*Marie Antoinette Sontag (1838-1922)*

“Uncrowned Empress of Korea.”

Dr. Sylvia Braesel

**“It is personalities, not principles, that move the age”**

(Oscar Wilde)

“But, surveying everything, old Ms. Sontag looks on. She sits in state, concealed from the eyes of the guests behind a traditional Korean screen or an ornate curtain, from which point she controls everything. A nod from her suffices to mobilize the entire retinue of imperial servants whose assistance is usually offered on such occasions”.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The above is taken from the writings of Mrs. Emma Kroebel, in her travel impressions and memories “How I came to be at the Korean imperial court”(Berlin, 1909). From the perspective of a solid bourgeois chronicle author, this is how Kroebel describes a woman who became a legend. This despite the initial impression that Sontag would have none of the prerequisites for a career of this sort, a career normally strictly reserved for men in the years around 1900. The stereotypes about women of power and (demonic) femininity do not seem to apply because Marie Antoinette Sontag (her full name) fulfilled in her behavior and her proper European clothing all the clichés associated with a conventional woman of this epoch from the western world. This unmarried lady with a stature resembling Alma Mahler-Werfel was neither young nor seductive. Men played a role in her machinations merely as a means to power. During the colonization of Korea (1896-1909) Antoinette Sontag rose to the forefront in the position of a mistress of court ceremonials, who even influenced imperial politics. She was not an emancipated world traveler from the highest social circles who conquered male domains worthy of public attention. Superficially she seemed to embody Schiller’s ideal of a “modest housewife,” but basically she was far removed from the exotic lifestyle of a *femme fatale* like Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904). At first glance Sontag would have corresponded to the thesis of the “absence of femininity in history.”

If one considers German-Korean relations a hundred years ago, one finds as a rule that women merely played marginal roles as the wives of diplomats, merchants or specialized experts. On the other hand, according to western colonial thought of the time, these women were also “subordinate members of a superior race”[[2]](#footnote-2) in East Asia. This opened up much latitude, because in non-western societies the gender of western woman lost part of its significance and allowed colonial, i.e. racial (skin color, cultural affiliation etc.), considerations to move into the foreground. This made it possible for a woman like Emma Kroebel who traveled to East Asia as the wife of a former military man to write about women in East Asia including another west-European lady—Marie Antoinette Sontag—who spent her career at the Korean imperial court at the very beginning of the 20th century.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Yet one must ask how it came about that a foreign woman from a bourgeois background could gain such great influence, indeed such a dominant power, over the course of public affairs in a country that clung with fanatical tenacity to all things traditional and rejected everything foreign. The answer lies in the great diplomatic talent of this woman who in her timely decisions knew how to empower the Korean king in a way that drew him into her nets. The king at that time was an unsteady person, who lost his throne thanks to the Japanese.[[4]](#footnote-4)

This critique from Emma Kroebel, who represented Ms. Sontag as mistress of ceremonial protocol during her European trip (1905/1906), helps us to understand how Antoinette Sontag, who gained considerable influence as court mistress of ceremonial protocol, is still appreciated to this day in parts of Korea.

This is documented, in part, by the publication in 1976 of a play premiered at the National Theater in Seoul, *Hotel Sontag* (손탁호텔) by the Korean author Cha Beom-Seok (차범석 ; 1924-2006). Almost thirty years later the composer Lee Yong-Jo (이영조) revised the original draft into an opera of the same name performed on 23rd November 2005. At the core of the drama and the opera is the resistance of Korean patriots to the colonizing policies of Japan that culminated in the 1895 murder of Queen Min (1851-1895). The legendary Ms. Sontag and the Russian chargé d’affaires von Waeber and his spouse, who in both versions appear as the only Europeans, are portrayed as friends and supporters of the aspirations of the Korean people for independence.

History, the travel memoirs of Emma Kroebel, and the diary entries of the bright, thoughtful court physician, Dr. Richard Wunsch (1869-1911), reveal Ms. Sontag as a personality who was totally capable of having her way by using shrewd sophisticated maneuvers, at least regarding the exercise of power, while maintaining a carefully planned discretion. Just like Alma Schindler-Mahler-Gropius-Werfel, who with calculated deliberation destroyed her diaries, Ms. Sontag always saw to it that personal information like political networks and business strategies were deftly concealed.

As a result, Ms. Sontag is ranked among the most prominent personalities of the early period of German-Korean relations, though contemporary travel reports and other sources of that time convey only speculation, her personal information (including her age!), her family background, and the further course of her life after her return from Korea remain obscure. It is therefore no surprise that there is no other person in the more then 130-year history of German-Korean relations around whom there is such a tangle of speculation and legends as there is surrounding this extraordinary woman, who was called “the uncrowned empress of Korea.”[[5]](#footnote-5)

The reasons for her unbelievable rise, while perhaps at first sounding trivial, are substantiated by weighty documentation. We know for a fact that in 1885 Ms. Sontag traveled to Seoul, where she was responsible for running the household of the Russian diplomat of German heritage Carl von Waeber (1841-1910). This was during the preliminary stages of the colonization of Korea by Japan. But in 1895, after the murder of Queen Min (known as Empress Myeongseong posthumously), who had bravely resisted Japan, the Korean King Gojong[[6]](#footnote-6) fled for his life, disguised in women’s clothing, to the Russian embassy. Antoinette Sontag’s hour had arrived. It was then that the Korean monarch came to appreciate the nurturing care and cooking skills of Ms. Sontag. She introduced him to such western conventions as coffee at breakfast, and her sweets and pastry creations were highly popular at the court, gradually replacing the indigenous specialties. He subsequently awarded her attentions richly with land and with his favor.

After returning to the palace, King Gojong appointed Ms. Sontag as imperial mistress of court ceremonies. His appointment of a female foreigner to this position was a shock for many court nobles. However her ability to achieve her goals and the proficiency with which the European woman did this soon silenced her critics, at least in official pronouncements. In this position, acting as confident and advisor to King Gojong, Ms. Sontag gained an influence at court which she was also able to put to use for her own material gain. Only the Englishman Sir John McLeavy Brown had a similar position at court, as the King’s financial advisor. Diplomats often sought the help of Ms. Sontag in order to push through their goals with the government especially considering the intrigues that flourished at court.

Ms. Sontag was responsible not only for directing the receptions and banquets that were held to honor foreign dignitaries, but for managing the entire court budget. Thus, we can read about her in the documents of Alexander von Claer (1864-1946), who was military attaché in China before being appointed as first German military representative in Seoul: *“as the champagne was served,* (she rose) *with a champagne glass in hand solemnly from her seat and spoke the words “His Majesty, the emperor!”[[7]](#footnote-7)*

On the one hand she fought again the corruption at court, although she herself did not strive for frugality. Alexander von Claer mentions *“her stately home, as the furnishings were gifts of the monarch; beautiful pieces of ancient Korean arts and crafts, including pottery, as they were even then disappearing from the market already,”[[8]](#footnote-8).* The material circumstances of Korean commoners were of less interest to her.

This applies as well to the situation of Korean woman. Dr. Wunsch and Emma Kroebel concur in reporting about extravagant festivities arranged by Antoinette Sontag while this land was being convulsed by crisis, backwardness and poverty. “*Thus truffle pastries, oysters and caviar have already become something quite ordinary, and French champagne flows here often more abundantly than at similar parties back home,”[[9]](#footnote-9)* writes Kroebel in her travel journal. Antoinette Sontag even succeeded, step by step, in progressively introducing European protocol customs at formal receptions in this land, which at the time was “locked in isolation.” That led to a considerable reduction of Korean courtly ceremonials and to a loss of Korean traditions—reaching all the way to influencing the architecture of the capital Seoul, with new buildings in western, European style.

An example of this is the new imperial palace and its gardens. The German architect Curt Rothkegel (1876-1945), who was also well-known in China, traveled in the beginning of the year 1905 to Seoul, after the imperial palace, constructed of wood, was destroyed on 15th April 1904 in a massive conflagration. The court decided on a new construction in the “European” style and Ms. Sontag and Dr. Richard Wunsch supported awarding the task to Rothkegel.[[10]](#footnote-10) It is testimony to Ms. Sontag’s business acumen that for her services she was able to obtain ownership of three building complexes in Seoul from the King during this time. Thus the well-established “Hotel Sontag” was created following the designs of the Russian architect Aleksej Seredin-Sabatin, who was also responsible for the building design of the Russian legation and the gardens of the Deoksu and Gyeongbok palaces from 1884 to 1904. Frequent guests included the American diplomat John Sill, William Franklin Sands, the advisor to the Korean government, the British journalist Ernest Thomas Bethell, who founded the progressive newspaper *Daehan Maeil Shinbo* in 1904, the American Ms.ionaries Horace Underwood, Henry Appenzeller, Homer Hulbert, Dr. Richard Wunsch, and Johann Bolljahn who established German language instruction in Korea. Furthermore, specialists invited by the Korean government also had their lodgings here. These included the American Henry Collbran, who was in charge of constructing the streetcar system in Seoul. But the most prominent guest at the Sontag Hotel was the young Winston Churchill (1874-1965), who visited Korea as Undersecretary of State for Colonial Affairs in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905. On the Korean side, the Sontag Hotel was frequented by representatives of various political movements like Min Young-hwan, a nephew of the queen as well as Yoon Chi-ho and Lee Sang-jae, who were among the founding members of the Independence Club.

Without the favor of Ms. Sontag, western business dealings in Korea at that time were difficult to transact. The fact that Ms. Sontag had *“good language skills […]; also the Korean she had acquired in a surprisingly short time”* is documented by Alexander von Claer.[[11]](#footnote-11)

In the legendary Hotel Sontag, Western guests, businessmen, diplomats “found a combination of the pleasant with the useful.” Its cottages, comfortably furnished for the standards at that time offered to the “garçons” of international diplomacy lodging as guests in exchange, of course, for appropriate remuneration. Thus, unmarried representatives of various legations lodged and dined in the Pension (later Hotel) Sontag. “It cannot be denied that under the circumstances the foreign states granted Ms. Sontag a certain degree of control,” Emma Kroebel[[12]](#footnote-12) noted ambiguously in her travel memoirs.

Thus Sontag, who seemed superficially to be counting on the traditional “female weapons” of protective care and excellent French cooking, became a central figure in the power game of the great powers struggling for spheres of influence in the lead up to colonization by Japan. Alexander von Claer wrote that “*her homely nature, her natural wit made her likeable; occasionally she fell into melancholy reflections about the fate of her imperial patron.”[[13]](#footnote-13)* Further he wrote about Ms. Sontag that she let go of her hatred against the Japanese freely when with her compatriots.[[14]](#footnote-14)

For Ms. Sontag “was the ‘medium’ to go through in dealing with the king.”[[15]](#footnote-15) Since she acted, in effect, as someone who could “open doors,” to reach the politically weak king, one could hardly do without her favor. Dr. Richard Wunsch, who in these years was the personal physician at the Korean imperial court, reports in his diaries repeatedly about invitations from Ms. Sontag, who preferred social interaction with the world of men, “*The cuisine there is exquisite. Besides me, the Belgian Consul and the French embassy secretary also eat there. The language of conversations is French.”[[16]](#footnote-16)* Sontag, who had both legs planted in practical life, also organized *“enormous dinners”*[[17]](#footnote-17) and many picnics outside the gates of the city as diversions for the Europeans and Americans. Finally, the emperor gave her the estate known as the Sontag Hotel, located today on the grounds of Ewha University School, even though the state treasury was empty and the people were starving. This Hotel Sontag became a culinary magnet and at the same time a business and political information exchange for various travelers, experts, and diplomats. Ms. Sontag was kept informed about the predilections of the imperial family as well as the moods of powerful ministers, the continual court intrigues and cabals—and thus was herself an important source if one attained her favor. Thus such a person as Dr. Richard Wunsch could only obtain a consultation with the King through the intercession of Ms. Sontag and the Russian representative Carl von Waeber.[[18]](#footnote-18)

After a reception in the Sontag House for Prince Ito, who was decisive in expediting the colonization of Korea, Dr. Wunsch noted: “I had actually expected more from Ito. He makes a different impression on me than the Korean officials whose positions are of similar rank.”[[19]](#footnote-19) At the same time, Emma Kroebel, using a very feminine approach, capped the event by presenting the menu for a banquet in honor of Prince Ito given by the Emperor of Korea.[[20]](#footnote-20)

The impending final Japanese colonization of Korea put an end to the activities of Antoinette Sontag in Seoul. Already in a letter of 17th July 1905, Dr. Wunsch reported that Ms. Sontag was going to Europe on vacation.[[21]](#footnote-21) Personal affairs and an inheritance were mentioned as official reasons for her journey.[[22]](#footnote-22) Concurrently during her sojourn, after the end of the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 (Peace of Portsmyth, September 1905), she is reputed to have championed the interests of the Korean Empire among the western Great Powers at a time when fewer and fewer foreigners were serving the Korean state. Similarly, as Dr. Wunsch lamented in one of his letters, the posts were increasingly filled by Japanese officials,[[23]](#footnote-23) forcing many Western experts to leave Korea.

Since Antoinette Sontag was considered an outspoken opponent of the Japanese influence in Korea, her withdrawal from the declining Korean imperial court would appear to have been based on a realistic insight into the political situation there, especially since this woman, who thought strategically in arranging her activities, had such good contacts with the diplomatic representatives of the great powers and repeatedly took on the role of diplomatic mediator and “letter carrier” between the King and western interests. There is repeated speculation that Ms. Sontag worked as a Russian agent or perhaps even double agent. But in the files that have been examined to date there is no corroboration for these speculations that she was some kind of Mata Hari (1876-1917) without the erotic exoticism.

On 24th September 1909—before the official annexation of Korea by Japan—Ms. Sontag took leave of Seoul. Accompanied by the German teacher Johann Bolljahn (1862-1928),[[24]](#footnote-24) she traveled on board the steamer “Tsingtau” to Shanghai. There she boarded a French ship headed for Marseille. She returned to Europe a wealthy lady in the company of her gardener Yi Eiu Woon (born 1884 in Seoul), her servant Moda Takahochi (born 1867) and her nine favorite dogs.[[25]](#footnote-25)

This is where the legends begin to appear, even in specialized publications which circulate legends about the life of Antoinette Sontag. A study of archival material is now able to disprove these legends. Marie Antoinette Sontag neither died of grief and despair as an old woman in the Soviet Union, nor was she the sister-in-law of the well-known Russian diplomat Carl von Waeber, nor the step-sister of his wife Eugenie—claims which scholarly publications repeatedly maintain without a factual basis or substantiation. Even the biographical data on Ms. Sontag’s life are often only speculative.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Work with sources in archives to objectify the life of Marie Antoinette Sontag moves beyond speculations or obsolete positions stemming from the cold war and reveals considerable transnational historical and genealogical connections. The present narrative illustrates how internationality and interculturality may blend with the awareness of tradition and a living, widely-branching family history, which illustrate profound transformations in world politics in the 20th century. In the dignified family vault of Marie Antoinette Sontag, located in the Catholic section of the famous cemetery “Du Grand Jas” in Cannes, which the former Mistress of Ceremonials at the Korean imperial court (as the epitaph reads) acquired on 9th April 1921 with “eternal concession,” others also found their last resting place: her sister Marie Pauline Maack (née Sontag), Pauline’s husband, the Russian citizen Alexander Maack, and her personal lady’s companion from the imperial court: Omaki (Moda Takahochi).[[27]](#footnote-27)

From the very beginning the various stages in the life of Ms. Sontag transgress borders in specific ways. This applies to the restrictions of social position, in matters of finance as well as culture, mentality and geographical regions. Still, the unusual rise of an unmarried western woman at the Korean imperial court around 1900 appears in retrospect to be the result of Ms. Sontag’s iron will coupled with a boundless eagerness to take calculated action, the ability to adapt to a new culture combined with cleverness in economic, political and personal questions. This career was not served up to Marie Antoinette from the cradle on a silver spoon. She was the first child of a young elementary school teacher who had a position in Alsace, on a border which periodically changed back and forth from France to Germany, at a time when it was undergoing a period of economic prosperity. Marie Antoinette Son(n)tag[[28]](#footnote-28) first saw the light of day on 1st October 1838 in Aubure (German name: Altweier). According to the birth certificate “at 1:00 in the afternoon there appeared before us, the mayor and the head of the office of the justice of the peace in the municipality of Aubure, Canton St. Marie aux Mines, Départment/Haut Rhin, Jean Georges Sontag, 23 years old, elementary school teacher living in Aubure to announce the birth of a child, of the female sex, this morning born to him and his 18 year old spouse Marie Anne Ballast, without profession, living in this municipality with her husband. The child is to be given the first name Marie Antoinette.”[[29]](#footnote-29)

Even at a time of prosperity the young family could not earn or accumulate any wealth, especially since between 1840 and 1845 four more children were born. In addition, the death registry in the Catholic parish office of Aubure notes the early death of the mother in the year 1847 and of the father in 1848. As complete orphans, Marie Antoinette and her siblings developed exceptional self-reliance from an early age, especially the sisters Marie Antoinette and Marie Pauline (born 1842) both had a talent for coping with the problems of life. A photo taken during these years shows Marie Antoinette, who had grown up bilingual (German/French), wearing a traditional Alsatian national costume. The posture and facial expression of the young woman look unusually wise to the ways of the world.[[30]](#footnote-30) The marriage of Marie Pauline Sontag (1842-1937) with Alexander Theodor Karlowitsch Maack (16th February 1846 – 2nd May 1923) from a well-known Baltic-German family in Arensburg turned out to be a stroke of good luck for the siblings.

The two young ladies quickly then learned the Russian language and, given the advantage of their background, were able to function comfortably in a multilingual cultural milieu. And so it appears that Marie Antoinette should have been able to integrate herself successfully into the new family in Tsarist Russia. Especially close contact developed with the sister of her brother-in-law Alexander Maack. Ella Alwina Alma (also Jenny or Eugenie) Maack (5th December 1850 – 24th November 1921), also born in Arensburg (today in Estonia), had just married a rising young German from Liebau (today Latvia) who was in the Russian diplomatic service. His name was Carl Iwanowitsch (also Carl Friedrich Theodor) von Waeber (17th June 1841 – 8th January 1910).[[31]](#footnote-31)

Marie Antoinette soon knuckled down to help out as the “right hand” in the private sphere of the von Waeber family. She accompanied the married couple to China and later to Korea. Antoinette Sontag is correctly described in official Russian sources as a “distant relative” of the Russian diplomat. In the relevant files of the foreign office, on the other hand, the French citizen née Sontag is entered after 1871 as a citizen of the German Empire.[[32]](#footnote-32) The biography of Ms. Sontag makes it understandable that she would realistically assess the world-political impact of Korea after the Russo-Japanese war, as it would affect her further plans for her future life. She needed to find an appropriate place to live as an elderly woman of almost seventy who might occasionally take upon herself the exertion of a voyage to Europe. Here it should be noted that in 1901, after the retirement of the diplomat with the rank of imperial Russian minister, the family von Waeber had already acquired a villa in “Sachsen Nice” (Radebeul in Saxony). The Elbe landscape northwest of Dresden with its mild microclimate and sunny vineyards was a hidden gem. The impressive villas attracted artists, diplomats and industrialists alike.

It attests to close family ties that after the death of her husband, in the year 1921, Eugenie von Waeber was living as a registered inhabitant in the villa of Marie Antoinette Sontag in Cannes.[[33]](#footnote-33) Already in the year 1906 the “uncrowned empress of Korea” had purchased the Villa Galatin on the French Riviera in the Rue des Anemones (today Rue René Viglieno)[[34]](#footnote-34) which she renamed Villa “Au Matin calme” (morning calm) in memory of her time in Korea. The census reports from the years 1921 and 1926,[[35]](#footnote-35) which included every member of a household in Cannes, prove to be important historical sources from various aspects. The lists preserved in the original verify that after the First World War, which among other things resulted in the collapse of the Russian empire and the incorporation of Alsace into France, people of various nationalities for various reasons were living under one roof. In the villa of Marie Antoinette Sontag, Marie Pauline Maack, the sister of Marie Antoinette had emigrated with her husband from St. Petersburg. Soon thereafter other relatives followed, including the grandparents of Patricia de Maack, the physician Dr. Georges (Georg) de Maack (1882-1938) and his wife Louise-Alma née Leuzinger (1884-1977). Both are also buried in Cannes. The family history, which is continued through the line of Georg Maack since the sister Pauline Maack had no children, documents in a striking way the successful integration of migrants into another culture and society through hard work and commitment. The father of Madame Patricia de Maack, Andre Patrick, born in 1915 in St. Petersburg, died in Paris in 1998 and was given honorable burial in the famous cemetery Père Lachaise. Other members of this family clan with its many branches married into such prominent families as von der Osten-Sacken.[[36]](#footnote-36) Their lives of tolerance and internationality enabled them to find their place already a hundred years ago in various lands and cultures, and actively to impact the formation of their new environments, without renouncing their own origins. Thus, for example, Patricia, the daughter of the German-Russian emigrant family de Maack, also mastered the Russian language which at one time made it possible for her ancestors to rise socially in the Russian Empire. These “bridge builders” are an important connecting link in the understanding between cultures.

So the census of 1921 already documents that in the villa of Marie Antoinette Sontag an international group of people had found lodging. It attests to the protective care given by Ms. Sontag and her sister Pauline, that her Korean gardener Yi Eiu Woon, who is registered in the 1921 census as a Japanese citizen born in Seoul in 1884, was married to Emma Clemenz who was twenty years younger (born 1905) and was from Ms. Sontag’s Alsatian homeland. This guaranteed Yi the right to remain in France after the death of Ms. Sontag.[[37]](#footnote-37) Ms. Sontag also wrote out a handwritten document of March 8, 1921 to the mayor of Cannes allotting Yi a place in the Sontag-Maack family grave.

The villa “Au Marin calme”[[38]](#footnote-38) once an imposing estate in Cannes no longer exists.[[39]](#footnote-39) After the death of Marie Antoinette Sontag on 7th July 1922[[40]](#footnote-40) the property was transferred to Pauline and Alexander Maack. After their demise, starting in 1937 the house was maintained by Dr. Georges (Georgi) de Maack (1882-1938) and from 1938 by his wife Louise-Alma (1884-1977). Today an apartment house is located on the site. But the lives of the family Sontag-de Maack-von Waeber continue to symbolically connect East and West, spanning diverse borders and boundaries. This legacy, that an energetic lady from Alsace created, remains for us to ponder.

**Bibliography**

Archives of the Foreign Office in Berlin: Korea R 18767, No. 826 (29 2 - 04/03/1904)

Braesel, Sylvia: *Johann Bolljahn – Begruender des Deutschunterrichts in Korea*. In: Baltische Studien, Vol. 95- 209, pp.133-150

Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.): *Dr. med. Richard Wunsch – Arzt in Ostasien*, Buesingen/ Hochrhein 1976

Clear, Alexander von: *Militaerbericht No*. 16, Seoul 15/05/1904, Bundesarchiv Freiburg MSg 2/11729

Choi, Chongko: *Vom Han bis zum Rhein. Geschichte der deutsch-koreanischen Beziehungen*, Seoul 1983

Habinger, Gabriele: *Frauen reisen in die Fremde*, Vienna 2006

Kneider, Hans-Alexander: *Globetrotter, Abenteurer, Goldgraeber. Auf den deutschen Spuren im alten Korea*, Munich 2009

Kroebel, Emma: *Wie ich an den Koreanischen Kaiserhof kam*, Berlin 1909

Lankov, Andrei: *Asia Pacific and Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 13.2.2013

Neff, Robert: *Letters from Joseon*, Seoul 2012

Пак, Былла Борисовна, Российская Дипломатия и Корея, книга вторая 1888-1897, Москва 2004

Seelmann, Hoo Nam: *Lautloses Weinen. Der Untergang des koreanischen Königshauses*, Wuerzburg 2011

Dr. Sylvia Braesel was from 1992 until 1996 an Assistant Visiting Professor at Yonsei University, Seoul. Currently, Dr. Braesel is a literary scholar at the University of Erfurt in Germany. Her research focuses on German-Korean Literature and German-Korean cultural relations. For further information, please see:

https://www.uni-erfurt.de/koreana-erfordensia/

https://www.uni-erfurt.de/literaturwissenschaft/ndl/lehrende/braesel/publikationen/

1. Kroebel, Emma: *Wie ich an den Koreanischen Kaiserhof kam*, Berlin 1909, p. 131 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Habinger, Gabriele: *Frauen reisen in die Fremde*, Vienna 2006, p. 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Cf. Photograph: The imperial Korean home minister with his palace ladies Ms. Sontag and Mrs. Hauptmann Kroebel. In: Kroebel *op.cit.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Kroebel, Emma *op.cit*. pp. 134-135 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Kroebel, Emma *op.cit*. p. 136 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Gojong was the last king of the Joseon dynasty and the first Emperor of Korea under the regnal name of Gwangmu. His son Sunjong was also politically weak and not assertive as Korean stakeholder; he succeeded Gojong as Emperor from 1907 -1910. On 22nd of August 1910 he was forced to sign the annexation treaty that made Korea a Japanese colony until 1945. Cf.: Seelmann, Hoo Nam: *Lautloses Weinen. Der Untergang des koreanischen Koenigshauses*, Wuerzburg 2011 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cf: Clear, Alexander von: *Militaerbericht No*. 16, Seoul 15/05/1904, Bundesarchiv Freiburg MSg 2/11729, p. 10. For the provision of these documents I thank Dr. Gerhard Keiper, Archive of the Foreign Office in Berlin. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cf: Clear, Alexander von, *op.cit*. pp. 10 / 11 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Kroebel, Emma, *op.cit*. p. 131 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For information provided about Curth Rothkegel my thanks to Prof. Wilhelm Matzat, Bonn and Renate Jaehrling & Anita Guenther, Eichenau [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Cf: Clear, Alexander von, *op.cit*. p. 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Kroebel, Emma, *op.cit*. p. 136 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Cf: Clear, Alexander von, *op.cit*. p. 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Cf: Clear, Alexander von, *op.cit*. p. 10 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Kroebel, Emma, *op.cit*. p. 137 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.): *Dr. med. Richard Wunsch – Arzt in Ostasien*, Buesingen/ Hochrhein 1976, p. 110 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.), *op.cit*. p. 115 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.), *op.cit*. p.134 & p.159 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.), *op.cit*. p.175 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Kroebel, Emma, *op.cit*. p. 165 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.) , *op.cit*. p.235 [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Kroebel, Emma, *op.cit*. p.118 [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Claussen-Wunsch, Gertrud (Ed.) , *op.cit*. p.235 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Cf.: Braesel, Sylvia: Johann Bolljahn – Begruender des Deutschunterrichts in Korea. In: Baltische Studien, Vol. 95- 209, pp.133-150 [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. For this information, as well as the following photos and family history information I am indebted to Mrs. Patricia de Maack, Paris. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Those unscientific claims etc. can be read in Kneider, Hans-Alexander: *Globetrotter, Abenteurer, Goldgraeber. Auf den deutschen Spuren im alten Korea*, Munich 2009, pp.179-180, p.167; Lankov, Andrei: *Asia Pacific and Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 13.2.2013; Choi, Chongko: *Vom Han bis zum Rhein. Geschichte der deutsch-koreanischen Beziehungen*, Seoul 1983, pp.194 & 196 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. For the photography and the information about the grave I thank Madame Christiane Lavigne / Cimetière du Grand Jas Cannes. My special thanks to Madame Patricia de Maack who is the probate administrator of de Maack –Sontag family, for providing the certificates of the burial site. For translations from French, I thank my friend, the German scholar Madame Marie Christine Fagnot. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Cf. Alphabetical birth register of the parish of Aubure for 1838. In the birth certificate for Marie Antoinette S. from 1st October 1838 is the spelling of the family name „Sonntag”. For searches in Aubure and the transmission of the birth certificate, I am indebted to Mr Michel Krucker, Association Généalogique Héraldique et du Val de Lièpvre (Alsace). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. I would like to thank Madame Marie Christine Fagnot, Cons-La-Grandville for contacting the parish of Aubure / Alsace and for her translations (such as the birth certificate) into German. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. For providing the family photograph of Marie Antoinette Sontag in Alsatian costume, I thank Madame Patricia de Maack, Paris. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Carl von Waeber died on 8th January 1910 in Niederloessnitz (Radebeul) near Dresden in his villa “Korea.” His tomb in the cemetery in Radebeul, created by architect Otto von Rometsch, is a listed building today. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Cf.: Пак, Былла Борисовна, Российская Дипломатия и Корея, книга вторая 1888-1897, Москва 2004, стр. 212. I thank Dr. Gerhard Keiper, Archives of the Foreign Office in Berlin for providing the relevant file of Korea R 18767, No. 826 (29 2 - 04/03/1904) of the Foreign Office / Berlin in terms of A. Sontag. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Cf.: Folio 26/ Census 1921 - Archives municipales de Cannes. I thank Madame Marie Brunel, Archives municipales de Cannes. I sincerely thank Ms. Kathrin Drechsel, Erfurt for her invaluable assistance with the research. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Cf. land registry entry Folio 100/ 2836 – 1907; Commune de Cannes, Archives municipales de Cannes. I sincerely thank Ms. Kathrin Drechsel, Erfurt for creating and editing of the scans from above Archives. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Cf.: Folio 26/ Census 1921; Folio 37/ Census 1926 in Cannes; Archives municipales de Cannes [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. I am indebted to Madame Patricia de Maack, Paris for information on family history. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. The marriage certificate from 28th November 1923 of Yi and Clementz is available to the author of this article and is quoted with permission of the Archives municipales de Cannes. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. The photography of the villa “Au Matin calme” was provided by Madame Patricia de Maack for this publication only. I sincerely thank Mr. Sergej Tan, Erfurt & Kathrin Drechsel, Erfurt for the photo-technical editing of the original scan. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. The villa was up to the seventies in the family. Today, on the property is an apartment block, “Corinne”. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Cf.: Death certificate of Marie Antoinette Sontag dated 7th July 1922 - No. 367 [↑](#footnote-ref-40)