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**Shared Failure: American Military Advisors in Korea, 1888-1896**

**by Donald M. Bishop**

Poor Korean people, whose fate at last appears to be sealed, your soldiery, if they had but drilled. . . years ago in far greater numbers, might have prevented all the tragedies of the last decade.

—Bertram L. Simpson1, 1905

From 1888 to 1896 a small group of American military officers worked in the Kingdom of Korea as military advisors under contract to the court of King Kojong. Although their arrival had been a consistent objective of Korean foreign policy for half a decade, and although their story has a significant place in Korea’s troubled passage through the late nineteenth century, the advisors, work in Seoul has drawn scant attention from historians.2 The delay in the progress of Korean historical studies caused by the unfortunate events on the peninsula since the beginning of this century has meant that no Delbruck or Craig has yet portrayed the military dimension to Korean history, and the American military mission has suffered from a corollary lack of examination. Korean studies for the period between 1864 and 1910, however, have now sufficiently advanced and enough documents are now available to describe the mission, to place it in its historical context, to estimate its effects, and to judge its significance in the history of Korean modernization.

**THE KOREAN REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE**

In the late 1800’s, isolated Korea was ruled by the kings of the Yi dynasty, then in its fifth century of power. The state of the Korean armed forces in the declining dynasty offers one more illustration of the military historian’s concept that military establishments reflect the larger society of which they are a part. Though Korea possessed proud naval and military traditions, by the late nineteenth century her military institutions were weak. Korea’s long period of self-imposed isolation had left her armed forces outmoded in technology. Korean military leadership had been weakened by the same clan rivalry, factionalism, and excessive turnover that [page 54] hampered all branches of the government. Corruption and “squeeze” were as prevalent in military and naval administration as in civil governance. In sum, the Korean armed forces were increasingly unable to perform their fundamental social task—to defend the nation against foreign or domestic enemies.3

After 1876, when a Japanese military demonstration precipitated the end of Korea’s celebrated resistance to foreign relations, however, the young king and a number of members of the scholarly class, stimulated by new ideas entering Korea from abroad, became interested in reform. Drawing on both China and Japan as models, the government ordered changes in Korean military organization. Korean students were sent abroad for training—seventy to Tianjin and fourteen to Toyama in Japan. And eighty Korean soldiers were organized into a “Special Skill Force,” the *pyolgigun*, to be trained by a Japanese officer.4

In July 1882,however, a clash took place over military reform. The new military policies led troops of the other, traditional military units in Seoul to fear dismissal. Angered by an incident revealing corruption in the administration of their pay, they rose in protest. They attacked government offices, the palace, and the barracks of the Special Skill Force. The Korean troops killed the Japanese advisor and attacked the Japanese Legation. In the tumult, the ex-regent, the Taewon’gun, seized power. China, as Korea’s traditional suzerain, and Japan, to avenge the murders of its nationals, deployed troops to Seoul. The Chinese removed the Taewon’gun after a rule of thirty-three days and restored the king. The Japanese imposed a harsh treaty.5

The Soldiers’ Revolt of 1882 forced King Kojong to become cautious in, his approach to reform, and it gave him reason to regard the loyalty of his troops with some apprehension. In the wake of the revolt the king authorized China to assume a new program of military training.6 As he regarded the failure of the initial reform program, the doubtful effectiveness of his armed forces in the era of transition, and the tense diplomatic situation between Seoul, Beijing, and Tokyo, he came to perceive that the new diplomatic relationship then being forged with the United States might offer possibilities for fresh initiatives.

In order to counterbalance the growing Japanese influence in Korea and to widen the kingdom’s options in the difficult period after 1876,the Korean court sought to sign treaties with other nations. China had recommended the United States as a power free of territorial ambitions in Asia. The Koreans’ willingness corresponded with Commodore Robert Shufeldt’s ambition to open Korea to the West. With Chinese assistance Korea signed [page 55] a treaty with the United States in May, 1882.7

The Korean court came increasingly to favor its new relation with the United States. In order to cement the new friendship and win American advice, assistance, and support for a reform program, the king granted several concessions to American firms and requested an American foreign affairs advisor, teachers for a royal school, farm advisors, and medical assistants.8 And at a special audience on October 16,1883,the king requested the “services of an American Military Officer, to instruct and drill my troops. If such a one can be recommended to me, I will confer upon him the Second Military rank in my Kingdom.” American Minister Lucius H. Foote eagerly conveyed the request to the Secretary of State.9

At the same time that the king was discussing military advisors with the American minister in Seoul, the first Korean embassy to the United States was in Washington.10 Minister Min Yong-ik raised the question of military assistance in conversations at the Department of State. At that time the idea that Shufeldt, soon to retire from the Navy, should go to Korea as foreign affairs advisor, was mooted. Shufeldt’s experience and the possibility that he could provide advice on foreign affairs as well as military improvements appealed to the Korean diplomats. Both Shufeldt and Secretary of State Frelinghuysen apparently assured the Koreans that an advisor—probably the Admiral―would be sent.11

Expecting a positive response to the request for military assistance, the Korean government made preparations. Minister Foote was asked to arrange the purchase of arms from an American firm.12 In January 1884, incidents between Chinese troops and Korean civilians gave the monarch a pretext to dismiss the Chinese military instructors.13 In June, 1884, four thousand Remington breech-loading rifles arrived in Seoul. Two naval officers at the American legation supervised the storage of the weapons while the king awaited the arrival of American instructors.14 The king also asked the Legation’s naval attache, Ensign George C. Foulk, to inspect Pukhan fortress to “advise as to the creation of modern batteries along its approaches.”15

The king and Minister Foote patiently awaited a formal reply from the State Department to the royal request for military advisors. On September 3, 1884, almost a year after the king’s original request, the minister wrote the Secretary of State to say he was “embarrassed and mystified” by the delay. When the State Department reply reached Seoul some months later, Foote was astounded to read that his original dispatch had been mislaid, and no action had been taken.16

In the period of delay, another crisis brewed. Conservative officials op- [page 56] posed to rapid modernization and military reform gained ascendancy in the government and began to assert control of the military units in Seoul. This state of affairs was anathema to a younger group of radical reformers, which included a number of the Koreans who had received military training in Japan. The cadets sent to Toyama in 1884 had been refused posts in the army by conservatives. Shortly afterward, it became known in Seoul that Admiral Shufeldt had decided against working in Korea.17 The radical group, with the tacit support of the king and the Japanese minister, thus decided to seize the government while they still had some control. The celebrated “post office coup” began on December 4, 1884. Several officials and military commanders were killed, and the radicals held control of the government for three days. The army units, associating the emeute with foreign innovations, reacted by attacking symbols of foreign influence, including the Japanese legation. It was not the Korean army, but rather the Chinese garrison in Seoul, that expelled the radicals and restored the government. The conspirators fled to Japan and exile. Once again, change in Korea had been stalled, at least partly by traditional armed forces.18

In 1885,Ensign Foulk, then serving as American charge d’affaires described the Korean army’s status to the Department of State. The troops were armed with modern weapons, Remington and Peabody-Martini rifles. Six Gatling guns and ammunition reloading equipment had been ordered. The army was, however, commanded by Korean officials of traditional bent. The troops of the four capital battalions

...have been well exercized in the use of modern rifles by long continued target practice; are uniformed, well garrisoned, and subordinate but are sadly deficient in training as to the manual of arms, company or platoon drill, or fighting tactics. The officers are Koreans of the old civilization without any knowledge of troops to be trained after Western methods.19

Foulk urged expeditious action on the king’s previous request for American advisors. In this desire both China and Japan, having twice sent troops to Seoul and risked the opening of an Asian war, agreed. In April 1885, the two governments signed the Convention of Tientsin to govern the withdrawal of their troops from Korea, and in the same convention they agreed that military instructors for Korea should come from a third power. Both nations communicated a desire to the Department of State, through their ambassadors in Washington, that the instructors be American.20

Everyone was willing that Americans should instruct the Korean army, it seems, except Washington, where was a definite lack of enthusiasm for the [page 57] project. The Commanding General of the Army, Philip Sheridan, could not “favor a proposition which embraces the idea of permitting an officer of our army to be detailed to duty in some foreign country which does not inure to the benefit of our military service.”21 Receiving an inquiry from the president, Secretary of War Robert Lincoln more tactfully opined that Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution (“no person holding an Office of Profit or Trust under them the United States shall, without Consent of Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State”) would prohibit releasing officers for such duty. Only Congress could grant such authority. The secretary of state and the president corresponded perfunctorily on the matter, and on January 30, 1885. Lame-duck President Chester A. Arthur wrote Congress to recommend that officers of the army be granted permission to accept temproray service under the government of Korea. The proposed measure came before the Senate and was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs, was designated a Senate Resolution, and twice read by title. But no action was taken.22

News of Congress’s initial refusal to authorize military instructors reached Korea in May, 1885, in the midst of still another crisis. The king had just refused to name a German as foreign advisor and troop commander, and shortly afterwards he would refuse to discuss the same subject with the Russians; the monarch was resolute in his desire for Americans.23 Secretary of State Bayard, on his part, agreed to bring the matter before Congress again when it reconvened at the end of 1885, but he also tried to dampen concern in Seoul. To Charge Foulk he wrote:

...let it be distinctly understood that your government in no wise originated or is now disposed to press the proposal to obtain United States Military officers as instructors in Corea. The desire of Corea that such officers should be sent is most friendly and flattering. It cannot, however, be acceded to without the consent of Congress. The urgency of Corea upon the immediate dispatch of the officers is almost embarrassing in view of this fact.24

The matter of the army instructors received no more attention in Washington until December. In his annual message to the Congress, President Grover Cleveland mentioned the request and recommended its approval. The following month, Senator Samuel Sewall of New Jersey introduced the proposal, and the Committee on Military Affairs reported it to the whole Senate with a favorable recommendation. After debate and [page 58] minor changes it was passed by the Senate on February 24, 1886. The bill was considered by the House Committee on Military Affairs, which received a favorable recommendation from the War Department and from the commanding general of the army, but no action was taken and the bill died.25 From Seoul, the American charge informed Washington that “almost daily inquiries” about the advisors were coming from the king, and that “from the time it is definitely established in Korea that the United States cannot supply the officers applied for, we may expect our influence to wane here.” He also predicted “a very probable increase of the already grave difficulties besetting the little kingdom we were chiefly instrumental in bringing to the notice of the world of nations.”26

Foulk was correct. In 1885 China had begun to assert a forceful, and ultimately controlling. influence on Korean affairs. The severe stresses in Chinese politics in the 1880’s convinced Li Hung-chang that the Middle Kingdom must curb the assertion of Korean independence, force the Korean court to accept China’s suzerain lead as an “elder brother” state, and strangle any fundamental changes in the Korean social and political order.27 Implementing this policy was China’s “Resident” in Korea, young Yuan Shih-k’ai. In 1886 Yuan officially deplored several Korean projects that had been earlier launched with American advice—the royal hospital under Presbyterian medical missionary Horace N. Allen, the Western model farm that had been established with seeds provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the purchase of coastal steamers from the American Trading Company. In the same memorial he urged a halt to army reorganization.28 The next year, working through pliable officials in the Korean Foreign Office, Yuan succeeded in having Ensign Geroge C. Foulk relieved of duty at the American legation.29 The same year he opposed the Korean court’s decision to send permanent diplomatic missions abroad. One mission was ultimately sent to the United States in 1888, but only after the king abjectly petitioned the Chinese emperor for permission to do so. The king’s memorial clearly marked Korean impotence in resisting the assertion of Chinese control over her domestic policies.30

As China increased its influence and Washington failed to provide advisors, the king gave up on securing advisors through channels. He began to appeal to trusted Americans for help. Admiral Shufeldt returned to Korea in a private capacity in November 1886, and remained some months as a guest of the king. In conversations with the monarch, Shufeldt refused another invitation to become foreign advisor, but he recommended that Ensign George C. Foulk be appointed as commanding general of the Korean army. Foulk, however, refused to accept a position without governmental [page 59] instruction.31 In September 1887, the king offered the position to Navy Lieutenant Theodore M. B. Mason, the brilliant officer who had been the Navy’s first chief of the Office of Naval Intelligence. With Foulk he had been assigned as escort to the Korean embassy in 1883; in 1887 he was in Seoul temporarily as aide to the Asiatic Squadron commander. Mason asked a yearly salary of $10,000 guaranteed by a pledge of the customs revenue and rank as major general and commander-in-chief. Mrs. Mason, however, vetoed the idea before the king made a decision.32 In 1888 the king also offered the position to the secretary of the American Legation, Charles Chaille-Long. This unusual individual was a Civil War veteran who had formerly served the khedive of Egypt. Chaille-Long refused.33 Responding to the king’s frantic concern, the new American minister, Hugh A. Dinsmore, wrote the American consul in Osaka to ask if he could recommend any member of the American community there for a position in the Korean military service.34 And medical missionary Allen prepared a letter for the Korean Foreign Office to the Presbyterian Mission Board in New York requesting the religious body to recommend military instructors!35

It was W. W. Rockhill, however, who successfully arranged for an American military advisory team to come to Korea. Acting as charge d’affaires in Seoul for a brief period at the beginning of 1887, he realized that the constitutional scruple causing the delay in Washington applied only to officers on active duty in the armed forces. To the Korean Foreign Office he noted that there were many other qualified Americans with military experience who could accept Korean service, perhaps “resigned officers or... men who, having graduated at the military Academy, had not received commissions in the army.”36

The king immediately agreed to the revised proposal, but the War Department then concerned itself with the adequacy of the Korean terms. The king agreed to pay $5,000 (Mexican) to a chief instructor and $3,000 to each of two subordinates, to provide housing, and to pay a travel allowance.37 Another year passed in the course of these negotiations, and thus it was not until 1888 that a mission was named to serve in Korea.

**THE DYE MILITARY MISSION**

The constitution hurdled and the terms settled, Commanding General of the Army Philip Sheridan was entrusted with making the actual selection of advisors for Korea. In doing so, the War Department followed the precedent established in 1873 when it had chosen former officers to serve the [page 60] khedive of Egypt.38

Sheridan selected as chief of the Korean mission a West Point classmate with military experience on both Civil War battlefields and the Nile— William McEntyre Dye. Born in 1831, Dye had been graduated from West Point in 1853. Assignments on the frontier followed graduation, and Dye was on duty in Texas as the secession dispute raged between North and South. He was on leave in Mexico when the Texas garrisons were surrendered to the Confederacy in 1861. He could not return to the United States via Texas or New Mexico, so he and another American took a small boat to Cuba, arriving there starved after a journey of twenty days. From the Caribbean Dye returned to New York. In 1862 he became colonel of the 20th Iowa Volunteers and served with great distinction during the war. By war’s end he held brevets as Colonel in the regular army and as Brigadier General of Volunteers.

After the war, however, Dye reverted to the grade of major. Peacetime service at a low grade failed to satisfy him, and he resigned from the army in 1870. Having married the daughter of a Chicago judge and invested his money there, the great fire of 1871 placed him in financial distress. Shortly thereafter he was one of the American veterans to be recruited for service under the khedive of Egypt. He entered the Egyptian army in 1873 and served on its staff until he was wounded in a campaign in Ethiopia. He returned to New York in 1878. Between 1883 and 1886 he served as superintendent of police for the District of Columbia, invigorating the department and sup-pressing lotteries within the District. At the time of his selection for the Korean mission by Sheridan, he held a position in the Bureau of Pensions.39

On paper, Dye’s credentials seemed impressive. He had certain traits of character, however, that augured ill for a successful mission to Korea. In Egypt he had developed little sympathy for the people of a different culture. In addition, he was a man who easily bore grudges for insults real or imagined; he was argumentative and criticized others easily.40 In the closed foreign community of Seoul, where even missionaries engaged in violent quarrels, Dye’s personality was to have an important effect.

General Sheridan allowed Dye to choose his own subordinates.41 At best, they must be judged unfortunate. His first assistant was Edmund H. Cummins, a former Confederate major who had seen active service in the Departments of the Mississippi and the Gulf in various staff positions, spe-cializing in signals. Cummins had fallen on hard times after the war, eventually joining the District of Columbia police force as a patrolman in 1883. General Dye came to know him and agreed to allow him to join the Korean mission to alleviate his financial distress. He was in 1888 sixty years old.42 [page 61]

Dye’s second choice can only be judged mystifying. Dr. John Grigg Lee of Philadelphia, age 30, the son of a naval officer, educated in France, had no military experience beyond membership in a Pennsylvania militia unit. A physician by profession, he evidently found work at the Philadelphia coroner’s office unsatisfying and sought excitement abroad. In 1885 he had been appointed Secretary of the American Legation in Constantinople, but Minister Samuel Sullivan Cox had quashed the appointment when he learned that Lee had concealed his political affiliation (Republican) from him. Three years later, the prospect of service in Korea must have appealed to Lee on two counts: it was romantically far away and satisfied what one contemporary called Lee’s “infatuation with the tinsel and glitter of military life.” Perhaps Lee’s willingness, his urbane personality and fluency in languages, or his “special studies” of tactics appealed to Dye; the influence of Lee’s second cousins, George McClellan and Fitzhugh Lee, may also have helped.43

The three officers at long last arrived in Seoul in April 1888. There they met a fourth individual who was to enter Korean military service. The prolonged delay in the arrival of advisors had prompted Minister Dinsmore to look for instructors in Japan. When his request reached the American consulate in Osaka, the vice consul, marshal, and translator, Missourian Ferdinand John Henry Nienstead, age 35, resigned his low-paying position to go to Korea. His military experience had been a term of service as a Navy pay clerk.44

On arriving in Korea, the instructors were introduced to the king and the crown prince by Minister Dinsmore. The king “expressed great satisfaction at their arrival and a hope for good results.” The relations between the four instructors and the Korean government got off to a bad start, however, as they negotiated their contracts. Nienstead was regarded as supernumerary now that the other three officers had arrived; he received no official contract as instructor, but remained anyway. The three other officers were surprised and disappointed to find that the Korean government felt no urgency about arranging to pay them. On May 9 they signed contracts providing for the agreed salaries.45 Dye was given the rank of general; Cummins and Lee became colonel and major respectively. (Nienstead later became a captain.) Minister Dinsmore saw that clauses were added to guarantee monthly payments of the salary in advance, and the Korean government made internal arrangements to pay the instructors from the customs revenue of various ports.46 By the end of June, however, no money had been paid. The officers correctly foresaw that the early delinquency in payment would become cumulative. During their entire term of service they [page 62] never received their salaries on time.47

The officers were not given the task of training the Korean army as they had been led to expect. Shortly before the arrival of the mission, Korean reformer Pak Yong-hyo had memorialized the king to initiate military reform by training military cadets in a modern academy.48 The American advisors were assigned to establish a small military academy, the *Yonmu Kongwon*, with some forty officer cadets. The king decreed that each province provide a quota of young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-seven as students, and he appointed a number of reform-minded officials as trustees of the new institution.49

The military academy had hardly begun operation when the advisors were given another task一to train a number of army noncommissioned officers. The king desired that his palace guard become more reliable, and so 160 NCO’s were selected to undergo a program of drill and training under the Americans. Besides strengthening the palace unit, the NCO’s could be distributed throughout the army to improve the qualities of all units.50

General Dye began the difficult work with determination. He believed that the healthy physique and willing attitude of Koreans made them excel-lent military material. Dye formulated a program of studies for the cadets, and for both cadets and NCO’ he sought to establish standards of military bearing and an attitude of uncomplaining performance of duty. He used his influence to reduce the use of corporal punishment in the model unit. From Dye’s experience with troops, he knew that the foundation of military efficiency was unit “cohesion”; drill would develop it. The initial work, then, was to teach close-order drill and small unit maneuvers. Dye decided to use English as the language of command, and he modified and combined features of various infantry drill systems to fit the Korean situation.51 Dye’s methods were described by a visiting officer:

The tactics in use by General Dye are not based on any one particular system, but are extracts from Hardee, Casey, and Upton, modified and harmonized with General Dye’s own tactical ideas as to what combinations are essential for use with much of the tactics of the past. The General has given particular attention to a simplification of the phrases of com-mand, reducing the number of words as far as practicable, that the Korean recruit may have less English to learn.... In the tactics of the column the principal novel feature was that of ‘squads’ of 16 men. While in line changing front to the rear [page 63] there was no wheeling of groups, but each individual faced directly about.52

Dye spent most of his time in this small unit work. He regarded it as the preliminary to the development of a coordinated land-sea defense system and a Western defense organization for the country. He outlined the initial work necessary to the Korean government, urged coastal surveys, and re-commended the appointment of a single commander-in-chief for the army.53 Dye confronted several problems, however. First was the language barrier. Dye and his assistants spoke no Korean, and the students knew little English. Another was that Korean arms purchases had never been standardized : the mission had to cope with the use of different weapons and different types of ammunition.54

Other difficulties were more profound. The Korean cadets and soldiers were not acculturated to Western ideas of discipline and physical activity. An American teaching English at the royal school, George Gilmore, noted that the “soldiers had hardly any idea of military discipline. Precision and punctuality were lacking. Soldiers served for their rice, and had no *esprit de corps*.”55 The young *yangban* (nobles) who formed the corps of cadets were not used to hard work and physical activity. For them, the appeal of Dye’s rigorous training program was also cooled by the government’s failure to provide for the new academy’s graduates to enter the army without passing the traditional Korean official examination. The cadets were obviously aware that physical training and drill would not improve their command of the Confucian classics.56

The latter failure of government policy paralleled a daily lack of support for the mission’s efforts. Dye lacked explicit command authority. His work depended, therefore, on cooperation with Korean officials. A Russian military observer, General Staff Lieutenant Colonel Vebel, noted that:

...training was supposed to begin at five or six in the morning. The American instructors would come out on the parade ground and find no Koreans were present. They would try to assemble the soldiers, dealing through Korean officials. Two hours would pass in useless arguments. Then, when everyone had finally fallen in, the Koreans would announce that it was too hot.... everyone would go back to the barracks.57

Gilmore was diplomatic: “While the instructors were treated with all courtesy and consideration, effective use of their acquirements was not made because of the sloth, indifference, and distrust of the officials.”58 The [page 64] Russian was more blunt: “The Korean government, or more properly the mandarins of the ministry, jealously followed them [the Americans] about in order to obstruct any influence they might exert and made success impossible.”59

While it was conservative Korean officials who visibly frustrated the work of the mission, the effect of China’s policy was also evident. An early public dispute with Yuan Shih-k’ai compounded the mission’s problems by adding the force of Yuan’s personal emnity to the restraint of Chinese policy on Korean initiatives for change.60 Dye would later remark that Yuan “opposed my efforts to place the Korean soldiers under educated, experienced, disciplined officers up to the day he left Korea...”61

Adding to these difficulties was the conduct of Dye’s own subordinates. The general, an older, more mature individual with previous experience in Egypt and the high ideals of West Point to uphold, took the various setbacks in stride. From the beginning, however, he had to deal with discontent and disloyalty among his juniors.

It began with the disillusion—now well known as a variety of culture shock—resulting from the unrealistic expectations Westerners on training missions often bring with them abroad. Gilmore recalled:

The youngest two of these men came out full of pluck and energy, and amused those who had more experience with oriental life, and especially with Korean inertia, with accounts of the reforms they were going to institute and the transformations they would effect in the appearance and effectiveness of the army. But months wore on, and even a start was hardly made....62

The military skills Nienstead had learned as a navy pay clerk were modest, but by most accounts he performed his duties with zeal. By learning just ahead of the cadets he became a competent drillmaster. Nienstead was nonetheless scorned by the other two “official” instructors, Lee and Cummins, who begrudged him his position.63

Colonel Cummins took an immediate dislike to Korea and the military academy. Within a few weeks he asked to be discharged, but Dye persuaded him to stay on. Cummins was subsequently overcome with lethargy, malaise, and hostility to Koreans. He resented being a “schoolteacher,” and doing “a corporal’s work.” He was disappointed not to find himself leading large bodies of troops. His expertise in staff positions during the Civil War had given him little experience in drill. Soon he absented himself from the academy for long periods, started drinking heavily, and even [page 65] refused to salute cadets.64

Major Lee was also fomenting disrespect. He, too, drank heavily in Korea. Though his own military service was limited to a state militia, he apparently regarded himself as an expert drillmaster and tactician. He regarded Dye’s adaptaions to suit the Korean troops as a personal affront and complained that Dye was out of touch with modern tactical developments.65 Minister Dinsmore discovered that Lee had a “disposition... which he apparently cannot control, to make everything which concerns him, and many which do not, the subject of newspaper correspondence.”66 Newspapers in Philadelphia, San Francisco, Hong Kong, and Shanghai printed articles in which Lee freely expressed his unflattering opinions of Korea, Dinsmore, Dye, Dr. Allen, the Chinese Resident, the king’s foreign advisor, and the Russian minister. To provide background for his articles, Lee rifled the files of the legation; he also purloined private correspondence. Even Charles Chaille-Long, the petulant American legation secretary, judged Lee as a man queerly subject to “bad humors.”67

Dye could not soothe the discontent of his less mature subordinates, and he became characteristically impatient with their conduct. Cummins and Lee argued that Dye failed to support them in their salary disputes with the government; the general was in turn displeased by his subordinates’ lack of loyalty. In September, 1889, Dye finally urged General Han, the Korean commander, to dismiss Cummins and Lee from Korean service.68 Han did so, but a long and bitter contract dispute followed. The two officers protested that no valid cause had been given for their dismissals, and they demanded full payment of their contracts with interest for arrearages. Secretary of State James G. Blaine sustained the two officers in their demands, making the dispute a formal diplomatic issue between the United States and Korea.69 On his part, Major Lee sought to sustain his conduct with a torrent of articles. In the *Shanghai Mercury* he labelled Korea as a country of:

Meddlesome foreign representatives, incompetent and venal officials, a people without spirit or honor, mismanaged finances, corruption, and misrule everywhere. Unpaid officials, unpaid contractors, unpaid troops, unjustly treated and un-paid foreign employees, famines, dissatisfaction, riots, and even partial revolts, to say nothing of palace intrigues and harem conspiracies, with their attempted assassinations and nameless horrors .70 [page 66]

Writing in the *Hong Kong Telegraph*, Lee called the Chinese Resident, young Yuan Shih-k’ai, “the Ching-chong Chinaman representative” and said of his policies, “What do’st think o’that? Daring, is it not? It is hoped he will try it on! What a jolly war we should have—Russians, Japs, Chinese, Koreans, and Britons all mixed up together. Hi-Yah!”71

The two disgruntled officers remained in Korea to extract every cent due them, and did not leave Korea until March, 1891, a year and a half after their dismissal. Their duty performance and offensive behavior had gone far to embitter the Korean Ministry of War against Americans.72

With Lee and Cummins frustrating the purpose of the mission, it is surprising that General Dye and Captain Nienstead accomplished anything. Nonetheless, they soon had the troops assigned to them in good condition. In October, 1889, Rear Admiral George Belknap observed a drill demonstration by the 155-man NCO training unit. Nienstead commanded the company in rifle, sword, and bayonet exercises, company-size maneuvers in column and line, and skirmish drill by bugle command. All spoken com-mands were in English, and the Koreans conducted portions of the exercise. He wrote that the Korean troops performed “with a precision and excellence that would do credit to veteran soldiers.” The visiting admiral was impressed with how the soldiers readily grasped the English orders and how the commands in a foreign language were accurately delivered by the Korean officers. The men followed bugle commands as efficiently. The admiral warmly approved Dye’s plans to “distribute this company as drill sergeants throughout the Korean army” as a “leaven for the whole force.”73

Dye’s plans, however, were never implemented. Records of the mission after 1890 become unfortunately sparse, but it is evident that the plan to use the academy cadets and the training company as the beginning of a wider reform of the Korean army was never carried out. In the early 1890’s the number of academy cadets gradually decreased; the secretary to the British consul general reported in 1894 that “favoritism and interest killed competition amongst the cadets, and now but a remnant remain.”74 Dye and Nienstead continued to drill individual Korean units on a part-time basis and had the opportunity to train them to use Gatling guns.75 The two Americans remained in the Korean army until 1896, but they never received more authority, troops, or control than they had at the turn of the decade.76

After 1891 the reports of American ministers in Seoul and the accounts of foreign visitors noted frequent disorders in the Korean army. Though the small units under Dye’s tutelage still impressed visiting dignitaries, it was apparent that the greater portion of the army was traditionally inefficient [page 67] and corrupt.77 In this regard, the army’s military inefficiency was displayed when the government confronted social unrest in 1893 and 1894. The Gatling gun unit was deployed to guard the approaches to Seoul against rebellious peasants in 1893, and a small number of troops from Dye’s unit were deployed to Kunsan and Cholla province in 1894 to defeat the Tonghak rebels.78 There are no reports that the small group of Western-drilled troops had any effect on the sorry performance of the body of the Korean army during the campaign. Indeed, the poor showing of the army prompted the Korean court to once again request military aid from China, thus opening the events leading to the Sino-Japanese War.

In the course of the war with China, Japanese forces seized the royal palace and took control in Seoul. Under Japanese auspices, returned Korean reformers undertook to reorganize the Korean military. The Korean army was disarmed and then reorganized with Japanese instructors. Japanese power in Seoul was maintained by two new battalions of eight hundred men known as the *Kurentai* (Korean: *hullyondae*).79 As part of the takeover of the army by the Japanese, General Dye was removed from his post at the military academy. Since his contract as advisor, however, had only been recently renewed for two years, he remained in Seoul.80

After the Treaty of Shimonoseki in April, 1895, the Japanese felt free to ease their policy of direct control in Korean affairs. During the summer General Dye and a few assistants began to form and drill a loyal Korean palace battalion, at first without arms, later with various old weapons. The rifles included some that Dye recovered from a lake where they had been discarded at the time of the Japanese takeover.81

In October, 1895, a group of Korean leaders in the queen’s clan, the Mins, resolved to frustrate the Japanese hegemony; the necessary first step was to disband the Kurentai troops. When the Japanese minister learned of the Korean plan, he determined to reassert Japanese control by once again seizing the palace, deposing the king, eliminating the Min leadership, and placing pro-Japanese officials in the government.82 The week before he implemented his plan, he saw that Dye’s guard was reduced and that useful weapons and ammunition were spirited from the palace.83

Early in the morning of October 8, 1895, the Japanese legation guard, the Kurentai battalions, and several Japanese ruffians (*soshi*) surrounded the palace. General Dye and one Mr. Sabatin, a Russian watchman, watched them form ranks beyond the palace walls. While the two were discussing a response, the assault began. The Japanese forced the main gate. The resistance of Dye’s loyal Korean guard, led by three former cadets, was ineffective; the general was swept aside by the Japanese. Treacherously, the Jap- [page 68] anese killed the Korean commander of the Kurentai troops, General Hong Kye-hun; having saved the queen’s life in 1882, Hong might impede the night’s plans. Royal counselor Yi Kyong-sik had his hands cut off as he offered resistance; he bled to death in front of the king’s quarters. Colonel Hyon In-tak, the loyal guard commander who had saved the queen’s life in 1884, was severely wounded. The *soshi* entered the chambers of Queen Min. They killed chambermaids while demanding that they identify the queen; finding her, they attacked with knives. After her assassination, they dragged the warm body outside for burning. When the kerosene flames died, only a few bones remained of Queen Min. With the palace battalion expelled from the grounds, the king was a virtual prisoner of the Japanese.84

General Dye and the Russian watchman informed the diplomatic corps of the night’s outrages. John Cockerill of the *New York Herald* was present in Seoul at the time; he interviewed Dye, wrote of the Japanese action, and smuggled the story past Japanese censors at the telegraph office. The Herald broke Dye’s story to the world.85

With the king completely defenseless and surrounded by enemies, Horace Underwood an American missionary, and Dr. Allen, now the American charge d’affaires, made frequent and ostentatious visits to the palace to insure that the monarch was unharmed. Mrs. Underwood prepared the king’s meals so that he would not be posioned. General Dye no longer had any troops under his command, but he took an apartment adjacent to the king’s and acted as his bodyguard.86

Dye’s presence in the palace antagonized the Japanese, and through the pliable new Minister of War they demanded that he be dismissed. Dye refused to be relieved unless the king himself demanded his withdrawal in the presence of the American charge. The king was forced to summon Allen to the palace. At the audience the king managed to whisper a few words to the American representative before the formal interview, begging Allen to refuse the request he was forced by the Japanese to make.

The doctor was glad to oblige. The king “demanded” Dye’s relief and Allen stated that since Dye’s service had been arranged by a previous minister he could not act without instructions from Washington. When the minister of war demanded that he telegraph immediately, Allen indicated that a written dispatch would suffice. Perhaps an answer could be expected in four months.87

Dye was still in the palace at the end of 1895, and the American minister’s wife wrote in December that “rumors are again rife, no foreigner at all is allowed inside the palace ground. The Taewon’gun is very anxious to have General Dye sent out, but the brave old gentleman insists that he will [page 69] stay, and in spite of them all, he does, although all the others have gone.”88 On February 11, 1896, the king escaped to the Russian legation and safety. Dye’s last dramatic duty came to an end.

Dye’s military contract expired in May, 1896. He remained in Korea three more years as unofficial manager of the government farm.89 The Russians aggressively assumed the task of instructing the Korean army; a mission of sixty Russian officers and NCO’s resumed the tasks that Dye and Nienstead had done alone.90 Their efforts, and those of a French military mission that followed, were equally ineffective.

Dye left Korea, an invalid, in 1899. He died in Muskegon, Michigan, a few months after his return.

**THE FAILURE OF MILITARY REFORM UNDER AMERICAN AUSPICES**

Future assessments of the decline of the Yi dynasty, it seems evident, must come to include a hard look at the weakness of Korean military institutions at the end of the nineteenth century. It is clear in retrospect that Korea’s loss of independence in 1910 was virtually foreordained by her total lack of effective military power. In this regard, it is not only the effectiveness of the army and navy against foreign enemies or domestic rebels that is significant. Korea’s military impotence was far more fundamental.

Students of politics and military theorists alike argue that a “monopoly of violence: is a fundamental attribute of a state. Military and police power form a protective framework that establishes the integrity of the social order. In this regard, then, the inability of the Yi dynasty to protect the Korean social order from the destructive effect of the coups, emeutes, and violent factional struggles demonstrates how marginal was its control of Korea’s destiny.

For a military advisory mission to have reversed this trend, Korea required a national commitment to a general program of reform and a parallel willingness to undertake specific military reform initiatives, leaders who possessed sufficient judgment in the realm of military affairs to advise the government and guide the reform efforts, and the technical assistance of a training mission which possessed enough people and resources to have an impact. This last, given the realities of the last century, required a commit-ment on the part of the sending government to support its efforts.

None of these requirements were met. In a decade when the energies of the United States were fully engaged in westward expansion and the nation’s foreign policies were founded on a principle of noninvolvement,  [page 70] the American government proved to be a most reluctant partner. Lucius Foote’s genuinely modest proposals—rendered in 1883, when their presence might have had a good effect—were never implemented. Administrative incompetence and delay in Washington played a role, but the failure to send the mission stemmed primarily from Washington’s firm policy of noninvolvement in Korea.91 This offcial reluctance meant that the American mili-tary advisors would be sent nearly four years after the moment for their favorable reception had passed. The advisors were not regular officers; they served Korea only in private capacities. And they were too few to have any real effect on the Korean military system.

The mission, moreover, was ill-suited to the task. General Dye’s military expertise was not matched by good judgement in selecting subordinates. The advisors lacked language ability, specific military skills adapted to Korean needs, and the proper temperaments to work in Korea.

Nevertheless, these American shortcomings, however grave, cannot be allowed to obscure the effect of other deficiencies on the Korean side. Korea’s lack of knowledge of the outside world compounded the late Yi dynasty’s cultural and political disposition to belittle military affairs; Korean officials of the 1880’s thus lacked sufficient military judgement to understand the need for weapons standardization, for military education based on such factors as technical expertise and physical fitness, and for unambiguous command arrangements. These deficiencies in turn highlight the lack of a basic commitment to a program of reform—at least after December, 1884. The difficulties experienced in daily training, the lack of proper management of the salary issue, and the failure to provide places in the army for Academy graduates all demonstrate the government’s inability to establish a program of reform and sustain it against internal critics and foreign resistance. The relief of Ensign George C. Foulk―the most energetic, effective, and sympathetic advisor the king had—from his position as attache at the American Legation and, two years later, the obstacles faced by General Dye both resulted from this same internal weakness. Despite his earlier eagerness for American military advisors, King Kojong was in 1888 unwilling and—due to the strength of conservative circles in the government—unable to give the mission the support it needed. Americans could not do for Korea what the Koreans could not resolve to do for them-selves.

Facile judgements about the past century of Korean-American relations abound, and partisans carelessly blame one side or the other for the missed opportunities, unwise decisions, and narrow self-interest of the other. The example of the American military advisors belies such easy [page 71] analysis. It must be judged a shared failure that revealed the weakness of both nations in the decades that set the stage for the tragic events of our own century.

**NOTES**

1. Pseud. B. L. Putnam Weale, The Re-Shaping of the Far East (New York, 1905), p. 514.

2. The only specific studies of the mission were written by military historians who described it as a predecessor to the Korea Military Advisory Group (KMAG). See KMAG’s Heritage: The Story of Brigadier General William McEntyre Dye, Eighth Army Pamphlet 870-2, 1966, by Herman Katz; and Richard P. Weinert, “The Original KMAG,” Military Review, June 1965, pp. 93-99. Korean historian Lee Kwang-rin also gave the mission some attention in his Han’guk Kaehwasa Yon’gu (Seoul, 1969); his work was summarized in English as “The Role of Foreign Military Instructors in the Later Period of the Yi Dynasty,” in International Conference on the Problems of Modernization in Asia, Report (Seoul, 1965), pp. 241-248.

3.See Chong-sik Lee, The Politics of Korean Nationalism (Berkeley, 1963), pp. 8-9.

4. This bald summary does some violence, through brevity, to Korea’s exceedingly complex politics after 1876. The reforms are covered in most works on the period. The latest comprehensive study is Martina Deuchler, Confucian Gentlemen and Barbarian Envoys: The Opening of Korea, 1875-1885 (Seattle, 1977), esp. pp. 99-101, 103-104.

5. Deuchler, Confucian Gentlemen, pp. 130-138.

6. C. I. Eugene Kim and Han-Kyo Kim, Korea and the Politics of Imperialism 1876-1910 (Berkeley, 1967), 40-41; H.A.C. Bonar, “Notes on the Capital of Korea,” Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan 11 (1882-3), p. 255.

7. The most effective summaries of the Korean-American treaty, based on multilingual research, are Deuchler, Confucian Gentlemen, pp. 114-122, and Frederick Foo Chien, The Opening of Korea: A Study of Chinese Diplomacy 1876-1885 (Hamden, Connecticut, 1967), ch. IV. The best recent commentary on the treaty is Vipan Chandra’s “The Korean Enlightenment: A Re-Examination,” Korean Culture (July 1982) pp. 20-25.

8. The primary sources are effectively summarized in Young I. Lew, “American Advisors in Korea, 1885-1894: Anatomy of Failure,” in The United States and Korea, Andrew C. Nahm, ed. (Kalamazoo, 1979), pp. 64-90.

9. Lucius Foote to the Secretary of State, no. 32, 19 Oct. 1883, in Korean-American Relations: Documents Pertaining to the Far Eastern Diplomacy of the United States, 2 vols., vol. 1 ed. by George M. McCune and John A. Harrison, vol. 2 ed. by Spencer J. Palmer (Berkeley, California: 1951-63), I. p. 53. (These volumes are hereafter cited as KAR.)

10. The best summary of the Embassy’s activity is Gary D. Walter, “The Korean Special Mission to the United States,” Journal of Korean Studies 1 (1969), pp. 89-142.

11. No official record of the conversations seems to exist. They were discussed retro-spectively by the Embassy’s escort officer, Navy Ensign George C. Foulk; see Foulk to Robert W. Shufeldt, 4 Oct 1886, Robert W. Shufeldt Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collections, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as “Shufeldt Papers”), and Foulk to the Secretary of State, no. 257, 1 Dec 1885, in KAR: I pp. 61-62. See also Walter, “Korean Special Mission,” p. 106.

12. Foote to the Secretary of State, no. 47, 18 Dec 1883, Despatches from United States [page 72] Ministers to Korea 1883-1905, Record Group 59 (General Records of the Department of State), National Archives (hereafter cited as “Diplomatic Despatches, Korea”).

13. Kim and Kim, Korea and the Politics of Imperialism, p. 45. Foulk, “Report of Information relative to the revolutionary attempt in Seoul, Corea,” enclosure to Foote to the Secretary of State, no. 128, 17 Dec 1884, KAR, I, 101-113. (This report is hereafter cited as “Foulk, ‘The revolutionary attempt’.”)

14. Foote to the Secretary of State, no. 82, 9 Jun 1883, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea; Foulk to family, 22 Jul 1884, Foulk Papers, Naval Historical Foundations Collections, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as “Foulk Papers, Library of Congress”).

15. Foulk, “The revolutionary attempt,” p. 110.

16. Foote to the Secretary of State, no. 105, 3 Sep 1884, KAR, I, 54-55; Secretary of State to Foote, no. 14, 6 Nov 1884, KAR: I, p. 57.

17. Shufeldt’s indecision may be traced through the despatches and his papers; see Perceval Lowell to Shufeldt, 24 Jan. 1884, and Foulk to Shufeldt, 4 Oct 1886, Shufeldt Papers; Foote to the Secretary of State, no. 105, 3 Sep. 1884, KAR: I, pp. 54-5, 56-7; Foulk, “The revolutionary attempt,” pp. 107, 108.

18. The coup is discussed in a great body of literature. For our purposes the document which best presents the coup from the American point of view is Foulk’s “The revolutionary attempt.”

19. Foulk to the Secretary of State, no. 224, 2 Sep 1885, KAR: I, pp. 130-131.

20. Secretary of State to Foulk, no. 63, 19 Aug 1885, KAR: I, 65; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, ed., Korea: Treaties and Agreements (Washington, 1921), p. 7.

21. Cited by Weinert, “Original KMAG,” p. 95.

22. Secretary of State to the President, 29 Jan 1885, in Congressional Record, 49th Congress, 1st Session, 1721; 48th Congress, 2nd Session, 1106, 1142, 2175; Secretary of State to Foulk, no. 184, 18 Jun 1885, KAR: I, p. 59.

23. Foulk to the Secretary of State, no. 166, 28 Apr 1885, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea; Foulk to John A. Bingham, 23 Jun 1885, Miscellaneous Record Books, Post Re-cords—Diplomatic—Korea, in Record Group 84 (Records of Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State), National Archives (hereafter cited as “Legation Miscellaneous Record Books”).

24. Secretary of State to Foulk, no. 63, 19 Aug 1885, KAR: I, p. 65.

25. Annual Message of the Pressident to the Congress, 8 Dec 1885, in Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1885 (hereafter cited as “Foreign Relations, [year]”), IX; Secretary of War to the House Committee on Military Affairs, no. 2953/B, 9 Jul 1886, records of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, National Archives; Congressional Record, 49th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 604-5, 1080, 1721, 1783.

26. Foulk to the Secretary of State, no. 9, 3 Oct 1886, KAR: I p. 63.

27. Lew, “American Advisors” pp. 80-82.

28. Foreign Relations, 1887, pp. 256-8.

29. Donald M. Bishop, “Policy and Personality in Early Korean-American Relations: The Case of George Clayton Foulk,” in The United States and Korea, Andrew C. Nahm, ed. (Kalamazoo, 1979), pp. 51-53.

30. Charles Denby to the Secretary of State, no. 521, KAR: II, pp. 110-112.

31. Foulk of the Secretary of State, no, 15, 1 Nov 1886, no. 23, 23 Nov 1886, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea; Shufeldt to “The Chronicle,” Aug 1887, clipping in the Shufeldt Papers, Box 30, Folder 3.  [page 73]

32. Hugh Dinsmore to Foulk, 18 Sep, 1887, Foulk Papers, New York Public Library; D. P. Mannix to Shufeldt, 24 Sep 1887, Shufeldt Papers.

33. Charles Chaille-Long to the Secretary of State, no. 159, 31 Dec 1888, KAR: 11, 169; Chaille-Long, My Life on Four Continents, 2 vols. (London, 1912), II, 383; Chaille-Long, “From Corea to Quelpaert Island,” American Geographic Society of New York Bulletin 12 (1890), p. 266.

34. Dinsmore to Thomas R. Jernigan, 27 Aug 1887, Legation Miscellaneous Record Books.

35. Fred H. Harrington, God, Mammon, and the Japanese: Dr, Horace N. Allen and Korean-American Relations (Madison, Wisconsin, 1944), p. 220.

36. W. W. Rockhill to the Secretary of State, no. 63, 13 February 1887, KAR: II, p. 141.

37. Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 67, 24 Oct 1887, KAR: II, pp. 143-144.

38. The best work on this eariler American overseas advisory effort is William B. Hesseltine and Hazel C. Wolf, The Blue and the Gray on the Nile (Chicago 1961).

39. Dye has not yet been the object of separate study. I have summarized his life from the Dictionary of A mericanBiography, s.v. “Dye, William McEntyre,” article by Harold J. Noble; Katz, KMAG’S Heritage; his military file in the National archives; J. Russell Young and Jas. L. Feeney, The Metropolitan Police Department Official Illustrated History (Washington, 1908), 62; news clipping files held by the Chicago Historical Society and the Capital Historical Society; and “General Dye Passed Away at his Home in this City Today,” Muskegon Daily Chronicle, 13 Nov 1899.

40. Hesseltine and Wolf, Blue and Gray, p. 238.

41. William McE. Dye to General Han Kiu Sul, n.d., enclosure to Dinsmore to the Secre-tary of State, no. 233, 15 April 1890, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea.

42. List of Staff Officers of the Confederate States Army, 1861-65 (Washington, 1891), p. 39; Cummins’ application for the Police Department in the police personnel folders, records of the Government of the District of Columbia, Record Group 351, National Archives. Cummins was the author of “The Signal Corps in the Confederate States Army,” Southern Historical Society Papers 16 (1882), pp. 91-107.

43. Edmund J. Lee, Lee of Virginia 1642-1892 (Philadelphia, 1895), 467, pp. 412-56. Ac-cording to Lee’s military record, held by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, he served in the Pennsylvania National Guard as an officer in the 3rd Infantry and as aide on the 1st Division staff. His highest grade was major. See also the passport application for John G. Lee, 28 Jun. 1881,Record Group 59,National Archives; Army and Navy Journal 25 (1887-1888), p. 590; S.S. Cox to Thomas F. Bayard, 11 Dec. 1885, Lee to Bayard, 24 Dec 1885,Bayard Papers, Library of Congress; Lee’s file in the “Applications and Recommendations for Public Offices,” RG-59, National Archives; and Chaille-Long, My Life, p. 364. Lee was the author of Homicide and Suicide in the City and County of Philadelphia (Philadelphia,/1882/) and Handbook for Coroners (Philadelphia, 1881). See also ‘‘Colonel Lee’s Sudden Death,” New York Times (10 Sep 1891), p. 1.

44. See Nienstead’s file in “Applications and Recommendations for Public Office, 1893-97,” Record Group 59, National Archives; F. J. H. Nienstead to James D. Porter,14 Oct 1887, Consular Records, Osaka and Hiogo, Record Group 84, National Archives; “List of American Residents in Korea,” 31 Dec 1892, Consular Records, Seoul.

45. Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 113, 11 Jun 1885, KAR: II, pp. 144-5.

46. Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 67, 24 Oct 1887, KAR: II, p. 144. For the customs arrangements, see Ch’oe T’ae-ho, “Custom-House Organization and Customs Duty [page 74] Revenues at the Time of Port Opening,” Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, no. 44 (Dec 1976), p. 65.

47. Horace N. Allen to the Secretary of State, 8 Aug 1898, enclosure 3, Legation Miscel-laneous Record Books.

48. Young I. Lew, “The Reform Efforts and Ideas of Pak Yong-hyo, 1894-1895,” Korean Studies I (1977), p. 42.

49. Lee, Han’guk Kaehwasa, pp. 161-163.

50. [John G. Lee], “The Chosen Military Mission,” clipping from the Shanghai Mercury, 5 Mar 1890, enclosure from Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no- 227, 24 Mar 1890, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea, Dinsmore noted that the “Soul correspondent. . . is unquestionably Mr. Lee though the articles are not signed in his name.” See also General Staff Lieutenant Colonel V. M. Vebel, “Comments Made in 1889 on the First MAG Mission to Korea,” tr. Edward Hurewitz, enclosure Hurewitz to Street, 18 Aug 1975,in the files of the Historian, U.S. Forces Korea, Yongsan Garrison, Seoul (hereafter cited as “Vebel, ‘Mission to Korea’ “).

51. The elements of Dye’s philosophy of training can be gleaned from his comments in “To the Editor: In Defense of the Palace Guard on October 8, 1895,” Korean Repository 3 (1896), pp. 228-230; Dye, “Dangers to an Agricultural People,” Korean Repository 4 (1897), pp. 267-270; Dye, “To the Editor: Comment on Korea and Her Neighbors,” Korean Repository 5 (1898), pp. 439-442. It is worth noting that the U.S. Army has recently embarked on a morale program to restore “cohesion” as an element of its post-Vietnam reform. For Dye’s training program we must rely on the comments of observers (Belknap, Gilmore, Vebel); “The Army of Korea,” Army and Navy Journal (16 Sep 1893) p. 61; and Major Lee’s contentious “The Chosen Military Mission.”

52. Rear Admiral George Belknap to the Secretary of the Navy, 21 Oct 1889, copy in Cor-respondence with Naval Officers, Post Records—Diplomatic—Korea, Record Group 84, Na-tional Archives.

53. Dye to General Han, 16 Aug 1889; “The Army of Korea,” Army and Navy Journal (16 Sep 1893), p. 61. See also Dye, “Dangers to an Agricultural People,” p. 270. The Korean government’s interest in a defense system may have been stimulated by Chaille-Long’s remarks to the King following his return from Cheju; see Chaille-Long to the Secretary of State, no. 159, 31 Dec 1888, KAR: I, pp. 169-170.

54. Lee, Han’guk Kaehwasa, pp. 170, 174; A. Henry Savage-Landor, “A Visit to Korea,” Fortnightly Review 56 (1894), pp. 184-190; Harry H. Fox, “The Corean Army,” Report of the Sxith Meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, January 1895, p. 517.

55. George W. Gilmore, Korea from its Capital (Philadelphia, 1892), pp. 41-2.

56. Lee, Han’guk Kaehwasa, p. 167.

57. Vebel, “Mission to Korea,” pp. 2-3.

58. Gilmore, Korea from its Capital, pp. 41-2.

59. Vebel, “Mission to Korea,” p. 2.

60. [John G. Lee], “The Chosen Military Mission.”

61. Dye, “To the Editor,” Korean Repository 3 (1896), p. 218.

62. Gilmore, Korea from its Capital p. 41.

63. “The Army of Korea,” Army and Navy Journal (16 Sep 1893), p. 61; [Lee], ‘‘The Chosen Military Mission.”

64. Dye to Han, n.d., enclosure to Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 233, 15 Apr [page 75] 1890, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea.

65. Ibid.; Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 220, 27 Jan 1890, KAR: II, p. 149; [Lee], “The Chosen Military Mission.”

66. Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 233, 15 Apr 1890, KAR: II, p. 154.

67. Chaille-Long to the Secretary of State, 19 Feb 1889, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea; Augustine Heard to Dye, /?/ Sep 1890, Legation Miscellaneous Record Books; Chaille-Long, My Life, p. 364. See also the interesting comment that Lee would “destroy friends from behind when smiling in front.” G. Vossiou to Chaille-Long, 13 Sep 1891, Chaille-Long Papers, Library of Congress.

68. Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 220 and enclosure, 27 Jan 1890, Dye to Han, n.d., enclosure to Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 233, 15 Apr 1890, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea.

69. The relevant correspondence is reprinted in KAR: II, pp. 145-166.

70. Clipping, 8 Feb 1890, enclosure to Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 227, 24 Mar 1890, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea.

71. Clipping, n.d., enclosure to Heard to the Secretary of State, no. 68,6 Oct 1890, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea.

72. Heard to Edmund H. Cummins, Heard to Lee, 26 Sep 1890,Legation Miscellaneous Record Books; Dinsmore to the Secretary of State, no. 227, 24 Mar 1890, KAR, II, p. 151. Lee died soon after nis return to New York. Cummins, subsequent life is unknown.

73. Belknap to the Secretary of the Navy, 21 Oct 1889, copy in Legation Correspondence with Naval Officers. In his short biography of Dye, Harold J. Noble noted that Dye had published a drill manual in Korean. No copy of this manual, however, has come to light.

74. Fox, “The Corean Army,” p. 518. The difficulties of inclucating Western concepts of military service and discipline among the Korean cadets and NCO’s may have been the reason behind the Korean government’s request—presumably prompted by Dye—in 1893 to send Korean cadets to West Point and Annapolis. Washington ignored the request. See Ye Sung Soo to the Secretary of State, 10 Nov 1893, Korean Legation Notes; Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of State, 16 Oct 1893, 20 Nov 1893.

75. Korean Repository 1 (1892), 100; Dye, review of Korea and her Neighbors by Isabella Bird Bishop in Korean Repository 5 (1898), p. 441.

76. Dye, “To the Editor,” Korean Repository 3 (1896), 217-218; Savage-Landor, “A Visit to Korea,” p. 190.

77. For favorable views, see Fleet Engineer John D. Ford, An American Cruiser in the East (New York, 1898), pp. 255-6, and Army and Navy Journal 30 (1892-3), p. 468; for less favorable descriptions see Yi Kyu-tae, Modern Transformation of Korea (Seoul, 1970), p. 243, and Chaille-Long, La Coree ou Chosen (Paris, 1894), pp. 8-10; and Heard to the Secretary of State, no. 220, 3 Dec 1891, KAR, II, p. 299.

78. Lee Ki-baek, Han’guksa Sillon (Seoul, 1973), pp. 317-19. The basic work on the Tonghak movement in English is Benjamin B. Weems, Reform, Rebellion and the Heavenly Way (Tucson, 1964); see esp. pp. 38-39.

79. These were part of the celebrated Kabo reforms. The standard work is Wilkinson, The Corean Government: Constitutional Changes, July 1894 to October 1895, with an appendix on subsequent enactments to 30th June 1896 (Shanghai, 1897).

80. Horace N. Allen to the Secretary of State, 8 Aug 1898, Legation Miscellaneous Record Books.

81. Kim and Kim, Korea and Imperialism, 84; Allen to the Secretary of State, no. 158, [page 76] 13 Oct 1895, KAR: II, 363; Dye, “To the Editor,” Korean Repository 3 (1896), pp. 218-219.

82. The events leading to the murder and the complicity of the Japanese minister were established in a trial of the major conspirators in 1896. The findings of the court are published in Henry Chung, The Case of Korea (New York, 1921), pp. 322-327.

83. Dye, “To the Editor,” Korean Repository 3 (1896), pp. 218-219.

84. Dye, review of Korea and her Neighbors by Isabella Bird Bishop, in Korean Repository 5 (1898), pp. 439-442; Allen to the Secretary of State, no. 156, 10 Oct 1895, KAR: II, p. 358; Bishop, Korea and Her Neighbors, pp. 271-274; Allen to Commander Folger, 8 Oct 1895, Legation Miscellaneous Record Books.

85. John A. Cockerill, “How the Queen was Murdered,” “Queen Killed by Japanese,” New York Herald, 14 Oct 1895, p. 7, 15 Oct 1895, p. 7.

86. Bishop, Korea and Her Neighbors, p. 279; John M. B. Sill to Arthur Cram, 1 Nov 1895, Sill Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Korean Repository 2 (1895), p. 437.

87. Allen to the Secretary of State, no. 158,KAR: II, pp. 363-4.

88. Sally Sill diary letter, 6 Dec 1895, Sill Papers.

89. Allen to the Secretary of State, 8 Aug 1898, Legation Miscellaneous Record Books.

90. Andrew Malozemoff, Russian Far Eastern Policy (Berkeley, 1958), p. 388; Dye, Review, of Korea and Her Neighbors by Isabella Bird Bishop, Korean Repository 5 (1898), p. 441; Allen to the Secretary of State, no. 270, 10 May 1897, Diplomatic Despatches, Korea.

91. I find the analysis of John Chay particularly persuasive in this regard; see his “The First Three Decades of American-Korean Relations 1882-1910” in United States-Korean Relations 1882-1982, Tae-Hwan Kwak, et. ah., eds. (Seoul: 1982), pp. 24ff.