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Korea Branch Of The Royal Asiatic Society Its Past And Present

By H. H. Underwood

KOREA BRANCH of the ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

I Brief History

Late in 1899 a group of the Occidental residents of Seoul interested in the study of things Korean decided to organize a society to direct and assist in such studies. Correspondence was entered into with the Royal Asiatic Society of London so as to give the local group the backing and support of that famous organization. On receipt of a favorable reply from London a meeting was called on June 16th 1900 to formally organize the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

At this meeting a constitution was adopted in accordance with the suggestion from London. Officers and Councillors were elected and the Korea Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society was born. The officers elected at that first meeting were:

President J. H. Gubbins, H.B.M., Charge d’Aff aires

Vice President Rev. G. H. Jones

Corresponding Secretary Rev. J. S. Gale

Recording Secretary H. B. Hulbert

Treasurer Rev. A. B. Turner

Librarian Alex Kenmure

Councillors Hon. H. N. Allen, U.S. Minister

Dr Wierpert, Consul General,

Germany J. McLeavy Brown, Royal

Korean Customs

The first General Meeting of the Society was held October 24th 1900 when Dr Gale read his paper on “The Influence of China upon Korea” Volume I of the Society’s Transactions was published under the date of 1900 though actually appearing early in 1901 and by Dr Gale, Mr Hulbert and Dr Jones.

The Society continued active for three years publishing seven papers in all, as Volume I, Volume II Part 1, and Volume II part 2.

For reasons not now clear interest seemed to flag and the Society became moribund for several years. Finally [page 2] in 1911 a meeting was called to revivify the Society and in 1912 Volume IV Part 1 was published. From that time on the Society maintained a continuous and active existence down to the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In fact Dr. E. W. Koons, one of the Society’s officers, had just finished reading the proofs on a paper for the Society when he was arrested and interned on Monday, December 8th, 1941. Up to that date the Society had published 63 articles on a wide range of subjects. The Transactions thus form a library which is of the greatest value to the student of Korea and its customs, history and art. A list of the Transactions is attached and a classified index to titles and authors for all articles published from Volume I―XXV inclusive was included in Volume XXV 1936.

Following the war and the return to Korea of some of the Society’s former members, together with the arrival of many American officers and civilians interested in Korea, it was decided to reorganize the Society.

An informal meeting was held on 26, November 1947 at the Church of England Bishop’s Lodge where plans were made for reopening. Following this an open meeting was held on December 18th, 1947 at the Bankers’ Club at which moving pictures were shown. After the picture a business meeting was held at which the following officers were elected:

President H. H. Underwood

Vice President Rev. Charles Hunt

Corresponding Secretary Lt, Bertsch, A.U.S.

Recording Secretary Rev. E. J. O. Fraser

Treasurer Lt. Com. H. A. Lord, Salvation Army

Librarian Mr Prostov

Councillor Mrs. Brown

Rt. Rev. Bishop Cecil Cooper

Those who signified their desire to become members at this meeting were duly elected at the following meeting of the Council held on February 2nd 1948.

There are still large fields and many subjects to be investigated. The Society is happy to announce that Mr. G. [page 3]

Gompertz is continuing his supplementary Bibliography on Korea, one portion of which was in the press when war broke out and was unfortunately lost. Mr Gompertz is also studying early voyages to Korea and Korean waters. The Society also is still in hopes of receiving from Mrs J. C. Crane a long promised paper on “Korean Costumes.”

For those who are interested we re-print the following list of suggested topics for investigation.

Suggested Topics for Investigation

1. Korean Dress 42. Monastic Libraries

2. ,, Stone Monuments 43. Market and Labour Songs

3. ,, Ancient Fortresses 44. The Tiger-hunter

4. ,, Coins 45. Pearl Fisheries

5. ,, Local Histories 46. Falconry

6. ,, Law 47. The Four Political Pasties

7. ,, Taxation 48. Pusang

8. ,, Punishments 49. Door Mottoes

9. ,, Holding of Lands 50. Street Calls

10. ,, Roads and Bridges 51. Games; Cards, Chess etc.

11. ,, Food 52. Household Utensils

12. ,, Confucianism 53. Counting Sticks and Count-

ing

13. ,, Buddhism

14. ,, Image Worship 54. Ancient Sepulchral Mounds

15. ,, Architecture 55. Archery

16. ,, Drama 56. Stone Implements of Korea

17. ,, Etiquette 57. The Lepidoptera of Korea

18. ,, Military System 58. Cotton in Korea

19. ,, Burial Customs 59. Debit and Credit Accounts in

20. ,, Caves Korea

21. ,, Fairs 60. The Dutch in Korea

22. ,, Governmen t61. Ancient Education

23. ,, Embassy 62. Tobacco

24. ,, Musical Instruments 63. Ginko Trees and Temple Sites 25. ,, Prisons 64. Folklore

26. ,, Signal System 65. Fortune-telling

27. ,, Law Suits 66. Habits of the Blind

28. ,, Geomancy 67. Ancient Rituals

29. ,, Printing 68. Manchu Relations with Korea

30. ,, Ornithology 69. Social Honours

31. ,, Ethnology 70. The Yang-ban

32. ,, Names 71. The Musical Scale

33. The O-Ryun Haina-sil 72. Aunal Celebrations

34. Itineraries 73. Salt Manufacture

35. Rubbings of Famous Stones 74. Sacred Animals and Birds

36. Koryo Chang and Po-san 75. The Penal Code of Korea

37. Phallic Worship 76. Origin of the Korean People

38. Images and Joss Houses 77. Mongol Remains in Korea

39. Wayside idols 78. The Dragon

40. Measurtements of Heads 79. Various Historical Subjects

41. Burial above Ground

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**LIST OF PUBLISHED TRANSACTIONS**

**1900 — 1940 (Volumes I-XXX)**

Volume I 1900

Influence of China Upon Korea Rev. Jas. S. Gale

Korean Survivals H. B. Hulbert

Korea’s Colossal Image of Buddha Rev. G. H. Jones

Volume II 1 1901

Kang-Wha Rev. M. N. Trollope

The Spirit Worship of the Koreans Rev. G. H. Jones

Volume II 2

Han-Yang (Seoul) Rev. J. S. Gale

Korean Folk-Tales H. B. Hulbert

Volume III 1 1903

Ch’oe Ch’i-Wun: His Life and Times Rev. G. H. Jones

The Culture and Preparation of Ginseng

in Korea Rev. C. T. Collyer

Volume IV 1 1912

The Old People and the New Government Midori Komatsu

The Korean Alphabet Rev. J. S. Gale

Volume IV 2 1913

Japanese-Korean Relations after the Japanese Invasion

of Korea in the Sixteenth Century I. Yamagata

Village Guilds of Old Korea

Coinage of Old Korea M. Ichihara

Volume IV 3 1913

Marriage Customs of Korea Arthur Hyde Lay

Selection and Divorce Rev. J. S. Gale

The Celestial Planisphere of King Yi

Tai-jo W. Carl Rufus

Volume V 1914

Some Recent Discoveries in Korean

Temples and their Relationship to

Early Eastern Christianity E. A. Gordon

A Plea for the Investigation of Korean

Myths and Folklore Cecal H. N. Hodges

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Volume VI 1 1915

History of Korean Medicine N. H. Bowman

Afforestation in Korea Rev. E. W. Koons

Volume VI 2 1915

The Pagoda of Seoul Rev. J. S. Gale

Hunting and Hunters’ Lore in Korea H. H. Underwood

Volume VII 1916

Gold Mining in Korea Edwin W Mills

Volume VIII 1917

Introduction to the Study of Buddhism

in Korea Rev. Mark N.Trollope

Korean Coin Charms and Amulets Frederick Starr

Volume IX 1918

The Vegetation of Korea Ernest H. Wilson

Arboretum Coreense Rev. M. N. Trollope

An Account of the Shipwreck of a Dutch

Vessel on the Coast of the Isle of

Quelpaert, together with the Des

cription of the Kingdom of Korea (Reprint)

Volume X 1919

The Climate of Korea Dr. J. D. VanBuskirk

Volume XI 1920

Captain Basil Hall’s Account of his

Voyage to the West Coast of Korea

in 1816 (Reprint)

Arborotum Coreense Part II & III Rev. M. N. Trollope

Volume XII 1921

Ecalogical Studies in the Tong-Nai River

Basin, Northern Korea Ralph Garfield Mills

Volume XIII 1922

The Diamond Mountains Rev. J. S. Gale

Volume XIV 1923

Some Common Korean Foods Dr J. D. VanBuskirk

National Examination In Korea H. B. Hulbert

Pottery of the Korai Dynasty (924-1392

A.D.) Dr A. I. Ludlow[page 6]

Volume XV 1924

A Shipwreck (Korean) in 1636 A.D. Trans, by Rev. J. S. Gale

Korean Roads Past and Present W. W. Taylor

Volume XVI 1925

Old Korean Bells Rev. E. M. Cable

Beacon-Fires of Old Korea Rev. E. W. Koons

Volume XVII 1927

Address Delivered by Rev. William Elliot

Griffis.

A. Royal Funeral in Korea Hugh Miller

Volume XVIII 1929

The Korean Mission to the United States

in 1883 Harold J. Noble

Some Wayside Flowers of Central Korea Sister Mary Clare

Volume XIX 1930

Some Pictures and Painters of Korea Rev. Charles Hunt

Volume XX 1931

Occidental Literature on Korea H. H. Underwood

A Partial Biblograph of Occidental

Literature on Korea (From Early

Times to 1930) H. H. Underwood

Volume XXI 1932

Korean Books and Their Authors Being

An Introduction to Korean Literature The Right Reverend Bishop Trollope

A Short List of Korean Books

Volume XXII 1933

Notes on Korean Birds Daniel J. Cumming

The Two Visits of the Rev. R. J. Thomas

to Korea Mr M. W. Oh

Volume XXIII 1933 1

Korean Boats and Ships H. H. Underwood

Volume XXIII 1934 2

Korean Weapons and Armour John L. Boots [page 7]

Volume XXIV 1935

Diary of a Trip to Sul-Ak San Hev. Charles Hunt

The Korean Record on Captain Basil

Hall’s Voyage of Discovery to the

West Coast of Korea Dr. George Paik

Supplement to A Partial Bibliography of

Occidental Literature on Korea E. & G. Gompertz

Volume XXV 1936

Introduction to the “Bibliographic

Coreene” Maurice Courant

(Trans, by Mrs. W. M. Royds)

Book Production and Printing in Korea Bishop M. N. Trollope

Volume XXVI 1936

Astronomy in Korea W. Carl Rufus

Volume XXVII 1937

Some Notes on Father Gregorio De

Cespedes Ralph M. Cory

Archbishop Mutel―A Biographical sketch G. St G. M.Gompertz

Volume XXVIII 1938

The United States-Korean Relations

1865-1871 Hev. E. M. Cable

Volume XXIX 1939

The Romanization of the Korean Language G. M. McCune &

E. O. Reischauer

The Yi Dynasty Annals of Korea G. M. McCune

Volume XXX 1940

Korean Musical Instruments and An

Introduction to Korean Music Mrs. J. L. Boots

Sino-Korean Relations at the End of the

XlVth Century L. Carrington Goodrich