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**CH’OE CH’I-WUN: HIS LIFE AND TIMES.**

BY REV. G. H. JONES, PH. D.

THE dominant literary force in Korea for the past five hundred years has been Confucianist in its philosophy and teachings. Such literary activity as has prevailed has been influenced and controlled by the sages of China. This tendency in Korea’s literary development has given origin to a school of writers, numerous and industrious, who have enjoyed royal patronage, and have thus been able to exclude all rival or heretical competitors and to mould to their own standards the literature of the Korean people.

Though we have mentioned this school as belonging particularly to the present reigning dynasty, it is only in the sense that its supremacy as a school dates from the founding of the dynasty (A.D. 1392). It long antedates the period indicated, and though it is difficult to say who was the founder of it, still, as far as the present writer has been able to discover, that honour seems to belong to the Silla scholar, Su1- ch’ong (薛聰), who lived in the eighth century of the Christian era. Our reason for suggesting that Sul-ch’ong is the founder of this school in Korea is as follows ; It has been the policy of the Confucian school in Korea, following the example set by the great parent school in China, to canonize those of its most famous members who have made some note-worthy contribution to the development of Coufucianism in Korea. This canonization consists in the enshrinement by imperial edict of a tablet to the recipient of the honour in the great temple to Confucius, the Song Kyun Kuan (成均館) at Seoul, the spirit of the disciple thus being permitted to share in the divine honours paid to the Sage. At the same time imperial letters patent are issued conferring a posthumous title on the recipient, usually of a princely or ducal order. Sixteen Koreans have thus far been so honoured, four in the epoch from Sul-ch’ong to Chong Mong-jo (about 600 years), and twelve during the present dynasty, a period of 500 years. [page 2]

In making out this list it is reasonable to believe that the scholastic authorities would place at its head the one man who, in their estimation, was entitled to be considered as the Founder of the Confucian school in Korea. To have ignored him would have been to put a low estimate upon the introduction of the Confucian school of thought and philosophy to Korea. And as in their estimate this unique honour appeared to belong to Sul-ch’ong his name heads the list of the Illustrious Sixteen. Later scholars on investigation may be led to dispute this, but it appears to be the unbiassed judgement of former times.

If this conclusion is adopted it will be wise to mark certain inferences which are not necessarily to be deduced from our assigning the headship to Sul-ch’ong. First of all, it does not mean that previous to Sul-ch’ong Confucianism was unknown as a literary force in Korea. This by no means follows. As has been shown in Mr. Gale’s very able paper, \*from the time of Kija the writings which form the base of Confucianism were known among the peninsular people. Works were written in the Chinese ideographs by Korean scholars, and customs and institutions were adopted from the great kingdom across the sea. But a distinction may be made historically between Chinese civilization in itself and Confucianism. Chinese civilization even to-day is a composite in which Buddhist and Taoist elements, and survivals from savage and barbaric life have a part as well as Confucianism. And for the first few centuries after the death of the Sage, Confucianism had a chequered history in its land of origin, occupying a far different place from what it does now. So that, as appears to have been the case in certain periods between Kija and Sul-ch’ong, Chinese civilization was the vehicle to bring to Korea philosophies and economies vastly different from those for which Confucianism stands. In illustration of this we would instance Buddhism. Therefore in dating the introduction of Confucianism as a school of thought from Sul-ch’ong we do not touch the question of the introduction of Chinese civilization, neither do we deny the presence of Confucian influence previous to Sul-ch’ong. Only the latter was an influence ex-

\*”The Influence of China on Korea.” Vol. I. R. A. S. Transactions (Korea Branch).

[page 3] erted from without, a foreign influence, an exotic. It was the aim of Sul-ch’ong, Ch’oe Ch’i-wun, An-yu and their fellow-schoolmen to make the exotic indigenous.

The list of the sixteen canonized scholars of Korea is of much interest historically, as it puts us in possession of the verdict of a very important section of native litterateurs on the comparative importance of the labours of Korean scholars in the past. We must not fall, however, into the error of thinking that these are Korea’s only scholars. Their eminence is due to the fact that they best fulfilled the standard set up by the Confucian school for canonization. This list is as follows : — .

1 Sul-ch’ong 薛聰

2 Ch’oe Ch’i-wun 崔致遠

3 An-Yu 安裕

4 Chong Mong-ju 鄭夢周

5 Kim Kong-p’il 金宏弼

6 Cho Kwang-jo 趙光祖

7 Yi Whang 李滉

8 Sung Hun 成渾

9 Song Si-yul 宋時烈

1o Pak Se-ch’ai 朴世采

11 Chung Yo-ch’ang 鄭汝昌

12 Yi Eun-juk 李彥迪

13 Kim In-hu 金麟厚

14 Yi I 李珥

15 Kim Chang-saing 金長生

16 Song Chun-kil 宋浚吉

With this introduction we proceed to consider the life, labours and times of the second savant named in this list— the Silla scholar, Ch’oe Ch’i-wun.

He was born in troubled times. During the period A.D. 862-876 Kyung-mun (景文王) was King of Silla ; but of the events of his reign we know very little, many of the histories simply mentioning his name and the dates of his accession and death. All authorities agree that it was the period of Silla’s decline. A long line of forty-seven monarchs had already sat on the throne of Silla. The neighbouring kingdoms of Paik-je (百濟國) and Ko-gu-ryu(高句麗國), which[page 4] had once divided the peninsula with Silla, had more than two hundred years previously been obliterated from the map by the Silla armies aided by the Tang, and Silla had held sole sway over all clans bearing the Korean name. And now Silla, torn by internecine strife and faction, had become the prey of ambitious mayors of the palace and was slowly verging to her final fall.

It was about this time that two men were born in Korea who were destined to climb high the steeps of distinction, and yet whose careers present many contrasts. One of these was Ch’oe Ch’i-wun and the other Wang-gun (王建), founder of the Koryu (高麗)dynasty. It is indeed an interesting fact that these men were contemporaries and acquainted with etch other. The “man-child of the Wang family was born amid the pine forests of Song-ak, and legend, which ever paints in mysterious colours the birth and childhood of Asiatic dynasty founders, relates many strange stories of the marvellous portents and omens which heralded his entrance upon this world. These stories would have been in all probability transferred to Ch’oe Ch’i-wun had he, instead of Wang-gun, proved the Man of Destiny for Korea and obtained the throne, for which he had received a splendid trainin

Ch’oe Ch’i wun was born in the year A.D. 859, the scion of one of the influential families of Kyeng-ju (慶州), the capital of Silla. Of his ancestry we possess very little information. But it seems clear that his family, like that of Sul-ch’ong before him, belonged to the Tang partisans in Korea, who had lost confidence in Buddhism―still the state cult in Korea—and who looked westward across the Yellow Sea for light and salvation. As a mere lad Ch’oe grew up in contact with those educational forces set in operation by Sul-ch’ong a century earlier, which were already beginning to mould and shape the literary life of Korea. We pause for a moment to consider them.

At this time the tide of the Confucian cult was rising in Korea. The close connection which had existed for centuries between the Tang and Silla courts had undoubtedly prepared the latter to give a favourable hearing to the Chinese Sage, though Silla still held to Buddhism as the state religion. [page 5]

As far as we can gather from the history of the times, Con- fucianism had not become the dominant cult in Korea. It had influenced the thought and life of the people, it is true ; but this influence it exerted from without, from its distant centre in China rather than from the vantage point of a settled location in Korea itself. The forces, however, which later, under An-yu (安裕), were to bring the Confucian cult bodily to Korea and plant it there were already at work. As a sign of the times we are told in the Mun-hun-pi-go (文獻備考) that in 864, five years after the birth of Ch’oe Ch’i-wun, the King of Silla personally attended at the College of Literature and caused the canonical books of China to be read and explained in the royal presence. And with this we may correlate another statement that, sixteen years later, in 880 A.D., the following books were made the basis of education in Silla, viz :

The Book of History 書傳

“ “ Changes 周易

“ “ Poetry 詩傳

“ “ Rites 禮記

Spring and Autumn Annals 春秋

Former Han History 漢書

Later Han History 後 漢書

The History 史記 by Sze Ma-ts’ien ( 司馬遷)

Are we not justified in regarding the presence of the sovereign at public lectures on the sacred bonks of China as of some significance? We are inclined to believe that it marked the inauguration of a movement which was to place education in Korea on a Confucian rather than a Buddhistic basis And in this connection it is interesting to note that the Mun-hun-pi-go says: “At this time lived Ch’oe Ch’i-wun, who had gone to China and there become an official.” Thus showing that Ch’oe’s influence became a potent factor in the movement to popularize Chinese literature in Korea

Returning to the chronicle of Ch’oe’s life we find that at the time the king was lending the royal presence to public lectures on Confucianism, Ch’oe, a mere lad of five years, was just beginning his studies. For seven years he continued them under such teachers as could be found in the[page 6] Silla capital, but these at the very best must have been unsatisfactory. At the most he could hardly hope to obtain more than a start in Chinese literature. Then it was that his father ordered him to proceed to the land of Tang, and there, at the fountain head of Chinese learning, complete his education. The causes which led him to take this step are not given and vet it is not difficult for us to surmise them. It was not an unknown thing for a Korean to go abroad, even in those early days. Beginning with the custom of sending hostages to reside in foreign Courts, which had been done in Korean relations both with China and Japan, when this became no longer necessary,. a few Koreans had voluntarily crossed the seas to these lands in search of adventure or education. Of recent years, however, these had been confined to members of the royal house. It may have been that Ch’oo’s father was a leader among the Tang partisans in Korea and took this radical step to mark his devotion to the Chinese. But better still, it seems to me, is the explanation that the lad had already displayed such large promise that high hopes were based on his ability, which hopes could only be realized by an education abroad. Certainly the tradition that the father in parting with the boy gave him a limit of ten years in which to finish his studies and secure the Doctor’s degree, failing which the penalty was to be disinheritance,— this tradition certainly seems to agree with the latter view. At any rate, great was the confidence of the father in the son and high the value he set on a Chinese education when he was willing to send him at such a tender age to a foreign land.

Let us glance at the China to which young Ch’oe was introduced. The Tang dynasty still held sway over the land, one of the most powerful, brilliant and wealthy dynasties that ever ruled China. We may not be able to assent to the dic- tum of a noted writer\* that China was at this time probably the most civilized country on earth, but it seems true that under the leadership of the House of Tang she reached one of the highest levels in the development of her culture.

It was a period of great military activity. The Tang generals had carried the prowess of the Chinese arms far to the westward, almost to the borders of Europe. They had

\*S. Wells Williams in The Middle Kingdom.

[page 7] conquered the savage tribes to the north, had annihilated the warlike Kogurios in the north-east, and spent one campaign on the southern end of the Korean peninsula, helping Silla crush Paik-je.

Literature was not neglected. The history of the dynasty is marked by a great revival of the Confucian cult, a complete and accurate edition of all the classics being published. We are told that a school system was inaugurated and learning highly developed. Nationalism showed itself in a reviving interest in the past history of the peoples of the empire, and some of the most illustrious historical writers of China belong to this dynasty.

It was during the Tang dynasty that Christianity first made its appearance within the bounds of the Chinese empire. The Nestorians were permitted to settle in the land and pro pagate the faith, and during this dynasty they reached the zenith of their development, their converts numbering many thousands. At the same time Arab traders obtained a footing, introducing to the East the commerce and science of Europe and bringing the two continents into closer relations.

This is but an indication of some of the influences which were at work in the empire, but these few things—the widely extended conquest of foreign lands by the Tang armies, the revival of Confucianism and the resultant renaissance in literature, the spread of Christianity, and the inauguration of commerce with Europe―all united to give currency to new ideas and to force the nation to higher levels of civilization. What a change for a barbarian lad like Ch’oe, thus suddenly transported from his own land —which was no larger than an ordinary prefecture of China, where all was stagnation and gloom with no signs of new life,—to such an immense theatre as the capital of China and to be thrust out into the current of such a forceful life as then prevailed there.

Young Ch’oe took his departure for China in the year 870. It is probable he took boat from one of the ancient, ports on the southern end of the peninsula, either Fusan or Kimha, or he may have crossed the mountains into the territory of Paik-je―for that land now belonged to Silla―and found passage in one of the many trading junks that frequented Kunsan. From here he would secure a quick passage across the[page 8] uneasy Yellow Sea to the Land of Tang. He may have gone in the train of some embassy from Silla to Tang, or, which is the more likely, he went as the protege of some Tang ambassador to Silla. who, at the instance of the father, had assumed charge of the lad. Be this as it may, his subsequent career would indicate that his introduction to Tang must have been under very favourable auspices, for honours came thick and fast upon him.

From the accounts of his life it seems clear that young Ch’oe from the very first, spent his life in the Tang capital at Chang-an (長安) or Si-ngan (西安). Situated in Shensi, in the far interior, it is probably the most interesting city historically in China. Located near one of the branches of the Yellow River, Ch’oe’s party would probably reach it only after many weary weeks of travel in a junk. The following description of the city in modern times is of considerable interest:―

The city of Si-ngan is the capital of the north-west of China and next to Peking in size, population and importance. It surpasses that city in historical interest and records, and in the long centuries of its existence has upheld its earlier name of Chang-an or “Continuous Peace.” The approach to it from the east lies across a bluff whose eastern face is filled with houses cut in the dry earth, and from whose summit the lofty towers and imposing walls are seen across the plain three miles away. These defences were too solid for the Mohammedan rebels, and protected the citizens while even their suburbs were burned. The population occupies the entire enciente, and presents a heterogeneous sprinkling of Tibetans, Mongols and Tartars, of whom many thousand Moslems arc still spared because they were loyal. Si-ngan has been taken and retaken, rebuilt and destroyed, since its establishment in the twelfth century B.C. by the Martial King but its position has always assured for it the control of the trade between the central and western provinces and Central Asia. The city itself is picturesquely situated and contains some few remains of its ancient importance, while the neighbourhood promises better returns to the sagacious antiquarian and explorer than any portion of China, The principal record of the Nestorian mission work in China, the famous tablet of A.D. 781 still remains in the yard of a temple. Some miles to the north-west lies the temple Ta-fu-sz, containing a notable colossus of Buddha, the largest in China, said to have been cut by one of the emperors of the Tang in the ninth century. [page 9]

This statue is in a cave hewn out of the sandstone rock, being cut out of the same material and left in the construction of the grotto. Its height is 56 ft. The proportions of limbs and body of the sitting figure are, on the whole, good, the Buddha being represented with right hand upraised in blessing and the figure as well as garments richly covered with color and gilt.\*

Into this wonderful city the young Korean lad was introduced, and the effect on him could not have been very different from that which would be the case in any boy in modern times. It is certain that he gave himself up to study, and the time limit set by his father, with the heavy penalty attached, proved an effective spur. That he improved his opportunities is clear from the extended and valuable character of the literary remains which have come down to us and which date from the years he spent in China. He developed into a thorough Tangite. Removed from Korea and the Korean environment ill the tender years of childhood, his character was formed by the educative forces of China. Such time as he could spare from his studies was spent in taking in the marvellous scenes about him. He became thoroughly saturated with Confucian philosophy. He saw Buddhism in a new light. It may be that some account penned by turn to his father in Korea describing the Buddhist cave at Si-ngan and its colossus of Gautama may have been the inspiration from whence came Korea’s colossal Buddha at Eun-jin. He must often have stood in the presence of the Nestorian Tablet and read its testimony to monotheistic belief and Christian ethics. How powerful all these forces must have been in his character. To his mind the Chinese Court at Chang-an must have been, when compared with Korea, a veritable fairy land. Thus as years passed the Korean hills and the Korean life faded far away into the dim recesses of memory. But though we call this education, it was at the same time also a foreignizing process which must have changed the Korean into a thoroughgoing Chinese. And in this may possibly be the secret of his failure to inspire his countrymen with confidence when he returned to them a comparatively young man.

Ch’oe took his degree of Doctor at the Civil Service Ex-aminations in 875, after six years of faithful study and when

\*Williaim’s Middle Kingdom. Vol. 1, p. 150.

[page 10] but eighteen years of age. As we look back over his career it is evident that this was a crisis in his life. Had he then returned to Silla, as was the original intention of his father in sending him to Tang, and applied himself to the solution of some of the problems of his native country, he might have rivalled and even eclipsed the fame of that other young Korean with whom we compared him at the beginning of this sketch. It might have fallen to Ch’oe to set up a strong government, to guide the weak monarchs of Silla along the path of successful administration, or, failing in this, it might have been his fortune, rather than Wang-gun’s. to create out of the ruins of Silla a new and more glorious kingdom. But the opportunities were too great, and the call to remain in Tang too loud for him to turn back to Silla, He elected to remain in China.

The Emperor Hi-tsung(僖宗) had ascended the Dragon Throne the year previously [874-888] and with this Emperor Ch’oe became a great favourite. It is possible they had grown up together as students. The Emperor immediately bestowed on the young Korean a Court appointment―that of Si-u-sa (時御史) a kind of special commissioner in the palace. This was followed shortly afterward by the appointment as Na-kong-pong (內供奉) or Imperial Court Chamberlain. Surely it was a remarkable achievement for a young Korean to rise six years to be the Court favourite of the all-powerful Emperor of China. Certainly some unusual influence must have been back of Ch’oe to secure him these high posts in the rang Court, yet there must have been much bitterness mingled with the cup of his joys, for the Emperor’s career was an ill-starred and disastrous one.\*

For some years China had been in a very depressed and unsettled condition. Floods had prevailed in certain sections and brought widespread ruin. Other regions had suffered from terrible drought and the people were in a pitiable condition. As is usually the case in such times, robbers and brigands rose everywhere and inaugurated a reign of terror. Widespread brigandage gradually developed into organized insurrection, the leader in rebellion being one Wang-sien. He died in 878, but was succeeded by a more capable leader named

\*Vide Macgowan’s History of China, p. 335.

[page 11] Whang-ch’an (黃璨), Raising his standard in the south, he besieged and reduced in rapid succession Canton and the prin-cipal cities of Hu-kwang and Kiang-si. He broke the imperial power and defeated and scattered the imperial armies everywhere. There was nothing to stay his terrible inarch north ana in a short time Whang-ch’an was in possession of the two imperial cities of Lo-yang and Si-ngan. The Emperor barely escaped from Chang-an with his life. He was accompanied in his flight by his faithful Korean minister Ch’oe, who never deserted him. In securing possession of Chang-an (Singan), the rebel Whang-ch’an proclaimed himself emperor and ascended the dragon throne of the Tangs with the dynastic title of the Great Tsi.

The usurper was not destined to reign long. The Tang emperor fleeing for his life from his blood-thirsty foe issued an appeal to the loyal people of the country. And while the pseudo-emperor Whang-ch’an in Chang-an was beheading all relatives of the imperial House of Tang, and flooding the streets of the capital with the blood of inoffensive people, the movement which was to overthrow hint was slowly getting under way. And in this movement our Korean Ch’oe Ch’i-wan was playing a most honourable part. Among those who responded to the fugitive emperor’s appeal was Li Keh-yung, chief of the Sha-to tribe of Turkomans who lived near Lake Balkash. He was very old and very famous, but the snows of many winters had failed to dampen the fire of his warlike heart. Over thirty years previously he had rendered important service against the Tibetans, for which he had been rewarded by the House of Tang with permission to assume the honourable family name of Yi (Li). He now hastened to the succour of the unfortunate Hi-tsung, coming at the head of 40,000 of his tribesmen. They wore a black costume and were very savage in warfare, which won for them the title of “Black Crows.”

In the campaign which the Black Crows undertook against Whang-ch’an, Ch’oe Ch’i-wun served with distinction, acting as adjutant-general to their chief. In fact it is said that from his fertile brain emanated the plans which shattered the rebel power and restored to the Tang emperor the heritage he had almost lost. Legend of course has not lost the oppor-[page 12] tunity to cast a halo around the exploits of the Korean in this connection. It is said that when Chang-an was attacked by the Black Crows, Ch’oe Ch’i-wun addressed a letter to the usurper within its walls, couched in such terrible terms that as he read it be unconsciously crept down from his seat and crouched like a terrified beast on the floor! The power of the rebel was destroyed and he met his fate at the hands of his nephew, who slew him in order to curry favour with the House of Tang. We have thus gone fully into the coarse of this rebellion because it is reputed to have been the most terrible ever known to Chinese annals. It lasted for five years, 880-884. Popular tradition says that in its course no less than 8,000,000 lives were lost. And though we may reject this number as preposterous, still the terrible loss of life during the Tai-ping rebellion indicates how enormous may be the destruction wrought by warfare in a populous region like South and Central China.

Restored to his throne the Emperor Hi-tsong took up his residence in Chang-an. The rewards which fell to his faithful Korean vassal must have been of a high and honourable character. Among other things he was made Vice-President of the Board of War. Thus this Korean lad who had come from the hills of Kyeng-sang walked the courts of Tang, a man whose word swayed the destiny of millions. Surely history offers very few careers more strange and marvellous than that of Ch’oe Ch’i-wun. For a short time Ch’oe enjoyed his honours in China. Amid the busy cares of state he found time to write some treatises. Determining to return to Korea in 886, the Court of Tang conferred upon him the rank of ambassador and commissioned him as Imperial Envoy in the peninsula. He was then but twenty-eight years old according to Korean count.

The native biographies desribe Ch’oe as returning to his native land with high purposes and plans in her behalf. He believed that the prestige of his achievements in China and the imperial authority with which he was clothed would secure for him a paramount influence in Silla and enable him to institute reforms and bring order out of confusion. He was doomed to disappointment, and it proved particularly galling to his imperious nature. But Silla’s sad plight was [page 13] beyond his power to amend. He only met with opposition and unfriendliness.

King Heun-gang (憲康) was on the throne—a man to whom music and dancing were more congenial than the responsibilities of state. In the Court the king’s sister Man (曼 ) held sway, leading a dissolute life. Ch’oe was given an appointment, but hatred and jealousy were his reward. It is said that King Heun-gang returning from one of his pleasure excursions met a freak of a human being at a sea-port. This freak could sing and dance, so he became a great favourite of the king’s. Later four other “freaks” suddenly appeared in the road before the royal cart in which the king was proceeding on a pleasure jaunt. They are described as hideous in appearance and repulsive to look upon. They danced, singing a ballad the refrain of which was

Chi-ri ta-do

To-p’a, To-p’a.

The King railed to note the prophetic warning contained in these words, which declared the overthrow of his capital To-p’a. While men of this character who could pander to the king’s whims were installed in the king’s presence, a statesman and a scholar like Ch’oe Ch’i-wun was driven by royal indifference and neglect or even hostility into exile.

Silla had already sunk too low ever to rise again. Insurrection was rife in the provinces. The power of the royal government over the outlying clans, ever light, had really been destroyed, and adventurers were rising throughout the land spreading terror and confusion. Among the factors creating disorder in the land and bringing ruin on Silla, one of the chief was an outcast offspring of the king, named Kung-ye, whose deeds of violence and cruelty were of a most atrocious nature. Many circumstances thus united to render futile the career of Ch’oe on his return to Silla. The death of his imperial patron Hi-tsung in 888, shortly after his return to Silla, must have, in view of the intimate bond between them, sent Ch’oe into retirement for a time. The scandalous immorality of the Court, dominated as it was by the effronteries of the lascivious Princess Man, and the terrible disorder and confusion abroad in the land, made it impossible for a man like Ch’oe to obtains a hearing. [page 14]

Hardly any notices exist of his public acts. Once it is said he appealed to Tang to aid Silla to put down the internal insurrections from which she was suffering. Then again during the reign of Princess Man he addressed a memorial containing ten suggestions for the conduct of state affairs. These met with the same treatment that Korean royalty had ever accorded him, polite courtesy and indifference, veiled in terms of royal gratitude and inaction, more deadly to a patriotic soul than out-spoken antagonism.

Therefore, in all the accounts which we have of Ch’oe’s life after his return to Silla, he conies before us as the scholar and recluse. It is said that “he buried his surpassing talents amid the mountain cemeteries. He retired to his ancestral home at Kaya-san, and there gave himself up to literary pursuits, being confessedly the most learned and finished scholar of his times.

This was the period of his literary activity. He was an essayist, poet and historian, and his pen being a diligent one he must have produced many works which are lost to us. From the scattered notices contained in Maurice Courant’s monumental Bibliographic Coreenne we have collected the fol-lowing notes.

(1) Poems. The Odes of Remarkable Litterateurs. The Hyun Sip-ch’o si (賢十抄詩) contains a selection of Ch’oe Ch’i-wun’s poems. This work, compiled about 900 years ago, contained odes from those poets who took precedence in the first rank. Ten examples are given from each writer. This would indicate that Ch’oe was a poet of more than ordinary merit. Our knowledge of this work is derived from the Tai-tong-un-ko (大東韻考), no copy having came down to us. Of the poets thus preserved six were litterateurs of Tang and only four were Koreans, viz.: Ch’oe Chi-wun, Pak In-pom (朴仁範) Ch’oe Song-a (崔承祐) and Ch’oe Kwang-yu (崔匡裕). These men were all educated in China, the last three having probably been influenced to that course by the example of Ch’oe Ch’i-wun.

Ch’oe Ch’i-won also presented on his return from China in 886, to King Heun-gang, a copy of his poetical works in three volumes. These have disappeared.

(2) The Chung-san-pu-Koue-jip (中山覆簣集). This was [page 15] a work of five volumes written while in China, which we only know about incidentally as part of his writings presented by Ch’oe in 886 to the King of Silla. As it is lost to us we have no means of ascertaining its character.

(3) The Silla Su i-jun (新羅殊異傅). Narratives of the wonders of Silla. The character of the work can be gathered from its title. It is cited by the Tai-tong-un-ko, but I know of no existing copy. This is to be regretted, as it would be of great value to the student of archaeology

(4) The Ch’oe Ch’i-wun Mun-jip (崔致遠文集 The collected work of Ch’oe Ch’i-wun. This was the collection preserved by his family, but has become scattered and some of the works have been lost. We owe our knowledge of it to the Tai-tong-un-ko.

(5) The Che-wang-yun Tai-ryak. (帝王年代畧) The Chronicles of Emperors and Kings. This was a work on General History, and though lost to us, it is mentioned in the Tai-tong un-ko, and fragments of it may berecovered, from such historical works as the Yul-yo-geui-sul (燃藜記述)

(6) The Kei-wun-p’il-kyung-jip (桂苑筆耕集). This title may be translated The Furrows of a Chinese Pen in a Garden of Cinnamon Trees. It extends to twenty volumes and makes up the collection of twenty-eight volumes (the other two being his poems and the Chung-san-pu-che-jip) which Ch’oe presented to King Heun-gong in 886 on his arrival as Tang ambassador at the court of Silla. This work has survived the ravages of time and has been preserved to us. We are indebted to an old patrician family, named Hong, of Seoul, for a modern edition of it. Hong Suk-ju, who rose to the post of Prime Minister of the Left, caused a copy of the “Furrows” to be printed in 1834. From the preface we learn that Hong also tried to secure a copy of the Chung-san pu, to publish it at the same time but was unable to find any trace of it. The edition of the Farrows was based on a manuscript copy which had been preserved in the Hong family for centuries. It consists of reports, letters, and various other documents, official and private, of Ch’oe and is of great value as the testimony of a keen eye witness of the events of his times. A copy of the 1834 edition is found in the Bibliotheque de l’Ecole des Langues Orientales Vivantes at Paris. [page 16]

The romantic career of Ch’oe Chi-wun, rivalling as it does the fancies of fiction, prepares us for his end, for he disappears from our view not into history but into legend. The common belief is that after his retirement into Ka-ya- san he gave himself up to the pleasures of literature and music. His days were spent in literary delights with a few kindred spirits. He was an accomplished player on the Ku- mun-go or Seven-Stringed Lute, and this instrument plays a large part in the legends of his hermit life. Legend, how- ever, takes its wildest flight in asserting that he secured the Magic Jade Flute of Silla. Upon this he played until the powers of death and dissolution were charmed and compelled to halt at the threshold of his mountain retreat and to respect the sacredness of his person. It it thus said that he never died but was transformed into a spirit and disappeared into the blue ether above, taking with him the Magic Flute of Jade.

He secured a prominence in Korean literary life which can never be taken from him. His predecessor, Sul-ch’ong, left so few literary remains that collections of early Korean literature begin with Ch’oe rather than with Sul-ch’ong. Thus the great Tong-mun-sun (東文選), Selections from Korean Compositions (54 vols.), compiled by Su-gu-chung (徐居正) 1478, begins Korean literature really with Ch’oe. This was also the case with an earlier work of similar character by Ch’oe-hai, called the Tong-in-mun(東人文) which begins Korean literature with Ch’oe. The fact that these collections of Korean literature begin with Ch’oe Ch’i-wun would seem to confirm the tradition that he was the first Korean writer to produce books in the Chinese characters, a tradition, however, which we are hardly prepared to accept. But an examination of his works certainly introduces us very nearly to the fountain head of Korean literature.

We must close our sketch with a legend. Kung-ye (弓裔),the one-eyed monster who had been spawned by King Heui-gang, after a career of blood and rapine in which he had alienated all followers by his acts of atrocious cruelty, was approaching his fall. Among his officers the greatest in fame and best beloved because of his courage and generosity was Wang-gun, the “man child of Song-ak.” Gradually the[page 17] hopes of the people began to centre around Wang-gun and it was felt that he was undoubtedly the Man of Destiny for Korea. The prophetic eye of Ch’oe Ch’i-wun fell upon the rising general and from his retreat in Ka-ya-san he sent to Wang-gun one of those literary enigmas which pass for inspired utterances among Asiatic peoples. It was a stanza of two lines as follows :—

곡 계 鵠 雞

령 림 嶺 林

쳥 황 靑 黃

숑 엽 松 葉

Translated freely this means “The leaves of the Cock Forest are sear and yellow. But the pines on the Snow Goose Pass are fresh and green.”

This is a poetical metaphor which on the face of it by a flight of fancy is easily translated. Ke-rim (Cock Forest) is the ancient poetical name of Silla. That its leaves are sear and yellow means that the time of its decay and death has arrived. Kok-yung (Snow-Goose Pass) was the ancestral home of Wang, and the freshness and vigour of its pines indicate the prosperity of the young general.

Among Ch’oe’s descendants have been many litterateurs, some of them rising to high distinction. It was in the year A.D. 1021 that Hyun-chong, eighth monarch of the Korea dynasty, immortalized the memory of Ch’oe by decreeing him a place in the Confucian Temple with the title Marquis Mun-ch’ang.

[page 18]

**The Culture and Preparation of Ginseng in Korea.**

By Rev. C. T. Collyer. [Charles T. Collyer]

Ginseng is the generic name applied to the several varieties of the plant known to the Chinese as Jen-sêng(人蔘 or 人參), of which indeed it is a rough and ready reproduction. It is interesting to note that as Westerners call the plant by its Chinese name so they know it to be of value only as it is prized by the Celestials.

In Korea it is known as Sam (삼), which is the native pronunciation of the Chinese 蔘. Not to speak of sub-divisions, the following varieties are generally recognized by Korean growers: ―

1. ― 山蔘 (산삼) *Wild Sam*, literally Mountain Sam. It is this wild ginseng of which we hear such fabulous stories and which is valued at such an extraordinary figure. It stands to reason that there is practically none of it or else the whole population would be out on the hunt. If a grower finds an unusually large root among his crop he often dries it privately and palms it off as having been found in some deep mountain ravine.

2. ― 嶺蔘 (렁삼), *Ryeng Sam*, which comes from Kyoung-sang Do (경상도). Its characteristic is that in body it is smaller than that grown in Song-do. It is merely sun-dried and is said to be a very powerful drug. It is but seldom exported, being highly valued by the Koreans, who will pay $22.00, Korean currency, per pound.

3. ― 江直蔘 (강직삼) *Kang Chik Sam* comes from the province of Kang wŭn (강원) and is graded as second to the above. In appearance it so like the Song Sam that it cannot be told apart by the uninitiated. Its difference if that it weighs more and is less powerful than No. 2. [page 19]

4. ― 松蔘 (숑삼) *Song Sam* is that grown in Song-do and only sun-dried. Its distinction is that it is less powerful than either of the above, for which reason it is graded commercially as No. 3.

5. ― 紅蔘 (홍삼) *Hong Sam* (Red Sam) is the last above mentioned variety after it has passed through the Government’s drying establishment in Song-do. It forms the principal export of this country, and is one of the most valuable assets of the Household Department.

Of these five varieties but two are recognized by the Royal Korean Customs, those known respectively as “White” and “Red” Ginseng. The “White Ginseng” is the root that has been sun-dried or cured by some other simple process ― the same as that shipped from America to China. The figures for 1898 published by the Bureau of Statistics of the United States Treasury Department show that the trade in the States if by no means a small one, 174,063 pounds having been exported, valued at $836,446.00 or an average of $4.80 per pound. In the same year 1,866 pounds were shipped from Korea at the average value of Yen 2.21 per pound. The export of this “White Ginseng” is decreasing all the time, for all roots that will pass muster bring a much bigger return if converted into “Red Ginseng.” The figures for Hong Sam (Red Ginseng) for that same year (1898) show that 60,104 lbs. were shipped to China from Chemulpo, valued by the Customs at an average of Yen 15.87 per pound. From these figures it will be seen that when the root has been put through the process that is hereinafter described it is two and one-seventh times more valuable than the American product.

That the trade really is an important one will be best gathered from the following figures which have been kindly furnished by the Customs authorities: ―

[page 20]

STATISTICS OF EXPORT OF GINSENG FROM KOREA.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year | White―Whole & Beard | | Red―Whole & Beard | |
| Weight in Piculs | Value in Yen | Weight in Catties | Value in Yen |
| 1892……  1893……  1894……  1895……  1896……  1897……  1898……  1899……  1900……  1901…… | 210  110  112  33  71  41  14  11  10  12 | 22,637  9,465  11,371  5,310  5,694  3,066  842  564  726  1,188 | ―  ―  ―  ―  16,686  33,037  45,087  23,178  60,310  18,431 | ―  ―  ―  ―  268,054  629,375  954,007  379,376  1,547,400  515,955 |
| Total…… | 644 | 60,863 | 196,729 | 4,294,177 |

For the six years (1896-1901) the average value per catty of “Red” was Yen 21.83 and of “White” Yen 0.76.

These figures hardly give one a true idea of the value, for “Beard” is of very much lower price than “Whole.”

It might be mentioned that much difficulty has been experienced in getting reliable information about the cultivation of ginseng. While the growers are too polite not to talk readily to one, yet on subsequent investigation I have often found that I had been misinformed.

Before a garden, locally known as a Sam-po, is ready for its first planting of Sam, extensive preparations are necessary. In the early winter thousands of loads of a variety of disintegrated granite known as Whang-t’o (黃土 황토) and also of Yakto (藥土) 약토 are carried to the Sam-po and heaped up in separate mounds. This 약토 (medicine earth) is a moderately rich mulch made from the leaves of the chestnut oak (Quercus Sinensis), known to the Koreans as the Sang (橡―도토리상). [page 21] The leaves are gathered in the spring and summer, dried in the sun, pulverized and sprinkled with water to help decomposition. This mulch is the only fertilizer used. The Koreans say that one of the secrets of successful cultivation lies in its use. Experiments have been made with other fertilizers, but none has been found that will take its place.

Before the season opens much time is spent in preparing the frames and mats used for the sheds under which the Sam is grown. As soon as the frost is out of the ground the garden is ploughed up and thoroughly worked over with a spade operated by a gang of five or more men. The spade is made of wood, has an iron shoe or tip, and a handle eight to ten feet long, to the butt of which are fastened two straw ropes. The captain, as we might call him, manipulates the handle while each half of the crew gives its undivided attention to a rope. Then with “a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether” an amazingly small quantity of dirt is thrown a distance of two feet or so. After the beds have been made high enough to prevent the possibility of water, even in the rainy season, getting to the roots of the plants, they are dug out to the depth of about six inches and carefully edged with slabs of slate. In the meantime the artificial soil (mom huk 몸흙) has been prepared. It consists of 15 bushels mulch (약토) and 22½ bushels disintegrated granite (황토) to the *kan* [\*5½ feet] ―during the last few years some of the big growers have been using ⅓ bushel of wood ashes mixed with the above ― these are rubbed together by hand, and with it the dug-out is filled up.

Sam is propagated from seed. As in other branches of the culture, the Koreans pay much attention to the seed. Four-year-old plants, if forward, will flower in the sixth moon (July); should the plants not be sufficiently forward the leaves are nipped off to prevent them flowering. Seed is also borne by five and six-year-old plants; that of the old plants is considered the best. Each year at the chung-pok (中伏 중복) [\*The second day of the midsummer festival, 26 July.] the seed is gathered and placed in grass cloth bags, which are held in running water and violently shaken to remove the red husks. The seed, which is a cream white, is then scattered on a sunk bed of sand dug up from the bottom of a stream; a thick covering of sand is spread over the seed and they are watered [page 22] every day until the yip-tong (立冬 립동). [\*November 8] This seed-bed occupies a conspicuous position in the end of the garden nearest the house: it has a plank frame and is covered with a lath screen. As it is of great importance to shield the seed from the early frosts, straw thatch is piled over the cover of the bed every night. On the 립동 the seed is dug up and sorted. Those seeds which have commenced to germinate are packed with sand in jars and buried in a shady place for the winter.

One of the busiest times of the year is when the seed is sown, crowds of coolies being employed to make up the beds, &c. When the bed has been properly prepared six or eight boys in charge of a man are set to work sowing the seed; they are preceded by a man who marks off the bed with an ingenious tool three feet long with half inch pegs at one inch intervals, the boys then come along and drop a seed in each hole, which is afterwards covered up by the man in charge who presses the soil down with his hands. It should be noted that 62 or 63 rows are sown to each *kan*. If at the time of sowing ― which by the way is regulated by the calendar and not by the weather ― it is at all cold the beds are immediately covered with one or two thicknesses of ricestraw thatch. If the weather is at all suitable the thatch is removed at the time of the Ch’ung-myung (淸明 청명) [\*April 4] and the sheds erected. It is quite a relief to see anything done with exactness and precision in Korea. Great care is taken in measuring the beds―which must face N.N.E. ¾E. ― and in erecting the sheds with exact uniformity. The rows of pillars are three feet apart; those in the front row measure just three feet seven from the ground and those in the back but ten inches. The pillars are set five-and-a-half feet apart and are nearly all spruce pine. Bamboo poles are securely lashed to the pillars and they in their turn support the cross pieces on which the roof of the shed rests. The roof is made of reeds woven together with straw rope.

From this time on the plants require incessant care, several men being kept busy in each garden. If the plants break through the earth by the Kok-u (穀雨 곡우) [\*May 6] they must be watered every three or four days; if the weather at the Ip-ha (立夏 립하) [\*April 21] is getting gradually warmer they are [page 23] watered twice in twenty-four hours and the top mat is rolled up from off the roof during the middle of the day. The calendar being unable to regulate the amount of water necessary it is a rule:— “If there is drought give water plentifully; if there is plenty of rain, give but little water. Let dryness and dampness harmonize!” At the time of the summer solstice the rainy season may be expected, so a thick covering of thatch is spread over the sheds, while the back and front are enclosed by rush blinds.

A native writer says:-

“The nature of Sam is different from that of other plants. It does not require much water nor should it be too dry. It likes light. Because it does not want too much dryness, the beds must be made wide and covered with mats to shade off the extreme light. If the soil (몸흙) in which it is planted is dry, give water and draw down the shades: if it is too moist, open the shades and let in the light. Rain and dew must not be allowed to fall upon it, but it must be watered as though it rained. The covering of the beds is not to keep out the wind and the sunshine, but to give the effect of a cloudy day. Following upon cold, if the ground be dry or damp, shade or light must be given, and if watered special care must be taken to avoid chilling the plants. When the atmosphere is warm or cold much shade or sunshine must not be allowed for either extreme is unsuited to the nature of the plant.”

Several references having been made to the watering of the plants, it may not be without its interest to pause and watch the operation. There is a well in or near every garden, from which water is lifted by means of a sweep. As far as we are aware, this is the only appliance in extensive use in Korea for lifting well water, but it is only used locally in the Sam gardens. The bucket itself is a combination of the Occidental and the Oriental. It is made of a strip of kerosene tin nailed on to semi-circular pieces of wood, which in their turn are nailed to a cross piece into which an upright handle is morticed. The rope of the sweep is fastened to this handle by means of a wire loop pulled off an oil can. The water when raised is emptied into an earthenware crock which is securely tied to a frame mounted on four crude wheels; this is drawn round the garden and between the beds and from it the water is dipped out in a gourd fastened to a long handle. This gourd is perforated [page 24] and in each perforation is inserted a small bamboo spout which gives the “rainy effect” that is so much desired.

It is not until the Ip Tong (립동) [\*November 8] has passed that the grower is able to rest easily. Up to that day he has to be continually on the alert, waging war against insects and weeds. Then with a sigh of relief, he pulls down the sheds and having put a layer of soil some seven or eight inches thick on the beds, the garden is left thus for the winter.

His next care is to select another site to which he can move his plants in the spring. The new lot need not be as sandy as the first one, but on the other hand a heavy clay is quite unsuitable. Having selected his site, fresh whang-t’o and yak-t’o in sufficient quantities must be carried thither in readiness for the opening of the next season.

At Ch’un-pun (春分) [\*March 21] of the following year the new beds are made up and the plants removed from last year’s garden. This time they are planted ten or twelve rows of ten roots each to the *kan*. The prepared soil (몸흙) is not of quite the same proportion and is less than last year’s — 8 bushels (말) mulch (약토) and nine of disintegrated granite (황토). To this also a very small quantity of wood ashes is sometimes added. The duties of this year are similar to those of last year, but there is an added care. The roots are now worth stealing, consequently the garden has to be watched day and night. A watch tower is erected and the hands take turn about in occupying it sentry-wise. Another man continually patrols the garden during the hours of darkness. With a view to scaring off the spirits and to prevent himself from feeling lonely he makes the night “hideous” with his cries. On dark nights a lantern is an indispensible accessory; but while any kind of lantern may be used, preference is given to one made for this special purpose as it throws its light a considerable distance. Made of paper and pasted on bamboo ribs, it is ballon-shaped, with the small end open. The handle which is fastened to the big end if pushed inwards will carry with it through the opening a swinging candlestick. It is only when the light is thrown in one’s face that one realizes how brilliant it is.

In the following year, a few days after Ch’un-un-pun the [page 25] plants are again moved. The circumstances are the same as last year, excepting that they are planted further apart, four roots to the row and eight to the *kan*. This is intended to be the final planting, but should the root not thrive it is moved to yet another location as soon as possible.

Here should be noted a special point in Ginseng culture, one which is held as a close secret. Each time the roots are transplanted they are placed in the ground almost horizontally, slanting slightly downwards. The reasons for not planting them vertically are: (1) That water may be applied evenly to the whole root; (2) To prevent the roots from dividing and spreading into fine rootlets, sometimes known as “beard,” and (3) That they may be readily inspected. Where the roots are so subject to blight it is a matter of great importance to be able to inspect them without disturbance.

Like so many other plants Sam has its special blight, the consideration of which must be left for a future paper.

When the plant is five, six or seven years old, according to circumstances and to grade, the root is dug up and handed over to the Government. Work at the Drying Establishment is carried on from the 10th of the Eighth Moon (September 11) to the 20th of the Ninth Moon (October 21) and the roots have to be delivered during that period.

The law requires every Ginseng garden to be registered. The certificate of registration, for which a fee of 40 cents is charged, states how many *kan* are under cultivation, so that the authorities always know how many roots should be available at harvest time. It being obligatory to sell the entire crop to the Government, the grower’s responsibility ceases when he has delivered his crop to the Government’s Drying Establishment (圃所표소). He there receives a receipt for what has been brought in, but has to possess his soul in patience for several months until the Government is ready to pay — when he gets anything from $6.00 to $9.00 per catty of 20 oz.

As to the profitableness of Sam growing. As an investment, of course, something large would naturally be expected when one has to wait from five to seven years for a return, From the best — though it can hardly be considered absolutely reliable — information to hand I gather that a profit of about 60 per cent is generally made on the original outlay and running [page 26] expenses. It is with some hesitancy that this figure is stated and it is given for what it is worth.

Upon visiting the Drying Establishment the first thing that impresses itself upon one’s mind is the inaccessibility of the place, both with regard to the streets leading to it and to the guard placed at its gate. As at the emperor’s palace so here the guard is no respector of persons. Until two or three years ago this establishment and the entire industry of Ginseng culture was under the supervision of the Song-do governor. There is now a specially appointed official, known as the Sam Sŭng Kwa Chang (蔘省課長 삼성과장). That this gentleman is held personally responsible for the stock is proved by the fact that he has recently had to pay a very large sum out of his own pocket for Ginseng that has more or less mysteriously found its way into other hands than those of the government.

Passing the guards, parts of whose uniform are usually conspicuous by their absence but of whom it must be said that whatever else may be forgotten the ominous bayonet is always in evidence, one finds himself in a twelve feet wide road running east and west and, for a considerable distance, with high walls on either side. Opening to the north and south are the gates leading into the twin compounds, each of which is in charge of a Chu Sa (主事 주사) resident on the premises while the curing process is in operation. Each section of the P’o Sa (포사) is about four acres in extent and is so much like the others that it is only necessary to refer to one of them. On three sides of the compound are buildings varying from 100 to 150 feet in length and of a uniform depth of 12 feet. One of these buildings is used as quarters for the workmen, the others are the drying rooms in which the root is stored every night. These drying rooms are divided into sections and called respectively “First Heaven,” “Second Heaven,” “Third Heaven,” “First Earth,” “Second Earth,” and “Third Earth.” Every tray is labelled according to the room from which it is taken. On the fourth side are the steaming shed and the various storerooms. Except for the buildings, almost the entire space of the enclosure is covered with three-feet-high bamboo platforms, on which the trays are exposed to the sun. Near the centre of each compound, under the shade of some very ancient yew trees, is the well, at the mouth of which the roots are washed as [page 27] soon as received. Year after year the same boys and men, to the number of 140, are employed in the drying house. They are well fed and housed; during the forty days that the drying process is in operation not one of them is allowed to go out of the gate without a special permit from the chu sa in charge, and even then he is searched by the guard.

It is a busy time when the freshly dug up roots are carried to the drying house. They are carefully counted and weighed on a scale-beam suspended from a specially erected structure; receipts for the number of roots and their weight are given to the growers.

It is interesting to note that during the process through which the root will have to go it loses just two-thirds of its weight. The process commences with a thorough washing by hand at the well mouth. The root is then handed over to men who carefully brush it with human-hair brushes: it is important that no speck of dirt be left between the rootlets. They are then packed in baskets (둥우리), two feet in diameter and six inches in depth, with a handle at either side for convenience of lifting. These are placed in pairs in an earthen ware steamer. The steamers are four feet in diameter and one and a half deep; they have holes in the bottom to admit the steam from the iron boiler below. When ready to commence the process of steaming three gallons of water are poured into the five-gallon boiler, the steamer placed on top and the joint made tight by a pad of grass-cloth. The steamer in its turn is covered with a lid placed on a paper pad held down by six or eight tiles tied together with straw rope. I am told that the object of the padding is to prevent any steam from escaping, though observation has shown me that a large quantity fortunately does escape. There are two places in which the steaming is done. Each has four fire-places in a row; the boilers are placed in the masonry just as the rice pot in every Korean house, the whole covered in by a straw shed. Pine wood only is burnt. It is a matter of great importance that there should be enough, without too much fire; the same men are employed year after year to do nothing but attend to this part of the business. The duration of steaming is determined by the burning of a torch made of the fibre and bark of the locust tree (R Pseudacacia.) For [page 28] seven-year old roots, 4½ inches are burnt; for six-year old, 3½ inches, and for five-years old, 2¾ inches. While the torch is burning it is placed in an earthenware vessel covered with a cloth. One day I suggested it would be easier to time the steaming by a watch and was told that easier it might be but certainly not as reliable. Just as soon as the torch is burnt out the fire has to be drawn; the baskets are lifted out of the steamer and the roots placed thirty each on wicker trays and exposed to the sun. When the roots stop steaming they are turned over and left in the sun a little while longer, then carried to the drying house.

This drying house has no floor and is so carefully built as to be air-tight; its doors are made of extra thick boards and all cracks are pasted up with stout paper. Shelves, or racks, of bamboo are placed all round the house and on these are the trays containing the roots. Three shallow holes are dug in the ground and huge charcoal fires lighted in them; the doors are then closed and hermetically sealed. During his absence of about half a day from the room a change takes place in the root that the Korean is quite unable to explain: the carbonic oxide liberated from the charcoal acts upon some property of the root producing a chemical change in colour and touch. We thus see that those books on chemistry which state that “Carbonic oxide is not put to any use in the arts and manufactures” are mistaken. When the Sam is taken out of the drying house its “body” is red, and just so hard that it will not yield to the touch: the rootlets are then cut off diagonally with a pair of scissors. For about ten days the roots are exposed to the sun until they become “as hard as stone,” when with a small knife the root-stock is scraped and if on the primary root there are any “pimples” as the natives call them, they are carefully cut off.

We have now reached the last item in the process and it certainly shows that the Koreans are ingenious about some things. The roots are now so hard and brittle that they will break if let drop on the floor, so it would be almost impossible to pack them without injury. A foreigner would get a lot of excelsior or cotton to protect that which had cost him so much labour, but not so the Korean. He simply puts the roots [page 29] in a hamper, which he places on the earthen floor of a damp store-room. In a short while the roots soften; they are then removed to a room with a heated stone floor and spread out covered with sheets of oil paper, being thus left until they are so soft that they yield to the touch. They can now be easily packed in paper bags and pressed into pine-wood boxes without fear of injury. After being packed they again harden, becoming adjusted to the shape of the box.

Each box is supposed to contain five catties. It is fastened with bamboo nails and wrapped first in common stout paper and then in oil-paper. Eight boxes go to the hamper, which is made of locust-tree withes papered within and without. They are then enclosed in a grass-cloth bag tightly bound with hemp-rope and labelled, and are then ready for the market.

The virtue of Sam as a drug lies in its aphrodisiacal property. I believe that it does not find a place in Western pharmacy because all legitimate medical ends can be better attained by the use of other drugs. We may look askance at it but it plays a very important part in the life of both the Korean and the Chinese gentleman. To speak in every day terms of its use in Korea, and quoting a native doctor, the drug made from white Ginseng is used only by men, for it is too intense for women and children. Hong Sam is given in moderate quantities to women and children because it is supposed, being red, to promote the circulation and therefore the health.

Were it not for China there would be no more trade in Ginseng than in several other native drugs of repute; hence we may well ask, “What gives it such value in that country?” The answer is short and simple, but whether it is a scientific fact or not I must leave to those who have both the opportunity to make investigation and the necessary technical knowledge. The Chinese say that the effect of smoking opium is to diminish the blood while Red Ginseng gives energy, strength, health and increases the flow of blood, hence it is in very high favour as a counteractive of opium. White Ginseng which does not act on the blood, if taken by an opium smoker, will cause speedy death. [page 30]

A discussion having arisen concerning the medicinal qualities of Ginseng, Mr. Gale read the following, taken from an old Chinese history:-

AN ANCIENT RECEIPT.

Take ten ounces of ginseng, cut it into small slices, put it to infuse in twenty small porcelain vessels of spring or river water till it is thoroughly soaked and then pour the whole into a stone or silver vessel, boiling it over a gentle fire made of mulberry wood till half the water is wasted then having strained off the juice pour ten middling porcelain vessels of water upon the gross substance and let them boil till they are reduced to five; take this juice and add five cups of water to the ten vessels which you had before strained off; boil it over a gentle fire till it comes to the consistance of an electuary (medicinal syrup) which you may close up in a proper vessel and when you make use of it dilute it with a liquor suitable to the disease you take it for.

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETINGS.**

SEOUL, 20th Feb., 1901.

A GENERAL Meeting was held this Afternoon at 4 o’clock in the rooms of the Seoul Union. Twenty-one members and eighteen non- members were present. The VICE-PRESIDENT occupied the chair, the PRESIDENT being unfortunately absent through sickness.

In absence of the RECORDING SECRETARY the LIBRARIAN was appointed Secretary pro tem.

The minutes having been read and approved the CORRESPONDING SECRETARY announced the election of the following new members:―

Messrs. D. W. DESHLER, Chemulpo.

W. G. BENNETT ,,

MIN YONG CHAN. SEOUL.

J. C. CHALMERS,CHEMULPO.

D. G. OWEN

W. Du F. HUTCHISON, Seoul.

Miss L. COOKE, M.D., “

The REV. M, N. TROLLOPE then read a paper on “Kang-wha.”

At its conclusion Mr. BUNKER moved “That a vote of thanks be given to Mr. TROLLOPE for his interesting and valuable paper.” Dr. SCRANTON seconded and the motion was carried unanimously.

The Chairman, after conveying the thanks of the meeting to the essayist, opened the discussion by asking whether sacrifices were still offered upon the shrines to heroes of which Mr, TROLLOPE had made mention. He said that hero-worship belonged to ancestor worship.

Pr. SCRANTON asked whether the altar on Mari San was an altar to heaven or to earth. It was square in form. The natives insisted that it was an altar to heaven, but Mr. Wilkinson stated that the altar to heaven was always round, and the altar to earth square.

Mr. TROLLOPE replied that he believed that it was one of the places used for sacrifices for rain, &c. In that case it was an altar to heaven. He found references also to worship of the spirit of the hill.

Mr. GALE asked about the dolmen—what is the common story of its origin ?

Mr. TROLLOPE replied that the only story was a rather foolish one which connected it with the “devil’s grand mother.”

Mr. GALE remarked that in England and in Europe the dolmens are usually referred to burial customs. The Korean says that they are intended to keep off the mountain influences, but never, in his experience, referred to burials. Possibly, however, that idea may not be found in Korea. [page 32]

Mr. MOOSE stated that on the road to Wonsan, 90 li from here, there are other stones of this sort. One dolmen he measured roughly. It was six feet high, two feet thick and 21 paces in circuit. The only account he could get of them was that many hundreds of years ago the people were very strong and erected them by mere exercise of strength.

The Chairman announced that the Society was now in temporary custody of a library of some 500 volumes, the LANDIS LIBRARY having been put under its care, and a loan of some 200 volumes made by Mr KENMURE

The meeting then adjourned.

SEOUL, 19th June, 1901.

A GENERAL Meeting was held at 4.30 P.M. this day, at the rooms of the Seoul Union, with the PRESIDENT in the chair.

The Minutes of the last meeting were taken as read.

The LIBRARIAN reported for the Publication Committee that the first volume of the Society’s publications would be out iti about six weeks and that it would contain the papers on Chinese Influence in Korea, Korean Survivals and the Colossal Buddha at Un-jin.

The Rev. GEO. HEBER JONES then read his paper on “The Spirit Gods of Korea,” which was listened to with marked interest.

In the discussion which followed MR. GALE spoke of Confucianism in connection with Shamanism and pointed out that there were set days for certain observances. Mr. KENMURE spoke of the similarity between Korean and Chinese spirit worship. In answer to a question by Mr. HUMBERT, Mr. JONES stated that this spirit worship is the main factor in Korean religious life today. Dr. SCRANTON spoke of the markings on beams. Mr. GUBBINS spoke of the fox-worship in Japan.

In conclusion the Chairman spoke of the wide spread of these superstitious observances, the difficulties attending their investigation, the fact that mutual knowledge and comprehension is necessary to international comity. He proposed a vote of thanks to the reader of the paper.

SEOUL, 27th November, 1901.

A GENERAL Meeting of the Society was held to-day at the Seoul Union Reading Room at 4.15 p. M. In the absence of the PRESIDENT and VICE-PRESIDENT the RECORDING SECRETARY occupied the chair.

Dr. AVISON nominated Prof. G. R. FRAMPTON as Recording Secretary pro tem., the CORRESPONDING SECRETARY seconded the motion, which was carried. The minutes of the last meeting were then read and approved. No other business arising the Chairman called upon the Corresponding Secretary, the Rev. J. S. GALE, to read his paper on Hanyang (Seoul). The paper was then read, being illustrated by reference to a large plan of the city.

After the reading of this most interesting and instructive paper the Chairman threw the question open for discussion. No one seemed to be prepared to add anything to what bad been said. The Chairman then [page 33] proposed a vote of thanks to the reader of the paper, which was unanimously carried.

In rising to move an adjournment Dr. AVISON remarked that it was plain that all present had greatly enjoyed the reading of the paper. He marveled at the power of observation shown by the Chinese ambassador, which enabled him even after so short a stay to give such a graphic description of Seoul and he doubted whether Europeans would have been so keenly observant.

J. N. JORDAN, Esq., in seconding the motion for adjournment expressed the great pleasure he had received on listening to the paper. He mentioned the Millenary of Alfred the Great, recently held in England and doubted whether on that event anything had been presented which could equal this account of Seoul and its history. His impression was that Korea is in much the same condition now as it was centuries ago. Speaking of the term “Dong” he said that it was in use in all parts of China not only as applied to villages but to districts, and from its use here he deduced the powerful influence China has bad over Korea.

The meeting then adjourned.

SEOUL. Jan 3 1902.

THE ANNUAL, MEETING of the Society was held this day in the Seoul Union Reading Room, at four o’clock in the afternoon. In the absence of the President, the Vice-President occupied the chair. A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order.

The Minutes of the last general meeting were read and approved.

The Annual Report of the Council was then read by the Corresponding Secretary. It was moved by Rev. J. R. Moore to adept the report. The motion prevailed.

The Treasurer read his annual report showing total receipts of Yen 546.90 and total disbursements of Yen 288.3o, leaving a balance of Yen 258.60.

The Meeting then proceeded to the election of officers for the year, the result being as follows:

President J. N. JORDAN, Esq.

Vice-President Rev. GEO. II. JONES.

Corresponding Secretary Rev. JAS. S. GALE.

Recording Secretary B. HUMBERT, Esq.

TREASURER G. RUSSELL FRAMPTON, ESQ

LIBRARIAN REV. H. G. APPENZELLER.

Hon. H. N. ALLEN.

Additional Members of council H. WEIPERT, Dr. Jur.

M. COLLIN DE PLANCY.

The chairman called for the reading of a paper on Korean Folk-tales, by H. B, Hulbert, Esq. After the reading of this paper the subject was thrown open for discussion. The President, Vice-President, Correspond-[page 34]ing Secretary and others made brief remarks. The librarian suggested a vote of thanks to the reader of the paper, which was carried. The meeting then adjourned.

SEOUL,Dec.17th,1902

A GENERAL MEETING was convened at the Seoul Union Reading Room at 4.00 p. M., with the PRESIDENT in the Chair. The Minutes of the last general meeting were read and approved.

The PRESIDENT then called upon Rev. Geo. H. Jones, Ph.D., to read the paper of the day, on Ch’oe Ch’i-wun. At its close the subject was thrown open to the house for discussion Brief remarks were made by the Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary and others.

After an expression of thanks to the reader of the paper the meeting adjourned.

**Report of the Council.**

It is but a short report that the Council has to offer this year. One meeting was held Dec. 17th; when a paper was read by the Rev. G. H. JONES, PH.D., on “CH’OE CH’I-WUN, His life and Times.” The meeting to-day, at which we are to have a paper by Rev. C. T. COLLYER on (Ginseng) Sam, marks the close of the year.

Some of the papers promised months ago are not yet forthcoming. We trust that we may have them presented before the season closes.

The Library kindly loaned by the Rev. M. N. TROLLOPE, M. A., has had many valuable exchanges added to it during the year. It is located at the Bible Society’s office and will be hereafter under the charge of Mr. KENMURE.

The list of members has been added to. We trust that the list of contributors will continue to increase likewise.

In closing this report the Council would record its sense of loss in the death of the Rev H. G. APPENZELLER, Librarian of the Society, who was drowned in the wreck of the Shoshen Kaisha Steamship “Kuin-agawa” on June the Eleventh.

**APPENDIX**.

**OFFICERS FOR 1903.**

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J. N. JORDAN, Esq., C. M. G.

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

Rev. GEO. HEBER JONES, Ph D.

**HONORARY SECRETARIES.**

Rev. J. S, GALE. B.A.

H. B. HULBERT, A.M., F.R.G.S.

**HONORARY TREASURER.**

G. RUSSELL FRAMPTON, ESQ.

**HONORARY LIBRARIAN.**

ALEX : KENMURE, ESQ.

**COUNCILLORS.**

HON. H. N. ALLEN.

H. WEIPERT, DR. JUR.

M. COLLIN DE PLANCY.

**LIST OF MEMBERS.**

Members are particularly requested to notify the Hun. Secretaries of any change of address or other correction to be made in this list.

‡ Indicates a member who has contributed to the Society’s transactions.

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Noble. Ph.D., Rev. W. A .... Methodist Mission, Pyeng-yang.

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Swearer, Rev W. C Methodist Mission, Seoul.

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Takaki. Ph D., M Dai-Ichi Ginko, Seoul.

Tanaka. Esq Seoul.

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Townsend, Esq., W. D Chemulpo.

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Wunsch. M.D., R Imp. Household Dept., Seoul.

Yamaguchi, Esq., H Kobe, Japan.

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