictions—or, for that matter, skirting the plans of Providence. God, as Allen saw it, had a way of working unpredictably, and there was no shame in staying alert to new opportunities, especially when older ones seemed, for one reason or another, unpalatable.

Above all, Horace desired—and needed—to feel useful. His abortive campaign for US minister no doubt dealt a blow to his pride, maybe even produced a tinge of nostalgia for his “old work.”³ But whatever the case he was only at the beginning of his career, as he reminded Ellinwood, and he was confident he had something left to contribute if sent back to the peninsular kingdom. Whether in the service of the State or the Church, Allen believed he could find his place in Korea.

As he had predicted, his absence from Seoul seemed to have done some good for the Presbyterian mission. Just before Horace left for Washington in the fall of 1887, his colleagues Horace Underwood and John Heron announced they were rescinding their resignations after all (although this decision, Underwood insisted, had nothing to do with Allen’s departure).⁴ In fact much would change while Allen was away. The Presbyterians would welcome the arrival of a handful of missionary “reinforcements,” doubling their

¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 24 September 1889, Presbyterian Church in the USA., Board of Foreign Missions, *Correspondence and Reports, 1833-1811, Korea* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1996), microfilm.

² From Matthew 10:16, New International Version. Ellinwood used this verse several times in his instructions. See for example Ellinwood to Allen, 29 August 1888, *Correspondence and Reports*.

³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 24 September 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁴ John W. Heron to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 September 1887, *Correspondence and Reports*; Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 30 September 1887, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers: The First American Missionary to Korea and the Founder of Yonsei University*, vol. 1, 1885-1892, transcribed by Sung-Deuk Oak (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2005), 434.

roster to nine. Church services and bible classes would be started for native seekers. And by early 1890, the number of Korean converts baptized by the Presbyterian mission would exceed more than one hundred, a five-fold increase within two years.⁵ The Methodists saw similar organizational growth. They added seven more missionaries, established a chapel with an average attendance of over fifty Koreans, and licensed their first local preachers.⁶ By the time of Horace Allen's return, too, Americans were no longer the only Protestant missionaries living on the peninsula. Several Australians and Canadians had joined the enterprise. Others were soon to follow.⁷

Yet if Horace's leave had allowed a degree of quiet to rest on the Presbyterian station in Seoul, it proved no panacea for its difficulties. The quandary that continued to vex the Presbyterian and Methodist camps alike was the question of mission methods, especially in regard to evangelism. Though the Korean government continued to sanction the missionaries' educational and medical initiatives, the "Jesus doctrine" remained an outlawed teaching, and among the missionaries there persisted an ongoing debate about how far, and how overtly, proselytizing efforts should be taken.

The issue had erupted in the summer and fall of 1888, after Korean authorities announced that Americans must cease all religious propagandizing.⁸ "We will continue our teaching quietly," Horace Underwood vowed, "...and baptize all fit applicants."⁹ Others, however, began calling for retrenchment. "I feel that it is not wisest to push Xtian work right now," John Heron told the Presbyterian board early the following year. "The Koreans can carry it...and do it in an unobtrusive way."¹⁰ The Methodist Rev. Franklin Ohlinger put the point more bluntly. "We have made a grievous mistake in the exuberance of our hopefulness," he said in a confidential report home. "Our presence in such numbers is in defiance of the law—of the king of the land—and, it seems, God does not prosper us."¹¹

⁵ The new arrivals were Lillias Horton, Mary Hayden, Charles Powers, Daniel Gifford, and the siblings William and Sarah Gardner. By the end of 1889, Charles Powers had been recalled by the board, and the Gardners had voluntarily resigned from the Korea mission. See Charles W. Power to F. F. Ellinwood, 28 January 1889, 11 May 1889, F. F. Ellinwood to Charles W. Power, 18 July 1889, F. F. Ellinwood to William Gardner, 2 March 1889, William Gardner to F. F. Ellinwood, 11 March 1889, 30 March 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*. For statistics on the Presbyterian mission, see Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 7 January 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁶ *Seventieth-First Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Year 1889* (New York, 1890), 290-294; Henry G. Appenzeller to A. B. Leonard, 31 March 1890, Missionary Files (Microfilm Edition), United Methodist Church Archives—GCAH, Madison, New Jersey.

⁷ On the arrival of new missions, see L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910* (Pyeng Yang: Union Christian College Press, 1929), 173-187.

⁸ See Hugh A. Dinsmore to Thomas F. Bayard, 21 April 1888, 28 April 1888, in *Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States*, vol. 2, *The Period of Growing Influence*, ed. Spencer J. Palmer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 205-206, 217, 221-222 (hereafter cited as *KAR II*), 206-208; Thomas F. Bayard to Hugh A. Dinsmore, 15 June 1888, Instructions, National Archives and Records Administration, San Bruno (hereafter cited as NARA SB). In response to the Korean government's injunction, Dinsmore refused to issue to American missionaries passports for travel into the interior unless they promised not to engage in preaching or baptizing. For missionary reactions, see for example Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 21 May 1888, Lillias Horton to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 March 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*; Henry Appenzeller to J. M. Reid, 21 May 1888, Frank Ohlinger to A. B. Leonard, 10 April 1889, GCAH.

⁹ Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 21 May 1888, *Underwood Papers*, 463.

¹⁰ John W. Heron to F. F. Ellinwood, 25 March 1889, *Correspondence and Files*.

¹¹ Franklin Ohlinger to A. B. Leonard, 1889, GCAH Correspondence Files.

Horace would have disagreed with Ohlinger that evangelism necessarily took priority over other departments of mission work. (“Our restrictions,” Ohlinger asserted, “are like a leprosy upon all our plans and efforts.”)¹² But like the Methodist reverend, Allen denied that openly contravening the anti-Christianity law was the solution, either. He had long held that proselytizing activity, if pursued at all, must be accompanied by the utmost caution, and he lay the blame for the 1888 injunction on the missionaries themselves, excoriating them for “having voluntarily, unnecessarily, and willfully blocked” their own progress “by rashness.”¹³ His ire was aimed especially at Underwood and the Methodist Henry Appenzeller. The two preachers were in the middle of what was supposed to be a joint, three-month-long itinerating trip to the north when the Korean government issued its 1888 prohibition. “Underwood and Appenzeller,” Allen had bristled in Washington when he heard the news, “are about the biggest fools that ever attempted to teach men wisdom.”¹⁴

Horace himself, of course, hoped to avoid such controversies by keeping away from Seoul altogether. The southern treaty port of Pusan, where he asked to be reassigned, was a good three hundred miles overland from Presbyterian headquarters in Seoul.¹⁵ And though still bound by the Presbyterian mission’s decisions and rules, at least he could observe them from a distance, and without entangling himself in the kinds of policy and personal quarrels that had so chagrined him in prior years. At Pusan, he could pursue his work in peace.

* * *

Horace landed at Pusan in the final autumn days of 1889, just as the winter’s chill was beginning to creep in on the peninsula. He had come by himself, leaving Fannie and the boys in Japan while he went ahead and surveyed the scene. Nagasaki to Pusan took only a day by steamer, and once boarding arrangements were made, he could call for the rest of the family to join him. His existing journal contains no immediate impressions of his arrival. But just as he did five years earlier, when he had briefly stopped in Pusan during his very first trip to Korea, Horace would have noticed at once the Japanese settlement that abutted the harbor’s western shoreline. This “wholly Japanese town,” as he then called it, had since grown even larger; its population now numbered some four thousand and made up almost the entirety of foreigners residing at the port.¹⁶ “It is not

¹² Franklin Ohlinger to Brother (mission board), 29 January 1889, GCAH.

¹³ Horace N. Allen to Hugh A. Dinsmore, 21 September 1888, Horace N. Allen Papers, The New York Public Library. Historian George Paik notes that though the injunction was mainly aimed at Catholic missionaries, who had become involved in a property dispute with the Korean government, “there was also reason to suspect a purpose of checking the work of Protestants.” See Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, 145-147.

¹⁴ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 29 August 1888, Allen Papers.

¹⁵ George Heber Jones, “Pioneering in Korea,” *Gospel in All Lands* 13 (November 1889): 526-527.

¹⁶ For a detailed treatment of the Japanese concession, see Hong Soon Kwon, “Formation of the Modern City of Busan: Focusing on the Space and Culture of the Japanese Settlement in Busan Before 1910,” *Korea Journal* 48 (autumn 2008): 41-76. For a listing of foreigners in Korea by country, see “List of Foreign Residents,” enclosure in Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 4 January 1892, Despatches From United States Ministers to Korea, National Archives and Records Administration, San Bruno (hereafter cited as NARA SB).

Korea but Japan which meets one on anchoring,” Isabella Bird Bishop, the famed British traveler, quipped after visiting there in the mid-1890s. As Bishop would observe, the actual Korean town lay several miles away, at the end of a “narrow up-and-down path” that wound northward along the hillside, and rose “at some height above the sea.”¹⁷

By treaty privilege, Horace could in theory rent or purchase property at any of Korea’s open ports, a stipulation he had taken full advantage of during his earliest days in Seoul.¹⁸ Back then, he had had the good fortune of receiving help from then-US Minister Lucius Foote, who happened to have available a parcel of land next to the American legation, and who was more than happy to sell it to the doctor. No such luck was to be found in Pusan. There was no American official stationed there, no obvious place to go for counsel or a roof.¹⁹ When the Presbyterian missionary William Baird traveled to the port several years later, he would complain about the difficulty of finding even temporary board. “The Japanese do not welcome the foreigner so I could not get a room at their hotels,” Baird said. “Most of the Korean inns, also either through suspicion or fear, are closed against us. At a sailor’s inn I could have gotten a room too small for me to stand erect, and into which the waves dashed in times of storm.”²⁰

What Horace’s precise plans were for securing quarters at Pusan is unclear. What was plain, however, was that he left the port in a flash. By mid-December 1889 he had made his way back up to Seoul, where he hastily mailed off an explanatory note to the mission board. He had been unable to find suitable accommodations at Pusan, Horace explained, and in general was “much depressed with the place.” Might the board consider one more alteration in his plans? Would it allow him to locate and settle in Chemulpo instead, where the atmosphere, he now averred, appeared “brisk and lively”?²¹

If not livelier, Chemulpo was certainly more familiar. Horace had traversed the short distance between Seoul and the western seaport, now the kingdom’s busiest port for foreign commerce, numerous times before. Chemulpo was where many of the foreign merchant agencies had opened shop, where the foreign powers anchored their gunboats,

¹⁷ Isabella Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbours: A Narrative of Travel, with an Account of the Recent Vicissitudes and present position of the Country*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1898), 16-20.

¹⁸ The 1882 US-Korea treaty stated that US citizens “shall be permitted to reside at such [open] ports within the limits of the concessions, and to lease buildings of land or construct residences or warehouses therein.” See Article IV of the treaty, in *Korean Treaties*, comp. Henry Chung (New York: H. S. Nichols, Inc., 1919), 197. Later treaties between Korea and other countries specified concession limits first at 10 *li* (approximately 3.3 miles) then subsequently at greater distances. By the most-favored-nation clause, Americans could claim these rights as well, though the property disputes that would emerge in the mid-1890s had more to do with American missionaries attempting to purchase property indirectly at non-treaty port cities. For a discussion of missionaries and extraterritoriality, see Dae Young Ryu, “Treaties, Extraterritorial Rights, and American Protestant Missions in Late Joseon Korea,” *Korea Journal* 43 (spring 2003): 184-203. On the foreign settlements in Korea, see Harold J. Noble, “The Former Foreign Settlements in Korea,” *The American Journal of International Law* 23 (October 1929): 766-782.

¹⁹ Regarding missionary difficulties with obtaining property in Pusan, see Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 6 March 1891, 27 March 1891, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 631-632; William M. Baird to F. F. Ellinwood, 27 March 1891, *Correspondence and Reports*. The missionaries would eventually appeal to Minister Augustine Heard, who helped them obtain property between the Japanese settlement and the Korean town. See “Korea,” *The Fifty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (New York: Mission House, 1892), 175.

²⁰ William M. Baird to F. F. Ellinwood, 6 October 1891, *Correspondence and Reports*.

²¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 13 December 1889, also “Minutes of Council of Mission held January 10, 1890,” *Correspondence and Reports*.

where travelers, traders, diplomats, and missionaries disembarked before proceeding inland to Seoul. Europeans and Americans still made up a tiny contingent among the non-Korean population there (by 1889 no more than thirty among two thousand, with the Japanese the largest group, followed by the Chinese). But here were things Horace would not have been able to find in Pusan: a designated General Settlement for foreigners, for instance, readier access to Western goods, and at least one friend, the American trader Walter Townsend.

Still, for Horace it was a compromise. He had not changed his mind about steering clear of Seoul, and now that Pusan was also out of the question (Wönsan, the treaty port on the northeastern coast, he “didn’t think much of”) Allen saw little choice but to buckle down at Chemulpo.²² “I have brought my family here today and we are ready for business,” he reported to the board in February 1890. “Mrs. Allen is glad to be back in old Chosen, though we have been a long time getting here.”²³

As a missionary Horace had always valued the notion of a fiscally “self-supporting” work, and here also he began laying plans with that goal in mind. His strategy was simple: first, construct a house, at the board’s expense, capacious enough to include rooms for a dispensary and clinic; start on house-to-house calls in the meantime; and then eventually build toward a solvent medical practice. In a Presbyterian mission meeting held in Seoul the previous month, he had received the sanction of his colleagues to proceed to Chemulpo until further instructions from home arrived, as only the mission board could officially approve the establishment of a new station.²⁴

Back at headquarters in New York, the board digested Horace’s plan with some doubt. “We realize the urgency on your part of having something decided as to your future, and you ought to have a house,” Secretary Ellinwood responded, “but you will see...there is a good deal of uncertainty hanging over the case.”

In the first place, we know almost nothing about Chemulpho. There is a fast growing foreign population, but that population is generally not favorable to the highest spiritual success of missions, and open ports are not the most desirable if they are so active and commercial as Chemulpho.²⁵

Nor was the time right for new funding requests. The mission board was going through the annual “hard squeeze” of balancing its books, making it leery of all but the “most necessary financial schemes.” This was in no way a referendum on Allen’s actions, Ellinwood added soothingly. But for the time being, Horace should merely rent a room at the port, make himself as comfortable as he could, and try to begin medical work.²⁶

One other factor had bothered the board. The previous December, after storming out of Pusan, Horace had mentioned in a letter to the board that there might be a chance of his entering the diplomatic service after all. Not as minister to Korea, for he had accepted the futility of that cause, but as the minister’s assistant, the secretary of the US legation in Seoul. The idea, he said, was not his own. “When I left Washington I gave up all political aspirations,” he insisted. But while stopping briefly in Seoul that December,

²² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 26 March 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

²³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 2 February 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

²⁴ “Minutes of Council of Mission held January 10, 1890,” *Correspondence and Reports*. “Manual of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.,” 1889.

²⁵ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 9 May 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

²⁶ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 18 February 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

Horace had been personally asked by King Kojong whether he would consider taking the post. Taken by surprise by the king's inquiry, Allen's first reaction was to agree to the royal request. Hence Horace had written to the mission board in mid-December that in case Washington happened to give him the secretarial appointment, "I will doubtless accept it."²⁷

As the winter of 1889 passed into spring, doubts did, however, begin to seep in. Even before hearing back from the board (a full exchange of letters still took upward of several months), Horace was backpedaling furiously. "As for the secretaryship I am very sorry I consented to do anything in the matter," he confessed in late March 1890. "I don't want it, and didn't at the time, but it is difficult to refuse a King to his face." Mission work was to be Allen's sole focus now. His two years away in the US had rejuvenated him physically and spiritually. Even his eyesight had noticeably improved. "Therefore I have been devoting all my spare time to brushing up professionally," he declared, "with the result of kindling my enthusiasm to a higher pitch than ever before."²⁸

The ardor soon cooled. Later that spring, Horace ran into a brood of troubles, not least of which was the resurfacing of his erstwhile antagonism with co-missionary John Heron. "He has pretty much succeeded in prejudicing the new comers against me and making my entrance to my old work to be a [last] resort," Allen grouched.²⁹ And it was not only Heron. Horace heard that Owen Denny, an American working in the Korean service, was also spreading unkind words, "saying very mean things of me."³⁰ The mission board might have wondered whether the doctor was being too sensitive, if not for a disparaging letter it would receive straight from the pen of Mrs. Denny. It was "full of the most violent attacks upon you," Allen was later informed.³¹

²⁷ Horace N. Allen to F.F. Ellinwood, 15 December 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

²⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 26 March 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

²⁹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 April 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

³⁰ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 26 March 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*. Owen N. Denny was a former US consular employee at Tientsin and Shanghai (1877-1883), and along with the American Henry F. Merrill, had entered the Korean service in the mid-1880s following the dismissal of P. G. von Möllendorff. Merrill was selected to be commissioner of Korean customs, while Denny was to serve as adviser to the Korean government. Although both Americans had been recommended by Li Hongzhang, Denny would eventually become a critic of China's policy in Korea, which he made public in an 1888 pamphlet, *China and Korea*. Merrill, for the most part, would support Qing interests during his service in the Korean customs. See Robert R. Swartout, Jr., *Mandarins, Gunboats, and Power Politics: Owen Nickerson Denny and the International Rivalries in Korea* (Honolulu: Asian Studies Program, The University Press of Hawaii, 1980); Young I. Lew, "American Advisers in Korea," in *The United States and Korea: American-Korean Relations, 1866-1976* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: The Center for Korean Studies, Western Michigan University, 1979), 71-72. A copy of *China and Korea* is included in Appendix B, *An American Adviser in Late Yi Korea: The Letters of Owen Nickerson Denny*, ed. Robert R. Swartout, Jr. (University, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1984), 139-161.

³¹ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 9 May 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*. Initially Allen and Denny seem to have been friends, but by late 1889 it was clear that the two were no longer getting along. Denny's criticism of Allen would include a scathing assessment of Allen's job as Korean legation secretary: "I am not at all surprised at Allen's withdrawal from the Legation and the service of the Korean government after the miserable mess he made in his efforts at diplomacy & business. He goes to Fusan [Pusan] as a missionary, a calling he is also entirely unfit for. As for being appointed U.S. Minister here, he never had any more show than the man in the moon..." Owen N. Denny to Everett Frazar, 23 November 1889, in *An American Adviser in Late Yi Korea: The Letters of Owen Nickerson Denny*, ed. Robert R. Swartout, Jr. (University, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1984), 99.

But other exasperations were also adding to Horace's incertitude. For one, his medical practice at Chemulpo was not attracting as large a clientele as he had wished. He blamed this partly on supply. There were now more doctors in the area practicing Western medicine than had been the case in 1884, when Horace stood virtually alone.³² What work he now did manage to secure, moreover, seemed to be floundering. One of his Korean patients, a "prominent man," had recently died following an unsuccessful amputation. And there were other perplexing, ill-fated cases too. "I have no reputation any more," Horace lamented that June. "The Koreans even seem to have turned against me."³³

If at one time Horace Allen had experienced the thrill of heroism, of having saved none other than the life of a royal Korean relative, he now sank to the nadir of insignificance. Not only did he suspect that he was being made a pariah—again—in the eyes of the missionaries, but it also seemed that his medical skills were neither being sought nor appreciated. He had failed, too, to sway the board's impressions of the western seaport. "I doubt whether we shall ever want to locate in Chemulpho," Ellinwood reiterated in another letter. "A port like that, fully exposed to European influence, is anything but a desirable mission field."³⁴ The one other alternative Horace contemplated was opening a mission station in Pyŏngyang, the kingdom's second largest city. But that possibility lay only in the indistinct future, as the northern metropolis, despite rumors of its imminent opening, was not officially a treaty port.³⁵

So that by the early summer of 1890, Horace felt utterly deflated, "destined to delays and discouragements." Indeed in the entire arc of his past and what was to be his future involvement in Korea, this was perhaps his lowest point, the single moment when he acknowledged almost total defeat. "I seem to be a failure this time," he noted ruefully. "I guess I had better pull out and go home."³⁶ Even for the occasional crank like Allen, such an admission must have been agonizing to admit.

Yet marvelous timing had rescued Horace before, and so it was to offer an out once again. That July, the State Department cabled the US legation in Seoul with the notice that Doctor Allen had been selected as legation secretary. The telegram came some six months after King Kojong had personally lobbied for Allen. As US Minister Hugh Dinsmore reported to Washington back in January 1890, an officer of the king had visited the American legation no fewer than three times about the matter. "He came once again," Dinsmore noted of the third visit, "saying that the King had directed him to request of me that I would send a message by wire to the Department, stating for him [the king] that he would be gratified if Dr. Allen would be appointed. . . that he had great confidence in Dr. Allen's integrity and intelligence. . . that he believed the interests of both countries would

³² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 April 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

³³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 7 July 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

³⁴ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 9 May 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

³⁵ Allen likely considered Pyŏng Yang because he expected its imminent opening. By the mid-1890s, several American missionaries would take up residence there, even though it did not officially become an open port until 1899. On early missionary visits, see for example Henry Appenzeller's travel journal, 23 April 1887, 28 April 1887, 1 May 1887, H. G. Appenzeller Papers, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 3, Notebook 1, The Burke Library Archives (Columbia University Libraries) at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York.

³⁶ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 11 June 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

be promoted by having him made secretary of our legation.”³⁷ Perplexed by the request, as it went against the State Department’s usual conventions, Dinsmore at last relented and forwarded the message to his superiors.

Whether or not the monarch’s opinion had any influence back in Washington, the position now landed in the doctor’s hands. Horace mulled over the offer for a few days and then accepted. By the end of July he was back in the Seoul, where he was sworn into office by Dinsmore’s newly arrived replacement, Augustine Heard. “It would seem,” Horace later said of the event, “that my appointment as Secty [sic] of Legation was a Providential thing.”³⁸ It was at least uncanny. On July 26, 1890, two days after Horace took his oath, John Heron died after a painful struggle with dysentery. He left behind his wife Hattie, two small daughters, and, as one missionary observed, “no insurance, no will, no money but two or three hundred dollars.”³⁹ It was the second missionary fatality in four months. Earlier that year, the Australian J. Henry Davies had died of small-pox following a grueling overland journey.⁴⁰ “I never met a man who seemed to be less of this world,” Horace noted sorrowfully when he heard the news.⁴¹

But Heron was the first loss on the American side, and it sent the Presbyterians scrambling for a gravesite. “We forced the Koreans to give us what is in our treaty rights, a cemetery near Seoul,” Lillias Horton Underwood reported to the board. “They set apart a pretty hill, overlooking the river.”⁴² This was the same location where, decades earlier, French priests and native Catholics had been executed during the Korean government’s anti-Christian purge. It would serve as the central burial ground for American missionaries for the next half-century.⁴³

There was a somber irony in John Heron’s passing. For during Allen’s leave in the US, Heron had come to adopt virtually the same kind of stringent approach to mission work that Horace had advocated. When the Underwoods, for instance, who were newly married in 1888, proposed taking an itinerating trip into the interior ostensibly as their honeymoon, Heron strenuously objected. And as Allen had done, Heron would charge Horace Underwood with baptizing too hastily. “Some of our go ahead missionaries,” Heron had written to the board, seemed not to be taking seriously the Korean government’s interdiction against Christian teaching.... It is the Lord’s work & He can

³⁷ Hugh A. Dinsmore to James G. Blaine, 14 January 1890, *KAR II*, 171.

³⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 August 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

³⁹ Lillias H. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 30 July 1890, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 599. See also Samuel A. Moffett to F. F. Ellinwood, 29 July 1890, *Samuel A. Moffett: First Letters From Korea, 1890-1891* (Seoul: Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Institute of Missions, 1975), 19. Heron’s daughters, Sarah and Jessie, were both under the age of five at the time of his death.

⁴⁰ D. G. Gifford, “Two Shining Marks,” *The Church at Home and Abroad* 8 (October 1890): 354-356.

⁴¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 April 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁴² Lillias H. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood 30 July 1890, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 599.

Augustine Heard noted in a dispatch to Washington that “two days before his [Heron’s] death while he was in a very critical condition, two other members of the same Board of missions called upon me, and informed me that no place had been set apart in Seoul for a Foreign Cemetery, asking what was to be done in the event of Dr. Heron’s death. I was greatly surprised at this intelligence, as a cemetery is generally one of the first things thought of in a new settlement, but it seemed that on the only two previous occasions when it became necessary to use one the body had been conveyed to Chemulpo.” See the rest of this letter for an explanation of the difficulties in obtaining a cemetery site. Neither Heard nor the Presbyterians seem to have been aware of the connection between the land granted to them and the Catholic purges.

⁴³ See Donald N. Clark, *Yangwhajin Seoul Foreigners’ Cemetery, Korea: An Informal History, 1890-1984* (Seoul, Korea: Yongsan RSOK Library, 1984).

do it even if we stand aside.”⁴⁴ To board leaders, those words would have sounded unmistakably familiar.

* * *

For a time in the summer of 1890, confusion reigned. “Dr. Allen has accepted the position of Secretary to the U.S. Legation,” the young reverend Samuel A. Moffett, a recent Presbyterian addition, wrote to the board the day before Heron died. Already word was afloat that Horace might try to remain a missionary even while working at the legation, and Moffett begged board leaders to forbid this from happening. “I do hope the Board will insist upon his being a missionary pure and simple or sever all official connection with the Mission,” Moffett pleaded. “*Please* give us a chance to do purely missionary work free from all outside combinations and complications.”⁴⁵

As more of a veteran Horace Allen might have contended, of course, that the entire missionary enterprise in Korea had never been without certain “combinations and complications.” Besides, work outside of the “purely missionary” did not necessarily contradict mission regulations. “The object of missionary life,” the Presbyterian manual stated, “must ever be held sacred—the preaching of Christ and Him crucified.” Yet it was possible that missionaries might be “temporarily led by providential circumstances” to “engage in work that yields them pecuniary remuneration.” (All “the moneys so received,” the manual continued, must be turned over to the mission treasury.)⁴⁶ It was this leeway that had allowed Allen to establish himself on the peninsula in the first place, back in 1884. And he was not the only one. During Horace’s absence in Washington, DC, John Heron had taken over the superintendency of the Korean royal hospital, as well as Horace’s medical practice with the foreign diplomats in Seoul. The Presbyterian missionaries Annie Ellers and Lillias Underwood, too, had at various times worked at the royal hospital and provided care for Queen Min.

Yet Moffett worried about more than intentions. The issue, he suggested, boiled down to efficacy. Could Horace really serve Christ when also in the employ of Caesar? For Moffett and the others, the answer was a hard no. Allen’s dual position, Moffett maintained, “will cause all the official political actions of the American legation to reflect for good or ill upon the Mission. It will be a combination of politics and missionary effort in which I feel sure the missionary work will be compromised.”⁴⁷ “We feel that to try to do both would be a mistake,” Lillias Underwood added. The sort of influence and “constant intercourse” that Allen would be exposed to at the legation would surely “bring an undesirable element” to the mission.⁴⁸

It scarcely helped that Horace was staying so tight-lipped about the matter. The doctor had never been one to bare his plans in the open (and ironically, he had always

⁴⁴ Lillias Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 March 1889, 10 October 1889, 22 November 1889, John Heron to F. F. Ellinwood, 25 March 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁴⁵ Samuel A. Moffett to F. F. Ellinwood, 25 July 1890, *Samuel A. Moffett, First Letters From Korea*, 18.

⁴⁶ Section 24, *Mission Manual*, 12.

⁴⁷ Samuel A. Moffett to F. F. Ellinwood, 25 July 1890, *First Letters From Korea*, 18.

⁴⁸ Lillias Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 30 July 1890, *Horace Underwood Papers*, 599. On the securing of the cemetery, see Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 28 July 1890, Augustine Heard to Min Yǒng Mok, 24 July 1890, *Despatches from Ministers*, NARA SB.

been much more confidential with the mission board 6,000 miles away than with his own coworkers on the field). But the Presbyterians in Seoul now agreed: this time, he had reached too far. “He at present is in a peculiar position,” Horace Underwood fumed. One minute Allen was in Chemulpo, the next “here in Seoul in an official position, and has not even notified the mission of any change or what he intends to do.” Even more aggravating, “he comes to our meeting as though a regular Missionary, and yet his time is entirely at the disposal of the U.S. Minister.”⁴⁹

If this collective anger was justified, Horace at first paid it small heed. He could admit that the State Department had unwittingly plucked him from his misery in Chemulpo, but whether his missionary commission should be immediately surrendered, he now seemed uncertain. Perhaps his new position could even have advantages for the mission. “Minister [Heard] is old and sick,” Horace noted after his first few days on the job. “I will doubtless be charge d’affaires most of the time. It gives me immense importance with the Koreans, all of which help the missionaries.”⁵⁰ In the end, however, board leaders would side with the majority in the mission. “It is our unanimous feeling,” Ellinwood wrote to Horace that September, “that with this position you ought not to think of retaining also a position as a missionary. Not that we lack confidence in you. I have in all the past given you abundant assurance on that score, but because we feel that it will be impossible to avoid bringing the mission more or less under the cross-fire of the politicians.”⁵¹ The last thing the mission needed, Ellinwood worried, was more trouble.

But by then the argument no longer mattered. Two weeks earlier, an incensed Horace had already decided to quit the mission. It was a feud over the royal hospital that at last pushed him to the precipice. In early August 1890, in the wake of John Heron’s passing, Horace had volunteered to substitute at the hospital until more permanent arrangements could be made. By a mission vote, however, his offer was rejected.

“It was very humiliating for me,” Horace later noted, “to be refused permission by the mission to even look into the condition of the hospital I started.”⁵² To his bewilderment, some of the newer missionaries appeared not even to believe that he had played a role in the hospital’s establishment, even after Underwood vouched for the story.

The standoff was made worse by an emergency telegram from the board. Knowing only of Heron’s death and nothing of the current fracas or the legation appointment, the board ordered Horace to assume temporary charge of the hospital, the very thing the mission had just vetoed. A burst of protest ensued, this time against the board. “We were very much surprised,” said Horace Underwood, “. . . that the Board did not think that we were able to judge what had best be done.”⁵³ For Allen, the board’s cable brought sweet but fleeting vindication. Feeling increasingly sabotaged by his colleagues’ opposition, Horace finally shot back. “I have made up my mind,” he declared before the month’s end. “I cannot work with the Presbyterian Mission of Seoul. . . I don’t care to be connected with any such people.”⁵⁴ He had spoken similar words before. Now, they rang with stinging finality.

⁴⁹ Horace Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 4 August 1890, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 604.

⁵⁰ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 11 August 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁵¹ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 9 September 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁵² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 11 August 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁵³ Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 10 August 1890, *Horace Grant Underwood Papers*, 607.

⁵⁴ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 13 August 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*. The feud was made worse by the fact that after being rejected by the mission vote, Allen went directly to the Foreign Office to

Later that year, the Presbyterian board would gingerly scold the Seoul mission for its latest “friction,” for playing a part in the departure of its very first and founding member. Bygones must be buried and peace pursued, the board entreated. But more precisely, each of the missionaries must now seek a friendly alliance with their former colleague, and not merely for the sake of reconciliation. “It seems to me all-important,” Ellinwood urged, “that there shall be no echoes or even whispers of the past to disturb the relations existing between Dr. Allen and the mission. He can be of important service to our cause in Korea.”⁵⁵

For the board secretary was looking ahead. “You know,” he wrote to Horace as 1890 rolled to a close, “how thoroughly I appreciate all your past services and your patience...in all the trying circumstances in which you have been placed.”⁵⁶ Though no longer a mission agent proper, there was no reason why Horace should be alienated from the larger cause. Quite the reverse, Ellinwood thought. “It may be that days of difficulty are in store for the mission,” he said. “We know not what may be the political situation [in Korea], and how it may change at any time.”⁵⁷ With the doctor at the legation, Ellinwood hoped, the missionaries might have a sure ally.

* * *

The United States legation in Seoul was still a modest institution when Augustine Heard took charge in May 1890. Most of the native-style, tiled-roofed flats comprising the legation compound lay uninhabited and in disrepair; only the office and the residential quarters had received minor mending, the first laid with wooden flooring instead of the common oil paper, the latter partially lined with brick walls. But even these were badly run down. There was no proper lodging for guests (Heard’s daughter, Helen, who had accompanied her parents to Seoul, at first slept in a makeshift bedroom down the hall from the one sleeping room in the main house). And on the outer perimeter of the grounds stood a crumbling mud wall.⁵⁸ All in all the scene displayed a “most deplorably dilapidated state,” Heard reported to the State Department. He asked for a \$3000 appropriation for basic repairs, a “very moderate” sum, he pointed out, given that his neighbors—the Russian, British, and French representatives—were putting up structures easily worth ten times that amount.⁵⁹

Heard’s other pressing request was for a legation secretary, whose seat had been left vacant for almost a year. The position itself was relatively new. Before Charles Chaillé-Long, who served under Hugh Dinsmore, the legation was a one-official operation (Lucius Foote had had a secretary back in 1883, but he was privately employed). Charles Chaillé-Long would be one of the more colorful characters to come

request its separate permission to reenter the hospital. See Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 8 August 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*; Horace G. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 10 August 1890, *Horace Underwood Papers*, 606-607.

⁵⁵ F. F. Ellinwood to Korea Mission, 21 October 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁵⁶ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 19 December 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁵⁷ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 9 October 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁵⁸ Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 3 June 1890, 1 December 1890, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

⁵⁹ Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 3 June 1890, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

through the US diplomatic mission in Korea. Traveler, writer, attorney, former soldier, he made a terrible secretary—“insolent, insubordinate, and disloyal,” as Dinsmore described him—but a good explorer. In fact his tenure would be best known for the extensive geographical survey he undertook of Quelpart (*Cheju*), an island off the southern coast of the peninsula, in 1888.⁶⁰ But by mid-1890 Chaillé-Long was long gone, and Heard entreated Washington to hurry with a replacement. For “in case of an accident to me,” Heard feared, “there is no American official—not only in this city, but in the whole country—who could take over the business of the Legation.”⁶¹ Two months later came notice of Horace Allen’s appointment.

Chaillé-Long’s adventures aside, the job Horace inherited was hardly a glamorous one. As outlined in his instructions from the State Department, the general duties of a legation secretary required much of the tedious: transcribing, dispatching, and recording correspondences and then preserving, classifying, and indexing them; keeping safe the legation’s books, seal, and cipher (the latter used for coding telegrams); attending to the legation during business hours; and answering the applications of American citizens, including passport requests. In case of the minister’s absence the secretary could be called upon to act as *chargé d’affaires ad interim*. Otherwise, he was under the minister’s direct authority, and as such was obliged to show him the “marks of respect and deference prescribed by the rules of politeness and good breeding.”⁶² All this for an annual salary of \$1500—one-fifth of the minister’s pay, and almost exactly the same as what Horace received as a missionary. If there had been compelling reasons for accepting the secretaryship, money was surely not one of them.

Horace was glad for the change in scene, in any case, and he applied himself straight away to his new duties. His prior exposure to the workings of the legation (when for example, years earlier, he had lent a hand to the hapless and overworked George Foulk) no doubt eased his transition. So did a budding cordiality with his chief. “I like my present work very much,” Horace noted cheerfully in the autumn of 1890. “Mr. Heard and I get along charmingly.”⁶³ It was not for any obvious similarity. Heard was from a prominent family of Ipswich, Massachusetts. He had been a lifelong businessman who spent many years abroad, first in East Asia (his uncle, also named Augustine Heard, was

⁶⁰ See Charles Chaillé-Long to Thomas F. Bayard, 31 December 1888, *KAR II*, 169-170; Thomas F. Bayard to Charles Chaillé-Long, 19 June 1888, James G. Blaine to Charles Chaillé-Long, 19 March 1889, Instructions, NARA San Bruno. Chaillé-Long later requested but was denied permission by the State Department to publish an account of his expedition. As Secretary of State James G. Blaine wrote, “the Department has so frequently of late years, been called upon to express discouragement of the practice of its diplomatic and consular officers in corresponding with the home press, upon matters connected with their service, even when such might purport to be merely narrative of scenes of travel.” James G. Blaine to Charles Chaillé-Long, 27 March 1889, Instructions, NARA SB. In late 1888, Chaillé-Long informed Washington that he had received a three-hour audience with Kojong, during which he was asked about his expedition to Quelpart and his opinion on Korea’s coastal defenses. In response, Secretary of State Blaine wrote to Chaillé-Long that “I cannot too urgently caution you against any remarks or suggestions which might have the appearance of advice regarding military defences or operations in Corea. The position of our Legation must be distinguished as much for its impartiality, as for its friendly desire to promote good relations between Corea and the United States.” Charles Chaillé-Long to 31 December 1888, *KAR II*, 169; James G. Blaine to Charles Chaillé-Long, 15 March 1889, *KAR II*, 170.

⁶¹ Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 20 May 1890, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

⁶² William F. Wharton (acting Secretary of State) to Horace N. Allen, 25 July 1890, Instructions, NARA SB

⁶³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 19 September 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

a well-known China trader) and then in Europe.⁶⁴ In his sixties when he received the Korea appointment, Heard was an almost exact contemporary of former US ministers Lucius Foote and William Parker, and like them came to the peninsula less as a stepping stone than as a coda to an already established career. As Horace later noted sardonically, the diplomatic post in Seoul was “at that time considered a sort of sinecure, with no work to do.”⁶⁵

But there was plenty to do, Minister Heard discovered, and from the start he leaned heavily on the assistance of his diligent if hot-buttoned secretary. The pile of clerical tasks alone would have been enough to justify the help. But for other reasons, too, Heard thought the doctor a valuable asset.⁶⁶ Three years later, when Heard resigned from his post, he would urge the State Department keep Allen’s services. “He is attentive to his duties, speaks the language, and is much liked by the King,” Heard would report. “Mrs. Allen moreover is a favorite of the Queen.” Retaining Horace as secretary, as Heard saw it, would be “the best thing for the [US] Government.”⁶⁷

By that time, Allen could indeed boast a good share of experience. This would owe something to necessity, since during his tenure in Korea Heard would take several leaves of absence from Seoul—sometimes for a few days, sometimes for a few weeks—giving Horace sole charge of the US legation. Still, the old merchant, though plagued throughout his term by ill health, would not be as dormant as Horace first supposed. In fact Heard would follow what was becoming an established pattern at the legation: pressing for a greater degree of American involvement in Korean affairs than policymakers at home would have liked.

Like former minister Hugh Dinsmore, Heard came to regard the Sino-Korean relationship as the main diplomatic conundrum in Seoul. “I am induced to allude to the Chinese question now, somewhat prematurely,” he reported to the State Department in June 1890, shortly after taking office. Since arriving on the peninsula, Heard had tried to impress upon Yuan Shikai, the Qing representative in Seoul, “the belief that I have... a sincere admiration for his Country and Countrymen.” Yet while “I am to a certain extent a partisan of China,” Heard admitted, “...I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the success of her arms means the extinction of Corea as an independent power.”⁶⁸ He was not proposing dissolution of Korea-China ties per se. The kingdom’s “reform and progress,” he argued, “could find free development under the protecting wing of China,”

⁶⁴ David Shavit, *The United States in Asia: A Historical Dictionary* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1990), 226.

⁶⁵ Horace N. Allen to James R. Morse, 29 November 1896, Allen Papers.

⁶⁶ During Allen’s leave in early 1893, Heard again implored the State Department to send more officials to Korea. “It is proper,” Heard wrote, “that a minister should have some one to aid him in the ordinary clerical duties of the post. That is recognized in the case of all the other Foreign Representatives in Seoul no matter what may be their rank. The German Consul, who is of the lowest rank, has two foreign assistants. The English Consul General is never left more than a few days without one; and he has besides a vice-consul at Chemulpo, although there is not a single English merchant in Korea. The American Minister is the highest rank, & has no assistant.” Augustine Heard to William F. Wharton, 7 February 1893, Despatches from United States Consuls in Seoul, 1886-1906, File Microcopies of Records in the National Archives, No. 167, Roll 1.

⁶⁷ Augustine Heard to John W. Foster, 21 March 1893, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

⁶⁸ Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 3 June 1890, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

but only if the latter ceased its policy of domination. “In all this,” Heard wanted to know, “what is America’s part?”⁶⁹

As before, answers would diverge between Washington and Seoul. Echoing some of the arguments of his predecessors, Heard insisted that the United States bore a personal responsibility to Korea; that though American commercial activity was negligible it would grow once native resources were developed; that the Korean monarch favored Americans—and why not “aid and encourage him,” thereby raising the status of the US vis-à-vis other foreign nations?⁷⁰ None of these overtures would prove convincing; as in years prior, they were mostly ignored. US foreign policy, now under the direction of the ambitious secretary of state James G. Blaine—the “plumed knight,” went the famous moniker—was elsewhere turning increasingly intrusive. But Korea remained a far-away concern. And unless American interests on the peninsula were directly impinged upon, Heard was told, he was not to meddle with “the exceptional relation of Corea to China.”⁷¹

The directive would not necessarily have surprised Heard. Since the beginning of treaty relations between the US and Korea, Washington had set forth a policy of recognizing the peninsula as a sovereign state, while staying uninvolved in the Sino-Korean relationship. This stance had been outlined back in 1883. “As far as we are concerned,” Frelinghuysen had explained to Lucius Foote, “Corea is an independent sovereign power, with all the attendant rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities; in her relations to China we have no desire to interfere unless action should be taken prejudicial to the rights of the United States.”⁷² Such a posture reflected America’s broader foreign policy approach to East Asia—which, notwithstanding the bellicosity that would characterize involvement in the Pacific in the coming decades, revolved in these years around the safeguarding of US citizens and commercial interests.⁷³ That there existed relatively few of both in Korea likely contributed to its low priority on Washington’s agenda. But policymakers also wanted, specifically, to avoid entanglement in what seemed the peninsula’s labyrinthine diplomatic situation. “Seoul is the center of conflicting and almost hostile intrigues involving the interests of China, Japan, Russia, and England,” the State Department told George Foulk, “and...it is clearly the interest of the United States to hold aloof from all this and do nothing nor be drawn into anything which would look like taking sides of the contestants entering the lists of intrigue.”⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 10 July 1890, 21 October 1890, 19 November 1890, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

⁷⁰ For example, see Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 10 July 1890, 21 October 1890, 30 October 1890, 19 November 1890, 31 August 1891, 24 January 1892, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

⁷¹ William F. Wharton to Augustine Heard, 25 August 1890, Instructions, NARA SB. See also relevant letters in State Department Instructions file, NARA SB, showing Washington’s neglect in addressing the issues raised by the US legation in Seoul. On Blaine’s policies, see Akira Iriye, *From Nationalism to Internationalism: U.S. Foreign Policy to 1914* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 98-100; Edward R. Crapol, *James G. Blaine: Architect of Empire* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2000).

⁷² Frederick T. Frelinghuysen to Lucius H. Foote, 9 March 1883, Instructions, NARA SB. See also Thomas F. Bayard to George C. Foulk, 18 August 1885, James G. Blaine to Augustine Heard, 27 June 1890, Instructions, NARA SB.

⁷³ See for example Iriye, *From Nationalism to Internationalism*, 53-94.

⁷⁴ Thomas F. Bayard to George C. Foulk, 19 August 1885, Instructions, NARA SB. As Jongsuk Chay notes, American trade in Korea continued to remain distinctly small throughout the 1880s and beyond. He estimates that between 1892 and 1908, trade with Korea ranged from \$700 to \$4,500,000, or what

Yet despite reminders to maintain “friendly impartiality” toward Korea’s relations with other countries, especially China, Lucius Foote and his successors at the US legation had often done the opposite.⁷⁵ Indeed by the time Augustine Heard assumed duties in mid-1890, the American representatives to Korea had already established a precedence of deviating from policy. It was not always a willful defiance. The sheer distance from home, coupled with the State Department’s almost regular neglect of dispatches from Seoul, contributed to misconceptions—at times, outright confusion—about where Washington stood on certain issues. Regardless of intent, what had emerged at the legation was a tendency toward an activist posture, one that contrasted with Washington’s more pragmatic imperatives. The pattern was to be continued by Minister Heard. “It seems to be a duty in my position representing America, as a friend of Corea,” Heard wrote to Blaine in the fall of 1890, “to remove when I can, obstacles from her path,” for to refuse to do so “would be churlish.”⁷⁶ “Is it not time,” he asked in another dispatch, “. . . for the Treaty Powers to take counsel together and warn the Imperial Government [of China] that it goes too far?”⁷⁷

Horace Allen doubtless sympathized with Heard’s sentiments, perhaps even spurred them on. For if by now Allen had become chastened to the reality that few at home held more than a passing curiosity in the peninsular kingdom, he clung to the belief that a change was possible. In fact, it even appeared that US influence in Korea might be on an upswing. There were now two Americans teaching at the Royal College (*Yugŏng Kongwŏn*), and recently the Korean government had enlisted Charles LeGendre, a naturalized US citizen and former foreign affairs adviser in Japan, to serve in the Home Office.⁷⁸ Americans could also be found at the newly established military training school: In mid-1888, the Koreans had hired William McEntyre Dye, a retired US army colonel, as an instructor for the school. Though the two assistants Dye brought with him, John G. Lee and Edmund H. Cummins, soon proved derelict in their duties and were dismissed the following year (“they are drunken bad men,” Horace seethed), Colonel Dye and another American named Ferdinand J. H. Nienstead, a former consulate employee in Japan, had stayed on at the military academy.⁷⁹

amounted to an average annual share of 0.01% of the US’s total foreign trade during this period. Jongsuk Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry: Korean-American Relations to 1910* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), 1-2.

⁷⁵ For example, see Thomas F. Bayard to George C. Foulk, 19 August 1885, Thomas F. Bayard to Hugh A. Dinsmore, 27 July 1887, James G. Blaine to Charles Chaillé-Long, 15 March 1889, William F. Wharton to Augustine Heard, 25 August 1890, Instructions, NARA SB; George C. Foulk to Parents and Brothers, 4 August 1885, 14 May 1886, *America’s Man in Korea: The Private Letters of George C. Foulk, 1884-1887*, ed. Samuel Hawley (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2008), 120.

⁷⁶ Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 30 October 1890, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

⁷⁷ Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 21 October 1890, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB. William F. Wharton, the acting Secretary of State, merely acknowledged receipt of the dispatch but ignored Heard’s question. See William F. Wharton to Augustine Heard, 20 December 1890, Instructions, NARA SB.

⁷⁸ LeGendre replaced Owen Denny, who resigned from his posts in the Foreign and Home offices in 1890. Later that year another American, Clarence R. Greathouse, would join LeGendre in the Home Office. See Young I. Lew, “American Advisers in Korea,” 69-75.

⁷⁹ Nienstead was recruited to come to Korea by Minister Dinsmore. For discussions of the American military instructors, see especially Donald M. Bishop, “Shared Failure: American Military Advisors in Korea, 1888-1896,” *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch*, 58 (1983): 53-76. See also related documents in *KAR II*, 141-166.

In the long run, the handful of US military and civil personnel in Korea would leave behind a dubious record. Problems within Korea's modernization program, the disinterest of Washington, and the personal inadequacies of the American advisers themselves would ensure that here, too, the US role was destined to be a minor one.⁸⁰ To Horace Allen, however, the picture was as yet not altogether bleak. During a short trip to Yokohama in late 1889, he had noted that American business people seemed uninterested in the peninsula and that "the only friends Korea has are the missionaries."⁸¹ But that was before Horace had joined the US legation. In the following years, widening that circle of "friends" was to become one of his central preoccupations.

* * *

As of early 1891, Horace was still overseeing work at the Korean royal hospital. Though months had elapsed since the death of John Heron, no replacement from home had been sent out, and Horace felt he owed it to the Presbyterian board to at least "hold" the hospital for the time being.⁸² He was also disappointed about the apparent decline over the past several years in the quality of the institution's medical services, something that would have never happened, he was sure, under his watch. "The only reason for the absence of a high mortality in the outpatients at the hospital," Horace sniped, "has been the growing lack of faith in western physic[ians]."⁸³ If he could he would live right there and devote his entire time to the place, he claimed, but with his duties at the legation, the most he could spare was an odd hour or two. No one was more relieved than Horace when Doctor Cadwallader C. Vinton, a new Presbyterian medical missionary, reached Seoul in the spring of 1891.⁸⁴

That May, shortly after taking over at the hospital, Vinton went on "strike." The reasons, as he explained, were twofold: first, that the Foreign Office had refused to hand over to him the entire appropriation for the hospital; and second, that the institution was "grievously unsuited to evangelistic work."⁸⁵ He acknowledged that the hospital position gave him a certain distinction with Koreans. And yet "official prestige," Vinton argued, "was no adequate return" for engaging in medical activity "without the opportunity nor the prospect of an opportunity of religious work associated with it." Lest board leaders

⁸⁰ See Lew, "American Advisers in Korea," 78-82; Yur-Bok Lee, "Korean-American Diplomatic Relations, 1882-1905," in *One Hundred Years of Korean-American Relations, 1882-1982*, ed. Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson (University, Ala.: The University of Alabama Press, 1986), 40-45.

⁸¹ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 20 December 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸² Horace noted that both a Japanese and an English doctor had indicated that they wanted to take over the hospital. Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 11 December 1890, 5 January 1891, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸³ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 18 September 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸⁴ Allen formally handed the hospital over to the Presbyterian mission in early January 1891. R. A. Hardie, a Canadian missionary sent by the Toronto University Y.M.C.A., took over the work until the arrival of Vinton in April of that year. Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 5 January 1891, Presbyterian Mission to F. F. Ellinwood, 6 January 1891, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸⁵ C. C. Vinton to F. F. Ellinwood, 20 May 1891, *Correspondence and Reports*.

think him singularly impetuous, he assured them that his decision had the unanimous support and approval of the mission.⁸⁶

Horace was horrified but not completely surprised.⁸⁷ Perhaps the situation bore too much the familiarity of past events; yet since his return to Korea from Washington, he had also observed what seemed to him an ever growing intrusiveness by the missionaries, especially the Presbyterians. Some now even talked about pursuing a revised treaty that would include a religious toleration clause. The idea, Horace thought, was as unnecessary as it was impractical. “Our gov’t would hardly move in the matter,” he told Ellinwood in late 1890, “unless perhaps some criminal of importance should secrete himself here and make an extradition treaty necessary, when perhaps a clause might be secured.”⁸⁸ The example was overblown, but Horace’s instincts were right. Over the years, the State Department had sided with the opinion of the US legation in Seoul that missionaries should avoid unnecessary conflicts—for example, by staying within treaty limitations. As Secretary of State Bayard told Dinsmore in 1888, “I am generally disposed to approve your cautious intimations to the missionaries discouraging any aggressive attempts to enlarge the boundaries of their privileges.”⁸⁹ Itinerating trips into the interior were the obvious red flag; but Dinsmore had also objected to the missionaries’ expanding religious activities inside the capital. In their “conception of authority ‘higher than man,’” he had complained, “their zeal gets beyond restraint.”⁹⁰

Vinton would hold out for two months before slinking back to the hospital in the summer of 1891. When he did, it was at the behest not of Allen but of Augustine Heard. “In my present course I am yielding somewhat to the solicitation of the American Minister,” Vinton later explained, “. . . who has been considered rather unfriendly to missions, but who has taken so great an interest in the matter as to offer to mediate. This he did especially to keep this office in the hands of an American.”⁹¹ Learning about the possibility of a British doctor entering the institution, Heard had negotiated with the Foreign Office to have Vinton reinstated. As for Horace Allen, he made the unlikely

⁸⁶ Vinton clarified in a later defense to the board that there “was no dissenting opinion among non-voters”—in other words, “those who had been upon the ground more than a year and so had acquired the right of voting.” C. C. Vinton to F. F. Ellinwood, 14 August 1891, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸⁷ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 13 May 1891, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸⁸ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 20 December 1890, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁸⁹ Thomas F. Bayard to Hugh A. Dinsmore, 15 June 1888, Instructions, NARA SB. See also James G. Blaine to Rev. John G. Wilds, 1 November 1889, *KAR II*, 223-224. The 1886 Korean-French treaty, which revised certain elements of the 1883 British treaty (for example, that subjects could now go Korea not simply to learn but also to “teach” the language, literature, laws, arts, and industries), was interpreted by the French as amounting to permission to propagate Christianity. Under the most-favored-nation clause, the US was entitled to the same rights as France, but Washington chose not to countenance the French interpretation of religious tolerance. In mid-1888, Secretary of State Bayard told Dinsmore that “the Department would not be warranted in instructing you to claim as derivative from the French treaty the extended privileges of religious teaching among the natives which are sought to be exercised and against which . . . the animosities of the Korean Government appear to be aroused.” It was only in mid-1891, following an incident where local authorities near Pusan forcibly detained a French Catholic missionary, that Washington instructed Heard to invoke the most-favored-nation clause when he thought it applicable. See Thomas F. Bayard to Hugh A. Dinsmore, 15 June 1888, Alvey A. Adee (acting Secretary of State) to Augustine Heard, 19 May 1891, Instructions, NARA SB; Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 2 April 1891, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

⁹⁰ Hugh A. Dinsmore to Thomas F. Bayard, 21 April 1888, *KAR II*, 206-208.

⁹¹ C. C. Vinton to F. F. Ellinwood, 3 July 1891, *Correspondence and Reports*.

claim that he had “stayed out of the affair entirely.” But everyone would have known where he stood. “The hospital has been saved to you,” he declared to board leaders, “entirely by the action of the American Legation against the machinations of the Presbyterian Mission.”⁹²

Machinations or not, Horace continued to find his former coworkers on the whole an irksome lot, even while he was determined, in his own way, to help them.⁹³ For though he had not relinquished his fundamental disagreement with certain mission policies and methods, he still had faith in the value of the foreign mission enterprise. As legation secretary he was limited in what he could do; later, when he climbed into a higher position, he would play a greater part in assisting—though often trying to contain—the scope of the missionaries’ activities. For now, he proffered advice (if not always appreciated), and at least on one occasion found cause to circumvent rules. As he admitted in the fall of 1892, for more than a year he had been issuing travel passports to Americans without requiring, as was the usual practice at the legation, an oath not to conduct religious work.⁹⁴ Horace also stayed in regular contact with the Presbyterian leadership at home. Long one of the doctor’s most steadfast advocates, F. F. Ellinwood urged him not only to keep the board apprised of political developments, but also to share freely his outsider views of the mission. “I thank you, as ever before, for the light which you throw upon our work in Korea,” Ellinwood wrote earlier that year.⁹⁵ It might just be that Horace “could do as much for the cause of missions as you could if you were directly in the service.”⁹⁶

If ties to the Protestant mission enterprise were to remain one constant in this new phase of Horace’s career, so would his connections to the royal court. His appointment to the legation would have pleased King Kojong, who despite the stalled response of Washington to some of his requests, continued to view the United States as a friendly power and ally.⁹⁷ The persistence of that view doubtless reflected the diminishing geopolitical choices the monarch faced. Chinese imperialism had dominated Korea’s foreign relationships for nearly a decade, while other treaty nations had at times displayed their own aggressive acts. Yet Kojong’s expectation of cooperation from the United States also likely had something to do with the encouragements he had received from

⁹² Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 3 July 1891, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹³ See Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 27 December 1892, 11 November 1893, 29 November 1894, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹⁴ Horace N. Allen to F. F. Ellinwood, 24 October 1892, *Correspondence and Reports*. See also Lillias H. Underwood to F. F. Ellinwood, 9 March 1889, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹⁵ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 21 April 1892, *Correspondence and Reports*. See also F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 19 May 1891, 9 December 1891, 8 March 1892, 2 July 1892, 14 June 1894, 22 October 1894, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹⁶ F. F. Ellinwood to Horace N. Allen, 24 October 1892, *Correspondence and Reports*.

⁹⁷ See for example Andrew C. Nahm, *Korea: Tradition & Transformation, A History of the Korean People* (Elizabeth, New Jersey: Hollym, 1988), 203-204; Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 23-25. For an extensive overview of how the Korean leadership viewed the US in the late nineteenth century, see Young Ick Lew, “The Perception of the United States during the Enlightenment Period,” in *Korean Perceptions of the United States: A History of Their Origins and Formation*, ed. Young Ick Lew et al., trans. Michael Finch (Seoul: Jimoondang, 2006), 105-208.

officials stationed in Seoul.⁹⁸ Among them could now be counted one of the longest-standing Western residents on the peninsula, Horace Allen.

The whole trajectory of Horace's tenure in Korea thus far, of course, had been influenced by the royal goodwill. His coincidental role in the events of the 1884 coup set him on a path unique from his compatriots in Seoul, and as he adjusted to life at the US legation, Horace would again be called into the services of the king. In the fall of 1892, Kojong asked Horace to help organize the Korean exhibit to the upcoming world's fair in Chicago. The "Columbian Exposition," named for the 400th anniversary of Columbus' landing in the New World, was slated to be an immense affair. American capitalists had poured millions of dollars into the construction of the "White City," a massive complex of glistening, white-plastered buildings set upon an exhibition grounds of nearly 700 acres, and designed as an idealized contrast to the squalor of America's real cities. On show were to be not only the latest technological and industrial attractions, but also an array of ethnic exhibits from around the globe—a sundry collection of persons and things, as one American observer put it, from the "civilized, half civilized and the savage worlds."⁹⁹

Horace had enthusiastically supported the idea of a Korean exhibit since 1891, when the American government formally extended an invitation to the kingdom. If obliged to follow Washington's uncharacteristic attention to the matter—"is it sincerely trusted," the State Department urged Augustine Heard, "that your efforts to induce the representation of Korea at that Fair may prove successful"—Allen also seemed to be motivated by a personal interest in Korean cultural articles. For some time he had been gathering his own collection of pottery, house wares, musical instruments, silks, and other items, some of which he had received as gifts from the royal court and had recently deposited at the Smithsonian Institution.¹⁰⁰ The World's Columbian Exposition, Horace must have thought, would be a prime venue to showcase some of Korea's products.

Whatever his reasons, Horace became relentless about having a Korean exhibit commissioned to Chicago. When Gustavus Goward, a representative of the Fair, visited Seoul in the spring of 1891 during one of Heard's absences, Horace took the initiative by arranging a meeting between Goward and the Foreign Office, and later helped Goward receive an audience with the king. The following year, Horace asked Washington to give him a six-month leave from the legation—ostensibly to attend the Fair as an observer, but really as an attempt to persuade the Koreans to participate in the event. As he explained to the new secretary of state, John W. Foster, "It seemed recently that it would be impossible, owing to many causes, to induce this government to prepare and send an exhibit to the Fair, but His Majesty on learning that I had applied to my Government for leave of absence to visit the Fair, began to show more interest."¹⁰¹ Horace's availability was at the least a convenient development for Kojong. Deciding to accept the invitation after all, the king immediately put Horace in charge of collecting, packing, and shipping

⁹⁸ Yur-Bok Lee, *Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Korea, 1866-1887* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), 80.

⁹⁹ Quote from Julian Hawthorne, son of writer Nathaniel Hawthorne, in Richard W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 64.

¹⁰⁰ See the catalog in Walter Hough, *The Berndau, Allen and Jouy Korean Collections in the United States National Museum* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893).

¹⁰¹ Horace N. Allen to John W. Foster, 12 October 1892, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

articles for Korea's exhibit. "While this is not exactly the work I was expected to do as Honorary Commissioner," Horace admitted, "I have agreed to do as he asks."¹⁰² Along with Chŏng Kyŏng-wŏn, Kojong's appointee for Commissioner to the Fair, Horace would spend the following summer in the White City, assisting the Korean delegation and the installation of their display.¹⁰³

Allen left no detailed account of his experience at the Columbian Exposition, but one could imagine he would not have been altogether satisfied with the results. He was confident he had "superintended the packing of a very creditable exhibit"—which included furniture, fabrics, jewelry, pottery, weapons, agricultural products, paper, royal attire, among other articles—but in Chicago it would be overshadowed by the Chinese exhibit and even more so by the magnificent, multi-building Japanese display.¹⁰⁴ "Japan leads all foreign countries in the amount of its appropriation for the World's Fair," one exposition guide noted. "The empire of the Mikado was willing to spend more money in making an exhibit in 1893 than many of the countries of Europe."¹⁰⁵ Korea's presentation, in contrast, garnered minimal attention by fairgoers, and seems to have been viewed by some as merely a peculiar side note. Juxtaposing the two exhibits, the *Los Angeles Times* would note that while "Japan has seized this opportunity to demonstrate her progressive spirit to the Western world," Korea "has a small booth in the Manufactures building, interesting, principally because it is the display of the hermit among nations."¹⁰⁶

Nonetheless, competition had never been Horace's main aim. Though he had returned to Korea before the Fair ended in October 1893 and thus missed the farewell banquet given by the Korean delegation, he would likely have agreed with Commissioner Chŏng Kyŏng-wŏn's statement about the larger purpose of Korea's participation. As Chŏng told an audience of American organizers and other foreign commissioners:

¹⁰² Horace N. Allen to John W. Foster, 12 October 1892, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

¹⁰³ Interestingly, the State Department gave unusual attention to ensuring that Korea participated in the World's Fair. For an analysis of the event, see Daniel Kane, "Korea in the White City: Korean Participation in the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893," *Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch* 77 (2002): 1-58. According to historian Wŏn-mo Kim, Kojong pressed for the sending of the Korean delegation to the World's Fair, despite the Korean government's troublesome economic situation, in part as an effort to strengthen diplomatic relations with the United States. See Wŏn-mo Kim, *Han-Mi oegyo kwan'gye 100-yŏnsa* [100 Years Korean-American Diplomatic Relations] (Sŏul: Ch'ŏrhak kwa Hyŏnsilsa, 2002), 227-238. For official dispatches, see James G. Blaine to Augustine Heard, 12 February 1891, 30 October 1891, 13 November 1891, 2 January 1892, William F. Wharton to Augustine Heard, 5 June 1891, 24 June 1891, Instructions, NARA SB; Horace N. Allen to James G. Blaine, 2 May 1891, 8 May 1891, Augustine Heard to James G. Blaine, 29 July 1891, 23 September 1891, 25 April 1892, Horace N. Allen to William F. Wharton, 28 April 1892, Horace N. Allen to John W. Foster, 13 September 1892, 12 October 1892, 5 January 1893, Augustine Heard to John W. Foster, 27 November 1892, 13 March 1893, 22 March 1893, Despatches from Minister, NARA SB.

¹⁰⁴ Horace N. Allen to John W. Foster, 5 January 1893, Horace N. Allen to Walter Q. Gresham, 23 May 1893, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

¹⁰⁵ *Picturesque Chicago and Guide to the World's Fair* (Hartford: D. S. Moseley, 1893), 310. See also *Official Guide to the World's Chicago Exposition*, comp. John J. Flinn (Chicago: The Columbian Guide Company, 1893), 133-134, 140-141.

¹⁰⁶ "Folks at the Fair," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1893, 19. See also "Glad He Was There," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, May 2, 1893, 9; "King Yi of Corea and His Exhibits," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 18, 1893, 2.

His Majesty was greatly honoured by the invitation of the President of the United States to participate in the World's Columbian Exposition. Never before has Korea taken part in any international exposition, but in response an urgent request of America, the great friend of Korea, his Majesty has sent his first official exhibit abroad, to make complete the representations of nations. Our small and humble exhibit... is simply a representation and is not offered for comparison with the exhibits of the earth, but is honoured in forming a part of those combined exhibits which make the greatest exposition the world has ever seen.¹⁰⁷

But Chŏng's speech had also contained a foreboding ring. "We are sure," the commissioner added, "this exposition will tend to the establishment of the principles of judicial arbitration as the supreme law of international relations." Freshly back in Seoul, Horace as yet detected little of the coming crisis.

* * *

Augustine Heard had already resigned and left Korea when Horace returned to the legation in the late summer of 1893. Before going, Heard gave a strong recommendation on Horace's behalf, advising the new administration in Washington to allow the doctor to keep his secretarial appointment (the 1892 elections had brought back the Democrat Grover Cleveland). The administration approved, and Horace, as he had done during Heard's previous absences, assumed the position of chargé d'affaires when he reached Seoul on August 31. This time, however, he would have charge of the US legation for a full seven months. Heard's replacement, John M. B. Sill, would not arrive on the peninsula until well into the following year.¹⁰⁸

Before departing in mid-1893, Minister Heard had alerted Washington to two important developments in Seoul. The first had to do with what Heard described as the "overbearing and aggressive demeanor of the Japanese"—and in particular, of Japan's new representative to Korea, Ōishi Masami.¹⁰⁹ Throughout the spring of that year, Ōishi had pressed the Koreans to settle an indemnity claim regarding an old embargo dispute. The claim itself was not new; but Heard thought that the amount Ōishi demanded was excessive, and that the Japanese minister himself was uncompromising. Though by summer the controversy had died down, Heard nevertheless sensed a worsening tenor in

¹⁰⁷ Translated transcript published in "Korea at the World's Fair," *Japan Weekly Mail*, October 7, 1893, 406-407.

¹⁰⁸ Heard had resigned in February 1893 but stayed until late June, when he was relieved by Joseph R. Herod, secretary of the US legation at Tokyo. Herod served as chargé of the Seoul legation until Horace arrived in late August of that year. See Augustine Heard to John W. Foster, 25 February 1893, 21 March 1893, 26 June 1893, 28 June 1893, Horace N. Allen to Walter Q. Gresham, 1 July 1893, 31 August 1893, Joseph R. Herod to Walter Q. Gresham, 1 July 1893, John M. B. Sill to Walter Q. Gresham, 1 May 1894, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB; Walter Q. Gresham to Horace N. Allen, 7 July 1893, Walter Q. Gresham to Joseph R. Herod, 12 July 1893, Instructions, NARA SB. On the tenure of John M. B. Sill, see Jeffrey M. Dowart, "The Independent Minister: John M. B. Sill and the Struggle Against Japanese Expansion in Korea, 1894-1897," *Pacific Historical Review* 44 (November 1975): 485-502; Bonnie B. Oh, "John M. B. Sill, U.S. Minister to Korea (1894-1897): A Reluctant Participant in International Mediation," in *The United States and Korea*, ed. Andrew C. Nahm (Kalamazoo, Mich.: The Center for Korean Studies, Western Michigan University, 1979).

¹⁰⁹ Augustine Heard to John W. Foster, 27 March 1893, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

Korea-Japan relations. Japan's army, he also informed Washington, "is in an efficient State, and She is rapidly increasing her navy with the avowed intention to make it equal or Superior to that of China."¹¹⁰

More disquieting to Heard, however, was the sudden appearance in the capital of members of a religious group called *Tonghak* (Eastern Learning). In early April 1893, Heard reported that some forty *Tonghak* followers had come to Seoul and for several days knelt at the palace gate, requesting the king to accept their petition. From what Heard could ascertain, the petition asked for exoneration of the group's founder, Ch'oe Che-u, who had been executed some years back, as well as for official toleration of the *Tonghak* religion. "It is supposed to contain," Heard added, "a protest against foreigners and Christianity."¹¹¹ Within days the group was dispersed and their petition publicly rejected. Yet over the next few weeks, rumors whirled among the foreign community about the possibility of violence erupting. Anti-Christianity placards were discovered on both American Presbyterian and Methodist buildings, and while Heard dismissed the more alarmist talk about attacks on foreigners, he admitted that "on casting one's eyes over the summary of events, one can hardly help feeling that something serious is preparing."¹¹²

Horace had missed these events due to the Chicago Fair, but he quickly caught himself up on the details. While he thought the Japanese indemnity "outrageous," he was more bothered by the Qing government's role in persuading the Koreans to settle. "The conduct of the Chinese here," Horace reported in late 1893, "is more openly arrogant than formerly."¹¹³ His aversion to China's presence in Korea, of course, had been a long time in making. But whereas before he had impugned the Qing mostly through words, he began to engage now in more direct challenges. In the winter of that year, Horace joined the new Japanese minister, Ōtori Keisuke (the "doyen" of the foreign officials, as Horace called him), in protesting another prohibition of Korean grain exports. Privately, Horace thought the embargo a good idea since it lowered prices for the Korean population. Yet he was convinced that Yuan Shikai was behind the decision, and as a statement to the Qing—and partly because the only American firm in Korea, Walter Townsend's, was interested in the rice business—Horace had thought "it wise to unite with the Japanese."¹¹⁴

Washington responded with a veiled reprimand. "The Department... approves," wrote Walter Gresham, "a disposition on your part not to permit the legation to favor, even in appearance, the unfortunate intrigues which are engendered at Seoul by rival interests."¹¹⁵ It was not Horace's first admonishment. In the fall of 1893, he had

¹¹⁰ Augustine Heard to John W. Foster, 18 December 1892, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB. In late May 1893, Washington telegraphed Heard that it would be willing to offer its good offices for arbitration of the dispute, but by then the matter had already been settled. Walter Q. Gresham to Augustine Heard, 20 May 1893, Instructions, NARA SB. For correspondence regarding the controversy, see dispatches in *KAR II*, 276-288. See also C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, *Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, 1876-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 71-73. The Korean government agreed to a payment, while Ōishi was soon to be replaced by a new minister, Ōtori Keisuke.

¹¹¹ Augustine Heard to John W. Foster, 4 April 1893, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

¹¹² Augustine Heard to John W. Foster, 20 April 1893, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

¹¹³ Horace N. Allen to Walter Q. Gresham, 20 November 1893, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

¹¹⁴ Horace N. Allen to Walter Q. Gresham, 20 December 1893, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB. As Allen noted, the petition was unsuccessful.

¹¹⁵ Walter Q. Gresham to Horace N. Allen, 5 February 1894, Instructions, NARA SB.

suggested in an official dispatch that in order to increase US influence, Washington might have to pressure the Korean government to renew contracts with American personnel. The State Department disagreed with the very premise. “Under all the circumstances,” Horace was sternly instructed, “it is not deemed expedient to exhibit solicitude for the appointment of Americans to official positions in Korea.”¹¹⁶ As future events were to attest, Allen would not always take such advice to heart.

As for rumors about the *Tonghak*, Horace was not overly concerned. He seemed to have viewed the sect, in essence, as a group of oppressed peasants who could be mollified as long as crop prices remained low. Besides, as he noted in September 1893, shortly after assuming duties as chargé, in case a disturbance did break out, the US legation had “guns and ammunition” sufficient to protect American citizens. By early 1894, Horace was confident that the danger of a revolution had been all but extinguished.¹¹⁷ He was wrong.

The *Tonghak* movement traced its roots to the early 1860s, when its founder and leader, Ch’oe Che-u, a native of the southern Korean province of Kyōngsang, began propagating a new religion as an alternative to Western Learning (or Catholicism). Blending aspects of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and shamanistic practices, *Tonghak* spread throughout the southern provinces and was adopted primarily by the peasant population. After 1864, when Ch’oe was executed by the government, the movement went underground; but by the early 1890s, *Tonghak* had gained new momentum and organizational strength. The demonstration that Augustine Heard observed in 1893 was only the beginning of what would soon turn into a mass uprising.¹¹⁸

Contrary to Horace’s assumptions, *Tonghak* members were not motivated merely by economic grievances. Social equality and millenarianism were core elements of their ideology, while at the same time they called for the ousting of Westerners, Japanese, and corrupt native officials.¹¹⁹ Ten years earlier, Horace had witnessed the revolutionary attempt inside the kingdom’s capital—a power struggle, as he rightly observed, from within the governing structure. The *Tonghak* rebellion was to have a fundamentally different character. To Horace, though, its chief importance would lie in what happened as a direct consequence of it.

In early 1894, a group of *Tonghak* followers led an uprising in a town in Chōlla, a province on the southwestern side of the peninsula. Seizing weapons and granaries from local officials, the rebels grew to a force of some ten thousand before taking hold of the provincial capital. Seoul responded by sending officials down to negotiate. It also forwarded, however, a request to the Chinese Viceroy Li Hongzhang, asking for assistance in quelling the rebellion. In early June that year, the Qing dispatched fifteen hundred soldiers to Korea. Horace later recalled that he happened to be attending a

¹¹⁶ Horace N. Allen to Walter Q. Gresham, 16 October 1893, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB; Edwin H. Uhl to Horace N. Allen, 21 November 1893, Instructions, NARA SB.

¹¹⁷ Horace N. Allen to Walter Q. Gresham, 28 September, 1893, 18 October 1893, 20 December 1893, Despatches from Ministers, NARA SB.

¹¹⁸ For an overview of *Tonghak*, see Ki-baik Yi, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1984), 258-259, 283-288; Yōng-ho Ch’oe, Peter H. Lee, and Theodore de Bary, eds., *Sources of Korean Tradition*, vol. 2, *From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 228-235.

¹¹⁹ See for example Sang Taek Lee, *Religion and Social Formation in Korea: Minjung and Millenarianism* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1996), 105-128.

function at the Chinese legation the night a telegram arrived for Yuan Shikai, announcing the sending of the troops. “The receipt of this telegram,” Horace remembered, “seemed to cause as much elation to the Japanese Legation officials present, as it did depression to the Chinese, who seemed to get a glimpse of grave consequences in store, so that we hastily made our adieus.”¹²⁰

Horace did not know it, but the Japanese legation in Seoul had been studying the *Tonghak* situation throughout the spring. In late May, Minister Ōtori had recommended to Tokyo that in case Korea applied for Chinese help, Japan should counter by sending its own force. For nearly a decade, the Japanese had watched as the Qing, in the name of a special suzerain status, consolidated their predominance on the peninsula. But unlike in 1884, the last time the two countries faced off on Korean soil, the Meiji leadership was now prepared to challenge that position militarily. By the middle of June 1894, there were more than 4,000 Japanese soldiers entrenched in the Seoul area. Though the Korean government had already announced a truce with the *Tonghak* rebels and requested withdrawal of all outside troops, neither the Qing nor Japan complied. Both saw control of the peninsula as essential to their own security, and by summer’s end, war loomed.¹²¹

It arrived on August 1, 1894.

* * *

The Sino-Japanese War, Horace Allen said in later years, “gave the world its first shock of surprise.” Horace, at least, had been much impressed, not least “by the facility and celerity of the movements of the Japanese troops” in Korea. But he was equally taken aback by the defeat of the Qing Empire. He had expected a sure victory by the Chinese—if not by military might, then by China’s advantage of having a land connection to the peninsula. Yet the war lasted only eight months before the Qing surrendered to a superior and more modernized Japanese military. Among the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 1895), China was to recognize Korea’s full “independence,” and all tributes and ceremonial functions observed by the Chosŏn dynasty were permanently to cease.¹²² It was the final eclipse of the Sino-Korean tributary relationship, which though by now had

¹²⁰ Horace Allen speech, “The Awakening of Korea,” given at Clark University, 1909, Allen Papers.

¹²¹ In accordance with the 1885 Treaty of Tientsin (negotiated between China and Japan following the 1884 coup in Seoul), Li Hongzhang gave notice to the Meiji government that Chinese troops were being sent to the peninsula. In Tokyo, however, the decision had already been made to take advantage of the opportunity for a military expedition. By July 1894, the Japanese force in Korea had increased to ten thousand. See Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 66-69; S. C. M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 113-120; Kim and Kim, *Politics of Imperialism*, 77-84. In July, Ōtori and his soldiers invaded and occupied Kyŏngbok Palace, forcing Kojong to accept a reorganization of the Council of State. At this time, the Taewŏn’gun made a brief return to the court. For a summary of these events, see Nahm, *Korea: Tradition & Transformation*, 176-179.

¹²² The treaty also required China to pay a 200 million tale indemnity; cede Taiwan, the Pescadores, and the Liaodong Peninsula; open four additional ports; and grant Japan most-favored-nation status. See Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), 223-224.

been fundamentally transformed, could be traced back for more than one millennium. “Such a downfall,” Horace declared, “had never before been witnessed in Korea.”¹²³

The war marked the end of an era in Chōson Korea. With the exiting of the Qing, the peninsular kingdom would become engulfed in a geopolitical vacuum filled first by a rivalry between Russia and Japan, and then ultimately by Japanese colonization. During these years, as before, Korea’s efforts to determine its own future would continue to be hampered by foreign aggression and interference. Its attempts to maintain its national sovereignty by appealing to the mediation of the international community, on the other hand, were to fail, leaving Korea isolated and without any recourse against Japan’s ambitions.¹²⁴ By the dawn of the twentieth century, it would become clear that the outside world, not least the United States, was willing to accept the peninsula as a casualty of the age of empire.

The 1894 Sino-Japanese war also marked a transition point in Horace Allen’s career. Over the next decade, Allen would not only rise to the post of United States minister to Korea, but would become involved in other undertakings, including helping to facilitate the first wave of Korean immigration to Hawaii. Many of the themes that characterized the initial ten years of Allen’s tenure would persist: his close ties with King Kojong, his connection to the missionary enterprise, his support for Korean political independence, his attempts to increase American knowledge about the country. But so would the nascent contradictions. The growing scope of Horace’s activities, especially in the realm of economic concessions, would often belie his claim of working on Korea’s behalf. Increasingly, seeking advantages for Americans would assume its own rationale.

Perhaps the most obvious incongruity in Horace’s future years on the peninsula would be the widening gulf in expectations between the United States and Korea. The latter half of his tenure would coincide with the kingdom moving even further outside the orbit of Washington’s foreign policy interests, at the same time that Seoul would press the US government for a guarantee of protection against threats to Korea’s autonomy.¹²⁵ How much Horace Allen contributed to that disjuncture remains debatable. That the early

¹²³ Horace Allen speeches, “The Awakening of Korea,” given at Clark University, 1909; “Social and Political History of Korea,” n.d., Allen Papers.

¹²⁴ On Japanese imperialism, see for example Akira Iriye, “Japan’s Drive to Great-Power Status,” in *The Emergence of Meiji Japan*, ed. Marius B. Jansen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 721-782.

¹²⁵ Nahm, *Korea: Tradition & Transformation*, 37; Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, 24-25; Wayne Patterson and Hilary Conroy, “Duality and Dominance: A Century of Korean-American Relations,” in *One Hundred Years of Korean-American Relations, 1882-1892*, ed. Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1986), 3-5. As has been discussed in detail in the literature, one of the reasons for Korea’s expectation of US mediation was because of the “good offices” clause in the 1882 Korea-US treaty, which stated that “if other Powers deal unjustly or oppressively with either Government, the other will exert their good offices, on being informed of the case, to bring about an amicable agreement, thus showing their friendly feelings.” Article 1, “Treaty of Amity and Commerce,” in *Korean Treaties*, comp. Henry Chung (New York: H. S. Nichols, Inc., 1919), 197. According to historian Yur-Bok Lee, “King Kojong and his adherents interpreted the good offices provision to mean that the United States would guarantee the territorial integrity and political independence of Korea by taking sides with Korea in cases of foreign aggression or oppression. They sincerely believed that the American ‘guarantee’ was not only legal but a moral commitment.” Yur-Bok Lee, “A Korean View of Korean-American Relations,” in *Korean-American Relations, 1866-1997*, ed. Yur-Bok Lee and Wayne Patterson (Albany: State University Press of New York, 1999), 18. On Korea’s use of the good offices clause and the American response during the period 1884-1895, see especially Chay, *Diplomacy of Asymmetry*, 60-107.

period of American-Korean relations would have looked significantly different without him is almost certain.

Afterword

On a spring day in 1908, three years after he had permanently left Seoul, Horace Allen made his way to the Savoy Hotel in New York City. The twelve-story, steel-columned building was situated at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 59th Street, adjacent to Central Park, and had been built some fifteen years earlier as part of the recent boom in hotel construction.¹ Neither the Savoy nor many of the skyscrapers that now clamored for vertical space across the cityscape existed when Horace had visited back in the late 1880s, during his time as Korean legation secretary. He might have wondered at the vast changes two decades had wrought here in America's largest city. Then again, in so many other ways, the world seemed to him a different place.

Horace had come to the hotel to deliver a speech on "missionary work in Korea." Rising in front of an audience of nearly five hundred people, including officers of the Presbyterian mission board, he began his remarks on a congratulatory note. "It is no small honor," Horace said, "to have been instrumental in opening up that marvelous work in Korea, even if I was but the instrument for holding the medical scalpel. I cannot claim more than this opening work however, for to the clerical missionaries who followed me, must be given the full credit for the success which now so surprises the world." He singled out his former colleague Horace Underwood, who was among the guests in attendance. "I would like to say," Allen enthused, "that long years after many of us are forgotten, his name will be a household word in hundreds of regenerated homes in the land of his care and devotion."²

Precisely who else was in the audience that April evening in 1908 is not known, but at least the Presbyterian board officers would have understood Allen's effusions. Over the past decade, American missionary work in Korea had witnessed a spectacular growth, so much so that the Korea field was starting to be hailed as a veritable miracle in modern missions.³ This growth was evidenced in the increase in institutions—hospitals, schools, literary publications, bible training classes—but more exceptionally, in the number of Christian adherents. At more than 100,000, Protestants in Korea still made up a small segment of the general population, yet they had expanded at an exponential rate unrivaled by their frequently cited comparisons, China and Japan. But the Presbyterians had a special reason to celebrate. Not only could they be credited with sending the first resident Protestant missionary to Korea—Horace Allen—but since that time they had also maintained the most prominent mission there. In fact counted together, American

¹ The speech was delivered on April 2, 1908. See "Missionary Work in Korea," in Horace N. Allen Papers, The New York Public Library. Sarah Bradford Landau and Carl W. Condit, *Rise of the New York Skyscraper, 1865-1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 340.

² "Missionary Work in Korea," Allen Papers.

³ The 1910 World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, for instance, called the growth of Christianity in Korea "one of the marvels of modern history." See L. George Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832-1910* (Pyeng Yang: Union Christian College Press, 1929), 2.

missionaries from the Presbyterian and Methodist boards had come to comprise almost seventy-five percent of the entire international Protestant force in Korea.⁴

It was not that Horace Allen had forgotten about the early years, the years when the Presbyterian mission had nearly broken apart, when it had managed to carry on, in some ways, despite itself. Nor, if he were still in Korea, would he have changed his mind about the over zealous type. As he would note in his upcoming publication of *Things Korean*, a collection of anecdotes from his two-decade experience on the peninsula, “new material” on the mission field still seemed to him a problem. “If the young missionary,” Horace wrote, “could only suppress himself until he gets his halo adjusted so it will not topple over and obscure his vision, he would obtain a better view of things and might save himself and his associates some unpleasantness.”⁵ If there was something of the past veiled in those comments, Allen had nonetheless reached by now a genuine rapprochement with Horace Underwood and other past colleagues. He could agree, too, that Korea had become the “banner mission” of the overseas Protestant enterprise, in part due to the dedication and quality of the missionaries. “The men and women forming the missionary body in Korea,” he told his Savoy audience, “are an unusually high class company.”

Horace himself had spent just under five years as a member of that body (one of these years in China); and yet looking back, he had little doubt about the importance of his missionary tenure. “Providence,” he continued in his speech, “seems to have ordered my going to Korea.” Indeed as a mission agent Horace Allen had played a pivotal role not only in the history of Protestant Christianity in Korea, but also in the making of the US-Korea relations. A young, inexperienced physician from Ohio, he had helped establish a base for the American missionary involvement on the peninsula, an endeavor from which Horace would ultimately depart, but which would remain the largest and most enduring aspect of the US’s connection to Korea well into the twentieth century. It was the missionaries who would choose to stay, long after Washington had recalled Allen and closed its legation in 1905, long after Japan would colonize the country five years later.⁶

But divine superintendence, Horace Allen at one time believed, had also led him into the other pillar of his career in Korea—the political arena. Now, to his New York

⁴ This number included missionaries from the southern Presbyterian and southern Methodists boards, who began arriving in Korea in 1893 and 1897, respectively. Overall, however, Presbyterians from the northern board comprised the largest group of Protestant missionaries (approximately one-third in 1909), followed by the northern Methodists. See tables and appendices in Charles Davis Stokes, “History of Methodist Missions in Korea, 1885-1930” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1947) ix-xvi; Sung-Deuk Oak, “The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea: North American Missionaries’ Attitudes Toward Korean Religions, 1884-1910” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University School of Theology, 2002), 80-87. On the growth of Korean Christianity at the turn of the century, see for example Andrew Eungi Kim, “Political insecurity, social chaos, religious void and the rise of Protestantism in late nineteenth-century Korea,” *Social History* 26 (October 2001): 268-281; Timothy S. Lee, “A Political Factor in the Rise of Protestantism in Korea: Protestantism and the 1919 March First Movement,” *Church History* 69 (March 2000): 116-142; Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).

⁵ *Things Korean: A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908). *Things Korean* would be published in November of that year. “Announcements of New York Books,” *The New York Times*, November 28, 1908.

⁶ For an examination of American missionaries in this latter period, see especially Donald N. Clark, *Living Dangerously in Korea: The Western Experience, 1900-1950* (Norwalk, Conn.: EastBridge, 2003).

audience, he described the transition in more modest terms. “I know it is unusual for a missionary to drift into diplomacy and rise to the highest post in the gift of his government,” Horace said, “but the change was so gradual that I worked up to it by degrees and acquired a familiarity with native customs and ways of thought that became of considerable service.” Such discreetness was perhaps appropriate for the occasion, for some of his listeners would have surely heard about Horace’s inglorious departure from Seoul several years earlier. A few might have even known about his confrontation with President Theodore Roosevelt, a contest that, as the rumors went, had cost Allen his diplomatic position.

Indeed, “drift” was only part of the story. A full accounting would have to begin with Allen’s crucial first decade, then continue to the subsequent ten years during which he would emerge as the most influential American, if not Westerner, in Korea. It would be in this latter half of his career, years that witnessed the brutal assassination of Queen Min by the Japanese, another regional war on the peninsula, the rise of a Korean nationalist movement, and the United States’ own march toward empire, that Horace Allen would cement his complicated legacy.

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