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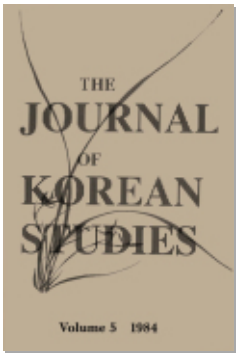

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INTRODUCTION

During the years 1880 to 1884, Yi Korea, under reform-minded leadership, belatedly embarked on a vivacious program of reform, euphemistically called the Enlightenment Movement (*kaehwa undong*). This movement featured Korea's entrance into treaty relations with Western powers; active institutional and cultural borrowing from Ch'ing China, Meiji Japan, and the United States; and the emergence in the Seoul political arena of a Progressive party (*Kaehwadang*) imbued with modern nationalistic ambitions. From a close examination of each of these aspects of the movement, it is clear that this nascent reform movement, if properly sustained without interruption, could in time have put the "hermit kingdom" on the road to full-fledged membership in the family of nations while enriching and strengthening the country sufficiently to maintain her independence. Unfortunately for Korea, however, it became a truncated experiment with limited historical impact. The momentum of this movement was arrested after the abortive pro-Japanese coup d'état in December, 1884, and Korea did not witness the revival of a reform movement of similar proportion until after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894. Korean failure to develop the Enlightenment Movement into a more enduring movement, analogous to Meiji Japan's "movement for civilization and enlightenment" (*bummei*

For a list of abbreviations used in notes, see page 106.

kaika), probably made Korea easy prey for Japanese imperialism at the turn of the century, not to mention retarding Korean modernization.

Scholarly opinion is divided over the question of why the important Enlightenment Movement failed to continue developing during the crucial decade of 1885 to 1894. One one hand, historians who emphasize Korean domestic intellectual and institutional history point to the resurgence of xenophobic conservatism including the deep-rooted Korean animosity toward Japan, in the wake of the *kapsin* (1884) coup and the entrenchment of a group of uninnovative, career-seeking officials in positions of power during the decade as the key factor detrimental to the progress of the movement.[1] On the other hand, historians with a penchant for Korean foreign affairs are inclined toward the view that the unfavorable international milieu surrounding Yi Korea during the period constituted the major cause for the decline of the movement.[2] The latter viewpoint seems more valid, since the Enlightenment Movement owed its inception to foreign stimuli. The increasing volume of scholarly literature on Korean history during the second half of the nineteenth century tends to corroborate this assumption, although no cogent and convincing argument has yet been advanced to vindicate it.[3]

This study intends to demonstrate that Ch'ing China's anachronistic policy of intervention toward her tributary state, Korea, which was put into practice during the 1885–1894 decade, indeed constituted the primary cause for the hiatus in the Korean reform movement. Because the Chinese policy toward Korea was imple-

1. For the view representing the former, see Yi Kwang-nin [Lee, Kwang-rin], *Kaehwadang yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1973), p. 173, and for the latter, see Sin Yong-ha [Shin, Yong-ha], *Tongnip hyŏppoe wa kaehwa undong* (Seoul: Sejong taewang kinyŏm saŏppoe, 1976), p. 11.

2. See, for example, Yi Sŏn'gŭn [Lee, Sun-keun], *Han'guksa: ch'oe kŭnse-p'yŏn* (Seoul: Ŭryu munhwasa, 1961), pp. 925ff; Payson J. Treat, "China and Korea, 1885–1894," *Political Science Quarterly* 49 (1934): 543. See also Dalchoong Kim, "Korea's Quest for Reform and Diplomacy in the 1880's: With Special Reference to Chinese Intervention and Control" (Ph.D. diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, 1972), pp. iii, 540.

3. Among others, the following studies on Yüan's career in Korea were particularly useful in preparing this treatise: Lin Ming-te, *Yüan Shih-k'ai yü Chao-hsien* (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1970); Yi Yangja, "Ch'ŏng ŭi tae-Chosŏn chŏngch'aek kwa Wŏn Segae," *Pudae sahak* 5 (February 1981): 75–120; Fujioka Kikuo, "Chōsen jidai no En Sei-gai," *Tōyō gakuhō* 52, no. 4 (March 1970): 1–51; Ching Young Choe, "Yüan Shih-k'ai: His Role in Korea, 1882–1894," unpublished seminar paper, Harvard University, 1956–57. My special thanks are due to Dr. Martina Deuchler for letting me peruse part of Choe's paper.

mented by Resident Yüan Shih-kai during this decade, the ultimate concern of this essay is to evaluate the historical significance of this decade-long interlude of Chinese interference in Korean affairs in the context of the history of Korea's modernization.

EMERGENCE OF A CHINESE RESIDENT

The traditional attitude of Ch'ing China toward her model tributary, Korea, was one of benevolent indifference. Engrossed as they were in the pressing tasks of the T'ung-chih Restoration, the Peking authorities of the 1860s and 1870s spared little sympathetic attention for Korea when this hapless neighbor confronted recurrent military attacks from modern imperialistic powers, including France, the United States, and Japan—under the convenient pretext of honoring the tradition of noninterference in the tributary's affairs. They also refrained from rendering assistance to Korea in 1876, when she was coerced into signing a modern, albeit unequal, treaty with Japan. The Chinese attitude toward Korea changed in 1879, when Japan annexed the Liu-chiu (Ryūkyū) kingdom, one of China's tributaries. At the same time, Russia menaced China from the north with threats of military action over the border dispute concerning the Ili valley. Alerted to the real possibility of a Japanese or Russian intrusion into the Korean peninsula, the protective "eastern shield" for China's metropolitan region and Manchuria, Peking took the unprecedented action in August 1879 of entrusting Li Hung-chang (1823-1921), the governor of the metropolitan province and the imperial commissioner for the northern ports, with the responsibility of devising effective means of protecting Korea from the aggressive designs of hostile powers.[4] This marked an historic departure from the traditional Chinese policy of noninterference, in favor of a new interventionist policy. Li was to remain the master mind and chief executioner of China's policy toward Korea through the turbulent era from 1879 to 1894. His policy toward Korea evolved through three distinct phases over the fifteen year period, with the *imo* (1882) mutiny of July 1882, and the *kapsin* coup of December 1884 as the major lines of demarcation. From 1879 to 1882, Li encouraged Korean leaders to embark on diplomatic and military modernization without direct Chinese intervention, in em-

4. Key-hiuk Kim, *The Last Phase of the East Asian World Order: Korea, Japan, and the Chinese Empire, 1860–1882* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), p. 345; T. C. Lin, "Li Hung-chang: His Korea Policies, 1870–1885," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 19, no. 2 (July 1935): 221.

ulation of the Chinese "self-strengthening movement," by exerting only indirect and personal, albeit paternalistic, persuasion. He made special efforts to prevail upon the benighted and conservative Korean leaders to enter into a multinational treaty system as a means of offsetting the monopolistic position that Japan had acquired in Korea through the Korean-Japanese Treaty of 1876, and warding off future Russian aggression toward Korea.[5] Finding the Korean leaders unresponsive to his suggestions, he undertook negotiations for a Korean-American treaty in Tientsin himself during the years from 1880 to 1882 with the American plenipotentiary, Commodore Robert W. Shufeldt. Li's behind-the-scenes negotiations resulted in the historical Korean-American treaty of friendship and commerce in May 1882.[6] Li also attended to the problem of upgrading Korea's military capacity to defend herself and, in 1881, extended an invitation to a team of about seventy Korean students and artisans to travel to the Tientsin Arsenal for apprenticeship. The Korean student-artisan mission to Tientsin, however, failed to produce any tangible results partly because of the lack of Korean funds to support it.[7]

After mid-1882, Li gave up the ineffectual strategy of trying to persuade the Korean leaders to undertake the requisite modernization, in favor of a more aggressive policy of interfering in Korean diplomatic, military, and financial affairs through his own hand-picked advisers in Seoul. The second phase of Li's management of Korea, which lasted until the close of 1884, began with the outbreak of the Taewŏn'gun-instigated mutiny in Seoul in July 1882. In August, China dispatched an expeditionary force of 3,000 troops to Seoul to repress the uprising and to abduct the Taewŏn'gun, taking him to China for punishment.[8] The Chinese forces, under the

5. Kim, *Last Phase,* pp. 284–89; Kwŏn Sŏkpong, "Yi Hongjang ŭi tae-Chosŏn yŏlguk ibyak kwŏndoch'aek e taehayŏ," *Yŏksa hakpo* 27 (April 1965): 101–30: Song Pyŏnggi, "Sipkusegimal ŭi yŏn-Miron sŏsŏl," *Sahakchi* 9 (1975): 61–88.

6. Martina Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys: The Opening of Korea, 1875–1885* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), pp. 110–22; Kim, *Last Phase,* pp. 302–16; Yi Pohyŏng [Lee, Bo Hyung], "Shufeldt chedok kwa 1880-nyŏn ŭi Cho-Mi kyosŏp," *Yŏksa hakpo* 11 (September 1961): 81–91; Song Pyŏnggi, "Sipkusegimal ŭi yŏn-Miron yŏn'gu," *Sahak yŏn'gu* 27 (1978): 106.

7. Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen,* pp. 100–101; Kwŏn Sŏkpong, "Yŏngsŏn sahaeng e taehan il koch'al," *Yŏksa hakpo* 17–18 (June 1962): 290–312.

8. Dong Jae Yim, "The Abduction of the Taewŏn'gun, 1882," *Papers on China* (East Asian Research Center, Harvard University) 21 (February 1968): 99–130; Kim Chong-wŏn, "Ch'ŏng ŭi tae-Chosŏn chŏkkŭkch'aek ŭi kiyŏn: Imosabyŏn ŭi p'abyŏng munje rŭl chungsimŭro," Yi Haenam paksa hwagap kinyŏm sahak nonch'ong p'yŏnjip wiwŏnhoe, ed., *Yi Haenam paksa hwagap kinyŏm sahak nonch'ong* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1970), pp. 304–16; Kim, *Last Phase,* pp. 316–27.

command of Admiral Wu Ch'ang-ching (1834–84), were ordered to remain in Seoul as a permanent garrison after accomplishing their original mission. These Chinese reserve military forces proved an important element in Li's new scheme of guiding the Koreans on a Chinese road to modernization.

The civil advisers whom Li appointed to important Korean posts at this time included a multilingual German employee in the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service, Paul G. von Möllendorff (1847–1901), and a Chinese official, Ma Chien-ch'ang. Li saw to it that Admiral Wu selected a couple of competent Chinese officers from the Chinese garrison in Seoul to act as military advisers to organize and train modern Korean military units. One of the officers thus chosen in late 1882 was the future Chinese resident in Seoul, Yüan Shih-k'ai.[9]

Another important course of action that Li pursued in Korea during the second phase of his Korean management was economic. With an eye to promoting Chinese trade in Korea to rival the Japanese merchants already well established in Korea's open ports, he forced upon the Korean government an unequal "modern" treaty, dubbed the Sino-Korean Maritime and Overland Trade Regulations, on October 4, 1882. This treaty included a set of legal privileges and safeguards reserved only for the subjects of the suzerain Chinese state in the "vassal territory" (*shu-pang*).[10] In October 1882, Li appointed Ch'en Shu-tang, a former Chinese consul in San Francisco, as the Chinese commissioner of commerce in Seoul to supervise prospective Chinese trade in Korea under the provisions of the trade regulations.[11]

A series of actions that Li and his government took vis-à-vis Korea in the wake of the *imo* mutiny was unprecedented in the centuries-old Sino-Korean tributary relationship. Li's interventionist measures also smacked of the current tactics of modern imperialistic powers in colonial or semicolonial territories. It is noteworthy, however, that the course Li took in Korea in 1882 repre-

9. See n. 27 below.

10. See Sin Kisŏk, *Hanmal oegyosa yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1967), pp. 89–94; Kim Chong-wŏn, "Cho-Jung sangmin suryuk muyŏk changjŏng e taehayŏ," *Yŏksa hakpo* 32 (December 1966): 151–58; O. N. Denny, *China and Korea* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1888), pp. 15–16.

11. Ch'en's title changed from a commissioner of commerce *(tsung-pan Chao-hsien k'o-kou shang-wu)* to a commissioner for diplomatic and commercial affairs *(tsung-pan Chao-hsien k'o-kou chiao-she t'ung-shang shih-wu)* in September 1884. See Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, pp. 143–44. Regarding Ch'en's character and professional competence as evaluated by the Japanese, see NGB 72: 1, 386.

sented a relatively moderate line in the high policy-making council in Peking. A group of chauvinistic scholar-officials, collectively known as the Purist party (*ch'ing-liu tang*), was clamoring for an even more aggressive policy toward Korea, a policy that included outright annexation of Korea as a province of China.[12] One of the aggressive suggestions of the Purist party that the Peking leadership brushed aside at that time emanated from Chang Chien (1853–1926), a senior staff officer in charge of civil affairs in Admiral Wu's camp in Seoul. In his action paper, entitled "A Six-Point Program for the Solution of the Korean Problem," submitted to Admiral Wu in October 1882 for imperial review, Chang argued that it would best serve the Chinese national interest to place Korea under the control of a Chinese royal supervisor (lit., superintendent of state, *chien-kuo; kamguk* in Korean)—in accordance with the precedent of the Chou administration of the conquered Shang territories in Chinese antiquity or the Mongol governance of the Koryŏ kingdom in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.[13] Li spurned this kind of radical suggestion, partly out of his residual respect for the tradition of Korean autonomy, and partly out of fear that Japan might not tolerate overt Chinese interference in the affairs of autonomous Korea.[14]

However, in October 1885, Li adopted the high-handed policy of controlling the Korean court and government through a Chinese resident, somewhat in line with Chang Chien's previous policy suggestions, after discovering that the Korean leaders, including King Kojong and his coterie, were intent on asserting Korea's independence from China under the influence of the ongoing enlightenment movement. The nationalistic tendency of the Korean leaders was demonstrated in the outbreak of the pro-Japanese *kapsin* coup and the secret Korean royal attempt to obtain Russian military protection in early 1885, through the medium of von Möllendorff.[15] That the Korean monarch, whom China had helped reinstate to his

12. See Tabohashi Kiyoshi, *Kindai Nissen kankei no kenkyū* (Keijō: Chōsen so tokufu, 1940), 1: 862–67; Sin Kisŏk, *Hanmal oegyosa*, pp. 79–87.

13. See Tabohashi, *Kindai Nissen* 1: 861–62; Wang Yun-sheng, *Liu-shih-nien lai Chung-kuo yü Jihpen* (Tientsin: Ta-kung-pao kuan, 1932) 1: 207; Yi Yangja, "Ch'ŏng ŭi tae-Chosŏn," pp. 91–92; Samuel C. Chu, *Reformer in Modern China: Chang Chien, 1853–1926* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 15.

14. Regarding Li's sensitivity toward Japanese reaction to his management of Korean affairs, as well as his respect for tradition, see Kwŏn Sŏkpong, "'Chosŏn chaengnyak' kwa Ch'ŏng-ch'ŭk ŭido," Chŏn Haejong paksa hwagap kinyŏm sahak nonch'ong p'yŏnjip wiwŏnhoe, ed., *Chŏn Hae-jong paksa hwagap kinyŏm sahak nonch'ong* (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1979), pp. 438–40; Song Pyŏnggi, "yŏn-Miron sŏsŏl," pp. 64–65.

15. See nn. 54 and 55 below.

seat of power in 1882, conspired with Li's hand-picked adviser to subvert Chinese suzerain control over Korea indicated the bankruptcy of Li's policy of moderate intervention during the years 1882–84. Also, the Tientsin Convention, which Li signed with Ito Hirobumi in April 1885, provided, among other things, for the withdrawal of Chinese garrison forces from Korea. This necessitated closer political supervision over the Korean government. As a result, in 1885, Li became receptive to the aggressive policy alternative of controlling Korea through a Chinese royal supervisor.

Between December 1884 and August 1885, at least three influential persons approached Li with requests to implement a high-handed policy toward Korea through a Chinese royal supervisor. The first to do so was a Chinese officer then stationed in Seoul, Yüan Shih-k'ai. He proposed the appointment of a royal supervisor shortly after he succeeded in thwarting the pro-Japanese coup. The second person who approached Li with similar suggestions was the Japanese foreign minister, Inoue Kaoru (1835–1915). In an "Eight-Point Proposal to Control Korea" that he transmitted to Li through the Japanese minister in Peking, Enomoto Takeaki (1836–1908), in early July 1885, Inoue suggested that Li initiate the following measures as a guarantee against a possible Russo-Korean entente: (1) prohibiting the (pro-Russian) Korean king and his coterie from dealing in state affairs, in favor of such competent and reliable (pro-Chinese) officials as Kim Hong-jip, Kim Yung-sik, and Ŏ Yun-jung; (2) relieving von Möllendorff of his advisory posts in Seoul, in favor of more reliable American(s); and (3) replacing the incompetent Chinese commissioner of commerce, Ch'en, with a resident supervisory commissioner of state affairs (*zatan kokusei taiin*) of higher caliber.[16] In a separate memorandum, transmitted to Li almost simultaneously through the Chinese minister in Tokyo, Inoue urged Li to release the Taewŏn'gun, the avowed champion of anti-foreign (particularly anti-Russian) causes and the inveterate enemy of pro-Western Queen Min, from his three-year-long custody in Paoting, China.[17] The third person to advocate the idea of placing the Korean court under a Chinese royal supervisor was the Taewŏn'gun himself. In an interview with Li's subordinates prior to his release from state custody in August, 1885, the Taewŏn'gun bluntly proposed that Li appoint a Chinese royal supervisor to the Korean court following

16. CJSL 8: 24–26; ISHK 17: 42; NGB: 72: 1, 359–60. See also T. F. Tsiang, "Sino-Japanese Diplomatic Relations, 1870–1894," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 17, no. 1 (April 1933): 89; Tabohashi, *Kindai Nissen* 2: 19–20.

17. WCSL 59: 5–6; CJSL 3: 27–28. See also Tabohashi, *Kindai Nissen* 2: 23.

the precedent of the Mongol superintendent at the Koryŏ court as a means of arresting the decline of the Yi dynasty, which he attributed to the perpetuation of misgovernment by the "wayward and spendthrift" Queen Min.[18]

Li seems to have been most influenced by Inoue's suggestions, because in late 1885 he implemented each of the Japanese foreign minister's four points mentioned above.[19] More important, Inoue's gratuitous proposals helped Li to embark on his high-handed policy vis-à-vis Korea without worry of Japanese criticism. In other words, the Japanese and Chinese leaders were collaborating from mid-1885 to strengthen the Chinese suzerain control over Korea in pursuit of their common goal: to preclude Russian penetration into Korea. This collaboration was at the expense of Japan's vaunted assertion of Korean independence, voiced in the Korean-Japanese Treaty of 1876. This Sino-Japanese cooperation in Korea was to remain the keystone of the international politics enveloping Korea through the third phase of Li's management from 1885 to 1894.

One of the first measures Li took in response to Inoue's proposal was to appoint Yüan Shih-k'ai in late October 1885 as a director-general of diplomatic and consular affairs resident in Korea *(chu-tsa chao-hsien tsung-li chiao-li chiao-she t'ung-shang shih-i)* to replace the commissioner for diplomatic and commercial affairs in Korean open ports, Ch'en Shu-t'ang. In his letter of recommendation on Yuan's behalf to the Chinese emperor, dated October 28, Li justified his decision in the following terms:

> The Korean king has been affecting gratitude toward Your Imperial Majesty outwardly, while inwardly he harbors the intent of promoting [his own] self-interest with the help of foreign powers. He thus has betrayed his faltering loyalty toward the Celestial Empire. No sooner did the Japanese soldiers withdraw from Korea than he invited the Russian envoys in. I have exerted my best efforts in tackling this recalcitrant monarch, but I am painfully aware that my exertions toward keeping this vassal kingdom under control have not availed so far. Much more needs to be done in this direction if we are to preserve this country. One inch we gain in strengthening our capacity to preserve this country is an inch added to our national interest. Sub-prefect Yüan Shih-k'ai abounds in knowledge and stratagems. He has cultivated intimate friendships with native officials in the Korean foreign office and court over the past few years. It is, therefore, assumed that he is the kind of person well-suited to

18. WCSL 59: 9–10; ISHK 17: 31. See also Sin Kisŏk, *Hanmal oegyosa,* pp. 179, 282–83. As early as 1884, King Kojong worried that his father, the Taewŏn'gun, would sell Korea out to China upon his repatriation from China. See the entry on Mar. 22, 1884, in YI.

19. In addition to fulfilling Inoue's above-mentioned proposals (2) and (3), as will be described below, Li tried to persuade King Kojong to employ the two Kims and Ŏ in the key government posts, to no avail. See WCSL 59: 8.

maintaining the local Korean situation to our advantage before any major trouble recurs in Korea in the future. I humbly submit that he be appointed to Korea [as a director-general of diplomatic and consular affairs resident in Korea] by availing ourselves of the timely Korean royal request for Yüan's service in Korea.[20]

Although Li avoided using the term, royal supervisor, in describing Yüan's role in Korea, it is clear that the supreme mission of the newly inaugurated Chinese director-general was to supervise the "recalcitrant and unreliable" Korean king in order to maintain the Korean kingdom within the ever-shrinking orbit of the Chinese world order. In other words, he was to perform the role of an ancient royal supervisor, or a resident supervisory commissioner of state affairs in modern times, in addition to performing the ordinary diplomatic and consular duties inherited from Commissioner Ch'en, whom he was to replace. Mindful of the special functions with which he was endowed by the Chinese emperor, Yüan Shih-k'ai styled himself as an H.I.C.M. Resident, Seoul (i.e., His Imperial Chinese Majesty's Resident in Seoul) in his dealings with Western diplomats in Korea after taking up his post in mid-November 1885.[21] This English translation of the title suggests that Yüan's position in Korea approximated that of contemporary British residents in India or French residents in Vietnam and Madagascar during the age of imperialism.[22]

RESIDENT YÜAN'S QUALIFICATIONS

Yüan Shih-k'ai was only twenty-six when he was given the mission of serving as resident in Korea in October 1885. Li Hung-chang maintained him in his Korean post for nine and one-half years by renewing Yüan's tenure twice, in spite of repeated Korean royal requests to the contrary.[23] Due to Resident Yüan's "successful" discharge of his mission, Korean politics remained placid from 1885 to 1894, while the volume of Chinese trade with Korea increased six-

20. CJSL 9: 13; WCSL 61: 18–19. See also T. F. Tsiang, "Sino-Japanese Diplomatic," p. 93; Choe, "Yüan Shih-k'ai," p. 42; Fredrick F. Chien, *The Opening of Korea: A Study of Chinese Diplomacy, 1876–1885* (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1967), pp. 191–92.

21. KAR 1: 138. See also Treat, "China and Korea," p. 519; Robert E. Reordan, "The Role of George Clayton Foulk in United States–Korea Relations, 1884–1887" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1955), p. 154. Yüan took up his duties in Seoul on Nov. 15, 1885. See KHOM 8, no. 1: 279–80 (#450, 451).

22. KAR 2: 16 (#112), 93 (#39). See also Reordan, "Role of George," p. 154; George Wai-ming Yuan, "Yüan Shih-k'ai in Korea, 1885–1894" (M.A. thesis, Yonsei University, 1967), pp. 61–68.

23. See CJHKS 5: 2524 (#1384); 11: 59, 68; NGB 27: 2, 130 (#495). See also Yi Yangja, "Ch'ŏng ŭi tae-Chosŏn," p. 117, n. 103.

fold. He was, in particular, credited with subduing recalcitrant Korean leaders who resisted his control. In May 1887, Hugh A. Dinsmore, the American minister in Seoul, observed:

> To my mind it appears that Korean political affairs are gradually approaching a crisis. China is slowly but surely tightening her grasp upon this government and its King. A spirit of resistance seems almost to have died out of the Koreans and there is an apparent acquiescence on the part of a number of foreign representatives. One at least, H.B.M's [His British Majesty's] Consul General is quite outspoken in his declaration that Korea is a vassal state and altogether incapable of self-government. . . . The Chinese representative memorializes, provides, dictates and directs, all under a system of intimidation mixed with affectation of disinterested kindness.[24]

It was unusual for a man of Yüan's youth to win the confidence of an all-powerful man such as Li Hung-chang, much less accomplish his mission as resident so impressively. An examination of Yüan's background, particularly his three and one-half year experience in Korea prior to October 1885, reveals that he was equipped with the requisite expertise and originality to make him worthy of Li's trust. In addition, he had been blessed with strong family backing and unbounded energy.

A scion of an influential gentry family in Honan province, Yüan embarked on his colorful military-civilian career in 1881 by volunteering as an officer in the Ching-tzu Battalion of the Huai Army under Admiral Wu Ch'ang-ch'ing, one of his adoptive father's friends, after twice failing the provincial civil service examination.[25] He arrived in Seoul in August 1882 as a junior staff officer in the military secretariat (*ying-wu ch'u*) of Admiral Wu's expeditionary forces. On reaching Seoul, he distinguished himself admirably by establishing firm discipline and morale among the Chinese soldiers, aiding in the abduction of the Taewŏn'gun, and conducting a mopping-up campaign against the major strongholds of mutinous soldiers in the outskirts of Seoul.[26] Yüan's performance earned him the recognition and respect of Admiral Wu and his senior friend and mentor, Chang Chien, a scholar of the Purist persuasion. Wu then

24. KAR 2: 12 (#20). For similar descriptions of Yüan's arrogant and overbearing attitude toward the Koreans during 1885–94, see KAR 2: 291 (#483); Fred H. Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese: Dr. Horace N. Allen and Korean-American Relations, 1884–1905* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1944), pp. 243–44; Horace N. Allen, "A Resume of Chief Events Relating to Korean Independence and the Recent Loss of the Same," *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 12 (May 1960): 64–65; Keijō-fu, ed., *Keijō-fushi* (Keijō: Keijō-fu, 1934) 1: 551–52.

25. Admiral Wu and Yüan's adoptive father, Yüan Pao-ching (d. 1873), were close friends. See Shen Tsu-hsien and Wu K'ai-sheng, eds., *Yung-an-ti-tzu chi* (Shanghai: Wen-hai, 1913), p. 7; Lin Ming-te, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* pp. 6, 10–12, 17.

26. Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* pp. 9–11. See also Fujioka, "Chōsen jidai," pp. 8–9.

assigned to him the more important mission of organizing and training a modern Korean army composed of five capital units in Seoul and one defense unit in Kanghwa Island, totaling about 2,000 men.[27] He fulfilled this assignment creditably, too. After Admiral Wu and half the Chinese garrison forces left Korea in the spring of 1884, Li Hung-chang, on April 30 of that year, appointed Yüan as a director-general of the military secretariat and the concurrent associate director of Korean military affairs *(tsung-li ying-wu ch'u hui-pan Chao-hsien ying-wu)*—a key position in the Chinese garrison army. This placed Yüan next in line to the commander of the remaining garrison forces, Admiral Wu Chao-yu, and made him an adviser to the newly created Korean armed forces.[28] Yüan acquired this appointment, the first major step in his legendary climb to success, not only on his merits but also due to the personal influence that his uncle and lifelong sponsor, Yüan Pao-ling, held over Li.[29]

Yüan excelled at making friends among high-ranking Korean officials from the moment he boarded the ship for Korea. In Seoul, he befriended many important Korean officials in charge of diplomatic and military affairs, including Min Yŏngik (1860–1914), Kim Yunsik (1835–1922), Yun T'aejun (1839–84), Cho Yŏngha (1845–84), and Han Kyujik (d. 1884).[30] His important role in the creation of a modern Korean army in turn led to the recognition of the Korean royal court. The king, for example, received Yüan in audience in September 1882.[31] His Korean friends at that time regarded him as an expert on "current affairs" *(shih-wu; simu* in Korean).[32] By helping his friends attain posts of command in the newly created modern capital units in the fall of 1884, Yüan became the virtual leader of the Korean army on the eve of the *kapsin* coup.[33]

Yüan was the first Chinese officer in Seoul to detect the possibility of a pro-Japanese coup. He reported his suspicions that the

27. KSS 2: 389, 402. See also Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* pp. 14–15; Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* pp. 30–33; Liu Feng-han, *Hsin-chien lu-chün* (Taipei: The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1967), pp. 9–14.

28. Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* p. 15. See also Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* p. 42; Sin, *Hanmal oegyosa,* pp. 100–101.

29. Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* pp. 41-42; Sin, *Hanmal oegyosa,* p. 69; Fujioka, "Chōsen jidai," p. 15.

30. Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* pp. 30–31, 44.

31. The king received Yüan in audience on Sept. 19 and 27, 1882. See the entries on 1882/8/9 (i.e., the ninth day of the eighth month of 1882 in the lunar calendar) and 8/16 (i.e., the sixteenth day of the eighth month in the lunar calendar) in KS. See also Ŏ Yunjung, *Chongjŏng yŏnp'yo* (Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 1958), p. 139.

32. Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai.*

33. Ibid., p. 52. See also KAR 1: 135 (#240).

Korean king sympathized with the pro-Japanese reformers in a letter to Li Hung-chang on November 12, 1884, about twenty days before the outbreak of the coup.[34] When the coup took place on December 4, 1884, he overrode Admiral Wu Chao-yu's desire to await instructions from Li before committing his troops to military action, and took the initiative himself by striking against the Korean and Japanese rebel forces entrenched inside the royal palace where they held the Korean king hostage.[35] He based his action on a written request for Chinese military help issued by the Korean Third State Minister Sim Sunt'aek (b. 1824). The Chinese attack on the Korean and Japanese rebel forces on December 6 turned out to be a brilliant strategic success. The pro-Japanese regime collapsed within three days and the king was restored to the camp of Yüan Shih-k'ai. Li's admiration for Yüan's timely, albeit unauthorized, action was unbounded, saving Li as it did from a major military-diplomatic crisis in Korea on top of the current Sino-French conflict.[36] The Korean king and queen found themselves again in debt to Yüan for rescuing them from the hands of the "rebels," whose three-day reign of terror had lost for their cause the sympathy of their royal captives.[37]

It is important to note that Yüan, who had begun to suspect the Korean king's loyalty to China before the coup took place, advanced the following proposal to Li on December 15, 1884, about a week after the suppression of the coup:

> At this juncture, China is free to adopt a peaceful or militant policy vis-à-vis Korea in planning for her preservation. In view of the increased possibility that the Western powers will encroach on Korea in the near future, nothing could serve China's interest better than to appoint a high-ranking Chinese official, a royal supervisor, to Korea, vested with the authority to manage Korea's domestic as well as foreign affairs, with the requisite military power at his disposal. The present moment is a golden opportunity to implement such a plan because the Koreans feel deeply obliged to China at this time. This chance should not be missed. If we allow Japan time to align her military forces, she will try to make war with China by taking advantage of the current Sino-French imbroglio.[38]

34. Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* p. 16; Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* p. 46.

35. See the report on the coup filed by Yüan in CJSL 6: 17–21. See also Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* p. 19.

36. Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* pp. 63, 73.

37. See the entries on Dec. 20–24 and 28, 1884, in YI. See also CJHKS 11: 36.

38. CJHKS 6: 19 (#2761); CJSL 6: 20. See also Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* pp. 31–32. Sekiya was perhaps wrong in suggesting that Yüan had proposed that Li appoint a "royal supervisor" to the Korean court *after* he left Korea in the wake of the coup. See Sekiya Chūrō, *Kaigetsu En Seigai* (Tokyo: Jitsugyō no Nihonsha, 1913), pp. 42–43.

Here Yüan, in attempting to map out a future Chinese policy toward Korea in the wake of the *kapsin* coup, was unequivocally advocating the creation of a royal supervisor. It is likely that Yüan derived the idea from his mentor in the Chinese garrison in Seoul, Chang Chien.[39] It is also possible that Yüan was obliquely promoting himself as a candidate for this position at a time when he already enjoyed the status of a virtual royal supervisor himself.[40]

Li Hung-chang could not act upon Yüan's proposal until the dust stirred up by the *kapsin* coup had settled. In the meantime, Yüan was compelled to abandon his military career and leave Korea at the end of January 1885, when his name was mentioned repeatedly in the Japanese press as the principal person responsible for the Sino-Japanese military clash in the Korean royal palace during the coup.[41] Yüan enjoyed a long-delayed vacation in China from February to September 1885, while Li busied himself in diplomatic parleys regarding Korea with Ito Hirobumi and Enomoto Takeaki.

Li determined to appoint Yüan to replace Ch'en Shu-t'ang after receiving Inoue's proposal in July 1885.[42] Probably to test Japan's response to such a move, Li ordered Yüan on October 5 to escort the Taewŏn'gun and Henry F. Merrill (1853–1935), an American destined to replace von Möllendorff as the director of the Korean customs service, to Korea.[43] During his two-week visit in Seoul, Yüan succeeded in easing von Möllendorff out of his advisory post in Korea and humbling the king and queen by reproaching them for their cold and hostile reception of the Taewŏn'gun upon the old man's repatriation.[44] Possibly because of a desire to soothe Yüan's ruffled feelings, the Korean king wrote a letter to Li on October 20 requesting Yüan's service in the Korean government as an adviser on military matters *(chang-po chih chu; changbaek chi cho).*[45] This letter facilitated Li's recommendation of Yüan to the Chinese emperor as a "director-general," or resident, on October 28.

39. See Fujioka, "Chōsen jidai," p. 15; Wang, *Liu-shih-nien-lai* 1: 207.

40. Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* p. 25; Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* p. 67; Fujioka, "Chōsen jidai," p. 11.

41. Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* pp. 67–68, 71–74; Yi, "Ch'ŏng ŭi tae-Chosŏn," p. 102.

42. Li seems to have made this decision on Sept. 5, 1885. See ISHK 17: 57–59.

43. Yi, "Ch'ŏng ŭi tae Chosŏn," p. 105.

44. See ibid., pp. 105–7; Choe, "Yüan Shih-k'ai," pp. 41–42.

45. CJSL 9: 5 (#409). See also ISHK 17: 5. King Kojong had previously asked Li for Yüan's service in the Korean government on Sept. 26 (or 8/18). See CJHKS 4: 1945 (#1064).

As the foregoing resume of Yüan's background suggests, despite his youth, Yüan was probably the best prepared among contemporary Chinese to represent Li in Korea as a resident. His expertise on Korean affairs, particularly his familiarity with the local political and military situation, in addition to his advocacy of the purist concept of controlling Korea through a royal supervisor, prepared him well for the task. Yüan's manifold personal qualifications and the steadfast backing he received from Li were indispensable in making him a successful resident in Korea during 1885–94. But these personal qualifications were not enough alone: a number of objective conditions facilitated Resident Yüan's career. They were exclusive institutional advantages that China already enjoyed as the suzerain power in Korea; the tacit acquiescence in or support of the Chinese policy in Korea by Korea's treaty nations; and the uncritical acceptance of the high-handed Chinese policy by the Korean people. The role played by these factors in assisting Resident Yüan to successfully manipulate the Korean people requires some explanation.

First, China enjoyed exclusive control over Korea's customs service and telegraph system during the years of 1885 to 1894, in addition to holding a set of legal and economic privileges provided in the Sino-Korean Trade Regulations of 1882. The Korean customs service, one of the most important revenue sources of the Korean government, had been created in early 1883 by von Möllendorff. The control of this important economic institution passed into Chinese hands in October 1885, when Henry F. Merrill, Robert Hart's (1835–1911) protege and Li's choice, took over its management as its chief commissioner. The Korean customs service thenceforth was operated as an integral part of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs.[46] Chinese control of this vital institution gave the Chinese considerable control over the purse strings of the Korean government and thereby prevented the Korean king and his government from embarking on ambitious economic ventures unauthorized by the Chinese, while strengthening Resident Yüan's leverage against the Korean government.

Li Hung-chang arranged a loan of 100,000 taels for the building of the first telegraph line in Korea linking Inch'ŏn, Seoul, Ŭiju, Port Arthur, and Tientsin in the summer of 1885, as part of a plan to facilitate Chinese strategic control of Korea. Upon its completion in November 1885, China took control of this telegraph line, justified

46. See Ko Pyŏng'ik [Koh Byung-ik], *Tong'a kyosŏpsa ŭi yŏn'gu* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1970), pp. 464–92, 539–40.

by the so-called Sino-Korean Agreement on the Ŭiju Telegraph Line (July 17, 1885), which allowed China an exclusive monopoly over the line for twenty-five years. From then on, the telegraph service in Korea was handled by the Chinese staff of the Imperial Chinese Telegraph Service. Similarly, the telegraph line linking Seoul and Pusan, which was completed in 1888, was subject to Chinese control, based on an agreement signed on April 18, 1887.[47] Chinese monopoly over the modern telecommunication system in Korea gave technological as well as strategic advantage to the Chinese people in Korea, including Resident Yüan.

Second, China enjoyed broad international support for her policy in Korea from 1885 to 1894. As indicated above, Japanese willingness to cooperate with China in warding off a possible Russian intrusion into the Korean peninsula set the tone for a decade of international harmony at Korea's expense. Great Britain led the Western powers in providing unqualified support to the Chinese policy. The United States government followed Japan's lead and silently shelved previous assertions of Korean independence. More important, Russia acquiesced in the Chinese policy in Korea after October 1886 by pledging to "abstain from encroachment on the integrity of Korea" through the "Tientsin Agreement of 1886," an agreement worked out between Li Hung-chang and Ladygensky, the Russian chargé d'affaires in Peking, in October 1886.[48] The only critics who hindered Yüan's policy in Korea during this period were a handful of Americans active in Korea as employees of the Korean government or as missionaries.[49]

Last, and perhaps most important, the Korean people tolerated the overbearing attitude of Resident Yüan and the accompanying Chinese economic exploitation of Korea without major protest. The majority of the Korean people, both the educated yangban elite and the illiterate masses, seem to have accepted Chinese oppression in Korea at this time as a matter of course, undoubtedly as a result of having become inured to the age-old tradition of Sino-Korean tribu-

47. See Ch'esinbu chŏn'gi t'ongsin saŏp p'alsimnyŏnsa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, ed., *Chon'gi t'ongsin saŏp p'alsimnyŏnsa* (Seoul: Ch'esinbu, 1968), pp. 43–128. See also the entry on May 16, 1887, in KS.

48. "First Steps of Russian Imperialism in Far East (1888–1903): Proceedings of the Meeting of the Special Committee, Held May 8 (April 26), 1888," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 18, no. 2 (1934): 240. See also Tsiang, "Sino-Japanese Diplomatic," pp. 97–99; Sin, *Hanmal oegyosa,* pp. 213–24.

49. See Young I. Lew, "American Advisers in Korea, 1885–1894: Anatomy of Failure," in *The United States and Korea,* ed. Andrew C. Nahm (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Center for Korean Studies, Western Michigan University, 1979), p. 81.

tary relations and cultural borrowing. No conscious nationalistic movement, analogous to the anti-Western and anti-Japanese movement to repudiate heterodoxy and defense orthodoxy of the early 1880s, broke out against the Chinese among the yangban literati during the years of 1885 to 1894. The Tonghak peasant insurgents who were emphatic in denouncing Japanese and Western imperialism raised no voice of protest against Resident Yüan and the Chinese policy during their uprisings in 1893 and 1894.[50] In this milieu, it was difficult for the Korean king and queen to lead the small number of pro-Western independents in an open challenge of Resident Yüan's heavy-handedness. Resident Yüan, when cornered, could easily silence the criticism of the Korean officials by invoking the authority of the Chinese emperor or Li Hung-chang, who remained equal to the Korean king in official ranking according to the Sino-Korean Trade Regulations of 1882.[51] This explains why the sea of Korean domestic politics remained relatively calm during most of Resident Yüan's tenure in Korea.

RESIDENT YÜAN'S POLITICS OF INTERFERENCE

It has been shown that Yüan was entrusted with the supreme mission of controlling the Korean king and his government in order to preserve Yi Korea's tributary position within the ever shrinking orbit of the ancient Sinocentric world order, and that he was well prepared to undertake such a mission as resident. But the methods he employed to accomplish his task and the cost of his success to the ongoing Korean enlightenment movement require discussion. The Chinese resident seems to have wreaked havoc on the nascent enlightenment movement, either by interfering in Korean politics, diplomacy, and economic policies, or by sabotaging Korean attempts at reforms during his residency. More specifically, his high-handed policy of interference had an adverse impact on the enlightenment movement in four major ways: (1) he broke the backbone of the reform-minded Korean leadership, replacing it with a corrupt and incompetent one, through his interference in Korean politics; (2) he blinded Korean eyes to the non-Chinese world by limiting Korean diplomatic and cultural activities abroad and modern education at home; (3) he suppressed Korean experiments with modern economic ventures by preventing the Korean government from obtaining foreign loans; and (4) he deliberately neglected upgrading the

50. See Fujioka, "Chōsen jidai," p. 31.

51. See Ch'oe Sŏgu, "Han-Bul choyak kwa sin'gyo chayu," *Sahak yŏn'gu* 21 (September 1969): 215,226.

Korean military, perhaps for fear that a strengthened Korean army might give force to latent Korean nationalism directed against China. While thus hindering Korean attempts to achieve independence and reform, he saw to it that Korea meticulously maintained her traditional tributary obligations to China and that Chinese merchants and traders competed successfully against Japanese rivals in monopolizing Korean economic opportunities.

PURGE OF THE ENLIGHTENED KOREAN LEADERSHIP

King Kojong (1852–1919; r. 1863–1907), who had assumed control of the government in 1873 from his xenophobic father-regent, the Taewŏn'gun, proved to be a realistic leader, favoring an open-door policy and the country's enlightenment or modernization. He supported the policy decision to conclude a modern treaty with Japan in 1874, and, from 1880 to 1884 he, together with his astute and pro-Western spouse, Queen Min (1851–94; r. 1866–95), vigorously championed the cause of the enlightenment movement. This enlightened but weak-willed monarch was quite receptive to Li Hung-chang's paternalistic guidance in the early phase of the enlightenment movement. After mid-1882, when China sent troops to Korea and appointed advisers to the Korean government, however, the king's latent nationalism began to surface. Royal animosity against the Chinse oppression grew to such proportions from 1882 to 1884 that King Kojong gave secret encouragement to the pro-Japanese reformer, Kim Okkyun (1851–94), on the eve of the *kapsin* coup in the hope of driving the Chinese from Korea by taking advantage of the current Chinese involvement in Vietnam.[52] The king's view of the pro-Japanese reformers and their cause changed after he and his spouse underwent a grueling three-day ordeal at the hands of the rebels, but his anti-Chinese stance did not.[53] His distaste for Chinese oppression and his fear of an immediate Sino-Japanese conflict over Korea in the wake of the *kapsin* turmoil led him, during the winter and spring of 1884–85, to accede to von Möllendorff's pro-Russian proposal to introduce Russian military advisers into Korea.[54] The Korean overture to Russia for military

52. See Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* p. 30; Yi, *Kaehwadang yŏn'gu,* pp. 33–35.

53. See the entry on Jan. 5, 1885, in YI. See also Yüan's cable to Li on Aug. 9, 1886, cited below.

54. See Shigeyoshi Banji, "Sen-Ro hōgō mitsuyaku teiketsu no kuwadate ni tsuite, 1884–1886," *Inaba Hakase kanreki kinen Man-Sen-shi ronsō,* ed. Inaba hakase kanreki kinen-kai (Keijō, 1938), pp. 320–24; Kuo Ting-i, "O-kuo tsae-chi ch'in-Han yin-mo te pei-tsu," *Chung-Han wen-hua lun-chi* 1 (1955): 213–17; Wang Hsin-chung, *Chung-Jih*

protection at this time failed because of the timely and concerted countermoves of China and Japan, and the British naval occupation of Kŏmundo Island (Port Hamilton) off the southern coast of Korea in mid-April 1885.[55]

During 1885 and 1886, when the Chinese increased their control over Korea, the king and queen adhered to a strategy of strengthening Korean ties with Western countries as a means of ameliorating Chinese oppression. To this end, the king hastened the conclusion of the Korean-Italian Treaty (signed July 10, 1885) and the Franco-Korean Treaty (July 4, 1886), which had been contemplated before 1885. He also renewed his request to the United States government to dispatch military advisers and schoolteachers – a request he had originally made in October 1883.[56] At the same time, he tried to muster as much individual help from pro-Korean Americans as possible, and finally succeeded in employing a competent American lawyer-diplomat, Owen N. Denny, as an adviser on Korean foreign affairs in March 1886. Besides Denny, such pro-Korean Americans as Horace N. Allen, a Presbyterian missionary-doctor attached to the United States legation in Seoul since 1883; George C. Foulk, the military attaché to the same legation and occasional chargé d'affaires from 1883 to 1887, and later Hugh A. Dinsmore, the American minister to Korea from 1887 to 1889, rendered active sympathetic support to the Korean cause of independence from China.[57] In the meantime, the king and queen

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chia-wu chan-cheng chih wai-chiao pei-ching (Peiping: Tsing Hua University Press, 1937), p. 98; Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, pp. 163–64.

55. Regarding the British naval occupation of Kŏmundo Island, see Watanabe Kasuo, "Kyobundo gaikōshi," *Pojŏn hakkoe nonjip* 1 (1934): 223–81; Yi Yonghŭi, "Kŏmundo chŏmnyŏng oegyo chonggo," *Yi Sangbaek paksa hoegap kinyŏm nonch'ong*, ed. Sangbaek Yi Sangbaek paksa hoegap kinyŏm nonch'ong p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe (Seoul: Ŭryu munhwasa, 1964), pp. 459–99; Young Chung Kim, "Anglo-Russian Crisis and Port Hamilton, 1885–1887," *Han'guk munhwa yŏn'guso nonch'ong* 18 (1971): 243–66.

56. See Lew, "American Advisers," p. 66.

57. The Korean king and his pro-American entourage were interested in securing Denny's service in the Korean government beginning in 1883. See the entries of June 9, 10, and 11, 1884, in YI. Regarding Denny's role in Korea, see Robert R. Swartout, Jr., *Mandarins, Gunboats, and Power Politics: Owen Nickerson Denny and the International Rivalries in Korea* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980), pp. 56–152. Regarding Allen's role in Korea, see Harrington, *God, Mammon and the Japanese*. Regarding the role of Foulk, see Reordan, "The Role of George"; Tyler Dennett, "Early American Policy in Korea, 1883–87: The Services of Lieutenant George C. Foulk," *Political Science Quarterly* 35 (1923): 82–103; Donald 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, pp. 27–63. Regarding the Korean royal

surrounded themselves with the so-called independents *(chaju nosŏnp'a)*, including Kim Kajin (1846–1922), Kim Hag'u (1862–94), Cho Chondu, Chŏn Yangmuk, and Ch'ae Kyŏnsik (d. 1886), who advocated forging an alliance with the United States and/or Russia to achieve Korean independence from China.[58]

The anti-Chinese feelings of the king and his independent-minded coterie came to a head in May 1886, when Resident Yüan impudently interfered in Korean negotiations with the French for a Franco-Korean treaty. The Korean officials took Yüan's gratuitous insistence that a clause concerning religious freedom be included in the prospective treaty as unwarranted interference in Korean sovereign affairs, whereas Yüan argued that he was empowered to do so by the Chinese emperor.[59] The matter was settled in favor of Yüan while Denny's efforts saved face for the Korean negotiators. But this incident ignited a strong anti-Chinese feeling in the king and his supporters. They consequently renewed a plan to court Russian protection against Chinese oppression.[60] According to Yüan, the Korean government transmitted the following request bearing the royal seal, dated August 9, 1886, to Karl I. Waeber, the Russian chargé d'affaires:

> Although our country, which is situated in a strategic position, possesses the right of independence, she has been unable to escape control of other countries. His Majesty is much ashamed of this. Now we have determined to strengthen ourselves by correcting the old system so that we may live free of the foreign yoke. Our country enjoys the most friendly relations with your country. . . . We hope your excellency will write to your government of our wish that it protect us in the spirit of mutual cooperation. His Majesty wishes that our country might become equal with other nations of the world. If other countries interfere, please send your ships to help us, so that we may achieve our goal. . . .[61]

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interest in employing Dinsmore, see Swartout, Jr., *Mandarins, Gunboats,* pp. 104–5.

58. The term *chaju nosŏnp'a* is coined by Pak Ilgŭn. See Pak Ilgŭn, *Kŭndae Han-Mi oegyosa* (Seoul: Pagusa, 1968), pp. 404, 408. According to Shen, Chŏng Pyŏngha (d. 1896), Kim Kisŏk, and Chŏng Nagyong were included in the independent-minded royal coterie. See Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* pp. 43–44.

59. See Sŏgu, "Han-Bul choyak," pp. 215, 226.

60. See KSS 2: 831–32; Kuo, "O-kuo tsae-chi," p. 224; Yi Sŏngŭn, *Han'guksa: ch'oegŭnse,* pp. 815–20.

61. LWCS, "Hai-chün han-kao" 2: 7. See also Choe, "Yüan Shih-k'ai," pp. 46–47; Pak, *Kŭnde Han-Mi,* p. 406; Yi, *Han'guksa: Ch'oegŭnse,* p. 821. The authenticity of this document has long been suspected because the king denied having endorsed such a letter on August 17. See KHOM 8, no. 1: 312–13 (#518). See also Jerome Ch'en, *Yüan Shih-k'ai, 1859–1916*(Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961). But the Russian archival document reveals that the Korean king did make a request for Russian protection in 1886. See "First Steps," *Chinese Social and Political Science Review* 18, no. 2: 240.

This letter, a copy of which Yüan succeeded in obtaining from Min Yŏngik—Queen Min's nephew and a close friend of Yüan's who opposed the king's risky policy of "allying with Russia in betrayal of China"—reveals the Korean royalty's ardent wish to obtain Russia's protection against China in return for unnamed territorial, strategic, or economic concessions.

Yüan had long suspected the Korean king's loyalty to China.[62] In addition, he held the king in low esteem for a lack of stout leadership and willpower. After 1884, Yüan characterized King Kojong as a "dim-witted monarch" *(hunchun; hon'gun* in Korean), henpecked by his "obstinate and stubborn" queen.[63] He secretly desired from October 1885, if not earlier, to sweep away the king, queen, and the heir-designate, Yi Ch'ŏk (1874–1926; Emperor Sunjong, 1907–10), from their seats of royal power in favor of a more reliable pro-Chinese leadership. Yüan had the Sinophilic Taewŏn'gun and his favorite grandson, sixteen-year-old Yi Chunyong (1870–1917), in mind as alternatives to King Kojong's effete but recalcitrant leadership.[64] It is possible that he counted on such pro-Chinese moderate reformers as Kim Yunsik, Kim Hongjip, and Ŏ Yunjung—whom both Li Hung-chang and Inoue Kaoru regarded highly—to support a Taewŏn'gun-led regime, should he succeed in bringing it into being.[65]

The secret royal overture to Russia for protection in August 1886 provided Resident Yüan an excellent pretext to implement his long-cherished plan. Upon seizing a copy of the aforementioned document, he cabled Li Hung-chang on August 9:

62. Yüan reported on the wavering loyalty of the Korean king to China in November 1884. See Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* p. 46.

63. See CJHKS 4: 2145–50 (#1178); 5: 2564–68 (#1411). Yüan's estimate of King Kojong's and Queen Min's political caliber jibes with the observations of other contemporaries. See the entries on Jan. 1, Jan. 21, Feb. 23, Apr. 24, May 12, and June 13, 1884, in YI; Isabella L. Bird Bishop, *Korea and Her Neighbors* (London: John Murray, 1897); 2: 255, 257, 284–85; George N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East: Japan—Korea—China* (London: Longmans, Green, 1894); William F. Sands, *Undiplomatic Memories* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1930), p. 53. See also Kim Haengja, "Minbi chipkwŏngi Hanjŏng taeoegwan'gye ŭi kukche chŏngch'ijŏk koch'al (M.A. thesis, Ehwa Woman's University, 1966), pp. 22, 27–29. Owen N. Denny, however, regarded King Kojong's competence as a leader highly. See O. N. Denny, *China and Korea* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, 1888), p. 46.

64. See KAR 2: 155 (#13); NGB 28, no. 1: 313 (#264); YI 4: 21 (the entry on Jan. 13, 1895), 62 (Sept. 7, 1895). There was an abortive plan in 1882 to make Yi Chae-sŏn, the Taewŏn'gun's illegitimate son, the king. For another plot in Kyŏngsang province in 1884, see the entries on Feb. 23, Mar. 5, 6, 20, and 22, and Apr. 4 and 7, 1884, in YI.

65. See Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* p. 23. See also nn. 78–79 below.

The king of Korea is desirous of dealing with Western countries on terms of equality. He is ashamed of putting his three-thousand-li territory under Chinese suzerain control. Recently more and more petty courtiers flock to his leadership with the same purpose in mind. The king, as you may recall, caused trouble in 1884 by pursuing a policy of befriending Japan in repudiation of China. Now he repeats this policy by seeking Russian help against China. The decision to ask for Russian protection was made after ousting [my confidant] Kim Yunsik [from the post of the President of the Foreign Office]. This decision seems to have received the concurrence of the king and a large number of petty courtiers. I submit that China dispatch marines to Korea and carry out the deposition of this dim-witted monarch in favor of a more sagacious scion from the Yi royal line. . . . If Russia realizes that our troops have landed first and completed the installation of a new king, she will abandon her schemes. . . . If you instruct the Taewŏn'gun to help [in this matter], order can be restored in a few days. If we delay our action until Russian troops arrive, I am afraid things will develop beyond our control. . . .[66]

In other words, Yüan was proposing to carry out a swift deposition of the pro-Russian Korean king under a Chinese military cover before Russia could take any initiative toward Korea.

Resident Yüan's "diabolical plot"—as Denny characterized it in his *China and Korea*[67]—did not succeed, due to Li's negative decision. After carefully weighing the feasibility of Yüan's proposal and the contingencies involved, Li sent a cable to Yüan on August 28 to "calm down and not incite things." Li's decision was based on a critical report of August 20 from his special agent, Ch'en Yun-i, a former chief of the Korean branch of the Chinese Imperial Telegraph Service whom Li sent to Seoul in mid-August to evaluate the Korean local political situation independent of Yüan. Ch'en stated that the Taewŏn'gun and his party were a poor match for the royalist party who were still firmly entrenched. Li must also have been influenced by a warning from the Chinese minister in Tokyo sometime in late August that the Japanese prime minister, Itō Hirobumi, disapproved of the "extreme" Chinese interference in Korean affairs, as well as an assurance from the Russian foreign ministry on August 28 that no Korean request for protection had yet been forwarded from Waeber. The Russians also assured Li that they would regard any such letter received in the future as a forgery.[68]

Although Resident Yüan's midsummer plot to depose the reigning king—the boldest imperialistic plan ever contemplated by

66. LWCS, "Hai-chün han-kao," 1: 5–6. See Choe, "Yüan Shih-k'ai," pp. 47–48; Pak, *Kŭndae Han-Mi,* pp. 405–6.

67. Denny, *China and Korea,* p. 34.

68. See LWCS, "hai-chün han-kao," 1: 3–5; KSS 2: 862. See also Yi, *Han'guksa: ch'oegŭnse,* p. 829; Choe, "Yüan Shih-k'ai," pp. 48–49; Pak, *Kŭndae Han-Mi,* p. 409.

the suzerain Ch'ing dynasty toward tributary Korea during their two-and-a-half-century-old relationship—miscarried, it left serious and long-lasting repercussions on Korean domestic politics. First of all, as a result of this incident the relative position of Resident Yüan toward the Korean ruler was elevated. The prostrate king was subjected to a series of intimidations and haughty memorials by Yüan between August and October of that year.[69] The king, according to Hugh A. Dinsmore, "dares not undertake enforcement of his own authority" in the wake of the traumatic incident.[70] Furthermore, Korean officials began to curry favor more with Resident Yüan than with the king.[71] In short, this incident allowed Yüan to confirm his position as a royal supervisor. Furthermore, he succeeded in preempting any renewed Korean appeals to Russia for protection by forcing the king to endorse a new ruling on September 3 that no Korean diplomatic paper would be valid without the countersignature of the Korean Foreign Office, which remained under his influence.[72] Consequently, the Korean rulers refrained from courting Russian protection until after the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895.

Perhaps the most enduring repercussion of Yüan's abortive plot was the change it helped bring about in Korean politics. Yüan forced the king to mete out stiff punishment to the band of anti-Chinese "petty courtiers" who had contributed to the pro-Russian movement. Consequently, Kim Kajin, Kim Hagu, Cho Chondu, and Chŏn Yangmuk were ordered banished on August 18, while Ch'ae Hyŏnsik was secretly strangled to death.[73] This spelled an end to the "independents" as an effective political entity at court. As a witness to this phenomenon, George C. Foulk, the chargé of the American legation in Seoul, reported to the United States State Department on September 8 that "while during this disturbance there was neither violence nor bloodshed, the effect of it is shown in a great weakening of the king's party."[74]

69. Yüan submitted two essays, entitled "Ten-Point Urgent Matters" *(Shih-shih chih-wu)* and "The International Context of Korea" *(Chao-hsien ta-chu lun)*, to the king on Aug. 28 and Oct. 9, respectively. See Dalchoong Kim, "Korea's Quest for Reform," pp. 394–400.

70. See KAP, vol. 2.

71. See Harrington, *God, Mammon,* pp. 226, 243–44.

72. See KSS 2: 867; KHOM 1, no. 1: 346 (#729). Regarding Yüan's hold on the Korean foreign office through 1886–1893, see KAR 2: 148 (#297), 202 (#490).

73. See the entry on 1886/7/17 in KS; KSS 2: 860–61. The two Kims, Cho and Chŏn, however, were freed on Aug. 24, thanks to the protest lodged by Waeber. See KSS 2: 863–64; Pak, *Kŭndae Han-Mi,* p. 408.

74. KAR 1: 153 (#3).

It should be borne in mind that the king, who managed to retain the prerogative to appoint and dismiss his own officials even after the 1886 incident, carried out his own purge of officials suspected of having rendered sympathetic support to Yüan's ill-starred plot to depose him. For example, Kim Yunsik, who rendered secret support to Yüan's plot by serving as his confidant, was banished to Myŏnch'ŏn in July 1887 by royal order,[75] while Kim's friends, including Kim Hongjip and Ŏ Yunjung, were not allowed to hold responsible positions in the central government until after 1894.[76] The Taewŏn'gun and his grandson, Yi Chunyong, who had aspired to the throne with Yüan's backing, were placed under stricter police surveillance equivalent to a virtual house arrest after the incident.[77] Min Yŏngik, one of the most enlightened officials of the Yŏhŭng Min clan, was compelled to exile himself from Korean politics due to the opportunistic, double-dealing role he played between the king and queen and the Chinese resident.[78] In short, both the pro-Chinese moderate reformers (including the two Kims, Ŏ and Min) and the Taewŏn'gun supporters lost ground in the Korean political arena as an unexpected consequence of Yüan's abortive plot. Considered in conjunction with the demise of the pro-Japanese radical reformers in 1884 and the collapse of the independents in 1886, the royal counterpurge of these two groups of politicans and officials from the central government facilitated the rise of the only remaining group, that is, the "Min group" (*che-Min; chu-Bin* in Chinese), to an

75. Kim Yunsik, *Sog'ŭmch'ŏngsa* (Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 1960), p. 2. Regarding Kim's support of Yüan's plot, see KSS 2: 922; Yi, *Han'guksa: ch'oegŭnse,* p. 833.

76. Kim Hongjip remained a second minister of the Office of the Ministers-without-Portfolio *(P'anchungch'ubusa)* during most of the period from 1885 to 1894, with the exception of a period of about five months between November 1887 and April 1888, when he served as a second state minister and the period from Apr. 29, 1889, to Oct. 21, 1891, when he served as a magistrate of Suwŏn. See the entries on 1884/12/1, 1887/10/29, 1888/3/21, 1889/3/25, and 1891/9/19 in KSS. See also Towŏn sanggong kinyŏm saŏp ch'ujin wiwŏnhoe, ed., *Kaehwagi ŭi Kim ch'ongni* (Seoul: Towŏn sanggong kinyŏm saŏp ch'ujin wiwŏnhoe, 1977), p. 161. Ŏ Yunjung held no important government post during 1886–94, except for a brief appointment as the pacifier of the Tonghak insurgents in the spring and summer of 1893. See the entries of 1893–3/17, 3/24, and 8/25 in KSS. Ŏ's close friendship with Kim Yunsik is borne out by his repeated overnight visits to Kim Yunsik in exile at Myŏnch'ŏn in September 1887 and October 1892. See Kim, *Sogŭmch'ŏngsa* 1: 15, 240. Regarding the predicament in which Kim Hongjip, Kim Yunsik, and Ŏ Yunjung found themselves, see CJSL 8: 24 (#385).

77. See Young I. Lew, "Korean-Japanese Politics Behind the Kabo-Ŭlmi Reform Movement," *Journal of Korean Studies* 3 (January 1982): 39–81.

78. See ISHK 19: 49–50; the entry on 1886/7/17 in KSS.

unchallenged position in the Korean government in alliance with Resident Yüan.

The Min group comprised a group of officials of the Yŏhŭng Min clan and their non-Min hangers-on, who owed their success in Korean officialdom to the patronage of Queen Min. They began dominating important government posts from the early 1880s, if not earlier, through the nepotism of Queen Min.[79] Their collective power and influence, however, were held in check from 1880 to 1886 by the parallel existence in the Korean government of a variety of non-Min groups, including the radical reformers, the moderate reformers, and the independents who received their backing from the king rather than the queen—not to speak of the Taewŏn'gun supporters who were popular among the populace. The elimination of these anti-Min groups from the Korean political arena after 1886 paved the way for the unobstructed growth of the Min groups into a virtual oligarchy composed of career- and self-seeking sycophantic officials. The resultant Min clan oligarchy is notorious in the annals of Yi dynasty history for its unparalleled corruption and incompetence.[80] In other words, Resident Yüan ended up supporting a Korean regime unpopular among the Korean people and least suited for leadership in an enlightenment movement.

CONTRACTION OF KOREA'S INTELLECTUAL VISTAS

The Enlightenment Movement of the early 1880s owed its inspiration to the stream of new ideas and men that flowed into the hermit kingdom after the opening of the country. Active diplomatic and cultural contacts with the non-Chinese world and the initiation of modern education were the two most important institutional factors promoting intellectual fertilization. The king and his en-

79. According to Deuchler, the Mins were "in control of the nerve centers of the government" from the end of 1882, if not earlier. Deuchler, *Confucian Gentlemen*, p. 154. The leading Mins and their hangers-on prior to the outbreak of the Tonghak rebellion in 1894 including Min Yŏngjun, Min Ŭngsik (b. 1844), Min Yŏnghwan (1861–1904), Min Yŏngso (b. 1852), Min Chongmuk (1835–1916), Sim Sunt'aek, Hong Kyehun (d. 1895), Sim Sanghun (b. 1854), Han Kyusŏl (d. 1930), and Cho Pyŏngsik (b. 1832). See Young I. Lew, "The Kabo Reform Movement: Korean and Japanese Reform Efforts in Korea, 1894" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1972), pp. 11–16. For a list of twenty-three Mins and their hangers-on in 1887, see Kukin kinenkai, ed., *Kin Gyoku-kin den* (Tokyo: Keiō shuppansha, 1944) 1: 37–38. See also Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai*, pp. 146–49.

80. Regarding the "corruption and incompetence" of the Mins in power, see Lew, "Kabo Reform," pp. 16–34. Harrington correctly notes that Yüan "preferred to work through the ex-regent's hated foes, the Mins" after 1888. See Harrington, *God, Mammon*, pp. 267–68.

lightened government sponsored a series of costly diplomatic and cultural missions to China, Japan, and the United States from 1880 to 1884—including the mission of sixty-nine student-artisans to the Tientsin Arsenal as "select students *(yŏngsŏn-sa)*, during 1881–82, the "gentry-officials' touring group" *(sinsa yuramdan)* of thirty-six men to Japan during 1882–83, and the eight-man "reciprocal mission" *(pobingsa)* to the United States in 1883–84.[81] The Korean government opened the first modern language school, called the *Tongmunhak* (the Korean counterpart of the Chinese *Tung-wen Kuan*), as part of the proto-modern foreign office, *T'ongnigimu-amun*, in 1883.[82] The king made a formal request to the United States minister in Seoul, Lucius H. Foote, in September 1884, for three American schoolteachers to undertake modern education in Korea.[83] In 1884, he also promised Reverend Robert S. McClay, the bishop of the Methodist Mission in Japan, that the Korean government would provide the requisite support for the educational activities of Protestant missionaries in Korea.[84] In this stimulating atmosphere, between 1882 and 1884, more than fifty Korean youths ventured to Japan and one to the United States for study in modern schools, partly on government scholarships.[85]

All of these diplomatic, cultural, and educational activities were destined to cease under the obscurantist influence of Resident Yüan during 1885 to 1894. Yüan discouraged Korean contacts with the outside world and modern education, ostensibly for financial reasons, but actually because he feared that enlightened and well-educated Koreans would turn against China in cooperation with Korea's treaty nations. Yüan's policy was most apparent in his (and his government's) obstruction of the Korean plan to establish permanent legations in the treaty nations in late 1887 and his failure to support the Royal College (*Yugyŏng kongwŏn*), which came into being in May 1886.

81. Regarding the mission to the Tientsin Arsenal, see n. 7 above. Regarding the mission to Japan, see Chŏng Okcha, "Sinsa yuramdan ko," *Yŏksa hakpo* 27 (April 1965): 105–42. Regarding the mission to the United States, see Gary D. Walter, "The Korean Special Mission to the United States of America in 1883," *Journal of Korean Studies* 1, no. 1 (1979): 89–142.

82. See Yi Kwang'nin, *Han'guk kaehwasa yŏn'gu*, rev. ed. (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1980), pp. 55, 107, 110; Horace N. Allen, *Korea: Fact and Fancy* (Seoul: Methodist Publishing House, 1904), p. 163.

83. KAR 1:55 (#109).

84. Lak-Geoon George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea, 1832–1910* (P'yŏngyang: Union Christian College Press, 1927; reprinted, Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1970), p. 230.

85. Yi, *Kaehwadang yŏn'gu*, p. 37.

The Korean king, following the advice of Denny, appointed Min Yŏngjun (1852–1935), as the first Korean resident minister (*pyŏlli taesin*) to Tokyo on July 6, 1887, with the intent of opening a permanent legation in Japan.[86] Since this royal action went unchallenged by Resident Yüan, the king on August 18, 1887 appointed Pak Chŏngyang (1841–1904) and Sim Sang-hak—soon replaced by Cho Sin-hŭi—as envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary to Washington, D.C., and the capitals of the five European treaty nations for the purpose of establishing Korean legations in these countries.[87] His motive was to bolster Korean claims to independence by strengthening her ties with the treaty powers, particularly in the light of Yüan's plot to depose the king the previous year. The Korean legations in Japan, the United States, and Europe could have served an important function by promoting economic as well as diplomatic and cultural interaction, provided they were well staffed and received sufficient financial and moral support from the home government.

Resident Yüan, who had winked at the Korean mission to Tokyo perhaps because he did not want to involve himself in a major diplomatic imbroglio with Japan, made a determined attempt to stop the Korean projects in the United States and in Europe. By browbeating the Korean foreign office, he succeeded in preventing these Korean missions from leaving the country until November 1887.[88] He argued that the projected missions must be canceled because they were not authorized in advance by the Chinese government and because the financially weak Korean government could not afford to station permanent legations in Western countries.[89] The Korean king, however, through separate negotiations in Tientsin, succeeded in obtaining Li Hung-chang's approval for the mission to the United States on November 10, on the condition that the Korean envoy would abide by the Chinese-imposed "three protocol terms" in conducting his business in Washington, D.C., and that, upon the completion of his mission, he would be replaced by an official of lower rank, a rank not higher than the Chinese minister-resident in Washington, D.C.[90] The protestations of the American

86. KHOM 8,no. 1: 367 (#625), 369 (#631), 377 (#649). See also Tabohashi, *Kindai Nissen* 1: 921–22.

87. Sim was replaced by Cho on Sept. 16. See KSS 2: 928, 932.

88. For details, see Pak, *Kŭndae Han-Mi,* pp. 420–40.

89. Ibid.

90. KHOM 8, no. 1: 384 (#660); KSS 2: 943; regarding the "three protocol terms," see M. Frederick Nelson, *Korea and the Old Orders in Eastern Asia* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946), pp. 186–87; Song Pyŏnggi, "Sowi 'samdan' e

ministers in Seoul and Peking, Hugh A. Dinsmore and Charles Denby, against the Chinese prohibition of a Korean mission to the United States seem to have had an effect on Li's compromise decision.[91] No overt Chinese action was taken regarding the Korean mission to Europe.

The Korean government succeeded in opening legations in Tokyo and Washington, D.C., in July 1887 and January 1888. These legations, however, never developed into active diplomatic-consular centers representing Korean interests abroad. Min Yŏngjun, the minister-resident in Tokyo, abandoned his post and returned home in early October 1887, leaving the legation business to a chargé d'affaires.[92] The Korean legation to Tokyo henceforth was run by a four-man staff headed by a consular minister (*pyo-nsa taesin*) during most of 1887 to 1894.[93] Similarly, the Korean legation in Washington, D.C. was entrusted to a two-man staff headed by a chargé after Pak Chŏngyang returned home in mid-November 1888.[94] The Korean mission to Europe somehow managed to depart Korea in 1887, but it never reached its destination due to the British obstruction of the mission's journey in Hong Kong, apparently in cooperation with the Chinese government.[95] The head of the mission, Cho Sinhŭi, returned home in February 1890, to be punished by the enraged king.[96] Thus, due to Chinese interference or noncooperation, the Korean government failed in its efforts to promote diplomatic, commercial, and cultural interaction with treaty nations during 1887–1894.

While not allowing progress in Korea's contacts with Japan and the Western powers, Resident Yüan saw to it that the Korean government fulfilled her traditional tributary obligations to China. A total of eleven tribute missions visited Peking during his residency.[97] In 1890, a Chinese imperial condolence mission arrived in Seoul at the occasion of Queen Dowager Cho's death, in spite of Korean wishes to do away with the "expensive" mission, and the king was compelled to

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taehayŏ, *Sahakchi* 6 (November 1972): 101–2.

91. Pak, *Kundae Han-Mi*, pp. 419–39; Song, "Sowi 'samdan,'" p. 100.

92. KSS 2: 937.

93. KSS 3: 368.

94. See Mun, *Han-Mi kwan'gye osimnyŏnsa* (Seoul: Chogwangsa, 1945), pp. 149, 174, 188. See also Allen, "Resume of Chief Events," 1: 63. The Korean government appointed a "consular minister" (*p'ansa taesin*), Yi Sŭngsu, on Dec. 31, 1893. See KSS 3: 397.

95. KSS 2: 943; 3: 143. See also Allen, "Resume of Chief Events," 1: 62.

96. CJKS 5: 2744–45 (#1509); KSS 3: 140.

97. See Lew, "Kabo Reform," p. 471, n. 140.

receive it with full traditional, self-degrading ceremonies.[98] Li Hung-chang had dismissed a Korean proposal to change the traditional tributary relationship into a more modern, egalitarian one in mid-1882.[99] Instead, he arranged for Korea to open a quasi-legation in Tientsin through the Sino-Korean Trade Regulation of 1882 and placed it under a resident supervisor of (Sino-Korean) affairs in Tientsin (*chu-Ch'ŏnjin taewŏn*).[100] Korea maintained this office in Tientsin through 1883–94 as the main contact point between the king and Li Hung-chang. In 1893, a Korean consular office was opened in Shanghai,[101] but it failed to develop into an active trade center due to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War the next year.

It is noteworthy that no major cultural or educational mission comparable to the 1881 mission to Tientsin and the 1882 mission to Japan was sent out by the Korean government from 1885 to 1894. The only cultural team that left Korea during this time was a small ten-man musical troupe participating in the Chicago World's Fair in March 1893.[102] Not only did the exodus of students cease, but also all of the students sent abroad prior to 1885 were ordered home. Some of the returning students, including Yu Kilchun (1857–1914) and Yi Sujŏng, suffered persecution at the hands of the pro-Chinese Korean government as sympathizers of the pro-Japanese "radical reformers"—possibly under the direction of Resident Yüan.[103]

While the scope of Korean contact with the outside world shrank, the fledgling system of modern education that had taken root in the early 1880s also withered. Three Protestant missionary schools, including the Paejae Boys School, Ihwa Girls School, and Kyŏngsin Boys School, opened between 1884 and 1886, but they failed to grow in their enrollment or physical facilities during the period to 1894.[104] Resident Yüan's anti-American and anti-Christian stance contributed to this situation. Similarly, the Royal College, the only government-sponsored school, that opened with three American teachers upon their arrival in May 1886, failed to grow into a major center of modern learning and the enrollment of this

98. KAR 2: 30–32 (#86), 35 (#89).

99. A Korean "consultant" on diplomatic matters dispatched to Tientsin, Ŏ Yun-jung, made this proposal to Li Hung-chang in 1882—only to be rebuffed. See Kim Chong-wŏn, "Sho-Jung sangmin," p. 139.

100. KSS 2: 372, 508–9.

101. See KSS 3: 377.

102. Allen, *Fact and Fancy,* p. 184; Mun, *Han-Mi kwan'gye,* pp. 221–24; KSS 3: 347.

103. See Yi, *Han'guk kaehwasa,* pp. 250, 288.

104. These schools began expanding after the conclusion of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895. See Paik, *History of Protestant,* p. 230.

multicurricular school never rose above thirty.[105] The school ceased operations in 1894 because the American teachers quit one after another, complaining of the lack of moral and financial support.[106] The Chinese resident may be held partially responsible for the school's failure because the funding for it depended on the income from the Korean customs service, which was under Chinese control at this time. Generally speaking, Korea's modern intellectual vistas were contracting rather than expanding during the decade from 1885 to 1894. No new ideas and men were allowed to penetrate the Chinese bamboo curtain erected by Resident Yüan.

SUPPRESSION OF MODERN ECONOMIC VENTURES

In 1883 and 1884, Korea witnessed a mushrooming of rudimentary modern economic institutions, including a customs service, mint, a mining bureau, a postal service, a steamship company, an American-style model farm, and a number of modern factories, all under government sponsorship.[107] The appearance of these institutions represented the first major sign of Korea's economic modernization in line with the Ch'ing self-strengthening movement. Successful development of these institutions, however, was contingent, among other things, upon a steady supply of capital from domestic or foreign sources. Since Korea lacked readily available domestic capital, it became increasingly clear to the Korean king and his reform-minded entourage that they had to borrow foreign credits, in addition to generating funds through manipulation of the monetary system. The king tested both these methods in March 1883, when he ordered Kim Okkyun to proceed to Tokyo on a secret mission to obtain a three million dollar loan from Japanese or American financiers.[108] He also authorized von Möllendorff to proceed with his scheme for generating quick money by minting debased currency, in this case the *tang'o* ("equivalent-to-five") coin.[109] Both these methods were risky in that the former, if indulged in for long on a large scale, would render Korea dependent on foreign creditors while the latter would invite an inflationary spiral.

Despite the risks inherent in the use of foreign loans, the king continued to show an avid interest in obtaining a two- to three million dollar loan from non-Chinese sources after Kim Okkyun

105. Yi, *Han'guk kaehwasa,* pp. 106–8, 115.
106. Lew, "American Advisers," p. 78.
107. See n. 113 below.
108. Yi, *Kaehwadang yŏn'gu,* pp. 59–61; Kokin kinenkai, *Kin Gyoku-kin* 1: 253–54.
109. KSS 2: 437–38; Kukin kinenkai, *Kin Gyoku-kin,* pp. 283–85.

returned home from Japan empty-handed in May 1884. The failure of the mission to Tokyo caused the king to turn next to the U.S. minister in Seoul, Foote, for help in obtaining substantial loans from the United States in return for franchises for construction of Korean railroads and telegraph lines by prospective American financiers and entrepreneurs.[110] This offer did not bear fruit because of the sudden outbreak of the *kapsin* coup and Minister Foote's departure from Seoul. The king continued searching for loans from the United States, Japan, France, and Great Britain after 1885, but with dismal results because of Chinese obstructions.

Li Hung-chang had manifested an interest in helping Korea launch the customs service and the mining bureau as early as 1879, under the assumption that they would generate the funds necessary to streamline the Korean military. He, therefore, took the initiative in arranging a series of Chinese government loans from 1879 to 1883 amounting to a total of 735,000 taels at low or no interest.[111] Part of this sum was used to create the Korean customs service. In 1885, he arranged an additional loan of 100,000 taels at an interest rate of 6 percent per annum for building the telegraph lines discussed above.[112] But Li stopped providing Chinese credit for Korean economic ventures after 1885, probably because Korea at this time did not command a priority in his strategic thinking, and also because China was then suffering from a lack of funds herself caused by her own drive for self-strengthening.

Chinese policy toward Korean economic development during the decade after 1885 was a double-edged one of aggressively promoting Chinese mercantile penetration into Korean markets, while at the same time discouraging Korean attempts at economic improvement. Resident Yüan and his government tried to curb Korean attempts to base the country's economic modernization on deficit spending, partially to prevent Korea from becoming mired in debt. But aside from this paternalistic concern, the Chinese leaders were also motivated by an imperialistic desire to preserve opportunities for developing the Korean economy for future Chinese investment, in addition to the fear that an improvement in the Korean economy would lead to a strengthening of Korean nationalism. Therefore,

110. See the entries on July 4 and Aug. 13, 1884, in YI. See also Yur-bok Lee, *Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Korea, 1866–1887* (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), p. 70.

111. Kim Chŏnggi, "Chosŏn chŏngbu ŭi Ch'ŏng ch'agwan toip," *Han'guksa ron* 3 (August 1976): 484.

112. Ibid., pp. 444–52.

Chinese economic strategy in Korea focused on attempts to block the inflow of non-Chinese foreign loans.

Resident Yüan began meddling with Korean economic planning in August 1886, when he submitted the following advice to the Korean king as part of his memorial entitled "Ten Current Abuses":

> The revered rule of economy in ancient as well as in modern times is to spend according to the amount of revenue. Recently the savings in the [Korean] treasury have been depleted and the country has heaped up foreign debts. . . . [In spite of this] petty officials promote various less urgent projects under the pretext of promoting national wealth and power. But their real motive is to aggrandize their own personal interests. Such undertakings as the Mint, the Seeds and Sericulture Bureau (Chongsangguk), the Arsenal, and the Steamship Company are, of course, good in themselves, but they are not urgently necessary in the context of current Korean economic conditions. Your Majesty has to concentrate first on the improvement of the domestic government and the opening up of unexplored resources, and bend your efforts to curtail superfluous government expenditures. Your Majesty may gradually work on building up wealth and power only after the national treasury is filled and the expenditures of the royal household are sufficiently met.[113]

Here Yüan was criticizing Korean attempts to build modern institutions through deficit financing, in favor of the Confucian economic ideal of a balanced budget. By pointing to the Mint, the Seeds and Sericulture Bureau, the Arsenal, and the Steamship Company as superfluous institutions motivated by the selfish desires of some petty officials in the royal entourage, Yüan was actually repudiating the first important experiments made by a reform-minded Korean leadership in the area of modern economy during the 1880s. As it turned out, with the exception of the Chinese-controlled customs service, most of these modern economic institutions failed to grow or were abandoned under Yüan's influence.

Resident Yüan and his government held an effective check on Korea's autonomous economic planning by controlling the Korean customs service, thereby checking the flow of available domestic capital, and by blocking Korean attempts to raise foreign loans. The Korean customs service remained under the control of a multinational administrative staff headed by the following Chinese-appointed Western chief commissioners during Yüan's residency: Henry F. Merrill (1885–89), J. F. Schoenicke (1889–92), F. A. Morgan (1892–93), and John McLeavy Brown (1893–1913). The amount of

113. The entry of 1886/7/29 in KS; CJHKS 10: 14. See also W. W. Rockhill to the Secretary of State, No. 54, Enclosure, Jan. 28, 1887, the United States National Archives, Record Group 59 (General Records of the Department of State), Dispatches from United States Ministers to Korea, 1883–1905.

customs revenue from Korean open ports tripled during this decade because of efficient administration by the non-Korean staff.[114] But the increase in customs revenue did not benefit the Korean king and his government because the customs receipts were disbursed according to a predetermined scale of priorities, namely, payment of salaries to employees of the service, paying off the principal and interest on the Chinese loans to Korea, and payment of salaries to foreign (i.e., American) advisers and teachers employed by the Korean government.[115] This arrangement left little or no revenue for the Koreans to utilize in undertaking modern projects. More important, the king and his government were effectively barred from using the customs revenues as collateral for foreign loans unless and until the Chinese loans had been paid off.

Resident Yüan and his government thwarted the Korean king's clandestine efforts to obtain loans from foreign, non-Chinese sources on at least three major occasions from 1888 to 1892. The king tried to obtain a two-million dollar loan from New York bankers in 1888 through Horace N. Allen and Yi Hayŏng (1859–1919), who were attached to the Korean legation in Washington, D.C. Allen and Yi succeeded in interesting American financiers in franchises to open lucrative gold mines and build railroads. Their efforts, however, were frustrated in 1889 by the eruption of the "baby-eating riots" in Seoul, which Yüan staged in order to discourage American investment in Korea.[116] The king made another clandestine attempt to raise loans from an American source in 1890 through the American adviser on Korean foreign affairs, Denny. Denny succeeded in persuading his friend in New Jersey, Everett Frazar, to prepare a contract for a $2,250,000 credit for the Korean government in return for the lucrative franchises that Allen had had in mind. The Denny-Frazar plan fell through at the last minute in February 1890, due to the activities of the pro-Chinese Korean officials working under Yüan's influence. Denny quit his job in Korea after this incident.[117] The king renewed his attempt to obtain a two million dollar loan by enlisting a Japanophile, the French-born American adventurer, Charles W. LeGendre (1830–99), as Denny's successor in March 1890. LeGendre was hopeful of obtaining the loans in Japan, France, Shanghai, or Hong Kong by utilizing his connections

114. See Ch'oe T'aeho, *Kaehang chŏn'gi ŭi Han'guk kwanse chedo* (Seoul: Han'guk hŏn'guwŏn, 1976), p. 129, table 1.

115. See ibid., pp. 134–40.

116. Mun, *Han-Mi-kwan'gye,* pp. 215–16, 220–21; Harrington, *God, Mammon,* pp. 135–40.

117. Swartout, Jr., *Mandarins, Gunboats,* pp. 135–41.

there.[118] But his two-year search for the desired loan was destined to fail because the Chinese government had issued warnings to potential foreign speculators interested in Korea, exemplified by the following memorandum from the Chinese minister in Washington, D.C., Tsu Kuo-yin, to the United States secretary of state in May, 1890:

> I have the honor to state to you, Mr. Secretary, that it having been brought to the attention of the Imperial Government that it is proposed to seek the negotiation of a foreign loan or loans on behalf of Korea, my Government has instructed me to represent to you and through you, to the capitalists or bankers of your country that the Imperial Government regards such a step as unwise and unlikely to involve those who should participate in such loans in serious trouble and financial losses. It should be borne in mind that Korea is a poor country inclined to be extravagant in its expenditures, and with small resources out of which to repay a foreign loan. This is shown by the fact that it has not been able to repay to the Imperial Government a considerable sum of money, which a number of years ago my Government in view of the tributary condition of Korea and out of a benevolent desire to relieve it from foreign embarrassment, advanced to the King of that country. It should be made known that the Imperial Chinese Government will not guarantee the repayment of loans made in behalf of Korea, nor will it permit the customs revenues of Korea to be seized for liquidating any indebtedness contracted on behalf of that country. In view of the friendly relations China desires to maintain with the United States and their people, it has been deemed advisable that I should bring the foregoing facts to your attention, in order that your countrymen may not be misled respecting the proposed loan.[119]

This warning was damaging enough to kill the appetite of any foreign financier. Notwithstanding, LeGendre continued to leave no stone unturned until 1892. By this time, the king was resigned to accept a Chinese loan arranged by Yüan under the pressure of paying off a $150,000 debt which he had incurred from a German firm in Seoul, Edward E. Meyer and Co., and an American firm in Inch'ŏn, the American Trading Company, during 1883 to 1892.[120]

Resident Yüan began his campaign in the spring of 1892 to replace minor Korean debts owed to these Western firms with private Chinese loans. He succeeded in persuading Li Hung-chang to endorse Chinese loans amounting to 200,000 taels through a Chinese firm in Seoul, T'ungshunt'ai. The T'ungshunt'ai loans were offered to the Korean government in the fall of 1892 at the annual interest rate of 6 percent, with the customs revenues of Inch'ŏn and Pusan as security. Yüan made certain that T'ungshunt'ai obtained a

118. CJHKS 5: 2622–28 (#1443); Shen, *Yung-an ti-tzu,* p. 48; Kim, "Chosŏn chŏngbu," pp. 462–68.

119. KAR 2: 19. See also Denny, *China and Korea,* p. 42; Kim, "Chosŏn chŏngbu," p. 466.

120. Kim, "Chosŏn chŏngbu," p. 474.

concession to operate a steamship service for transporting Korean tributary rice between Seoul and Inch'ŏn on the Han River in return for the loans.[121] Yüan arranged another Chinese loan in mid-1893 of 35,000 taels, through the Chinese Board of Admiralty at an unknown interest rate, to help the Korean government pay off the first installment of the indemnities it owed the Japanese merchants following the settlement of the "bean embargo incident."[122]

Both Yüan and Robert Hart were actively advocating a policy to provide large-scale Chinese loans to Korea in the early 1890. In his proposal, "Six Advantages of [a Chinese] Loan to Korea," which he submitted to Li in early 1893, Yüan argued, among other things, that a large-scale Chinese loan would have the effect of blunting the Korean desire for independence while facilitating his manipulation of the pro-Chinese Korean officials. It would also preempt Japanese or Western efforts to gain various concessions from Korea in mining, railroad building, and steamship service, and it would help China to secure her hold on the Korean customs service in the future.[123] Yüan's proposal to pour a large amount of Chinese capital into Korea, however, was not implemented during his tenure in Korea apparently because China lacked the available domestic capital to do so.

Yüan's assiduous efforts to prevent the Korean government from borrowing non-Chinese foreign money resulted in a rather low level of indebtedness of the Korean government to foreign capitalist countries, shown in table 1.

This table is based on an official Japanese investigation of the Korean financial situation in 1894. There are ambiguities in some of its information. For example, the Japanese source does not clarify the background of three loans the Korean government contracted in 1893 from British and Japanese sources. Aside from this point, it is clear that Resident Yüan succeeded in keeping the level of Korean indebtedness to about one-fourth the three million dollar level the "spendthrift" Korean king had originally attempted to reach in 1883. This table also shows that China, under Yüan's residency, emerged as a major creditor of the Korean government at the expense of other countries, particularly the United States. Resident Yüan must be credited with preventing Korea from becoming an

121. Ibid., pp. 468–77. See also Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* pp. 212–13.

122. Kim, "Chosŏn chŏngbu," p. 474.

123. For the text of this proposal, see Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* pp. 219–20. See also Kim, "Chosŏn chŏngbu," pp. 477–78.

TABLE 1

MAJOR OUTSTANDING DEBTS INCURRED BY THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT, 1894

Creditor	Date of Contraction	Amount of Loan (in taels)	Debt Outstanding (in yen)
China Merchants' Steamship Navigation Company	1882	210,000	199,714
Imperial Chinese Telegraph Service	1885	100,000	83,571
T'ungshunt'ai Company	1892	200,000	200,715
Chinese Board of Admiralty	1893	35,000	35,000
Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation	1893	50,000	22,000
Japan Specie Bank	1883	120,500 yen	26,992
First National Bank of Japan	1893(?)	—	25,000
	TOTAL	(in yen)	712,920

NOTE: This table is adapted from a similar table in *NGB* 28, no. 1: 336, with slight modification based on Ch'oe, *Han'guk kwanse,* p. 143. The Chinese Tls. are converted into Japanese yen in the last column for the sake of convenience.

"Egypt of Asia," while strengthening China's financial grip on Korea.

Resident Yüan was more successful in promoting Chinese exploitation of trade opportunities in Korea. By fully utilizing the legal privileges provided for in the 1882 Sino-Korean Trade Regulations in favor of Chinese merchants, including extraterritoriality, exclusive rights to inland travel, and the exclusive right to trade in Seoul, and by winking at Chinese smuggling along the Korean coastline and opening regular steamship services between Inch'ŏn and Tientsin (and Shanghai after 1893).[124] Yüan saw to it that an unprecedented number of Chinese traders and merchants came to Korean open ports to compete with their Japanese counterparts. Consequently, Yüan succeeded in boosting the level of the Chinese population in Seoul, Inch'ŏn, Pusan, and Wŏnsan from a total of 520

124. See n. 10 above. See also Song Pyŏnggi, "Killim-Chosŏn sangmin muyŏk changjŏng' yŏkchu," *Sahak yŏn'gu* 21 (September 1969): 193–207.

in 1884 to 2,182 in 1893.[125] At the same time, he succeeded in promoting an increased volume of Chinese imports into Korean ports, as shown in table 2.

The table shows that Chinese trading activities in Korea under Resident Yüan's supervision were gaining quickly on those of the Japanese and at a rate that would enable the Chinese to surpass the Japanese after 1894.

All in all, Resident Yüan was preeminently successful in raising Chinese economic stakes in Korea while fending off the imperialist encroachment of Japan, the United States, and other Korean treaty powers. It is, however, a moot point whether Yüan's success in the sphere of Korean economics benefited the Chinese national interest in the long run. As Kitagawa Osamu pointed out, the intensified trade rivalry between China and Japan served as an important economic cause for Japan to wage war against China in 1894.[126] It may also be pointed out that Resident Yüan's promotion of Chinese financial and mercantile interests in Korea at the expense of Korean economic modernization contributed to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in another more subtle way. By denying the financially stricken Korean king and his government the use of customs receipts as well as access to foreign loans during the years of 1885 to 1894, Resident Yüan compelled the king to rely increasingly on the alternative means of raising quick money, the minting and circulat-

TABLE 2

IMPORT OF CHINESE AND JAPANESE GOODS AT INCH'ŎN, WŎNSAN, AND PUSAN (IN U.S. DOLLARS), 1885–92

Year	Chinese	Japanese	Ratio Chinese	Japanese
1885	313,342	1,377,392	19	81
1886	455,015	2,064,353	17	83
1887	742,661	2,080,787	23	77
1888	860,328	2,196,115	28	72
1889	1,101,585	2,299,118	32	68
1890	1,660,075	3,086,897	32	68
1891	2,148,294	3,226,468	40	60
1892	2,055,555	2,555,675	45	55

NOTE: This table is derived from Kitakawa Osamu, "Nit-Shin sensō mateno Nit-Sen bōeki," *Rekishi kagaku,* no. 1 (1932), p. 74.

125. Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* p. 199.
126. Kitagawa, "Nit-Shin sensō," p. 78.

ing of the debased *tang'o* coin—in addition to indulging in such traditional fund raising methods as selling examination degrees and official titles and openly demanding bribes from prospective local government officials.[127] The minting of a large volume of the *tang'o* coin after 1885 no doubt contributed as much to the disruption of the traditional Korean monetary order as the intensified Sino-Japanese trade activities in Korean ports undermined traditional Korean industry and commerce.[128] In addition, perpetuation of these fund-raising methods made the Min clan oligarchy the most corrupt regime in Yi dynasty history. The steady deterioration of the Korean domestic economy, accompanied by increased burdens on the peasantry, both of which were indirectly caused by Yüan's conservative economic policy, touched off the Tonghak peasant unrest in 1893–94, which in turn sparked the Sino-Japanese War in which China lost all her interests in Korea.

Resident Yüan's success in preventing Korea from becoming too deeply indebted to foreign non-Chinese powers also needs critical evaluation of the harm it inflicted on the enlightenment movement. By rigorously impeding Korean opportunities to borrow money from foreign countries for the purpose of supporting nascent economic ventures, Yüan denied the Koreans a chance to try their strategy of promoting economic modernization through deficit spending. In October 1890, the American minister in Seoul, Augustine Heard, made a perceptive observation on the potential harm the paternalistic Chinese policy might have on Korean economic modernization:

> That the king and a large party desire reform and development is unquestionable, and it is no answer to this desire to say, as the Chinese do, that they are incapable and would only squander money that might come into their hands – pointing as example, to the mint and other useless purchases. All countries, notably Japan, make mistakes at the beginning of their new life, but there is no reason to suppose that Corea, like others, would not profit by experience. . . .[129]

In other words, Resident Yüan perhaps deprived the Koreans of a historically important trial-and-error process that seemed universally

127. Yi, *Han'guksa: ch'oegŭnse,* pp. 940–53. See also Lew, "Kabo Reform," pp. 22–34.

128. Lew, "Kabo Reform," pp. 22–34.

129. KAR 2: 25 (#75). Another American minister in Seoul, Hugh A. Dinsmore, voiced a similar view in 1887: "In conclusion I venture to remark that in my opinion from all that I have seen and heard in the short time I have been in this Capitol *[sic],* but for Chinese interference all would go smoothly and well here and the country advance rapidly in prosperity and enterprise. But every step forward is opposed by the Chinese Minister. . . ." KAR 2: 70 (#14).

requisite for any country aspiring to modernization in the nineteenth century.

DOWNGRADING OF MILITARY COMPETENCE

Improving the country's military capacity was the primary objective of the Korean enlightenment movement, as had been the case with the Chinese self-strengthening movement. The Korean government embarked on a program of military modernization in 1881 by engaging a Japanese military officer, Lieut. Horimoto Reizō (d. 1882), as a drillmaster to organize and train an eighty-man cadet force called the Special Skill Unit *(Pyŏlgi-gun)*.[130] This Japanese-oriented military reform was abandoned after the outbreak of the *imo* mutiny in mid-1882, which took the life of the Japanese officer. The task of modernizing the Korean army was then entrusted to Chinese officers, including Yüan Shih-k'ai. Under Yüan's guidance, the traditional Korean capital defense units, which had not changed their basic organization and equipment since the Japanese invasion of 1592–98, were reorganized in October 1884 into four battalions, the Front, Rear, Left, and Right, in accordance with the Chinese Huai Army system.[131] While the Chinese officers were busy reforming the Korean military system in line with their own, the king sent seventeen youths to Japan in the spring of 1883 to learn modern military technology in Japanese military schools.[132] He also purchased 5,000 Remington rifles and six Gatling guns from the American Trading Company in Yokohama in 1883 and 1884,[133] and made a confidential request in August 1883 to the American minister in Seoul, Foote, to send American military advisers to Korea.[134] The king was dissatisfied with the progress of military reform undertaken by the Chinese officers and unhappy over the prospect of Chinese domination of the Korean military.

The *kapsin* coup revealed that the four capital units organized and trained by the Chinese were neither competent nor reliable. A

130. See Lee Kwang-rin, "The Role of Foreign Military Instructors in Later Period of Yi Dynasty," in *International Conference on the Problems of Modernization of East Asia: Report,* ed. Asiatic Research Center, Korea University (Seoul: Korea University Press, 1966), p. 242.

131. Yukkun sagwan hakkyo kunchesa yŏn'gusil, ed., *Han'guk kunjesa: kŭnse Chosŏn hugi p'yŏn* (Seoul: Yukkun ponbu, 1977), p. 324.

132. Yi, *Kaehwadang yŏn'gu,* p. 31.

133. Harold F. Cook, *Pioneer American Businessman in Korea: The Life and Times of Walter Davis Townsend* (Seoul: Seoul Computer Press, 1981), p. 24. See also the entry on June 12, 1884, in YI; Allen, *Fact and Fancy,* p. 167.

134. Lew, "American Advisers," p. 66.

majority of the soldiers attached to the Chinese-organized battalions remained helpless during the three-day mêlée, which the soldiers of the Front and Rear battalions participated in the coup together with the seventeen Japanese-trained cadets who had returned in July 1884.[135] It was for this reason that the king endorsed von Möllendorff's plan to bring in Russian military advisers during the spring of 1885 to reorganize the Korean armed forces, but the plan failed because of Chinese, Japanese, and British obstruction. Consequently, the king redoubled his efforts to invite American military advisers, whose services he had already requested from the United States government in 1883. No sooner had four American military advisers—General William McEntyre Dye, Colonel Edmund H. Cummins, Major John G. Lee, and Captain Ferdinand J. H. Nienstead—arrived in April 1888, than the king organized a Military Training School *(Yŏnmu kongwŏn)* to train a modern officer corps. The school started with forty Korean officer-students who were supposed to spread American-style drill methods and techniques throughout the Korean army.[136] However, after one year of operation the school had failed to develop into a solid educational institution capable of producing future leaders of the Korean army. Two of the American advisers departed because the Korean government was delinquent in payment of salaries.[137] After they left neither the Korean government nor the Chinese resident made any serious attempt to procure their replacements or otherwise promote the military school project. The other two American advisers who chose to stay, Dye and Nienstead, were charged, according to Dye, with "instructing ten or twelve thousand soldiers" in Seoul "without government aid and against the active and powerful opposition of the Chinese minister, supplemented by his Korean allies."[138] Faced with this impossible task, they accomplished little. As a result, the morale and technical quality of the Korean army remained very low. Minister Heard's observations on the Korean military in December 1891 testify to the demoralized state of affairs:

> In this city the Soldiery, upon whom the Government must rely against any uprising of the people are themselves the object of grave suspicion. So far from preserving order,

135. Yi, *Han'guksa: ch'oegŭnse,* p. 645.

136. See Lew, "American Advisers," pp. 68–69, 75–76.

137. Ibid., pp. 76, 79–80. See also Yi, *Han'guk kaehwasa,* p. 177; Yukkun, *Han-guk kunjesa,* p. 330.

138. "General Dye on 'Korea and Her Neighbors,'" *The Korean Repository* 5 (November 1898): 441. Yüan applied pressure on the Korean government in 1890 to dismiss the American military instructors. See KAR 2: 53 (#52).

they are a potent element of Disorder. Instead of suppressing crime, they are the first to commit. Robbery is not infrequent. . . . Soldiers sent as police to patrol the streets seize upon the wayfarer and despoil him . . . that the Soldiers are wanting in discipline and in respect for their officers is undoubted. From being constantly in the Palace and seeing the King every day, they have lost their Awe of his presence which is So Salutary; and the fact that they are irregularly and ill-paid they unquestionably commit many excesses.[139]

One of the primary reasons why Korean soldiers were left "irregularly and ill-paid" was that the Korean government did not have adequate funds to spare for them. Failure to generate wealth under the decade of paternalistic Chinese control resulted in the failure to strengthen the Korean military.

If the Korean government failed to promote military modernization primarily because of the lack of funds, the Chinese failed to do so apparently because they relied on faulty judgments relative to the problem of protecting Korea after 1885. Korea had loomed large in the strategic planning of Chinese leaders after 1879. Li Hung-chang gave active support to Korean attempts at military modernization in the early 1880s by extending an invitation to a team of Korean students and artisans to visit the Tientsin Arsenal, by sending samples of modern Chinese weapons to Korea, and by helping the Korean government organize a modern arsenal, not to mention the Chinese support given the customs service and the mining bureau.[140] It was in accordance with this policy that Li ordered Chinese officers in Seoul to undertake the training of Korean troops between 1882 and 1884. The Chinese approach toward Korean military problems, however, changed drastically after the Li-Itō Convention of April 1885. In the first place, this convention specifically forbade Chinese and Japanese officers from undertaking the training of Korean soldiers in the future, in addition to obligating the signatories to withdraw their troops from Korea. Henceforth, the training of Korean troops was to be entrusted to the officers of a third country. After signing the convention, Li was compelled to rely on the Chinese armed forces under his direct jurisdiction, including the Peiyang Fleet, to defend Korea from external foes. It was apparently this situation that caused him to build the strategic telegraph line linking Seoul to Tientsin via Port Arthur in June 1886. According to this strategy, the level of Korean military capability was sufficient only to prevent or suppress domestic rebellion. There was no urgent need for Li and his agent, Resident Yüan, to promote Korean

139. KAR 2: 299 (#220).
140. KSS 3: 289; 4: 557.

military modernization after 1885, because they apparently felt Korean forces were strong enough to suppress domestic rebellion.

There were two other factors that put Li and Yüan off guard regarding the defense of Korea after 1885: the unofficial Li-Inoue accord in July 1885, and the Li-Ladygensky agreement in October 1886.[141] The first agreement made Li a gullible partner in a Sino-Japanese alliance against Russia, whereas the second caused him to relax his vigilance against Russian designs on Korea. Li must have presumed that as long as China, Japan, and Russia abided by these unofficial accords, there would be no conflict over control of the Korean peninsula. Since both Japan and Russia primarily respected and feared British naval power, Li faithfully maintained friendly ties with Great Britain to preempt Japanese or Russian military action in Korea. No wonder that Li and Yüan cooperated with the British by their management of the Korean customs service and the opening of a naval school at Kanghwa Island in 1893 under a British staff. In retrospect, Li committed the errors of underestimating potential Japanese aggressiveness and overestimating British diplomatic and military power in East Asia.

If the foregoing military and diplomatic considerations formed the background for Li's and Yüan's negligence in regard to Korean military improvement as a whole, there was a particular reason why Resident Yüan provided active and powerful opposition to the endeavors of American military advisers in Seoul, including his obstruction of the Military Training School project. The Chinese disregard for the American-sponsored projects in Korea was influenced by their low estimate of America's strategic influence in Asia and their distrust of individual Americans in Korea. Both Li and Yüan had espoused the view that the United States lacked any substantial strategic interest as a preeminent commercial power in Asia, and unlike the Korean king, discounted American military support as an important factor in their strategic planning.[142] Furthermore, they came to suspect that most of the nationalistic and democratic Americans active in Korea, including diplomats and missionaries, were strongly in favor of Korean nationalism. Resident Yüan developed a negative image of the Americans because the Americans with whom he came in contact in Seoul, including Foulk,

141. See n. 48 above. Li Hung-chang trusted the Japanese and the Russians because of this. See CJHKS 5: 2662 (#1443).

142. In August 1886, Yüan characterized the United States as "a rich country lacking in the will to commit her resources to the protection of remote countries" in his essay, "The International Context of Korea," mentioned in n. 69 above. See CJHKS 11: 51.

Denny, LeGendre, and Merrill, invariably criticized his high-handed policy toward the Koreans.[143] This was probably Resident Yüan's key reason for not lifting a finger to help when the Military Training School project foundered.

China began paying belated attention to Korean military problems in 1893, after the first major demonstration of the Tonghak bands shook the country. A naval school was established on Kanghwa Island in March 1893, with a British naval officer, Lieutenant Caldwell, as its chief instructor, under a secret agreement between Li and the British minister in Peking, Nicholas R. O'Conner.[144] A shipment of 8 howitzers and 900 rifles arrived in Korea from Tientsin in June 1893, in response to Yüan's urgent request for logistics support.[145] But by the spring of 1894, these eleventh-hour military measures had proved to be too little too late.

The Korean government troops, whom Yüan had once drilled, suffered defeat after defeat at the hands of the ragtag Tonghak rebel army, eventually losing the strategic city of Chŏnju to the rebels in June 1894. Chinese military intervention after the fall of Chŏnju saved the outmatched government troops but triggered the Sino-Japanese War. Resident Yüan and his government, in retrospect, paid dearly for failing to improve the military competence of the Korean troops.

CONCLUSION

The high-handed Chinese policy vigorously implemented in Korea by the Chinese resident, Yüan Shih-k'ai, during the decade of 1885 to 1894 constituted the primary cause for the truncation of the so-called Enlightenment Movement begun in the early 1880s. As the modern-day equivalent of the Mongol royal supervisor appointed to the Koryŏ court in the fourteenth century, Resident Yüan was charged with the primary political task of supervising the in-

143. Yüan disliked the Americans in Korea because they sympathized with the cause of Korean independence. See CJHKS 5: 2897 (#1618). Foulk was forced to leave Korea in June 1887 because of his legendary enmity with Yüan. See CJHKS 11: 52; KAR 2: 79–80. Denny's relationship with Yüan deteriorated beyond repair after Denny published *China and Korea* in February 1888. See Swartout, *Mandarins, Gunboats,* pp. 121–22. Yüan suspected that LeGendre was intent on "promoting the Korean cause by relying on the Japanese." See Kwŏn Sŏkpong, "Yi Sŏndŭk ŭi p'a-Il kwa Ch'ŏngch'ŭk kaeip," *Paeksan hakpo* 8 (June 1970): 614. Yüan's obstruction prevented the renewal of Merrill's term in Korea as chief inspector of customs. His obstruction to Merrill was based on the grounds that "the Koreans are fond of the Americans and both like to discuss [Korean] independence." See Lin, *Yüan Shih-k'ai,* p. 183.

144. CJHKS 11: 68; KAR 2: 244 (#374), 292 (#483); Allen, *Fact and Fancy,* p. 185.

145. KSS 3: 367.

creasingly recalcitrant Korean leaders, including King Kojong and Queen Min, and keeping tributary Korea within the ever-shrinking orbit of the Sinocentric world order. He was also entrusted with the routine duties of looking after diplomatic and commercial affairs between Korea and China, based on the Sino-Korean Trade Regulations of 1882. In carrying out these missions he was expected to capitalize on the time-honored tradition of Chinese suzerainty over Korea. The youthful Yüan fulfilled his mission creditably in the eyes of his sponsor, Li Hung-chang, because of his familiarity with Korean politics, which he acquired during his three-year military service in Seoul prior to his appointment as resident in October 1885.

Yüan succeeded in increasing Chinese trade with Korea to record levels, while keeping imperialistic Japan and Russia at bay by aggressively interfering in Korean domestic and foreign affairs. But in 1894, the stagnation in Korean politics and economy that he had so carefully fostered during his residency spawned the massive Tonghak peasant rebellion, and the aggressive Chinese competition with the Japanese for Korean trade provoked the Sino-Japanese War. Furthermore, his interventionist policies suffocated the nascent Korean enlightenment movement.

Yüan played havoc with the fledgling Korean reform movement of the early 1880s in at least four ways. First of all, by impudently interfering in Korean internal affairs, exemplified by his abortive attempt to depose the reigning king in favor of a Sinophilic regent in August 1886, he replaced an enlightened and reformist leadership with an incompetent, corrupt, and sycophantic one, hardly suited to promoting a reform movement. Second, by pursuing an obscurantist policy in Korean diplomacy and education, exemplified in 1887 by his obstruction of the Korean government's attempts to establish legations in treaty nations and his neglect of the Royal Academy project, he dried up potential sources of inspiration for modernization from abroad. Third, by assiduously implementing a conservative and paternalistic policy regarding the Korean economy, exemplified by his discouragement of embryonic modern capitalistic institutions and his blocking of Korean attempts to raise foreign loans from 1886 to 1892, he prohibited the Korean leadership from economic modernization based on a strategy of deficit financing. And fourth, by deliberately sabotaging Korean attempts to improve the quality of the Korean military, exemplified by his nonchalant attitude toward the Military Training School project in 1888, he failed to upgrade the country's defensive capacity requisite for the survival of the dynasty.

In retrospect, Chinese control of Korea through a resident, or royal supervisor, from 1885 to 1894, represented an aberration rather than the norm in the tributary relationship, which was usually characterized by the benevolent indifference of the Chinese suzerain state toward the deferent Korean tributary. By implementing an imperialistic policy toward Korea, Ch'ing China succeeded in delaying Korean independence from China by only a decade, while denying the Koreans an historic chance to experiment with their own program of modernization—the enlightenment movement of the early 1880s. Given the reform-minded and nationalistic, albeit weak and spendthrift, propensity of the Korean leadership available in the 1880s, the chances of Korean success in promoting a viable reform movement were not necessarily bleak. Although Korea might have become a protectorate of Russia or an "Egypt of Asia," in debt to Japan or some of the Western powers had it not been for the paternalistic protection China provided through Yüan's residency, the vibrant nationalism and enthusiasm for reform exhibited by the Korean leaders of the enlightenment movement indicate that Korea could have succeeded in achieving sufficient modern wealth and power to preserve its national independence, if not to rival modern Japan in economic and military terms, had Korea not been subjected to China's oppressive control. In other words, Ch'ing China unwittingly contributed to the demise of the Korean kingdom and its eventual subjugation as a Japanese colony in the early twentieth century by blocking the development of the Korean enlightenment movement.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES

CJHKS *Ch'ing-chi Chung-Jih-Han kuan-hsi shih-liao.* 11 vols. Taipei: The Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1972.

CJSL *Ch'ing Kuang-hsü-sh'ao Chung-Jih chiao-she shih-liao.* 88 *chüan* in 2 vols. Reprint. Taipei: Wen-hai, 1970.

KAR *Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States.* 2 vols. Vol. 1. *The Initial Period, 1883–1886.* Edited by George M. McCune and John A. Harrison. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951. Vol. 2. *The Period of Growing Influence, 1887–1895.* Edited by Spencer J. Palmer. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963.

KHOM *Ku-Han'guk oegyo munsŏ.* 22 vols. Seoul: Koryŏ taehakkyo Asea munje yŏnguso, 1966–73.

KS *Kojong Sunjong sillok: Kojong sillok*. 3 vols. Seoul: T'amgudang, 1970.

KSS *Kojong sidaesa*. 7 vols. Edited by Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe. Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 1967–73.

LWCK *Li Wen-chung-kung ch'üan-shu*. 100 *ts'e*. Edited by Wu Ju-lun. Published by the Li family. Nanking, 1908.

NGB *Nihon gaikō bunsho*. 73 vols. Compiled by Gaimushochosabu. Tokyo: Nihon Kokusai rengō kyōkai, 1936–63.

WCSL *Ch'ing-chi wai-chiao shih-liao*. 161 *chüan*. Compiled by Wang Yen-wei and Wang Liang. Peiping: Wai-chiao shih-liao pien-ch'uan-chü, 1932–35.

YI Yun Ch'i-ho, *Yun Ch'i-ho ilgi*. 5 vols. Edited by Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe. Seoul: Kuksa p'yŏnch'an wiwŏnhoe, 1973–75.

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