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**Karl Friedrich August Guetzlaff - The First German in Korea**

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“July 17.-A stiff breeze brought us in sight of Corea. A merciful Providence has protected us through many dangers, along the coast of China, and 0 (sic) that we were truly grateful. We came to anchor at Chwang-shan (modern designation Wosan-do; S. R), an island north of Basil’s Bays. The silent (sic)] seemed to reign everywhere. We ventured towards the shore, and the first thing we met was a fishing boat..., with two natives in it clothed in rags. Though we could not communicate with them orally, yet we could use the Chinese character (sic) in writing.”(l)

This description comes from the pen of Karl Friedrich August Guetzlaff, who was the first German and the first Protestant missionary to set foot on Korean soil. This occurred on the late afternoon of July 17，1832. He came as a translator and one of the leaders of an expedition of the British East India Company. The East India Company had sent out the ship ‘Lord

Amherst’ on a recognizance voyage along the coasts of China and Korea.

What were the official reasons given for this undertaking and what subjective motivation could have caused the Prussian Protestant missionary Guetzlaff to take part in an expedition? History tells us that that contacts between Europe and East Asia in the course of the 18th Century were weakened by trade barriers imposed on mercantile traders and the clear failure of Jesuit missionary efforts in China. In addition, as a consequence of the Napoleonic Wars in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Europe was too much preoccupied with its own affairs to turn its attention to East Asia. It was not until after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the rise of the industrial revolution in Western Europe that there was a renewed focus on[page 70] East-Asia. Trade with Asia was a primary motivation for the European powers. Great Britain was especially interested in strengthening its exports to East Asia, above all to China. This was the goal of Lord Amherst’s unsuccessful political mission in 1816 in Peking. At this point Great Britain adopted the official position that its peaceful attempts at normalizing trade with China had been exhausted.

In 1832 the British East India Company once again attempted to expand its trade with the Middle Kingdom (China) and to initiate trade relations with Korea. There is a certain historical symbolism in the fact that the ship ‘Lord Amherst’ under the direction of company’s supercargo Hugh Hamilton Lindsay was selected for this secret mission. Guetzlaff was hired because he was fluent in the Chinese language including coastal dialects. He was able to communicate with the Mandarins and had knowledge of the area gained on previous trips. The expedition was risky, but Guetzlaff was motivated by the opportunity to disseminate the Gospel among the Chinese and Koreans.

Who exactly was this extraordinary missionary and gifted man, and what led him to spend half of his life in East Asia? And what drove this man to became one of the most knowledgeable experts on Cnina and the surrounding regions in the 19th Century, and a well-known figure in East Asia, Europe and North America?

The 200th anniversary of Karl Guetzlaff s birtn in 2003 is an appropriate time to objectively evaluate his life and work. For the most part he was misunderstood and even discredited by 19th and 20th century historians. Yet he had a profound knowledge of East Asia, was a devoted missionary and, seen from the perspective of our current global era, he was a sensitive interpreter of culture. One must also take into account that Guetzlaff was a colorful character, with eccentric traits, a taste for adventure, and a touch of [page 71] arrogance. He was also a master of public relations, fundraising, and marketing, whose abilities far exceeded those both of his professional colleagues and his contemporaries in general. In order to fully appreciate his restless, bold and exciting life in its entirety, it is first necessary to do historical justice to this outstanding, globally active pioneer of dialogues between East-Asia and the West which were based on a profound sense of equality and respect.

This paper takes up this task and examines Guetzlaff’s role in the development of German-Korean relations and his significance in promoting the transfer of information from Korea to Europe and North America. At the same time, we will consider the need for a re-evaluation of his place in the history of the relations between the Western World and East Asia.

Karl Guetzlaff was born on July 8，1803, into a family of artisans in county seat of Pyritz located about 100 kilometers northeast of Berlin in the Prussian province of Pommerania. Already as a secondary school student his gift for languages and nis interest in faraway lands and peoples made itself apparent. After completing his schooling, he went to Stettin where he learned the trade of belt-making. His inclination to become a preacher and missionary was nourished by the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the harbor city near to the Baltic Sea. As the result of a chance meeting with the Prussian King, Friedrich Wilhelm III, Guetzlaff was able to attend the Berlin Missionary School. The historical records indicate that from 1827 on, after his training as a missionary at the Dutch Missionary Society in Rotterdam, he was devoted to missionary work on Java in Netherland India. His encounters there with Chinese traders strengthened bis resolve to devote the rest of his life to missionary work in China. An important step towards this goal was his relocation to the island of Bintang located off Singapore, Here he continued his studies of various Chinese dialects, and began to adopt the appearance and customs of the Chinese. [page 72]

In preparation for his move to China, the restless missionary, always in search of new activities, relocated his sphere of operations to Bangkok in the middle of 1828. This led to a break with the missionary society. From that point on, like Albert Schweizer in the 20th Century, he became a free-lance missionary, without any firm connections to a missionary society. In spite of his mastery of the language, his attempts to win converts among the Buddhists of Siam were unsuccessful. Even so, his translation of the New Testament into Siamese left its mark in Thailand.

Instead of trying to convert the Siamese, he concentrated his missionary zeal on the local Chinese and on those Chinese involved in trade. His knowledge of Chinese dialects, and of medicine, used in his missionary activities, won him increasing recognition and goodwill. In 1831 after the death of his wife and their twins, he decided to move beyond this personal tragedy and dedicate himself entirely to his work as a missionary in China and East Asia.

What followed next in 1831 was Guetzlaff’s adventurous journey on a Chinese junket. Guetzlaff, who had adopted Chinese ways and taken the alias of Kuo Shi-li, traveled into the isolated Chinese Empire as far as Manchuria. This was a new step in the history of relations between the Western world and East Asia. This was followed immediately in 1832 by his famous expedition aboard the ‘Lord Amherst’. This fact-finding mission and good-will tour was to the coastal provinces of China, including Taiwan, Korea and the Riu-Kiu Islands (today Nansei Islands; S. B.). Its goal was, in part, was to collect information about the reactions in official circles, the business community and the population at large to the petition requesting opening the harbors and initiating free-trade and missionary activity. At the same time, the expedition sought to gather information about the political climate and the strength of the military. The British interest in the Korean peninsula was strengthened when the travelers included the kingdom of [page 73] Chosun in the route of their expedition. Earlier interest by the British had been expressed in the recognizance journeys undertaken by W. R. Broughton (1797) and Basil Hall (1816).

“In the distance we saw a dome-shaped island, named the Guetzlaff Island in honor of the famous German missionary and Sinologist. (2) This quote is taken from The Frigate Pallas”, a travel book by the Russian author Iwan Gontsharov (1812-1891). Gontsharov’s renown rests less on his experiences as a world traveler than on his having added the legendary figure of Oblomov to world literature. In the middle of the 19th Century Gontsharov was a member of a Russian expedition to China and Japan. He also visited Korea and consciously followed in the footsteps of Guetzlaff, with whom he was familiar having read his publications. This gives some indication of the aura which the Protestant missionary disseminated and it shows how his influence transcended cultural borders.

Guetzlaff devoted an entire chapter to Korea in his ‘Journal of Three Voyages Along the Coast of China, in 1831，1832, & 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea and the Loo-Choo Islands’. He begins his discussion of the relations with the powerful neighbors, China and Japan, by making observations on the shifting course of Korean history. As one of the first Western authors to write about Asia, he takes pains to understand the ‘other’within the context of his own behavior. He does this when he comments on his first meetings with Koreans on Chwang-shan-do (Wonsan- do; S. B.) on July 18，1832: “Their conduct formed a contrast with the behavior of the Chinese. Had we now left the peninsula, we should have reported to the world, in addition to the accounts of other travelers, that the Coreans, were the most misanthropical people in the world, with courage enough to repress any intruder, so that threatening and injury were all which could be obtained there. From our first interview with them, I very much doubt this, but had no sufficient reasons to urge in supporting my opinion of [page 74] their cowardice, and willingness to yield any thing firmly demanded. Though they very plainly showed their inhospitable feelings towards us, we would yet perceive a conflict in them while treating inoffensive strangers like enemies, for the native feelings of humanity, which are in the breast of every mortal, can never be entirely eradicated.” (3). In his reflections addressed openly to the to his readers Guetzlaff considers his own characteristic manner of overcoming prejudice in dealing with the modes of behavior he encountered. He does this when he notes that an incorrect, hostile view of the Korean people would probably have resulted if he would have measured it against the behaviors decreed by the Korean royals: “We cannot think that those signs of decapitation, made by the people on shore, were merely for pretence, but begin to believe, from the universal adoption of this gesture, that government would punish every transgressor with death, who dared to cultivate friendship with strangers.” (4)

Due to his linguistic competence and cautious manner of dealing with people, Guetzlaff gained access to the Koreans within a few days. On July 24th he notes in his journal: “A large boat came along-side, and before the people came on board, they sent up a slip of paper, expressing their sympathy with us in our hardship from the winds and weather and assuring us they did not come to intimidate (sic) us. Those who entered the cabin called themselves mandarins, and made very free with the rum. They inquired politely our country, and remarked that we had anchored in a very dangerous place, adding, we will bring you to a bay called Gan-keang, where you may find safe anchorage, meet the mandarins, adjust the affairs of your trade, and obtain provisions.” (5)

With the help of Korean pilots the expedition reached Gan-keang “and found very convenient anchorage, sheltered from all winds.” (6) At the second place where the expedition dropped anchor the Koreans were very congenial. As Guetzlaff comments: “All seemed cheerful and happy that we[page 75] had come. And promised that we should soon have an audience of the great mandarins, to whom we might deliver the letter.”(7)

The document Guetzlaff refers to was an official letter to King Sun-Jo requesting that he establish trade relations and accept gifts including a Bible and religious books. The formal presentation ceremony to the mandarins Kim and Lee took place on July 26，1832. “After our formally delvering (sic) the letter and presents, they handed us raw garlic and liquor, and promised speedly (sic) to forward the things entrusted to their charge. Meanwhile, they sent us two pigs, and a little ginger and rice, aboard; a very satisfactory proof of their good intensions (sic).” (8) As Guetzlaff s depictions make clear, the expedition was quite successful in establishing a relationship of trust with the local authorities, whose hospitality he repeatedly emphasizes: “Our old friend Kin (sic), meanwhile prepared a dinner, consisting of cakes, vermicelli, honey, pork, melons, salad, vinegar and rice. This time they had taken all possible care to make the whole palatable, and we did not fail to enjoy their hospitality.” (9) This friendly stance, which contradicted the official government position regarding foreigners, gives us a deeper insight into the feelings and interests of the Koreans. This prompted Guetzlaff to write in his journal: “Though apparently their laws do not permit foreigners to enter their dwellings, we met everywhere with as much friendship as could well be expected from barbarians.” (10)

Guetzlaff used the weeks of waiting for an answer from the king to study the behavior of Koreans, their everyday way of life and their relationship to nature and society. Impressed with what he observed, he summarized: “In their intercourse with us they always showed a great deal of soundness of judgement. We cannot charge them with laziness, but we fear they want the necessary stimulus to exertion. Government does not permit them to enjoy the fruits of their labors; they are therefore indifferent to the possession of[page 76] anything beyond the bare necessaries of life.” (11) Here Guetzlaff proves himself to be a profound analyst of social condition in the kingdom of Chosun, which in the first half of the 19th century were characterized by crises in the feudal system and general decline.

The missionary describes the people and their appearance realistically and objectively. He resists the trend current at the time to portray foreign cultures as exotic. “As soon as we stepped ashore, some persons took the trouble to conduct us to their village. Many of them wore large brimmed black hats most elegantly plaited. Their frocks, made of a sort of grass cloth, reached down to their ankles, and had very long and wide sleeves, which served also as pockets. Most of them wore stockings and shoes very neatly fitted to their small feet. They are not tall, but of middle stature, have Tartar features and the most symmetrical shape.” (12)

True to his Pommeranian roots, Guezlaff planted potatos in Korea and gave instruction on their cultivation. The potato had been the basic source of nourishment in Pommerania since the reign of the Prussian monarch Friedrich the Great (1740-1786). Guetzlaff used his charm to circumnavigate the general ban and distribute Bibles and religious works to the populace. In this connection he reports: “We had frequently opportunity of speaking to them of the Saviour of mankind, whilst we explained to them the time of the commencement of our Christian era. They heard and read repeatedly that Jesus Christ, God overall, was also their redeemer, but their affection was never roused... Yet I provided those, who were willing to receive the gospel, with books, and they promised to bestow some attention to the subject, and took great care to keep possession of their books.” (13)

In his unrealistic visions, Guetzlaff had attributed to Korea quite an interesting role in his missionary plans for East Asia. Thus, when they passed Cheju-do, he said: “Would it not be giving a fatal blow to those[page 77] hateful systems of exclusion, by establishing a mission in so important a situation? I know not how far the Corean government exercises control over the island; but I should think, that a missionary residing here, would be less subject to dangers than those in New Zealand, and the first harbingers of the glad tidings in Labrador or Greenland.” (14) This comment illustrates that Guetzlaff’s area of missionary activity extended beyond the Middle Kingdom and included bordering countries like Korea. Guetzlaff was so convinced of the importance of his mission, already during his stay in 1832， that he asked himself: “Can the divine truth, disseminated in Corea, be wholly lost? This I believe not: there will be some fruits in the time appointed of the Lord.” (15) His prediction was proven correct by the history of missionary conversion in Korea and the current position of the Christian churches there.

On August 9，1832，the failure of the goals of the expedition were formally announced by King Sun-Jo’s representative Woo Tayin: “He stated that he was sent by the treasurer, and … said: To receive your letter and presents is illegal, we ought to ascribe the mistake to the great age of the two mandarins whom you charged with this business; but as it is illegal, we cannot represent your affairs to his majesty, and accordingly returned all to you.” (16) The official offered a formal explanation of the reason the Koreans rejected trade relations: “Our kingdom is a dependent state of China; we can do nothing without the imperial decree: this is our law.” (17) The argument presented here as a justification for rejecting the offer of trade and travel relations does not touch on the central issue in the position of the royal government. As is well-known, the reasons for the strict policy of isolation from foreigners was connected to Korea’s decisive historical experiences with the domination and efforts at occupation imposed by its neighboring states, especially Japan, in the 16th and 17th centuries. From this point on, a deeply rooted distrust towards all foreigners dominated Korean politics.

Not only was the decision of the royal court contrary to the national[page 78] interest of Korea, but also, as Guetzlaff notes, the local mandarins, such as General Kim, disapproved of it: “He expressed his deep regret that strangers should not be permitted to have any intercourse with his country…” (18)

Of course the Protestant missionary was well aware that opening the country to foreigners was a double-edged sword, and he wrote accordingly: “Would their present state have been what it is, had they been allowed intercourse with foreigners? ‘Exclusion’ may have kept them from the adoption of foreign customs, but has not meliorated their condition.” (19) But already in the opening section of the chapter on Korea, he emphasizes a fundamental historical insight whose validity extends beyond any particular epoch: “As long as this system of exclusion of which they boast continues, they must always remain in the lowest rank of nations.” (20)

The first German in Korea had departed on the ‘Lord Amherst’ on August 17 and after a stay on the Riu-Kiu-Islands sailed back to Macao. He had not achieved any of the goals of his mission, but had been given ample provisions by his hospitable Korean contacts.

In spite of the failure of the expedition, Guetzlaff’s one-month stay on the west coast of Korea must be regarded as an important milestone in the contacts between the Western world and Korea in the early 19th century. In many respects the response of the local population as well as the mandarins was positive. This was due in large measure to Guetzlaff’s linguistic brilliance, the medical help he offered, and his Chinese garb. In his travel report he rightly stresses: “Never did foreigners, perhaps, possess such free access to the country as we enjoyed. We hope that the communications which we transmitted will suggest to the rulers a different line of policy from that which they have hitherto followed. The inhabitants seem to possess sound understanding, but with great pride and apathy of feeling.” (21)

A glance at Korean history substantiates the basic accuracy of Guetzlaff’s[page 79] travel report. In his well-known book, ‘The Call of Korea,’ Horace G. Underwood already pays tribute to Guetzlaffs voyage: “As early as 1832, the intrepid Prussian pioneer missionary Guetzlaff landed, and spent a month on the island in Basil’s Bay, disposing Chinese Bibles and other books.”

(22) In his standard work The History of Protestant Missions in Korea’ George Paik explains how, upon arrival, the ‘Lord Amherst’ dropped anchor near “...the cape of Changsan, on the west coast of the Hwanghae Province”

(23) and later anchored more southwards off the coast of Chung Chyong Province.

Paik designates the year 1832 as the beginning of Protestant missionary efforts in Korea. This marks 1832 as the year of Guezlaff’s visit, which Paik makes a point of characterizing as peaceful. Paik’s assessment of these missionary attempts is realistic when he says that the “...visit to Korea was so brief that no recognizable results were produced.” (24) The former president of the Yonsei University provided later generations of scholars an important Korean source concerning Guetzlaff’s visit. In his writings, the president refers to the annals of the 7th month of the 32nd year of the reign of King Sun-Jo. The Naval General Kim who is mentioned by name in Guetzlaff’s journal and the Mandarin Lee are historically verified in the annals as Kim Hyeong-Su and Lee Min-Hee. The information which they collected and passed on to the royal court are striking in their focus on the essential and also their wealth of detail regarding particular important questions. Their painstaking transmission of information regarding the cargo of the ship (including 50 bails of cotton, 40 lantern, 100 knives, 500 bowls, wheat) confirms the commercial character of the undertaking. At the same time the annals give us insight into the world view of Koreans at that time. For instance, England is presumed to be right next to Hindustan. In addition there are statements to the effect that England is a state which respects its citizens and maintains trade relations with countries such as France, Siam, Russia, Holland and Africa. (25) It supports the view that the[page 80] expedition was undertaken to create friendly trade relations, that a petition to this effect was submitted, and, in the end, bowed to the wish of the Korean king that they should leave the country. Thus a favorable opportunity to pave the way to peaceful trade contacts between Korea and the West was not utilized.

Among the publications that resulted from the voyage to Korea, Guetzlaff’s explications of the Korean language deserve special attention. It is to the Prussian missionary’s credit that in contrast to earlier philological commentators, he published the first treatise in the entire Western World dealing with the Korean language that was based on first-hand information. It is characteristic of the speed with which Guetzlaff worked that in November 1832, shortly after the voyage, he published an article entitled ‘Remarks on the Corean language’. Within a short time, in 1833, this article was made available in abbreviated form to German-speaking readers.

Despite the reservations of the part of the Koreans, Guetzlaff had succeeded as best he could in acquainting himself with the Korean language and put together some notes on it. This is confirmed in several sources, including the ‘Report of Proceedings on a Voyage to the Northern Ports of China in the Ship ‘Lord Amherst “ published in London in 1833 by order of the House of Commons: “One day, the 27th [of July 1832; S. B.], after a great deal of persuasion, we succeeded in inducing Yang-yih to write out a copy of the Corean alphabet, and Mr. Gutzlaff having written the Lord’s Prayer in Chinese character (sic), he both gave the sound, and wrote it out in Corean character (sic), but after having done so he expressed the greatest alarm, repeatedly passing his hand across his throat, and intimating, that if the chiefs knew it [,] (sic) he would loose his head. He was most anxious to be permitted to destroy the paper. To quiet his apprehension, it was locked up before him, and he was assured that no one should ever be allowed to see it. (26) In his article ‘Remarks on the Corean language’ Guetzlaff places the[page 81] Korean language within the cultural sphere of China and comments in this connection: When the lands neighboring China “...adopted (sic) Chinese mode of writing, they introduced also their original sounds of the characters, but as their organs of speech differed widely from those of the Chinese, they were either unable to pronounce them correctly, or they confounded them with similar sounds in their own language, which were more familiar their ears... Thus two languages arose, one merely expressive of the sounds of the written characters, the other expressive of the ideas uttered. For the latter, the natives of the respective countries..., invented alphabets, strictly adapted to their own organs of speech. These general remarks apply fully to the Corean language.” (27) Korea made this step in the development and introduction of Hangul already in the mid-fifteenth century under King Sejong the Great. The article ‘Remarks on the Corean language’ contains these Korean letters. Even though he was a language genius, with a command of an entire range of European and East-Asian languages, Guetzlaff did make mistakes, due no doubt to the short length of his stay. For example, he assumes that there is a similar sentence structure in Chinese and Korean, and he speaks of 15 consonants. However, in the Korean of that time there were 17 consonants. Moreover, today there are only 14 remaining. On the other hand, he very precisely describes the 11 vowels of that period (at present there are 10, since the dark ‘a’ is no longer in usage). Similarly, he discusses intonation, pronunciation, details of sentence construction, and even word order. On the whole it is accurate to say that Guetzlaff was one of the first Europeans who contributed to the dissemination of knowledge about the Korean language. In this way he laid important cornerstones for scholarly study of Korean in the Western World.

The Protestant emissary performed brilliantly during the expedition as a perfect translator and skilled missionary with a profound knowledge of the Chinese and East-Asian mentality. It were two publications especially that rapidly escalated the Protestant missionary to world fame: The Journal of [page 82] Two Voyages Along the Coast of China in 1831, & 1832; the First in a Chinese Junk; the Second in the British Ship Lord Amherst: With Notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands, and Remarks On the Policy, Religion etc. of China，(New York: 1833) and ‘Journal of Three Voyages Along the Coast of China, in 1831, 1832, & 1833, With Notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands’ published 1834 at London (German version Basel: 1835). It was these volumes, that were later translated into other European languages which made a fundamental contribution to the transfer of information to Europe and North America about China and Korea in particular and about East-Asia in general.

The well-known missionary Broomhall Marshall paid tribute to Guetzlaff’s pioneering achievement with the words: “one can hardly imagine the enormous enthusiasm that these reports generated in political, religious and business circles in England and America.” (28) Almost 150 years after the report of the Dutchman Hendrik Hamel on Korea, Guetzlaff remains one of the few Europeans, who contributed to the modernization and enrichment of the image of Korea.

An important stage in Guetzlaff’s further activities in East-Asia was his appointment in 1834 to the Chinese Secretary and translator at the English legation in Canton. This guaranteed him a certain measure of financial independence. On the one hand, he was now a part of the British establishment in East-Asia. On the other hand, he continued his missionary work with undiminished elan. He focused his efforts on China, as is indicated by nearly a dozen trips he took into the Middle Kingdom and along the coasts, as well as an expedition he planed to Tibet. Even so, he never lost sight of the totality of East Asia, as is attested by his participation in a voyage by ship in 1837 to do missionary work and pave the way for trade contacts with Japan, which at the time was closed to foreigners. In spite of his efforts, the Japanese prevented the cargo from being unloaded. [page 83]

Nonetheless, Guetzlaff was able to make a contribution to missionary work in Nippon by contributing to the translation of the Gospel according St. Johannis.

Naturally the Prussian missionary was in his missionary activities always obligated to respect the trade interests and the political ambitions of his British employers.

During the military skirmishes between Great Britain and China between 1839 and 1842 Guetzlaff continued in his double capacity as a missionary and also as a confidant of the British. Thus, for example, in 1840 he served as a magistrate in the strategically important Zhousan Islands at the mouth of the Jiangtse, and, later on in the harbor city of Ningbo. In 1842, after the end of the war, he participated in the negotiations for the Nanking peace treaty, which began the forced opening of China through military force. It also signified a breakthrough for Christian missionary work. In 1843 in recognition of his important service to the British, Guetzlaff was given the important position of Chinese Secretary to the Governeur of Hongkong. Running parallel to his administrative and political function, Guetlzlaff was able, in the time that followed, to utilize the new possibilities to intensify his missionary activities and increase his work as a publicist. He knew how to further the results of his increased output as a writer in a manner that was made extremely effective use of the media.

A highpoint in Guetzlaffs dynamic and intensely creative life was his travel in Europe in 1849-1850. In the course of this trip he traversed the continent in breath-taking tempo, from Ireland to White Russia and from Sweden to Italy. His primary task was to publicize his missionary work, to acquire material and personal resources for future activities, and also to disseminate knowledge about China and the bordering lands of East-Asia. Thanks to his prominence, his gripping presentations, and his aura, Guetzlaff[page 84] was certain to have a full house everywhere he went. His sermons and lectures drew thousands of people from all over Europe like a magnet, which led to a genuine Guetzlaff-euphoria among the public and in the media. His basic message consisted in promoting support for missionary work all over East-Asia. On May 30, 1850, already during his second lecture in Berlin, a sermon held in the Trinity Church, he mentioned Korea by name when he said: “that one worships Thee [God; S. B.] in Manchuria, one honors Thee in Korea and bows to Thee in Japan. Lord, have pity on these nations and give them Thy mercy!” (29) In two other Berlin sermons the missionary explicitly mentioned the Koreans.

Guetzlaff did not limit himself to the pulpit in order to awaken interest in East Asia during his stay on the European continent. It is to his credit that on October 9,1850, he was the first German who held a lecture in the Berlin Borsensaale (stock exchange chambers) which reported from his own eyewitness perspective ‘Concerning the Trade Conditions in Eastern Asia.’ The basic thrust of this lecture was to solicit support in Prussia for a flourishing trade relation with East Asia. He had already written earlier in his ‘Journal of the Three Voyages Along the Coast of China...’concerning the economic potential of Korea: “We could never discover the staple articles of export from the country. Judging from the climate and from what we have seen, we think there must be a great variety of the productions which we find in southern Europe. The natives were very desirous to persuade us that their country produced nothing for exportation…” (30) In view of Korea’s position today as one of the world’s leading export nations, this comment must appear truly grotesque.

It is further to Guetzlaff’s credit that he nonetheless includes Korea in his reflections: “Now we come to the trade with the East, that is with China, Japan, Manchuria, and Korea.” (31) He adds truthftilly: “The later is hardly worth mentioning.” (32) And in the end he adds: “Trade with Korea is too[page 85] insignificant, and in Manchuria there is still little that has been undertaken.”(33) With historical insight into future possibilities he concludes his evaluation: “Both regions will, however, soon be the subject of serious, consideration.” (34) These examples confirm that his visit to Korea in 1832 definitely make its mark on Guetzlaff. Moreover, his repeated references to Korea may have been the first official mention of the country in Germany, or at least in Berlin. In any event, he is the first German who examined Korea in an East Asian context from a commercial point of view.

As a result of Guetzlaff s presentations, support groups for his missionary work sprang up all over both inside and outside of Germany. His writings about his missionary work in China and East-Asia were published in large editions. At the same time he received many honors, including, for example, an audience with the Prussian King Frieanch Wilhelm IV.

His life took something of a tragic turn, when towards the end of his triumphal tour of Europe he had to respond to accusations regarding the methods of his missionary efforts and defend his reputation. On the one hand there was ill-will as well as envy because of so much admiration for Guetzlaff from his professional colleagues. And then on the other hand there was just criticism of his missionary methods from colleagues who judged him objectively. Accustomed as he was to success, this hit him hard, even though his personal integrity had not been called into question. Defending himself from these intrigues and from some just criticism exhausted his reserve of energy, which had already been dissipatea by his hectic travels. In any event, his life’s work was now being put to the test. Upon returning to Hongkong he used up what little strength he haa left in his attempt to maintain and preserve what he had accomplished. But the missionary, who had devoted his life to his projects, was not to recover from these superhuman efforts. On August 9, 1851，the great son of Pommerania, Karl Friedrich August Guetzlaff, who brought the German Protestant[page 86] mission to East Asia passed away, having only reached the age of 48.

His name and his work were soon to lose their luster, especially since the principles he put forth did not mesh with the conceptions of missionaries who succeeded him in the age of imperialistic expansion which followed. His principles included a belief in the equality and equal ranking of nations, and a high regard for the Chinese and their culture. It is only in historical and missionary literature that he is remembered or, rather, often refuted, without coming close to doing justice to his outstanding significance in the complex texture of the relations between the Western World and East-Asia in the 19th-century. This is true of standard works in the West and in East-Asia as well. Thus, representative reference works such as ‘Dong-A’s Encyclopaedia’( Seoul 1983) and ‘Hakwon’s World Encyclopaedia’ (Seoul 1993) only give brief biographical data and the travel date 1832.

After Guetzlaff’s death, it took almost 150 years until steps were take towards his historical rehabilitation. It is to the credit of Dr. Winfried Scharlau that in 1997 he published a new annotated edition of ‘Gutzlaffs Bericht uber drei Reisen in die Seeprovinzen Chinas 1831-1833.’ The book and Scharlau’s commentary marked a milestone in the reevaluation of Guetzlaff s role in history. The renowned journalist explains in his biographical essay that among other things: “The name of the Prussian missionary in British service streaked like a comet throughout the world and was rapidly extinguished. In the controversies among missionaries … Guetzlaff fell into the garbage pail of history. In the end, the victors were his opponents who denigrated him as a charlatan, fraud, and adventurer.... Today in Europe Guetzlaff is unknown, notwithstanding the breadth of his world historical influence in Asia.” (35) Also worthy of mention is the publication ‘Karl Friedrich Neumann und Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff. Zwei deutsche Chinakundige im 19. Jahrhundert, ‘ edited in 2001 by the Director of the East Asian Department of the State Library at Berlin Dr. Hartmut[page 87] Walravens. In addition, we should take note that the German Embassy in Korea has erected in 1982 a stone monument on Wonsan-do to honor the first German who arrived in Korea.

To summarize we must again assert that Karl Guetzlaff was not only a devoted missionary, but also a successful promoter of British interests, a talented master of public relations, and an efficient fundraiser. His willingness to mesh the Bible, commerce, and the transfer of information are attested to by his activities in Korea. These activities are reflected in his wide-ranging and ambitious missionary efforts and they correspond to the basic pattern of Western operations in Asia in the 19th Century. The dimensions of Guetzlaff’s missionary goals, which were aimed at East-Asia as a whole, smacks of a certain megalomania-even if from his subjective point of view they were a part of honest good intentions. As his biographer, Schlyter, stresses: In all of his activities “Guetzlaff overestimated the importance of quick and superficial missionary work and the distribution of written materials.” (36) In his missionary zeal, he often succumbed to illusions, and proved himself to be “a man of visions, who often designated something as a fact that he saw as a promise of the future.” (37)

This qualification of his impressive activities and influence is, however, not intended to belittle the outstanding achievements of Guetzlaff the missionary as an inspiration and pathfinder for Protestant missionary work in East Asia and as a pioneer in the network of relations between Europe and East Asia. From today’s perspective, the symbiosis he sought between Western values and those of Chinese culture pays testimony to his deeply felt humanistic concept of missionary work and his commitment to promoting contacts between peoples. This symbiosis was based on the principles of equal ranking and mutual respect rather than hegemony and intolerance. Thus it is correct to describe Karl Friedrich August Guetzlaff as a forerunner in the process of establishing basic values and principles which[page 88]

increasingly characterize relations in our global epoch and serve to benefit mankind.

It is in this sense that Guetzlaffs name and his inestimable contribution to the intercultural dialog, and to better understanding between the Orient and Occident, will continue to live through the centuries.

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