Reaction and Response to the Opening of Korea, 1876–1884

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The end of Korea's policy of isolation and subsequent developments stimulated political ferment among the contending factions in Seoul. The contest for political power was particularly intense and bitter between men who were conservative and pro-Chinese and those who were progressive and anti-Chinese. The latter advocated reform for the modernization of the ancient kingdom of Korea. The politics of reaction and response, while setting the pattern of conflict between political groups in Korea, marked the beginning of active participation by foreign powers in Korea's domestic affairs. Meanwhile, the movement launched by the Progressives signaled the rise of modern nationalism in Korea.

This paper deals with: (1) the initial reaction of the anti-foreign groups to the opening of Korea; and (2) the clash between the conservative party called *Sadaedang* and the reform party called *Kaehwadang* which brought about the bloody events of December of 1884.

Anti-Foreign Reaction

Different types of reaction developed immediately after the conclusion of the Kanghwa Treaty of February 26, 1876, between Korea and Japan and the commercial agreements signed between them. The uncompromising, anti-foreign sentiment was voiced by conservative intellectuals who were genuinely concerned with the preservation of Korea's traditional ethics and values. The politically

oriented anti-foreign (both anti-Western and anti-Chinese) movement was promoted by the Regent Taewŏngun, who was the father of King Kojong (1851–1919). The third type was the response which developed among the more progressive elements in and outside the Court of Kojong. The interaction between these groups created in Seoul a sensitive and explosive political situation, which was further aggravated by the Treaty of Amity and Commerce between Korea and the United States (often called the Chemulp'o or Shufeldt Treaty) of May 22, 1882.

Long before the conclusion of these treaties, the tradition-bound Confucian scholars had advocated and implemented an anti-foreign policy which was directed against the "Western Learning" movement and the Catholicism that had come into Korea.[1] In spite of repressive legal measures against them, the progressive scholars' interest in Western thought, science, and religion continued to increase, and the number of Catholic converts multiplied. The increasing frequency of the visits of foreign vessels to Korean waters and the Western demands for commercial intercourse fostered even more anti-foreign sentiment in Korea. To halt the spread of foreign influence, Taewŏngun ordered the massacre of the French Catholic missionaries and Korean converts in March, 1866, and when the American schooner *General Sherman* violated Korean territory in the summer of that year, Koreans burned the ship and killed its crew. At the same time, Taewŏngun strengthened Korea's coastal defense against Western intruders and possible invasions by French and American troops; and when American aggression did come, in the latter part of the spring of 1871, Taewŏngun ordered his troops to repel the "barbarians," and he warned the people about the evils of the Westerners by erecting a stone monument in the Chongno Square in Seoul.[2] At the same time, he decreed that those who advocated peace with the "Western barbarians" would be considered traitors, and would suffer appropriate punishment. However, a combination of factors forced Taewŏngun to quit his post as regent in 1873, leaving him powerless to prevent the renewal of diplomatic and commercial relations between Korea and Japan. He could only despise the Westerners who arrived in Korea and wait for an opportunity to put his reactionary program into operation.

The Korean-Japanese treaty revived the anti-foreign movement,

and a critical opinion of the government policy developed in some quarters, particularly among orthodox Confucian intellectuals such as Yi Man-son, Kim P'yŏng-muk, Ch'oe In-hyŏn, and others who regarded the ideals and the system of China's ancient sage kings (Yao, Shun, and Yü) as the Golden Rule, and preached that the teachings of Confucius were the foundation of the moral and ethical system of the people. They were convinced that the "barbarian customs" were lecherous and sensual and therefore extremely harmful to ancient values, and that alien interests and influence would certainly weaken the moral and ethical foundation of the kingdom. Their policy may be described as "repel evils and rectify the conditions of the people." Their attitude was reactionary and conservative toward domestic matters and both anti-Western and anti-Japanese on foreign policy.[3] Therefore, they opposed the rise of Western thought and religion in Korea, and they agitated for the prevention of Japanese influence there.

Scholars such as Kim P'yŏng-muk were thoroughly convinced that once foreigners were permitted to enter Korea, inevitably alien thought and practices would corrupt the people. So violently opposed to the opening of Korea was Kim that he, along with Yi Man-son and Hong Chae-hak, submitted memorials to the king protesting the policy of dealing with foreign powers. They even demanded that Kim Hong-jip, the king's envoy to Japan in 1880, be put to death because he had advised the king to import Western civilization and establish close ties with Japan, a policy which had accomplished extensive modernization in a short period of time.[4] The memorial submitted by Kim P'yŏng-muk, author of the book entitled *Ch'ŏkyang tae* ("The Principles of Anti-Westernism"), contained so many harsh and disrespectful elements that he was sent into exile in the summer of 1881.[5] However, Kim and others continued to fight for the lost cause and maintained their uncompromising intellectual conservatism to the end.

The opposition of intellectual conservatism to the introduction of Western civilization and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan and other powers was a futile battle against the currents of modern times. No matter what the values of the Confucian system may have been, the political corruption and economic stagnation that had lasted for many centuries under the autocratic government administered by the Confucian literati weakened the very foundation

upon which that system was built. The people had lost confidence, both in those values, and in those who advocated them. Moreover, Korea was in no position to reject the wishes and demands of the Japanese nor those of the European powers.

The anti-foreign movement in Korea was closely related to the anti-government, and particularly anti-Min (Queen Min and her supporters), sentiment. The politically motivated anti-foreign policy was promoted by Taewŏngun, who became a bitter enemy of Queen Min after his retirement in 1873. Thus he welcomed the crisis which developed in Seoul in the summer of 1882, two months after the conclusion of the Korean-American treaty of 1882. The event which precipitated this crisis dates back to October, 1881, when secret police discovered a conspiracy led by Yi Chae-sŏn, an illegitimate son of Taewŏngun, against Queen Min and her clan. Mass arrests were made, the conspirators were sentenced to death, and many military officers who had joined the plot were imprisoned. This first attempt to overthrow the Min power by those who were against the opening of Korea created a chain reaction in the summer of 1882. The military uprising of July, 1882, known in Korean history as *Imo kunnan*, began as a local riot in Seoul staged by soldiers who had not been paid for almost a year and who were opposed to the modern military training program of the government.[6] The rioting soldiers, while registering their grievances, stormed the Ch'andŏk Palace and other government buildings in Seoul and killed many members of the Min party.

Taewŏngun quickly took advantage of this situation to regain power so that he might fulfil his goals, which were to crush the Min power, and to carry out his anti-foreign policy. After taking command of the insurrectionists, Taewŏngun was able to force Queen Min to flee from her palace, and he also murdered many pro-Min and pro-Chinese officials. Meanwhile, the insurrectionists, after killing a Japanese military instructor, threatened to harm the lives and damage the property of the Japanese. The mob joined the soldiers and forced several Japanese, including Minister Hanabusa Yoshitake, to flee to Inch'ŏn, and then to Japan.[7] But, Taewŏngun failed to retain his position, as the Chinese intervened.

Grand Secretary of the Ch'ing government and Viceroy of Chihli, Li Hung-chang, who was in charge of foreign affairs for the government in Peking, received news of the insurrection in Seoul, and

immediately dispatched Commander Wu Ch'ang-ch'ing and two other generals to the peninsula with some 5,000 troops.[8] Arriving in Seoul, the Chinese quickly restored order, kidnaped and transported Taewŏngun to China where he was imprisoned until October, 1885, and returned Queen Min to power in Seoul. A treaty was signed between Korea and Japan on August 30, 1882, settling personal and property damages inflicted upon the Japanese during the insurrection.[9]

Korea had been a vassal state to China since the Manchu conquest in 1637.[10] Traditionally, however, the Ch'ing government refrained from interfering in Korea's domestic affairs as long as Korea continued to recognize China's suzerainty and remained obedient to her wishes, and as long as no other powers challenged China's political and economic positions in Korea. However, an antipathy developed among some Koreans toward Chinese domination, and Korea's gradual involvement in international complications created a new situation for the Chinese government.

The Chinese had been suspicious of Taewŏngun's intentions, as well as of Japan's, in Korea for some time. China's apprehension concerning Japanese intentions was a logical reaction to the new situation that had developed in her vassal state; in the first place, Japan, by recognizing Korea's sovereignty and independence in the treaty of 1876, and by concluding commercial agreements with Korea, challenged China's claims to suzerain rights and commercial privileges in Korea.

As yet, Japan had not developed a territorial appetite for Korea; but she was determined to achieve three objectives there: (1) the destruction of China's claims in Korea and the end of Chinese control there; (2) increased political influence and the furtherance of Japan's economic interests; and (3) the prevention of Korea's becoming a threat to the security of Japan.[11] In order to accomplish the second and third objectives, the Japanese government, prior to 1894, endeavored to achieve the first goal without going to war with China.

As China sank deeply into political and economic crisis following the Opium and Arrow wars, and especially after the T'ai-p'ing Rebellion, the leaders of the Ch'ing government became irrational, and an extreme sense of insecurity and frustration prevailed among them. As a result, extremists in Peking, such as Chang P'ei-lun and

T'eng Ch'en-hsiu, advocated positive action against Japan while "she was weak," as well as the suppression of anti-Chinese sentiment in Korea.[12] Even Li Hung-chang, who was much more realistic and cautious than the others, felt that increased Japanese interests and influence in Korea constituted a menace to the security of China and to her position in Korea, and should not be tolerated.[13] Hence, Li, by taking advantage of the Korean situation in the summer of 1882, carried out his policy to whip Korea back into the Chinese orbit and reassert China's claims there. Subsequently, trade regulations between Korea and China were revised (in October, 1882, and again in March, 1883), with the incorporation of new features which ensured for the Chinese a special position in Korea.[14] In December, 1882, the Korean government was reorganized and patterned after that of the Ch'ing. Two Chinese were made counselors, and Ch'en Shu-t'ang, another Chinese, was made the Chinese Commissioner for Commercial Relations in Korea. Li Hung-chang installed a Chinese agent, Paul G. von Möllendorff, a former German consul at Tientsin, as vice-president of the Korean foreign office and inspector-general of Maritime Customs for the Korean government; General Wu Ch'ang-ch'ing and Commander Yüan Shih-k'ai supervised Korean military affairs; and an ardently pro-Chinese Korean, Cho Nyŏng-ha, was appointed president of the foreign office.

Chinese influence in Korea grew stronger after Li Hung-chang established direct control over Korea through his agents, and the Korean reform movement which had arisen was thereby paralyzed. As a result, Korea became even weaker and more defenseless, a ready victim for foreign aggression. The dry-rot of Chinese conservatism and reactionary policy pervaded everywhere. Naturally, the re-establishment of Chinese domination over Korea strengthened the political position held by Queen Min and her supporters, but at the same time, it stimulated the growth of anti-Chinese sentiment.

SADAEDANG VS KAEHWADANG: KAPSIN CHŎNGBYŎN

The reassertion of Chinese suzerainty and strict control in Korea also aroused nationalistic sentiment, and this spirit was fostered by a group of young aristocrats in Seoul. The rise of this group caused the pro-Chinese conservatives to become even more reactionary;

consequently, conflict between the two antagonistic groups in Seoul became intense, and the struggle for power between them brought about the violent event known as *Kapsin chŏngbyŏn* (the "Political Incident of the Year Kapsin") on December 4–6, 1884.

The leaders of the conservative *Sadaedang* (the "Great-Power-Serving-Party") were Queen Min (King Kojong's wife), her young nephew Prince Min Yŏng-ik, and their adviser Paul G. von Möllendorff. Queen Min was the guardian of the interests of the Min clan and its allies, and the real power behind the throne occupied by the unhappy King Kojong. Her actions were motivated by selfish interests, and whatever she did was the result "of expediency and partisan animosity rather than intellectual conviction."[15] The Queen was determined to maintain the *status quo*, not only in regard to the balance of power between her party and others, but also in terms of the relationship *vis-à-vis* China. Although she was uneducated and superstitious, the Queen was capable of perceiving the possibility of strengthening her own position and protecting her clan's interests by allowing limited, slow changes in Korea, and her political skill and knavery surpassed that of the other members of the Min party.[16]

Prince Min was a "young man of pleasing manners and gracious address," but he demonstrated no trace of progressivism, and his policy, like that of his aunt, was based on selfish, partisan interests. Although he was aware of the necessity of change in Korea, his awareness was overshadowed by his concern for his family interests. He had been exposed to the "light" when he visited the United States and Europe as a member of King Kojong's first mission to the West in 1883–1884, and his belief in reform had been somewhat strengthened during his visit. But as he confessed to the American minister General Lucius Foote, he "returned into the dark" when he returned to Seoul.[17] When he saw the Progressives and the king preparing for the "vigorous infusion of Western civilization" into Korea, Prince Min became a determined enemy of the progressive movement and its advocates.[18]

Behind the reactionary forces in Korea was the German adviser von Möllendorff, the watchdog of Li Hung-chang and faithful servant of Queen Min. He considered the Progressives as "scoundrels" who would bring "terrible mischief to the country," and he was "fully aware of the Japanese aims to destroy Chinese influence

in Korea" which he was sent to protect.[19] He was loyal to China, and he had evinced strong resentment when his policies were challenged by the young Korean Progressives.[20]

The young nationalists, who had become aware of Korea's backwardness, advocated political, economic, and social reform. Their supreme objective was the immediate achievement of complete and permanent independence for Korea, for they were certain that as long as China maintained her domination over Korea, and as long as the Min party and the Chinese jointly blocked Korea's progressive reform movement, Korea was sure to suffer disastrous consequences. Therefore, men who shared similar ideas and convictions gradually rallied around Kim Ok-kyun, a young official in the government who was the epitome of anti-Chinese reform spirit in Korea.

Kim Ok-kyun (1851–1894), son of a Confucian scholar, studied Confucian classics at the school in Kannung which was established by Yi I, one of the most outstanding scholars in Korea, who is better known as Master Yulgok.[21] After completing his basic studies in Kannung, Kim went to Seoul where he attended the national Confucian Academy. There he became associated with sons of some of the powerful families in Korea. He was a bright, intelligent, and ambitious student, and Kim's future as a dynamic leader seemed predestined. At the age of twenty-two he passed the metropolitan examination in *munkkwa* (Division of Classics) with the highest literary distinction of *chang'wŏn*. After serving in various capacities in the government, he was made Deputy Transmitter of Royal Edicts in the Office of Transmitters, an office which enabled him to establish a personal relationship with the king.[22] Thereafter, he rose to prominence and was appointed Counsellor of the Board of Punishment before his thirtieth birthday.

In Seoul, Kim foresaw the impending crises at home and abroad, and as a conscientious and patriotic official was keenly aware of the dangerous situation arising. He felt strongly the need for reforms in Korea, and his basic conviction was further strengthened by his acquaintance with such scholars as Yu Tae-ch'i and Monk Yi Tong-in. Moreover, through reports submitted by the king's emissaries such as Kim Ki-su, Kim Hong-jip, and Ŏ Yun-jung who had visited Japan and elsewhere, he became aware of conditions in other lands.

Kim Ok-kyun's conversion to a progressive and nationalistic philosophy occurred when he met, and eventually became a disciple of, Fukuzawa Yukichi, the champion of liberalism and progressivism in Japan.[23] Kim's visit to Japan in 1881 enabled him to become acquainted with new ideas and systems. What he saw in Japan not only astonished, but also inspired, him. Affected by Fukuzawa's progressive philosophy, and impressed with achievements made by the new leaders in Japan, Kim came to the conclusion that nationalism and progressivism, alone, could reconstruct and improve the conditions of his people and country. He felt the pressure of time keenly, and became seriously concerned with the impact of foreign intrusion, especially that of China.

During his sojourn in Tokyo, Kim established personal relationships with such outstanding Japanese leaders as Itō Hirobumi, Inoue Kaoru, Gotō Shōjirō, Itagaki Taisuke, and Fukuzawa Yukichi; they, in return, came to regard him as a potential modern leader for Korea. Moreover, his "marked intelligence and attractive manners" left a very favorable impression among the European diplomats in Tokyo.[24] He was concerned with the welfare of his people and the destiny of his country, and he demonstrated his hatred for injustice, backwardness, and outmoded conventions of the past. At every opportunity, he preached the doctrine of progress, and he considered it his duty to lead his young friends toward the goal of the amalgamation of Western ideas with the best of his own tradition.[25]

Kim deepened his relationships with the Japanese leaders when he went to Japan in September, 1882, as a member of the goodwill mission sent by King Kojong following the conclusion of the treaty between Korea and Japan. The mission was headed by Pak Yŏng-hyo, son-in-law of the late king; Kim Ok-kyun was his adviser. At this time the Progressives hurriedly produced a Korean national flag (the present-day Republic of Korea flag), instead of using the old flag that symbolized Korea's vassalage to China. The mission was cordially received, and friendly relations between the two countries were restored. The mission was also able to secure a loan of 170,000 yen from the Specie Bank in Japan to finance reform programs in Korea.

Upon returning to Seoul, fully converted to nationalism and progressivism, young Kim and his friends banded together for the

national cause, and they won the king's support for their reform program. Thus, a political group known as *Kaehwadang* (the "Progressive Party") emerged.[26] The main objectives of the Progressive Party were: (1) to open Korea to Western civilization; (2) to establish a modern government; and (3) to achieve complete and permanent independence from China.[27] Because of their goals and activities the Progressives stood diametrically opposed to Queen Min's party.

Despite the conservatives' opposition, the king and the Progressives were able to carry out certain reform measures;[28] but they demanded more reforms, and wanted a speedier implementation of their modernization program than the Chinese and Korean conservatives would allow. Antagonism between the two parties mounted steadily, and the personal relationship between Prince Min and von Möllendorff on the one hand, and Kim and his comrades on the other, grew gradually worse. Prince Min became convinced that so long as the Progressives schemed to eliminate Chinese control and to destroy the Min monopoly of power, there could be no room for either compromise with, or tolerance for, such a movement. Since neither was possible between the two antagonistic groups, each conspired to destroy the other. In 1883, these rapidly deteriorating relations prompted the reactionaries to launch an all-out effort to stamp out progressivism and crush the reform movement. Pak Yŏng-hyo, who had carried out numerous reforms as mayor of Seoul, was transferred to the governorship of a province, and the first modern press, *Hansŏng sunbo*, which was the voice of the Progressive Party, was forced to discontinue operation.[29]

In view of the worsening political situation and the increasing intensity of animosity between the two political groups in Seoul, moderates such as Kim Hong-jip, Ŏ Yun-jung, and others attempted to bring about a reconciliation between the two hostile camps by introducing a gradual political reform program, and by preaching the need for national defense. At the same time, they proposed international cooperation between Korea, China, and Japan for mutual survival, emphasizing the dangers arising from the encroachment by imperialistic Western powers.[30] They also endeavored to find neutral ground upon which Korea, without antagonizing China, could achieve her independence and modernization. However, their efforts were unsuccessful.

The Progressives felt the growing danger of a plot to annihilate them, as the Chinese in Seoul became more arrogant and Korean conservatives grew more reactionary. Their realization of such a possibility led them to become more emotional and radical, and to seek more and immediate aid from the Japanese, who frequently displayed their anti-Chinese sentiment while showing their willingness to help the Korean Progressives to achieve their goals. King Kojong and the Progressives also sought American cooperation through Minister Foote who believed that the influence of the United States should become a permanent factor in the progress of Korea. However, the Korean Progressives, particularly Kim Ok-kyun, felt that they understood the Japanese better than they did the Americans, and they thought that their neighbor seemed to be more willing to help them. But on a trip to Japan in the fall of 1883, Kim discovered, to his dismay, that the Meiji leaders were not only reluctant to commit Japan in Korea's domestic affairs, but were also suppressing a pro-Korean movement in Japan. The disheartened Kim then attempted to solicit American or French aid, but with no success.[31] He returned to Seoul empty-handed, and as of the spring of 1884, it seemed to the Progressives that all hope was lost, and that Korea had no choice but to remain a vassal state to China and suffer national humiliation.

The sudden intensification of the Franco-Chinese conflict over Annam in the fall of 1884 created an entirely new situation, not only for China, but also for the Progressives and their opponents in Korea.[32] The Japanese minister Takezoe Shin'ichirō, who, until his return from Tokyo to Seoul in October, 1884, had maintained a cool, if not suspicious, attitude toward the Progressives, now demonstrated his sympathy and willingness to help the national cause of the reform party.[33] Not only Takezoe, but also other Japanese who were in Seoul, actively encouraged Kim and his friends to take bold steps to accomplish their goals.[34] As a result, the Progressives, in cooperation with the Japanese, laid plans for a *coup d'état*.

Sensing the approaching crisis, the American Minister Foote and British Consul Aston in Seoul cautioned the Progressives to be moderate in their movement, and they advised Kim not to rely too heavily on the Japanese. Even Yüan Shih-k'ai sensed the brewing storm in Seoul and sent a confidential message to Li Hung-chang on November 11, saying that the king and many of his supporters

were planning to seize an opportunity to shake off Chinese control in order to achieve full independence and modernization. "I fear," he wrote, "that in three years' time the result of this policy will become evident."[36]

In spite of the warnings given by the American and British representatives, the crisis approached rapidly, sooner even than Yüan had expected, as the Progressives completed their plans for the coup. King Kojong, too, was convinced that he would have no better opportunity to win his kingdom's independence and to liberate himself from the Min domination.[34] The "great event" occurred on the eve of December 4, 1884.[37] Prince Min was mortally wounded, and many pro-Chinese ministers and generals of the army were put to death by the revolutionaries,[38] but no harm was done to the Queen. The reform government was established during the night, and the King gave his approval. The Japanese soldiers commanded by Capt. Murakami Masamori were called into the palace to protect the King and his newly-born government.[39]

The policies which the ephemeral revolutionary government proclaimed on December 5 expressed strong nationalism and a certain degree of progressivism. It was declared, among other things, that:[40]

(1) The Chinese government must free Taewŏngun and allow him to return to Korea.
(2) The practice of sending tributes to China must be abolished.
(3) Factionalism must be abolished, and equality among the people must be established.
(4) Men of talent must be employed in the government, regardless of their birth or social origin.
(5) The taxation system must be revised, and the welfare of the people must be promoted.
(6) The Office of Eunuchs must be abolished.
(7) A modern police system must be established to prevent crime.
(8) Political prisoners and those who were sent into exile injustly must be freed.
(9) Corrupt officials must be punished.
(10) The Bureau of Trade, which benefited the Chinese, must be abolished.
(11) The national financial administration must be in the hands of the Board of Revenue, and all other offices which handled finance must be abolished.

(12) Conferences of Ministers and Councillors must meet at the Assembly Hall, and all government decrees and regulations must be made public.

(13) All political offices and agencies other than the Six Boards (Ministeries) must be abolished.

Thus, the so-called "Kim Ok-kyun's *samil ch'ŏnha*" began.[41]

Outside the palace, rumors spread among the citizenry that the King and the Queen had been murdered by the Japanese. Counter-revolutionary forces were organized by Yüan Shih-k'ai and Korean reactionaries, and the Chinese and Korean soldiers attacked the palace on the afternoon of December 6. The handful of Japanese and Korean defenders could not match the overwhelming odds and the stillborn reform government was crushed. The King was taken into custody by the counterrevolutionaries, but some Progressives who survived the ordeal managed to escape to the Japanese legation with the Japanese, and then to Japan via Inch'ŏn.[42] The Min party was restored to power, and a Korean-Japanese protocol of January 9, 1885, settled several issues which had developed as a result of the abortive coup.[43] The Tientsin Treaty of April 18, 1885, signed by Li Hung-chang and Itō Hirobumi, removed temporarily the danger of war between China and Japan over Korea.[44]

CONCLUSION

Korea proved to be "the sick man of the Far East" toward the end of the nineteenth century, and Japan played a role similar to that of Great Britain in the Middle East. Unlike the British, however, the Japanese displayed no desire to go to war with China for the sake of the sick man during the latter's early confrontation with China. While Japanese policy makers believed that Korea's independence and her modernization would be desirable for the security of Japan, their primary interest in Korea lay in promoting their own political influence and economic interests, the latter seeming much more vital. They pursued a safe and sane policy, and attempted to gain maximum profit with minimum risk. Only a handful of Japanese "liberals" (who were against the oligarchical control) and their agents in Korea agitated for aggressive action in behalf of the Korean reform advocates.

An ideology known in Korea as *sadae jui* or *mohwa sasang*[45]

dominated the minds of the leaders in general, particularly those of the Min clan. So strong was the influence of *mohwa sasang* on Korean aristocrats (*yangban* in Korean), that they copied things Chinese blindly and regarded non-Chinese thought and practices as "barbarous and evil." Politically, the conservatives were subservient to China, and the absence of any spirit of intellectual and political independence on the part of the government inevitably undermined national or racial self-consciousness among the people of Korea as a whole. Thus, when Confucian intellectuals such as Kim P'yŏng-muk spoke of safeguarding the cultural tradition and ethical values of Korea, they meant the preservation of Chinese thought and institutions.

The Progressives espoused nationalism and progressivism, but their nationalism was romantic in nature, and their reform ideas were superficial and lacked deep conviction. Although their vocabulary included such words as liberty, equality, justice, and progress, they were under the influence of traditional political elitism. Far from promoting the concept of popular sovereignty, they even failed to take into consideration the importance of popular support. Their dreams of transforming Korea into a modern nation proved to be only fantasy, for neither they nor Korea were ready to duplicate the pattern that had changed Japan from a feudal nation into a modern empire.

The young reform advocates, although sincere and dedicated, were naïve, impatient, and inexperienced, both in their thinking and in practical politics. The romantic idealism of the progressives—no matter how inspiring, logical, and just in itself—proved to be ineffectual in the realm of practical affairs. They failed to take into consideration the political and geographical importance of Korea to China, while overestimating the goodwill of the Japanese. Moreover, they were ignorant of, or overlooked significant differences in historical experience and stages of economic and social development between Korea and Japan: Japan had never been subjected to Chinese domination, whereas Korea had been a vassal state to the Yüan, the Ming, and the Ch'ing dynasties for many centuries; furthermore, the economic and social changes that had taken place in Japan since 1600 had not occurred in Korea.

There can be little doubt that the Progressives understood progressivism only in its narrower sense, precluding democratic con-

cepts and practices in the affairs of the nation. This was so primarily because, as their counterparts in Japan had demonstrated, a Western type of liberalism has a difficult time growing and flourishing in the cultural soil of Asia. In more ways than one, the Korean Progressives resembled the European romantic nationalists of the 1840's and 1850's. The philosophy of *kaehwa* ("progress and enlightenment") in nineteenth-century Korea, as in China and Japan, meant only the abolition of ancient laws and systems, but not of the objectionable practices and traditions of the past. Notwithstanding all these obstacles, the Progressives did give birth to Korea's spirit of independence and to the reform movement.

One can only speculate as to what might have been the results of the Progressive revolution in 1884 had China not intervened. It is certain, however, that the Progressives would have faced enormous problems in their attempts to create a modern nation. Had Korea won complete independence from China, it is questionable whether she would have been able to maintain that sovereignty and independence in the face of growing Japanese imperialism and Russian expansionism. Furthermore, economic and social progress would have been extremely slow and difficult.

One thing is clear, however; whatever possibilities may have existed for the realization of national independence, social reform, and economic development in Korea, Chinese intervention in Korea not only jeopardized any hopes of the Koreans for freedom from external domination and frustrated their aspirations for national regeneration and cultural progress, but it also intensified conflict between China and Japan in the succeeding decade.

NOTES

1. *Sŭhak* or the "Western Learning" movement began in Korea at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and flourished during the following century. Catholicism came to Korea at the end of the eighteenth century via China. For details, see Hyŏn Sang-yun, *Chosŏn yuhak sa* ("History of Korean Confucianism") (Seoul: Minjung sogwan, 1954), pp. 433–445; Gregory Henderson, "Chŏng Ta-san, A Study in Korea's Intellectual History," *The Journal of Asian Studies, XVI*, 3 (May 1957), 377–386; Oda Seigo, "Ri-chō no hōtō o ryakujo shite Tenshukyō hakugai ni oyobu" ("Factionalism in Yi Korea and the persecution of Catholicism"), *Seikyū Sakusō*, IV (September 1930), 1026; Yamaguchi Masayuki, "Kinsei Chōsen ni okeru Seigaku shisō no tōzen to sono hatten" ("Introduction and development of Western Learning in recent Korea"), *Oda sensei sōjū kinen Chōsen ronshū* (Keijo: Ōsakayagō shoten, 1934), pp. 1004–1040.

2. *Chōsen shi*, comp. Chōsen Sōtokufu (35 vols.; Keijo: Chōsenshi Hensankai, 1932–1940) Vol. VI, Part 4, p. 247. (Hereafter cited as CS.) The warning read: "Western barbarians invaded our land. If we do not fight, then we must appease them. When appeasement is made, it then leads us to the selling of our country. [Therefore], let our sons and their sons be on guard."

3. Hyŏn, *Chosŏn yuhak sa*, p. 444. 4. *Ibid.*, p. 446.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 447; CS, Vol. VI, Part 4, pp. 572, 576–580. For Kim P'yŏng-muk's biography, see *Chōsen jinmei jiten* ("Biographical dictionary of Koreans"), ed. Chōsen Sōtokufu. (Keijo: Chūsuiin, 1937), p. 881.

6. For details, see Tanaka Naokichi, "Nissen kankei no ichi dammen: Keijō Ningo no hen" ("An aspect of Japanese-Korean relations: the Imo Incident in Seoul"), *Meiji gaikō shi kenkyū* ("Studies on diplomatic relations of the Meiji period"), ed. Nihon Kokusai Seiji Gakkai (Tokyo: 1957); *Nihon gaikō monjo*, edited and compiled by the Japan Foreign Office (1936—), XV, 216–226. (Hereafter cited as GM.) Reports, personal memoirs, and newspaper articles on the case are collected in Miyatake Gaikotsu, *Ningo Keiriu jiken* ("The Imo Incident in Korea") (Tokyo: Tokyo Teikoku Daigaku, 1932).

7. Minister Hanabusa left Inch'ŏn aboard the British ship *Flying Fish* on July 26. He returned to Inch'ŏn on August 12 and negotiated for a treaty. GM, XV, 231.

8. Generals Ma Chien-chung and Yüan Shih-k'ai went to Korea while Ting Ju-ch'ang took his fleet to Inch'ŏn.

9. During the anti-Japanese mob demonstration, the Japanese legation building was burned down. Korea was forced to pay 500,000 yen of indemnity to Japan in this treaty. GM, XV, 200–204; Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai Nissen kankei no kenkyū* ("Study of recent Japanese-Korean relations") (2 vols.; Keijo: Chōsen Sōtokufu. Chūsuiin, 1940), I, 759–784.

10. Korea became again a vassal to the Manchu empire in 1637, as she had been to the Yüan and the Ming dynasties earlier.

11. Iwakura Kō Kyūseki Hozonkai (ed.), *Iwakura kō jikki* ("The authentic records of Prince Iwakura Kowashi") (3 vols.; Tokyo, 1927), III, 897–899; Itō Hirobumi, *Hisho ruisan: Chōsen kōshō shiryō*, ed. Hiratsuka Atsushi *et al.* (26 vols.; Tokyo: Hisho Ruisan Kankokai, 1934–1936), I, 251–253. (Hereafter cited as HR: CKS.) Japanese newspapers such as *Chōya*, *Akatsuki*, and *Yūbin Hōchi Shimbun* advocated these policies. *Jiji Shimpō*, which was established by Fukuzawa Yukichi, was particularly concerned with the Korean question. See Ishikawa Mikiaki's article of September 1, 1897, in *Jiji Shimpō*, dealing with its editorial of August 12, 1883. Ishikawa Mikiaki, *Fukuzawa Yukichi den* ("Biography of Fukuzawa Yukichi") (4 vols.; Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1932), III, 270–275.

12. Wang Yun-sheng, *Liu-shih-nien lai chung-kuo yü jih-pen* ("China and Japan during past sixty years") (7 vols.; Tientsin: Ta-kungpao, 1934), trans. by Nagano Isao and Hatano Kan'ichi into Japanese as *Nishi gaikō rokujūnen shi* ("Sixty Years' history of Sino-Japanese relations") (4 vols.; Tokyo: Kenseisusha, 1933–1936), I, 175, 176, 258–261, 267–269. Hereafter cited as Wang, *Nishi gaikō*.

13. Li Hung-chang, *Memoirs*, trans. R. C. Robert and W. F. Minnix (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913), p. 249; *Ch'ou-pan I-wu shih-mo: T'ung-chi ch'ao* (100 chüan; Peiping: The Palace Museum, 1930), Bk. 82, p. 31b. (Hereafter cited as

IWSM: TC.); Li Hung-chang, *Li wen-chung kung ho-kao*, comp. Wu Ju-lun (34 chüan; Paoting: Lien-chi Shu-she, 1902) Bk. 1, pp. 45b–49b. (Hereafter cited as LWCK: HK.)

14. CS, VI; 4, pp. 651–652, 703–704; Wang, *Nisshi gaikō*, I, 290–295.

15. Carl F. Bartz, Jr., "The Korean Seclusion Policy, 1860–1876" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, 1952), p. 16. One writer described her as "a strong and formidable character, brilliant and magnetic . . . brainiest woman of the entire Orient," who was "an uncompromising conservative, a fearless leader, and the power behind the throne." Mary V. T. Lawrence, *A Diplomat's Helpmate: how Rose F. Foote, Wife of the First United States Minister and Envoy Extraordinary to Korea, Served Her Country in the Far East* (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker Co., 1918), pp. 12–25; Annie E. Bunker, "My First Visit to Her Majesty the Queen," *Korean Repository* (Seoul: Korea), II, 374, 426; Lilias H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1918), p. 87 ff.

16. Lawrence, *Diplomat's Helpmate*, pp. 12–13.

17. No. 62, Foote to Frelinghuysen, April 8, 1884 and No. 83, Foote to Frelinghuysen, June 17, 1884.

18. No. 128, Foote to Frelinghuysen, December 17, 1884.

19. R. von Möllendorff, *P. G. von Möllendorff* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1930), p. 77.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 98.

21. *Kin Kyoku-kin den*, ed. Kokin Kinenkai (2 vols.? Tokyo: Keiō Shuppansha, 1944), I, 40–44. (Only one volume was published.) (Hereafter cited as KKD.) For Kim's biographical data, see Matsumoto Masazumi, *Kin Kyoku-kin shiden* ("Detailed biography of Kim Ok-kyun") (Tokyo: Kōseidō, 1894); Kerimsa (ed.), *Chosŏn inmin* ("Biographies of eminent Koreans") (Seoul: 1948), chapter on Kim Ok-kyun.

22. KKD, I, 46.

23. For his relationship with Fukuzawa Yukichi, see Ishikawa, *Fukuzawa*, III, 285–289; KKD, I, 130–143; Watanabe Shujirō, *Tōhō Kaiki* ("Affairs of the eastern nations") (Hamamatsu: Hokokai, 1894), pp. 124–186. See also Kim Ok-kyun's *Kapsin illok* ("The Kapsin diary") whose Japanese text is found in Watanabe, *Tōhō Kaiki*, pp. 124–186, and the Chinese text is found in HR: CKS, I, 430–467.

24. *Jiji Shimpō* (Tokyo), September 11, 1882; Joseph H. Longford, *The Story of Korea* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911), p. 325.

25. KKD, I, 147–149; Ishikawa, *Fukuzawa*, III, 285; Tabohashi, *Kindai Nissen kankei*, I, 899.

26. *Kaehwa* means progress and enlightenment. The party was also called *Tongnipdang* (the "Independence Party") or *Ilbondang* (the "Japanese Party"). Outstanding members of the Progressive Party were Kim Ok-kyun, Pak Yŏng-hyo, brother-in-law of King Kojong and son-in-law of the late King, Hong Yŏng-sik, the former prime minister's son, Sŏ Kwang-bŏm, and his nephew Sŏ Chae-p'il (who later became known as Dr. Philip Jaishon), Pyŏn Su, Yun Ch'i-ho, Yi To-jae, and Yu Kil-jun.

27. CS, Vol. VI, Part 4, p. 681; Gordon Haddo, "The Rise and Fall of Progressive Party in Korea," *The Chautauquan*, XVI (1892–1893), 46–49; No. 128,

Foote to Frelinghuysen, December 17, 1884; Tabohashi, *Kindai Nissen kankei*, I, 765; KKD, I, 366–367.

28. Some notable reform measures taken were these: the abolition of the ancient laws that prohibited Korean aristocrats from engaging in commercial enterprises; granting of educational equality to all; the establishment of an English language school; the publication of a modern, tri-monthly newspaper called *Hanŭng sanbo*; the sending of a large number of young Koreans to Japan to study economics and military science; the installation of steamship service between Inch'ŏn and Shanghai by a British firm; the modernization of the silk industry by Western technicians; the founding of an experimental farm called the "American farm" with the land donated by the king, and seeds and stock brought back from the United States; the introduction of modern military training; and the establishment of a modern postal service.

29. *Hanŭng sanbo* was published by Pangmungwan, which was organized by the Progressives with the help provided by Fukuzawa through his students Inoue Kakugorō and Ushiba Takuzō.

30. KKD, I, 275, 276; Kikuchi Kenjō, *Kindai Chōsen shi* ("Recent Korean history") (2 vols.; Keijo: Keimeisha, 1929), I, 649–654.

31. Kim Ok-kyun went to Japan in the fall of 1883, hoping to secure a 3,000,000 yen loan from Japan. He was not successful in this project. He also failed to convince the American minister, John A. Bingham, and an American financier, James R. Morse, in Yokohama, to support the Korean Progressives. The *Jiyūtō* (the "Liberal Party") in Japan, particularly its leaders such as Kobayashi Kusuo and Okamoto Ryūnosuke, attempted to help Kim. Through the members of the *Jiyūtō*, Kim negotiated with the French minister, Joseph A. Sienkiewicz, who "promised" both financial and military aid for Korea. Yamabe Kentarō, a well-informed Japanese writer on Korean-Japanese relations, disclosed to me in our conversations that this was only a make-believe plan dreamed up by the members of the *Jiyūtō*. Ishikawa, *Fukuzawa*, III, 301; Tabohashi, *Kindai Nissen kankei*, I, 908–913; KKD, I, 256, 259; Uda Tomoi (ed.), *Jiyūtōshi* ("History of the Liberal Party") (2 vols.; Tokyo: Gosharō, 1910), II, 334–347; Inoue Kakugorō Sensei Denki Hensankai, *Inoue Kakugorō sensei den* ("Biography of Inoue Kakugorō") (Tokyo, 1943), pp. 50, 51. Hereafter cited as *Inoue Kakugorō den*.

32. The Chinese violated the Li-Fournier agreement of May 11, 1883, and after failing to receive definite reply from Peking, the French declared a blockade of the coasts of Formosa on October 23, 1883, and began belligerent action.

33. Ishikawa, *Fukuzawa*, III, 309; *Inoue Kakugorō den*, pp. 50, 51; HR: CKS, I, 284–294.

34. On October 2, 1884, Minister Takezoe had an audience with King Kojong *à deux*, and presented Emperor Meiji's personal letter and the gift from the Japanese Foreign Minister to the Korean monarch. On November 12, he suggested two alternative plans for Japan in Korea to his government in Tokyo. In his dispatch, "Tai-kan saku kō otsu nian" ("Plans A and B for Korea"), Takezoe, after summarizing the political situation in Seoul, proposed that: (A) since there was no possibility for mutual understanding and cooperation in respect to Korea between Japan and China, and as an open war with China was desirable to curb China's arrogance, it seemed to be best for Japan to *instigate and bring about a civil*

war in Korea; and (B) in order to maintain peace in the Far East and to avoid friction between Japan and China, leave Korea alone, and let nature take its course there. In the latter case, however, Japan's action should be limited to providing some protection for the Progressives and their actions.

On November 18, Takezoe informed his superiors in Tokyo that, according to confidential information, the lives of the Progressives were in grave danger, and concluded that "If the Japanese party (meaning the Progressive Party) fails, and the leaders of that party are dispatched, the hope for Korea's independence would certainly perish completely." HR:CKS, I, 265–287; C. M. Kim (ed.), *Nikkan gaikō shiryō shūsei* ("Collection of sources on Japanese-Korean diplomatic relations") (8 vols.; Tokyo: Kannandō, 1963—), III, 3–6. In HR:CKS, the phrase "Instigate and to bring about a civil war" is missing. However, the unpublished *Chōsen kōshō jiken roku* ("Documents relating to Korean affairs") collected at Gunaishō archives, Bk. III, Doc. 4 included them. GM has no information.

35. Jerome Ch'en, *Yüan Shih-k'ai (1859–1916)* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 23. See also LWCK:HK, Bk. 20, pp. 23a, 24b.

36. On the eve of November 29, King Kojong summoned Kim Ok-kyun to his chamber and had an audience *à deux*. Kim urged the King to approve his plans against the Chinese and the Min party. He stated that "We must reform our country's system, develop and promote the people's welfare, and establish our country's independence, and open doors to others so that we may import new civilization and increase our national power." King Kojong agreed with Kim, saying, "We have no better opportunity than now to win our independence." Kim, *Kapsin illok*, November 29, 1884.

37. This date was chosen primarily because the Progressives could assemble a large number of government officials at a spot without arousing special suspicion. At the same time, it was thought that the Conservatives would relax their security measures, since almost all the Progressives were scheduled to attend the dinner commemorating the opening of the Postal Administration, given by Hong Yŏng-sik, a leading member of the Progressive Party and first Superintendent of Postal Administration. All foreign representatives, except the Japanese Minister, attended the dinner. Minister Takezoe did not attend the banquet because of his "illness." He was actually preparing to take Japanese soldiers to the palace to support the revolutionaries. *Allen Diary*, December 5, 1884 (in the Horace Allen MSS, collected in New York Public Library); Tabohashi, *Kindai Nisson kankei*, I, 950; "Keijō jihen shimatsu sho" ("Report on the Seoul Incident"), in GM, XVIII, 352–362; No. 127, December 5, 1884, No. 128, December 17, 1884, Foote to Frelinghuysen.

38. Pro-Chinese members of the Min party who were killed were: President of the Foreign Office Min Yŏng-mok; Home Minister Min T'ae-ho; commanders of Palace Guards Han Kyu-jik, Yun T'ae-jun, and Yi Cho-yŏn. An ardent pro-Min and pro-Chinese, Cho Nyŏng-ha, was also killed.

39. Japanese soldiers came to the palace upon King Kojong's request. Takezoe to Foreign Minister Yoshida Kiyonari, December 6, 1884.

40. KKD, I, 366, 367; Kim, *Kapsin illok*; Tabohashi, *Kindai Nisson kankei*, I, 956.

41. It means the "Three Days Mastery of the World by Kim Ok-kyun."

42. Forty-three Progressives perished during the counterrevolutionary retaliation; only nine survived the catastrophe. Among the perished was Hong Yŏng-sik.

Kim Ok-kyun, Pak Yŏng-hyo, Sŏ Kwang-bŏm, Sŏ Chae-p'il, and a few others fled to the Japanese legation first, and then to Inch'ŏn. From Inch'ŏn they sailed for Nagasaki, Japan, despite Minister Takezoe's objection. Some forty Japanese, including Captain Isobayashi Shinsŏ, were killed by the Chinese and Koreans during and after the coup.

43. As a result of this treaty, Korea was again forced to pay 130,000 yen indemnity to Japan. GM, XVIII, 347, 348.

44. The Li-Itō Convention (Tientsin Treaty) of April 18, 1885, stipulated that: (1) both China and Japan shall withdraw their troops now stationed in Korea; (2) they agree to invite the king of Korea to instruct and drill a sufficient armed force in order to assure Korea's public security; (3) the king of Korea shall engage into his service an officer or officers for military instruction of his troops from a third power; (4) neither China nor Japan shall send any of their own officers to Korea for the purpose of giving military instruction; (5) in case of any disturbance of a grave nature occurring in Korea which necessitates either China or Japan to send troops to Korea, each party shall give previous notice in writing to the other party, showing its intentions of doing so; and (6) when the matter is settled its troops shall be withdrawn promptly from Korea.

45. *Sadae jui* is an ideology or attitude (*jui*) peculiar to Korea's foreign affairs during the nineteenth century. It means literally "ideology of serving, or depending on, a great power." *Mohwa sasang* refers to a thought or belief that worshiped things Chinese.