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Cover illustration Members of the Korean History Compilation Association having a picnic on a Chosŏn 朝鮮 royal tomb (Archives National Institute of Korean History)

Errata In the previous issue of *East Asian History* (No.28), the article 'Index of Mongol and Chinese Proper and Geographical Names in the *Sheng-wu Ch'in-Cheng lu* 聖武親征錄' by Paul Pelliot and Louis Hambis, edited by Igor de Rachewiltz, was inadvertently left off the Contents page. The article commenced on p.45.

CHRISTIAN MODERNITY IN THE MISSIONARY DISCOURSE OF KOREA, 1905-10

史 Hyaeweol Choi 최혜월

A common image of American missionaries at the turn of the twentieth century in Korea relates to their role as modernizers.¹ This image is partly based on the fact that they served as doctors and teachers, practising 'modern' medicine and teaching at the first modern schools, such as the government-run Yugyōng Kongwōn 육영공원, and mission-run Paejae 배재, Ewha 이화, Kyōngsin 경신 and Chōngsin 정신 schools. In addition, most prominent enlightenment-oriented thinkers and reformers of Korea (such as Sō Chaep'il 서재필, Yun Ch'iho 윤치호, and An Ch'angho 안창호) were significantly influenced by Christianity and Western modernity, and their vision for a modern nation-state was deeply colored by the Western/Christian model.²

It is also significant that the image of missionaries as modernizers was coupled with an image as sympathizers with or allies of Koreans in anti-Japan-

to a cultural dependence on the West and a loss of national identity. Kang's claim is useful in understanding the power dynamics between missionaries and Koreans (and also in questioning whose modernity was being instituted, and for whom this was done). However, it fails to recognize Koreans as historical agents because Kang's perspective, based on ideas of cultural imperialism, seems to assume that Koreans passively accepted 'imposed Western' values and religion. As recent scholarship in mission studies demonstrates, local people often strategically appropriated missionary resources to their own advantage either for survival or for social advancement. The case of Korea follows precisely this pattern. For example, many Koreans came to mission schools not because they were interested in the new religion but because they considered learning English or associating with American missionaries to be of advantage to them. See Kang Tongu, "Han'guk Kidokkyo nūn Minjokju'i iōtna" [Was Korean Christianity nationalistic?], *Yōksa Pip'yōng* [Historical critique] 27 (Winter 1994): 317-27; Andrew Porter, "'Cultural imperialism' and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780-1914," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25.3 (September 1997): 367-91.

I would like to thank Daniel Devitt, Robert Eskildsen and George Thomas for their invaluable comments on earlier versions of this article, and I wish to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their thorough comments and suggestions for strengthening my arguments. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the staff of the Methodist Archives and History Center at Drew University and the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia for their help during my research trips.

¹ The article focuses on both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches of the USA, as they constituted the majority of the Prot-

estant mission enterprise in Korea.

² In his study of Christian nationalist movements during the Japanese colonial period, No Ch'ijun notes that early reformers of Korea accepted Christianity not as a religion *per se* but as a means of modernization or a path to Western civilization. See his book, *Ilcbeha Han'guk Kidokkyo Minjok Undong Yōn'gu* [A study of the Korean Christian nationalist movement under Japanese rule] (Seoul: Han'guk Kidokkyo Yōksa Yōn'guso, 1993), pp.39-41. Kang Tongu has argued that Korea's efforts toward modernization with the help of Christian missionaries contributed

³ Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle, Wash.: University of Washington Press, 2003), p.5. See Timothy S. Lee's review of *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*, in which he critiques Park's claim that the Protestant church fermented of Korean nationalist politics. As an example to counter Park's claim, Lee argues that Korean Christians' participation in the March First Movement of 1919 "is not so much evidence that the church had been nationalistic in spite of the missionaries, as Park claims, but that the Korean Protestants—like the rest of their countrymen—could not help but resent the harsh Japanese rule and respond to the instigation of their overseas compatriots, who, in turn, had been instigated to plan mass demonstrations by Woodrow Wilson's famous Fourteen-point declaration." *Korean Studies* 27 (2003): 153-57.

⁴ Kenneth Wells, *New God, New Nation: Protestants and Self-reconstruction Nationalism in Korea 1896-1937* (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990). Similarly, Ryan Dunch's study of Fuzhou Protestants from the mid-19th century to the 1920s in China also shows the critical role of Christianity in inspiring and influencing Chinese patriotism and Chinese desires for modernity. Along with recent scholarship, these studies significantly challenge one of the premises in the discourse of Western modernity—that is, the separation of religion from politics and the declining social significance of religion—and demonstrate how religion has played an integrated and crucial role in modern nation building. See Ryan Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China 1857-1927* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001); Talal Asad, "Religion, Nation-state, Secularism," in *Nation and Religion*, ed. Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp.178-96; Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁵ Min Kyōngbae argues for the notion of an anti-nationalist tendency among missionaries, in relation to their theological disposi-

tion toward rigid pietism and their emphasis on the separation of religion from politics. See his book, *Han'guk Minjok Kyoboe Hyōngsōngnon* [History of the formation of the Korean National Church] (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1974). Focusing on the issue of missionaries' extraterritorial rights, Ryu Dae Young argues that this privilege, among others, enabled them to expand the missions rapidly and also to present themselves as apolitical benefactors. See his article, "Treaties, Extraterritorial Rights, and American Protestant Missions in Late Joseon Korea," *Korea Journal* 43.1 (Spring 2003): 174-203.

ese movements in colonial Korea. Indeed, when the official mission policy was the separation of religion from politics, a few prominent missionaries (such as Homer Hulbert, Horace Allen and William Arthur Noble, to name just a few), broke with that policy and made efforts to reveal the injustices of the colonization of Korea by Japan, either by publishing books or engaging in diplomatic missions. In addition, the claim that many Christian Koreans participated in anti-Japanese movements throughout Japanese colonial rule (1910-45) and that the Christian church "served as a rallying point for fervent nationalists striving for independence"³ is also responsible for the lasting image of missionaries as favorable to Korean nationalism. Kenneth Wells' study of the development of a particular form of Korean nationalism called "self-reconstruction" nationalism succinctly demonstrates how Christian ethics and morality were deeply embedded in a Korean nationalism in pursuit of an independent, modern nation-state.⁴

It is generally acknowledged that missionaries played a role as modernizers and sympathizers with Korean nationalist causes.⁵ Yet there is a conspicuous absence of debate about what exactly constituted modernity in the minds of the missionaries, how their own understanding of the modern intersected with western modernity, racial discourse, Japanese colonialism and Korean nationalism, or how the different subject positions of missionaries produced different experiences of the political and cultural junctures in Korea at the turn of the twentieth century.⁶ These questions can be instrumental in complicating a rather fixed image of missionaries in association with modernity and nationalism and in disclosing the more complex and fluid nature of missionary ideologies in Korea. This article is an attempt to explore these questions with three important methodological considerations. First, the article pays attention to the unique status of American missionaries in Korea, which cannot be fully explained by the binary approach to the mission enterprise (i.e.,

/tion toward rigid pietism and their emphasis on the separation of religion from politics. See his book, *Han'guk Minjok Kyoboe Hyōngsōngnon* [History of the formation of the Korean National Church] (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1974). Focusing on the issue of missionaries' extraterritorial rights, Ryu Dae Young argues that this privilege, among others, enabled them to expand the missions rapidly and also to present themselves as apolitical benefactors. See his article, "Treaties, Extraterritorial Rights, and American Protestant Missions in Late Joseon Korea," *Korea Journal* 43.1 (Spring 2003): 174-203.

⁶ It is important to distinguish 'modern

ization' (which centers on socioeconomic and institutional reforms) from 'modernity' (which is an overarching term that includes not only socioeconomic and political changes but also cultural, aesthetic and subjective experiences in the midst of modernization). As Laurel Kendall points out, there is plenty of work that analyzes the process of Korean modernization, but "the living of Korean modernity is subtler stuff and has received far less attention." Laurel Kendall, ed., *Under Construction: The Gendering of Modernity, Class, and Consumption in the Republic of Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), p.2.

colonized East versus colonizing West, or civilized versus primitive).⁷ Unlike most European missionaries, who went to places that had been colonized by their home countries, American missionaries came to Korea when Korea was facing colonization by Japan—the only non-Western, non-Christian imperial power at the turn of the twentieth century. One finds at least a tripartite split in the power dynamics between Japan as the colonizer, Korea as the colonized and the West/the USA as a competing imperial power. This not-so-straight-forward location of missionaries in a Korea colonized by Japan is a crucial backdrop for our understanding of the nature of ‘the modern’ in the Korea mission.

Second, unlike the methodology of previous studies, which have tended to privilege theological, institutional and political analysis,⁸ this article pays special attention to the missionary discourse that was an integral part of the missionary enterprise. Emphasizing the interplay between institutional/political changes and discursive formation as mutually indispensable forces that constitute so-called reality (or rather our understanding of reality), the article explores the ways in which missionaries understood “the modern” and their perception of their role in making the particular history of modernity in Korea.⁹ Here, I emphasize that the missionaries’ sense of modernity and their cultural and religious identities were *in the making* through their interaction with the local culture and particular historical circumstances. Just as the West’s sense of cultural identity was constructed in its colonial project overseas,¹⁰ so the mission ideology was re-articulated *in response to* the particularities of the mission field. This mission ideology was given voice by individual missionaries in their written narratives, conditioned by the unique subject position of each missionary.

Third, very few studies on the Korea mission have focused on gender as a significant category of analysis, especially when it comes to political issues. Just as discourse on Korean nationalism and modernization has been hyper-masculine, so studies on the Korea mission have invested heavily in male missionaries as the main players. As recent studies show, the experience of women missionaries as a subordinate gender but a ‘superior’ race reveals a more complicated picture of the mission field.¹¹ Thus it is crucial to incorporate women missionaries’ experience and perspectives into our analysis in order to untangle the complex web of ideas and activities that male and female missionaries put forward in imagining ‘modern’ Korea in the face of Japanese colonialism.

/Wells, *New God, New Nation*; Donald Clark, *Christianity in Modern Korea* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1986); David Chung, *Syncretism: The Religious Context of Christian Beginnings in Korea* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001); Chung-shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea*; Wi-Jo Kang, *Christ and Caesar in Modern Korea: A History of Christianity and Politics* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997); Chai-shin Yu, ed., *Korea and Christianity* (Seoul and Berkeley, Cal.: Korean Scholar Press, 1996); and, No Ch’ijun, *Ilcheba Han’guk Kidokkyo Minjok Undong Yon’gu*.

⁹ James Hevia argues for the power of discourse in shaping certain realities in the context of conflicts between Western missionaries and “the Other.” See James Hevia, “Leaving a Brand on China: Missionary Discourse in the Wake of the Boxer Movement,” *Modern China* 18.3 (July 1992): 304-32. See also Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage, 1997); Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

¹⁰ Timothy Mitchell, ed., *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

¹¹ A number of research studies pay special attention to gender as an analytical category in the context of Western imperialism and the foreign missionary enterprise. To mention just a few examples: Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984); Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1992); Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999); Mary Taylor Huber and Nancy Lutkehaus, eds., *Gendered Missions: Women and Men in Missionary Discourse and Practice* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1996).

⁷ Although one can find missionary writings that are largely based on the “civilized west backward east” world view, experienced missionaries challenged the binary approach to “the Other” and rebuked the popular image

/of Korea as “primitive” in travelogues and newspaper correspondences. See “Where is Korea?” *The Korea Mission Field* 3.12 (December 1907): 186-7; “Global trotters,” *The Korea Mission Field* 4.1 (January 1908): 10.

⁸ Representative studies include Kenneth

¹² Horace Underwood, *The Call of Korea* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), p.6.

¹³ William Newton Blair, *Gold in Korea* (Topeka, Kans.: H.M. Ives & Sons, Inc., 1957), pp.60–2.

¹⁴ The term ‘modern’ itself has close ties with Christianity as it derives from the fifth-century Latin term *modernus*, which distinguished a ‘Christian present’ from a ‘pagan past.’ In the nineteenth century, however, Western modernity was defined by much more complex philosophical, sociopolitical and aesthetic terms that were not always mutually compatible and were often indeed in competition. See Barry Smart, “Modernity, Postmodernity and the Present,” in *Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity*, ed., Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 1990), pp.14–30.

¹⁵ Prasenjit Duara, “The Discourse of Civilization and Pan-Asianism,” *Journal of World History* 12.1 (2001): 99–130.

This article focuses on the historical period between 1905 and 1910. This period is of great importance because from the missionaries’ point of view it was arguably one of the most exhilarating times with the spectacular growth in church membership, culminating in the Great Revival movement of 1907 which was, in Bishop M.C. Harris’ words, equivalent to “the divine inauguration of the Christian Church in the land of Chosen.”¹² But it was also “the church’s testing” time owing to the political tensions involving US foreign policies, the Japanese colonial project and Korean anti-Japanese movements.¹³ I argue that during this unique historical period, both the public and private discourses of missionaries reveal a particular meaning of the modern embedded in the mission ideology that was being articulated in response to the turbulent political situation. Missionary narrative strategies were by no means unitary or homogeneous. On the contrary, depending on the subject positions of the missionaries, different discursive strategies were employed to indicate political and cultural views concerning “the Other”—namely Korea and Japan—as well as the USA/the West. Moreover, I argue that these diverse narratives center on the idea of Christian modernity as the universal path of history. By ‘Christian modernity’ I mean an ideology which advocates the inevitable historical movement toward modernity in material and technological aspects but which also places the moral and spiritual role of Christianity at the core of that enterprise.¹⁴ As Prasenjit Duara points out, during the nineteenth century “the singular conception of Civilization based originally upon Christian and Enlightenment values came not only to be dominant but to be the only criterion where sovereignty could be claimed in the world.”¹⁵ The notion of Christian modernity needs to be understood in the context of the dominance of Western modernity and the claim that moral Christian civilization is superior to all others. I contend that while religion was deeply implicated in the imperial politics of Japan and the USA, the idea of Christian modernity running through different narratives emerges as a powerful way for the missionaries to resolve the tensions caused by the political turmoil intertwined with racial and cultural clashes. Caught between a ‘heathen’ Korea and a modern but non-Christian Japan, missionaries tried to locate and articulate “the Others” *vis-à-vis* the presumed superior Christian civilization. In so doing, the missionaries (intentionally or unwittingly) tended to contribute to the justification of both Western and Japanese imperialism—not by taking a position of outright support for any imperial project, but rather by putting forth the idea that true modernity needed to be centered in spiritual values, and that moral superiority was the quality that the mission could provide. I further argue that despite the relative success of Japan as a modern imperial power, Japan was an expedient symbol that missionaries could use to justify the limits of secular modernity and the superiority of Christian ethics as the principal element of true modernity.

For the remainder of the article, I first describe the pivotal historical context from 1905 to 1910, during which the political crisis in Korea was at its

peak and the US foreign mission boards of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches—the two most prominent foreign missions in Korea—accentuated with urgency their long-standing official policy of the separation of religion from politics. In an effort to elucidate the interplay between collective institutional tactics and individual discursive strategies in dealing with the politically volatile situation, the second part of the article examines the discourse of individual missionaries in the light of their diverse subject positions, such as gender and status in the mission organization. I specifically analyze official/public writings and unofficial/private writings of seven missionaries, namely Homer Hulbert (Methodist, served 1886–1906), Horace Allen (Presbyterian, served 1884–1905), William Arthur Noble and Mattie Noble (Methodist, served 1892–1934), James Gale (Presbyterian, served 1888–1928), Horace Underwood (Presbyterian, served 1885–1916), and Annie Baird (Presbyterian, served 1891–1916). The discussion attempts to capture the diversity of individual missionary discourses in response to official mission policies. I do not claim that the missionaries chosen here represent the complete picture of missionary discourse, but their discursive strategies are comprehensive enough to show the multilayered views of the modern, the mission and the specific political situation. These diverse discourses from Korea reveal how missionaries tried to tackle the not-so-straightforward relations among the USA, Japan and Korea and envision their unique role in the mission differently; even so, the principle of Christian modernity runs through all their narratives. I conclude that the idea of Christian modernity embedded in the various discourses was a particularly powerful vehicle for justifying the superiority of Christian morality in the face of Japan's transformation as a 'heathen' nation into a modern imperial power, Korea's 'deterioration' from its old civilization, and the US government's complicity with the Japanese colonial project.

Navigating Between Religion and Politics: Guidelines from the Boards of Foreign Missions

In the history of the Korea mission, the period between 1905 and 1910 is characterized by two interlocking changes. One was the explosive rate of conversion to Christianity among Koreans. The other was the transition from a sovereign state to a colony of Japan, marked by the Korean-Japanese Protectorate Treaty in 1905 and the 1907 Treaty that resulted in the abdication of Emperor Kojong.¹⁶ These two interrelated transformations offered missionaries both great opportunities for spreading the gospel and a politically difficult position for themselves between the colonial government of Japan, US foreign policies toward East Asia and colonized Korea. The number of Koreans converted to Christianity increased most rapidly during this time, especially after Korea had been devastated in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–05). According to statistical data, the estimated

¹⁶ The royal title "king" was changed to "emperor" in 1897 in an attempt to eliminate the implication of the subordination of the Korean king to the Chinese emperor, and thus to declare Korea's independence and sovereignty. Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp.72–8, and L. George Paik, *The History of Protestant Missions in Korea 1832–1910* (fourth ed.: Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1987), pp.263–358.

¹⁷ Sung-Deuk Oak, "The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea: North American Missionaries' Attitudes Towards Korean Religions, 1884–1910," (PhD diss., Boston University, 2002), p.487. Oak refers to "Korean Christians" as communicants (members who take Communion), Catechumens (probationers who are studying the catechism) and beginners.

¹⁸ Yun Kyöngno, *Han'guk Kūndaesa ūi Kidokkyojöklbae* [A Christian understanding of modern Korean History] (Seoul: Yökminsa, 1997), pp.19–31.

¹⁹ M.C. Harris, "Japan and Korea, Report of Bishop M.C. Harris," *Journal of the 25th Delegated General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 1908, p.857.

²⁰ "Annual Report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA," 1908, p.268.

²¹ Arthur Judson Brown, *Report on a Second Visit to China, Japan and Korea 1909* (with a discussion of some problems of mission work) (New York: Board and Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1909), p.85.

²² Paik, *History of Protestant Missions*, pp.356–7; No Taejun, "1907-yön Kaesinkyö Taebuhüng Undong ūi Yöksajök Sönggyök" [Historical characteristics of the great revival movement of the Protestant church in 1907], *Han'guk Kidokkyosa Yön'guboe Sosik* [Newsletter of the Research Institute on the History of Korean Christianity] 15 (1987): 4–18; Song Könhö, "A History of the Christian Movement in Korea," *International Review of Mission* 74 (January 1985): 19–36; and, Kang Tongu, "Han'guk Kidokkyo nün Minjokjuüi iötna."

²³ Yi Man'yöl, "Hanmal Kumi Cheguk ūi Taehan Sönkyö Chöngch'ek e taehan Yön'gu," [A study of the Korean mission policies of the USA and European nations in the late Chosön Dynasty] *Tongbang Hakji* [Journal of the East] 84 (1994): 44–5; Kim Süngt'ae, "Hanmal Ilche Ch'imnyakki Ilche wa Sönkyosa ūi Kwangye e taehan Yön'gu (1894–1910)" [A study of the relationship between Japanese imperial power and missionaries during the Japanese encroachment in the Late

number of Korean Christians of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches of the USA combined shot up from 11,905 in 1898 to 188,341 in 1910.¹⁷ The Great Revival movement of 1907, first triggered by a prayer meeting in Wönsan in 1903, was a watershed, marking spectacular success in recruiting converts.¹⁸ At the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1908, Bishop M.C. Harris reported the "unprecedented prosperity" enjoyed by all the churches in Korea, and attributed it to "the great conflict" (the war) that had "profoundly moved the religious sentiments of the people."¹⁹ In the same year, the Presbyterians reported that Korea was the "most readily conquerable of all the places where God in his providence has led our Church."²⁰ Arthur Judson Brown, the Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, noted in 1909 that "it now looks as if Korea would [sic] be the first of the non-Christian nations to become evangelized."²¹ There are numerous explanations for this conspicuous growth in Christian church membership, ranging from psychological and spiritual despair caused by war, poverty and corruption to political motivation for national sovereignty against Japanese encroachment.²² The missionaries and their churches, however, were in a delicate position, responding to the political turmoil and its impact on Koreans who were searching for alternatives to their old customs and belief system. There can be no doubt that the primary goal of missionaries was to convey Christian messages, but missionaries were often taken not only as new spiritual leaders but also as a powerful force in protecting Koreans from the encroachments of Japan and Russia.²³ A report from the Sönch'ön station in 1905 succinctly describes how desperate Koreans perceived the USA and the missionaries: "The American flag over the Mission Compound inspired confidence even in the heathen Koreans, and the American missionary, with his mysterious power of commanding the friendship of both sides of the conflict, gained tremendous prestige."²⁴

Regardless of the Koreans' expectations of missionaries as either purely spiritual leaders, advocates of western modernity or allies of anti-Japanese movements,²⁵ American missionaries overseas were often bound by broader US foreign policies as well as those of the mission boards at home (which

/Chosön Dynasty], *Han'guk Kidokkyo wa Yöksa* [Korean Christianity and history] 6 (1997): 82.

²⁴ "Annual Report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA," 1905, p.253. George Trumbull Ladd also points out "the political interest of Koreans" who "seem friendly to citizens of foreign Christian countries—especially of the USA—in order to secure help for themselves in an appeal to interfere with the Japanese adminis-

/tration." See his book, *In Korea with Marquis Ito* (London: Longmans, 1908), pp.11–12.

²⁵ Yi Man'yöl makes the important point that while previous studies have tended to expect missionaries to join Koreans in anti-Japanese movements, this is hardly a reasonable expectation. See his article, "Hanmal Kumi Cheguk ūi Taehan Sönkyö Chöngch'ek e daehan Yön'gu," p.3.

became pro-Japanese in order to ensure the success of the mission work).²⁶ In 1897, by direction of the Secretary of State, missionaries along with other American citizens residing in Korea were instructed to “strictly refrain from any expression of opinion or giving advice concerning the internal management of the country, or from any intermeddling in its political questions.”²⁷ Keenly aware of the exceptional patriotism that the Korean church tended to have and also of “a danger that Christianity may be politicalized,” the mission board urged missionaries to exercise the “greatest prudence and caution.”²⁸ The difficulty loomed large especially when Western powers, including the USA and the United Kingdom, endorsed Japan’s colonial project through bilateral agreements, such as the Anglo-Japanese Alliances of 1902 and 1905 and the secret Taft-Katsura Agreement of 1905, in pursuit of their own national interests.²⁹ Under these circumstances, F.F. Ellinwood speculated in 1905 that “Our missionary work in the coming decades, whether we will or not, and whether for good or bad, will be more and more closely related to the influence of diplomacy and commerce.”³⁰ In this tangled network of influences, the mission board adopted an “entirely non-committal and neutral policy in reference to the national problems” as their official choice in dealing with both the Japanese colonial regime and anti-Japanese Koreans.³¹

In this tripartite power dynamic, leading politicians and high-ranking mission officers used racial discourse to justify their civilizing mission and imperial ambitions. Immediately after the Korean-Japanese Protectorate Treaty was proclaimed in November 1905, the Roosevelt administration pulled its delegation out of Seoul, ending Korean-American diplomatic relations (which had been existence since 1882).³² Behind this diplomatic decision was mutual acquiescence on the part of the USA and Japan to each other’s imperial ambitions (i.e., the Philippines for the USA and Korea for Japan), with an expectation that Japan would act as “a proxy for American interests by holding open the door for commerce in East Asia” and an increasing appreciation in the West of the hegemonic power of Japan over East Asia.³³ Being a Darwinian in his views on race and international politics, Theodore Roosevelt believed that “all the great masterful races have been fighting races,” and considered Anglo-Saxons to be the most advanced race.³⁴ From this point of view Japan, while not an Anglo-Saxon country, had joined the imperial league with its “wonderful military spirit.” Roosevelt wrote, “The Japs have played our game because they have played the game of civilized mankind.”³⁵ “Our game” or “the game of civilized mankind” was clearly imperial expansion, in which a “civilized” nation conquered “backward” ones.³⁶ In this logic, the presumed racial hierarchy justifies aggression as a manifestation of racial superiority, and thus the imperial project of the West and Japan gains legitimacy.

High-ranking officers in the boards of foreign missions buttressed the USA’s foreign policy toward Japan using similar racial discourse but with more emphasis on the spiritual role of Christianity in this changing political scene. For example, during his visit to Korea, Japan and China in 1909, Arthur Judson Brown asked, “How is your work being affected by the rapidly

²⁶ Ibid.; William R. Hutchison, “Modernism and Missions: The Liberal Search for an Exportable Christianity, 1875–1935,” in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp.110–31; and, Paul A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese and Diplomats* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1958).

²⁷ John M.B. Sill’s circular letter, “To Citizens of the United States present in Korea,” 11 May 1897, cited in Nak Heong Yang, *Reformed Social Ethics and the Korean Church* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), p.112.

²⁸ “Report on the Mission in Korea of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission by Robert E. Speer, Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA,” 1897, pp.32–7.

²⁹ In the Taft-Katsura Agreement, the United States acknowledged Japan’s interest in Korea, and this acknowledgment was reciprocated with Japan’s support of US interests in the Philippines. In the Anglo-Japanese Alliances of 1902 and 1905, Britain’s interest in China was recognized in exchange for its acknowledgment of Japan’s interest in Korea.

³⁰ Cited in Paik, *History of Protestant Missions*, p.269.

³¹ “Annual Report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA,” 1908, p.269.

³² “Annual Report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA,” 1906, p.237.

³³ Joseph M. Henning, *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American-Japanese Relations* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p.138.

³⁴ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), pp.126–7.

³⁵ Frank Ninkovich, “Theodore Roosevelt: Civilization as Ideology,” *Diplomatic History* 10 (Summer 1986): 238.

³⁶ Ki-Jung Kim, “Theodore Roosevelt’s image of the world and United States Foreign Policy Toward Korea, 1901–1905,” *Korea Journal* 35.4 (1995): 39–53.

³⁷ Brown, *Report on a Second Visit*, p.10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.12–15.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.63–78.

changing social, political, commercial and intellectual conditions in Asia and the growing spirit of Asiatic independence and self-consciousness?”³⁷ Based on his observations of the fast-changing political and economic circumstances in East Asia, he made fundamental distinctions between East Asians. He argued that Japan is characterized by “solidarity” and “the remarkable oneness” that brings it success in politics, war and commerce. In contrast, China’s “conspicuous absence of centralization” and its people’s “indifference” lead to its lack of unity as a solidified nation. The Koreans are “less virile, less ambitious, less independent in spirit,” and the Korean temperament is “more emotional than that of the Japanese and Chinese.” And thus it is “comparatively easy to reach his [the Korean’s] heart and to arouse his sympathies. This is one reason why Christianity has made more rapid progress [in Korea].”³⁸ In this comparison, Brown relates the status of Japan, China and Korea in the world system to their respective racial and cultural characteristics, implying why Japan succeeded in its imperial projects while the others failed, and hinting at why “emotional” Koreans offer fertile soil for planting Christianity. In a report on Korea bearing the subtitle, “The problem of evangelistic success and political relationship [*sic*] among a helpless people,” he reasoned that Korea’s lack of “imperial ambitions” and “independence” eventually led it to become the subject of Japan. He writes:

Korea’s ancient history is one of honorable achievement but the Koreans today have not improved upon the inventions of their ancestors and appear to have *deteriorated* ... the Koreans, unlike the Japanese, are not a masterful people with imperial ambitions ... [their] independence was seldom more than nominal. The Koreans were pulled and hauled by contending powers until the nation developed an attitude of hopeless submissiveness or rather of despair George Kennan writes: “They [Koreans] are not only unattractive and unsympathetic to a Westerner who feels no spiritual interest in them, but they appear more and more to be lazy, dirty, unscrupulous, dishonest, incredibly ignorant, and wholly lacking in the self-respect that comes from a consciousness of individual power and worth. They are not undeveloped savages: they are the rotten product of a *decayed* Oriental civilization.” There is a great deal more to the Korean people than these pessimistic utterances would indicate With good government, a fair chance, and a Christian basis of morals, the Koreans would develop into a fine people I confess to sympathy also for the Japanese. They were forced to occupy Korea to prevent a Russian occupation which would have menaced their own independence as a nation. They found conditions so unspeakably bad that drastic measures of reconstruction were necessary.³⁹ [*emphasis added*].

These statements by Brown represent his central framework for justifying Japanese and Western imperialism and the necessity for Christian influence. He claims that despite “ancient” Korea’s high achievements in civilization, its lack of “imperial ambitions” and scant experience of “independence” have led to the deterioration of its civilization and to its colonization by Japan, echoing Japanese colonial discourse on the Korean national character as “dependence”

(*sadaejui* 사대주의, serving the great).⁴⁰ Japan, by contrast, with its imperial ambitions, “more swiftly responded to the touch of the modern world” and “organized their government, their army and their navy in accordance with scientific methods,”⁴¹ reaching a point where “it is not easy for the white races to compete with them.”⁴² Looking at the “deteriorating” Korean civilization and the rising modern power of Japan, Brown envisioned how Korea would benefit from the “good government” of a Japanese colonial regime, together with “a Christian basis of morals” that could be offered only by the missionaries themselves. Brown’s evaluation of Japan as a modern nation-state was by no means unusual at the time. Heated debates on the status of Japan in the hierarchy of civilizations were rampant among Westerners in Japan, and by the early twentieth century Japan was perceived as America’s “Yankee brother in the Orient.”⁴³ A statement by the missionary Sidney L. Gulick succinctly represents how the Western perception of Japan had been transformed. He wrote in 1903 that “This ‘little nation of little people,’ which we have been so ready to condemn as ‘heathen’ and ‘uncivilized,’ had in a single generation made itself into a world power.”⁴⁴ This changing view of Japan went hand in hand with Japan’s orchestrated efforts through social and political reforms to emulate modern Western forms of society. However, despite the growing tendency to acknowledge alternative definitions of civilization, there remained a stubbornly lingering view that “modern civilization was synonymous with whiteness and Christianity.”⁴⁵

The Western image of Japan as heathen and non-white, but modern, was strategically employed in the official missionary discourse to validate the limitations of secular modernity and the absolute necessity of Christianity for a truly modern civilization. As missionaries in Korea tried to manoeuvre their delicate position between Japanese power and anti-Japanese Koreans, their discourses advocate an expedient division of labor in which Japan as a modern colonial power would take up its role as modernizer and missionaries would provide Christian morality as the basis of a new Korea. For example, in 1905, the Annual Report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA included reports from Korea that illustrated the impact of Japan. It stated:

The latter [the Japanese] are now in absolute possession of the country. ... As a result of the Japanese ascendancy, Korea is now undergoing a process of transformation. Railways are being rapidly extended, roads are being made, laws are being more justly administered, and abuses are being corrected The fact is that Korea is therefore in the throes of a new birth. That the outcome will be beneficial is undoubted.⁴⁶

Despite this strong endorsement of Japan as a modernizing force, the material modernity Japan was capable of bringing to Korea was not deemed to be enough. Arthur Brown stated that “the position which they [the Japanese] have now won in the world in general and in the Far East in particular is one

⁴⁰ Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895–1919*.

⁴¹ Arthur Judson Brown, *New Forces in Old China: An Unwelcome but Inevitable Awakening* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1904), p.305; Brown, *Report on a Second Visit*, pp.17–20.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.20.

⁴³ Henning, *Outposts of Civilization*, p.140.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.146.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.163.

⁴⁶ “Annual Report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA,” 1905, p.238.

⁴⁷ Brown, *Report on a Second Visit*, p.17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.16, 28–30.

⁴⁹ Kiyoshi Nakarai, *Relations between the Government and Christianity in Chosen* (Educational Affairs Bureau, Government-General of Chosen, 1921), p.6

⁵⁰ Cited in Oak, “The Indigenization of Christianity in Korea,” p.33.

⁵¹ Kim, “Hanmal Ilche Ch'imnyakki Ilche wa Sönkyosa üi Kwangye e taehan Yön'gu,” pp.78–88.

⁵² “Annual Report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA,” 1905, p.238. The report states: “The Japanese Government is tolerant of other religions and is particularly friendly to American Protestant missionaries, so that we have nothing to fear, but, on the contrary, everything to hope from the triumph of Japan.” See also James Gale, “Information furnished by the chairman of the educational committee of the General Council to the missionaries in Korea,” *The Korea Mission Field* 4.10 (October 1908): 146–7.

⁵³ Brown, *Report on a Second Visit*, p.79.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.82.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.81–3.

⁵⁶ “Annual Report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA,” 1908, p.269; 1907, pp.251–2.

which can be held only by military force” because Japan lacks moral and spiritual power.⁴⁷ Brown welcomed the propositions of several prominent Japanese politicians, including Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (the first Resident-General in Korea), who stated “1) that no nation could prosper without material improvement; 2) that material prosperity cannot last long without a moral backbone; 3) that the strongest backbone is that which has a religious sanction behind it.” But Brown believed that “they still need our help” because any spiritual element was “a new world” to the Japanese.⁴⁸ Statements by Itō Hirobumi were consistent with the idea of this division of labor. He remarked to Bishop M.C. Harris in 1906 that “As for the political side of the Korean problem, I shall try to see that all is right, but with regard to the moral and spiritual salvation of the Korean people, I ask you and your fellow missionaries to take it up. We shall then be able to complete our work in Chosen.”⁴⁹ He also told missionaries in 1907: “You are here to help the Korean morally and religiously, and I am here to help them [*sic*] politically.”⁵⁰

Itō's conciliatory policy toward missionaries and his support for their moral and spiritual role enabled them, at least in part, to maintain a friendly relationship with the Japanese administration.⁵¹ There was a great sense of relief among missionaries that the Japanese authorities would guarantee the freedom of religion and mission education.⁵² However, missionaries were also keenly aware that explicit cooperation with Japan would offend Christian Koreans, who were “united in the common object of opposing the present administration.”⁵³ Arthur Brown suggested that there were four possible attitudes for missionaries toward the Japanese: 1) “opposition”; 2) “aloofness”; 3) “co-operation”; and 4) “loyal recognition.” “Aloofness,” he noted, was impossible because no one could ignore the government. Both “opposition” and “co-operation” were objectionable because “missionaries are not called upon to ally themselves either with or against a government,” and “if there is any sphere in the world from which they should resolutely exclude themselves, it is the political.”⁵⁴ Brown recommended “loyal recognition” as the best policy because it was “in accord with the example of Christ, who loyally submitted himself and advised his Apostles to submit themselves to a far worse government than the Japanese.”⁵⁵ The difference between “loyal recognition” and “cooperation” is not readily apparent. However, when the mission board proudly reported that missionaries in Korea had shown “most commendable discretion in *cooperating* with the Japanese authorities in allaying distrust and opposition on the part of the discontented Koreans” [*emphasis added*],⁵⁶ there are grounds for interpreting Brown's argument for an apolitical stand as political in essence.

Bishop M.C. Harris of the Methodist Church argued for exactly the same principle as Brown did, but he went further in support of Japanese rule in Korea. Acknowledging that “the church in Korea occupies a delicate position,” Harris stressed that missionaries in Korea “give themselves absolutely and wholly to the work of evangelizing the people. They are not connected,

directly or indirectly, with any domestic or any political problems.”⁵⁷ The only true mission is to “save Korea” through evangelization. Interestingly enough, his endorsement of the separation of religion from politics seems to blur the boundary between them when he talks about Japan. Harris, known as a strong advocate for Japan and a particularly close friend of Itō,⁵⁸ defends missionaries from the suspicion of aiding anti-Japanese Koreans, stating that:

Together with all the missionaries in Korea, I can assure you that our missionaries, with good intentions toward Japan, strive to promote the well-being of the Koreans and, at the same time, seek our national interests. Please understand that missionaries are not the enemy of the Japanese people. Rather, we, as the most faithful friends of Japan, work in concert to promote well-being through Christian reconciliation between the Japanese and Korean peoples. In my opinion, resident-general Ito’s policies deserve the highest praise. I would like to confess that I am the staunchest supporter of the resident-general’s rule of Korea.⁵⁹

Harris accordingly promoted a friendly relationship with Japan, which resulted in his gaining a reputation as “an agent of the Japanese government rather than a Bishop in the Christian church.”⁶⁰ Although he highlighted the “Christian reconciliation of the Japanese and Korean peoples” as the spiritual contribution of missionaries in the politically trying times, his extensive political commitment in support of Japan significantly skewed the publicly claimed principle of the separation of religion and politics.

Confronted by the intervention of non-Christian Japan as a colonial power in Korea, the mission boards endorsed Japan’s imperial ambitions and modernizing forces, but at the same time they asserted the importance of Christian morality as the first and indispensable basis for modernization. Arthur Brown’s rhetorical question, “What is civilization without the gospel?” neatly encapsulates this idea of Christian modernity.⁶¹ As George Thomas has pointed out, “the early conservative, evangelical movement resisted not modernity *per se* but rather a particular understanding of it.”⁶² The missionaries’ particular understanding of modernity magnified their essential role in shaping ‘true’ civilization and modernity beyond material and technological advancement. Caught in between two ‘heathen’ countries—Korea and Japan—as well as between anti-Japanese Koreans and a US foreign policy that was favorable to Japan, missionaries tried to navigate the political situation in order to take advantage of the most opportune time for religious expansion. The missionary discourse shaped by this political and spiritual urgency in “Korea’s crisis hour”⁶³ produced an ideology of Christian modernity that reinforced the essential role of Christianity in shaping a true modernity that went beyond secular states.

⁵⁷ Harris, “Japan and Korea, Report of Bishop M.C. Harris,” p.864.

⁵⁸ Paik, *History of Protestant Missions*, p.414.

⁵⁹ Song, “A History of the Christian Movement in Korea,” p.23.

⁶⁰ A letter from Walter Smith to Arthur Brown, dated 30 January 1908. Cited in Paik, *History of Protestant Missions*, p.414.

⁶¹ Brown, *New Forces in Old China*, p.127.

⁶² George M. Thomas, “Cultural Analysis of Religious Change and Movements,” *Sociological Inquiry* 66.3 (1996): 290.

⁶³ Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, p.6.

Vanguards or Skeptical Observers: Narrative Strategies of Individual Missionaries

It is one matter that the official policy of the boards of foreign missions insisted on the strict separation of religion and politics, but it is quite another how individual missionaries in the field understood and reacted to their specific historical circumstances. No doubt the spreading of the gospel was the shared and most important principle among missionaries. But some were in a quandary about the extent to which they could or should involve themselves in national politics, and this seriously complicated their evangelical work. There was a delicate line between purely spiritual endeavors and a certain level of sociopolitical commitment, leading to tensions between missionary obligations to the general guidelines from the mission boards and some level of solidarity with the Koreans they worked with. Within this delicate and complex situation, each missionary envisioned and represented what would be best for Korea and what Koreans should do, using various writing strategies in which they expressed their support, opposition, discreet accommodation or refusal of the official policy of the mission boards. In doing so, they tried to make sense of their work and commitment, articulating the idea of Christian modernity in diverse ways. The diversity stems from their subject positions in terms of their specific relations to the foreign mission and the US or Korean governments. It is also related to the timing of the publication of their work—either before or after the Great Revival movement of 1907, and in relation to the level of political crisis in Korea in the face of Japanese colonization.

The missionaries upon whom this article focuses were among the most prominent and influential figures in the Korean mission field. In their capacity as leaders, they also demonstrated fairly distinct strategies for the mission work at this particular historical juncture in Korea. Some figures, such as Horace Allen and Homer Hulbert, who had earlier served as missionaries but who were not officially missionaries during the period under consideration here, participated in political and diplomatic endeavors, producing much more politically explicit discourse. The other missionaries discussed here, who continued in the evangelical work of the mission, were expected to follow the general mission policies from the home church that insisted on the strict separation of religious endeavor from any political stance. These missionaries nonetheless voiced different points of view, and I take the timing of their writings as an important factor in the fashioning of their narrative strategies. For the sake of clarity, I categorize missionary discourses into three groups, highlighting some unique characteristics of each discourse to illustrate the ways in which individual missionaries responded to the policies of the US government and the mission boards, and more importantly to the rapidly changing political and religious scene on the eve of Korea's colonization by Japan.

Outside the Mission: The Political Engagement of Homer Hulbert and Horace Allen

The careers of Horace Allen (1858–1932) and Homer Hulbert (1863–1949) are unique in that both spent rather short periods of time as missionaries, serving mostly in the roles of politician, diplomat or teacher. When Korea was turned into a semi-colony of Japan at the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, Allen and Hulbert were no longer missionaries but were already engaged in the political arena as diplomats, representing either the US government (Allen) or the Korean government (Hulbert). Their capacity as diplomats at this time significantly informs the tone and content of their writings. They were not bound by the boards of the foreign missions, and were thus in a position to speak their minds freely. In addition, their discourse tends to reflect their engagement in Korean affairs over the years, with issues ranging from evangelical to economic, cultural and political. In order to understand the ways in which Allen and Hulbert portrayed the Korean situation after 1905, it is appropriate to briefly sketch their respective career paths.

Horace Allen entered Korea in 1884 as physician to the American Legation in Seoul. He was the first resident Protestant missionary in Korea, sent by the US Presbyterian Church. After some disputes with fellow missionaries, he left the Mission in 1887 and was appointed Secretary of the Korean Legation in Washington. In 1889, he was reappointed by the Mission Board, but quit the position to become the Secretary of the American Legation in Seoul in 1890, being promoted to Minister Resident and Consul General in 1897. His final involvement in Korean politics was in the capacity of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, until he was recalled by the Roosevelt administration in 1905. The recall is attributed to Allen's political record of interfering in Korean domestic affairs against US State Department instructions and his anti-Japanese activities, which often provoked anger and concern in US officials.⁶⁴ It should be noted, however, that as a US diplomat Allen always privileged US economic and political interests in Asia, and that his anti-Japanese attitude stemmed from his keen awareness of the potential damage that the rise of Japan could wreak upon those interests.⁶⁵

Unlike Allen with his diplomatic career, Homer Hulbert distinguished himself as teacher, intellectual and cultural observer. He first came to Korea in 1886 as a teacher at Yugyōng Kongwōn 育英公院, the first modern school sponsored by the Korean government; he left in 1891, however, when the school closed. He returned to Korea in 1893 as a Methodist missionary with a special assignment to the Trilingual Press, a publishing house of the Methodist Mission located in Seoul. In 1897, he was asked by the king of Korea to take up the post of principal of the Imperial Normal School (*Hansōng Sabōm Hakkyo* 漢城師範學校—later the Imperial Middle School), where he served until 1905. His lengthy involvement in government-sponsored

⁶⁴ Wayne Patterson, *The Korean Frontier in America: Immigration to Hawai'i, 1896–1910* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988), pp.38–46; Paik, *History of Protestant Missions*, pp.269–70.

⁶⁵ Min, *Han'guk Minjok Kyohoe Hyōng-sōngron*, pp.184–9. Japan was aware of Allen's opposition to its growing influence in Korea. As a result, Japan expressed concern about the appointment of Allen as US Consul General in 1897. See Kim, "Hanmal Ilche Ch'imnyakki Ilche wa Sōnkyosa ūi Kwangye e taehan Yōn'gu," pp.73–4.

⁶⁶ While other missionaries, such as Horace Underwood and Henry Appenzeller, emphasized purely spiritual elements in the activities of the YMCA, Hulbert was also interested in social reform-oriented educational programs through which, he believed, young Koreans could be enlightened and become a force for the modernization of Korea. Yun, *Han'guk ūndae ūi Kidokkyosajōk Ihae*, pp.219–20.

⁶⁷ Homer Hulbert, "Editorial Comment," *The Korea Review* 4 (1904): 70–4.

⁶⁸ Clarence Norwood Weems, ed., *Hulbert's History of Korea* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), pp.46–54; Yun, *Han'guk Kūndae ūi Kidokkyosajōk Ihae*, pp.205–50.

⁶⁹ Homer Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1906), p.9.

⁷⁰ Horace Allen, *Things Korean. A Collection of Sketches and Anecdotes Missionary and Diplomatic* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1908), pp.7–8.

⁷¹ Thomas F. Millard, *The New Far East* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), pp.80–123.

⁷² Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, p.224.

⁷³ Allen, *Things Korean*, p.8.

⁷⁴ Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, pp.4, 78–9.

⁷⁵ For an example, see Edward Lawrence, "Missions in Korea," *The Gospel in All Lands* (June 1887): 273–4.

educational enterprises in pursuit of modernization was extended to his participation in the YMCA as its first president in Korea in 1903.⁶⁶ Hulbert's political involvement began more explicitly when the Korean emperor commissioned him to appeal to President Roosevelt in a (failed) attempt to prevent Japan from taking over Korea's sovereignty in 1905. The climax of his political career came at the Hague Peace Conference of 1907, to which he was appointed ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to all the treaty powers except Japan. Hulbert had at one time considered conditions in Japan and Japanese influence to be an emblem of enlightenment and social progress in East Asia.⁶⁷ However, his observation of the Russo-Japanese War and his mission to Washington and the Hague dramatically changed his perception of Japan.⁶⁸

The publications of Allen and Hulbert reflect their direct and unique involvement in the political situation right after the 1905 Protectorate Treaty. The explicit goal of Hulbert's book entitled *The Passing of Korea* (1906) was to help readers to "find a narrative of the course of events which led up to this crisis."⁶⁹ Similarly, Allen's *Things Korean* (1908) was intended to bring to public attention how and why Korea had arrived at its current condition.⁷⁰ Both also referred to an influential book by Thomas Millard, titled *The New Far East* and published in 1906, which reveals how Japan coerced Korea into signing the Protectorate Treaty and used misinformation to create political perceptions that were to Japanese advantage.⁷¹ Furthermore, Hulbert attributed the cause of Korea's crisis, at least partially, to the "contemptuous attitude and the precipitate action of the American government ... which involves the very life of the Korean nation."⁷² Allen agreed that

"we [Americans] deserted them in their time of need and ignored the solemn agreement we had entered into with them as an inducement for their abandoning the centuries-old position of exclusion and non-intercourse and emerging into the dazzling glare of treaty relations."⁷³

In explaining the course of events leading to Korea's crisis, both Allen and Hulbert make a sharp contrast between 'old' Korea and Japan and their contemporary counterparts. The crux of that discourse is a highlighting of the dramatic reversal in status of the two nations. That is, the glory of ancient Korea is contrasted with its current state of "deterioration," while in comparison, "a very inferior state of Japan" has magically risen to become a modern imperial power.⁷⁴ It is reasoned that the superior status of old Korea *vis-à-vis* old Japan was dramatically reversed when Japan actively promoted its modern reform program of "civilization and enlightenment" (*bummei kaika* 文明開化), emulating Western civilization and transforming itself into a modern imperial state, while Korea remained aloof from the rapidly changing world. When Korea finally tried to catch up with modern trends, Japan had already mastered the West's imperial ways. The contrast between old Korea and contemporary Korea was not new in the missionary discourse.⁷⁵

From the very beginning of the Korean mission, the contrast was repeatedly used to further justify the role of missionaries as legitimate, superior agents in restoring Korean capability and heralding major changes in Korea. In his memoir, Allen portrays the historical change as follows:

It is not surprising that they [Koreans] should now resent being absorbed by a race [Japan] they have long despised Poor Koreans, you have waited too long. Perhaps had your land been tossed and riven by earthquakes and volcanoes you might have been shaken out of your contented sleep. But while you slept and dreamed and cared for naught but to be let alone, your ancient enemy has been busy learning the arts of those strange folk you see even now, wending their way up your ancient path to yon fortress of your ancestral kings. Having learned these arts she has even vanquished one of her teachers, and you, once a teacher but now a decrepit old ex-officio, what can you hope for when your land is wanted by your energetic erstwhile pupil. The sleep is o'er, the dream is done and now comes the struggle for existence amidst competition keen and sharp.⁷⁶

It is suggested that Korea had failed in the survival of the fittest and Japan had been able to reverse the centuries-long teacher-pupil relations with Korea. Allen portrays the Japanese as “shrewd and manipulative,” having learned modern forms of politics and society from the West, while Koreans are seen as unsuspecting, naïve and childlike people who lack the discipline, persistence and punctuality that are essential in modern life.⁷⁷ Allen marvels at “the excellence of the Japanese military organization” in its wars against China and Russia and its diplomatic dealings with other imperial powers, while chastising a US foreign policy that had failed to maintain the “hard-earned and profitable commercial situation” which the US had had prior to the Russo-Japanese War.⁷⁸ He described his hard work as the American representative in Korea as being “to further the business interest of his nationals,” gaining several important concessions for American business including a gold mine, a railway, electric plants and waterworks. He also perceived what could be a vast economic interest in Manchuria by way of friendly relations with Russia, while he understood Japan as a potential threat to the US economic enterprise in the region.⁷⁹ Specifically, Allen regretted

our position in that land [Korea] and the jeopardy in which many of our Asiatic interests are placed by virtue of the changed conditions, but it is late now to complain After her brilliant war with Russia, Japan is in no mood to accept any marked interference on our part in what she may consider as being her legitimate right to enjoy the fruits of her victory in her own ‘prearranged’ manner. Our day for any such interference seems to have passed.⁸⁰

The prevailing power of Japan is simply accepted as the natural course of history, but Allen regrets that US policies toward Japan had cost newly-found opportunities in Korea and the Asian region. Thus, his caution about Japanese expansion largely centers on his primary concern for US economic

⁷⁶ Allen, *Things Korean*, 59.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp.28–30, 37, 131–4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.221–36, 245; Min, *Han’guk Min-jok Kyoboe Hyöngsöngnon*, pp.184–9.

⁷⁹ Allen, *Things Korean*, pp.249–51.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.259.

⁸¹ “The Hour for Korea,” *The Foreign Missionary* 44.4 (1885): 153–6.

⁸² Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, pp.76–7 and 50.

⁸³ Schmid, *Korea Between Empires*, pp.55–100.

⁸⁴ Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, p.9.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.4.

and political interests in the Asian region.

Hulbert’s approach to the “passing of Korea” seems more cultural than economic. He attributed Korea’s failure to adjust to the changing world to Chinese influence over the centuries. Defining Confucianism as a religion for the educated classes, the early missionaries regarded it as “the chief organized opponent of Christianity.”⁸¹ Hulbert has a very clear opinion on this bad influence from China: “Chinese law, religion, dress, art, literature, science and ethics became the fashion, and I am convinced that from that day began the deterioration of the Korean people, which has culminated in her present helpless condition.” He further argues that Confucian-prescribed barriers between the upper and the lower classes caused the disintegration of Korean civilization.⁸² His critique of Chinese influence echoes the general attitude not only of missionaries but also of enlightenment-oriented Korean intellectuals who were trying at that time to “decenter” China in envisioning a new Korean identity by highlighting “barbarous” aspects of Chinese customs.⁸³ Japan’s victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War simply confirmed the declining power of pre-modern China and the rising power of modern Japan.

Hulbert clearly acknowledged Japan’s striking metamorphosis through modernization, which enabled it to move up in the hierarchy of civilized states. However, he cast serious doubt on the civilizing power of modern Japan. For example, he challenged the overall view of the American public that Japan had a right and an obligation to colonize Korea because the Korean people were “a degenerate and contemptible nation, incapable of better things, intellectually inferior, and better off under Japanese rule than independent.”⁸⁴ Entirely to the contrary, Hulbert alerted the public to his view that despite the fact that “[t]he world has been held entranced by the splendid military and naval achievements of Japan,” they should ask “just what part Japan is likely to play in the development of the Far East.”⁸⁵ Hulbert tended to believe that Japan’s daunting modern power was insufficient for mastery over Korea, and argued that it needed to be constrained by “the transforming power of Christianity.” He writes:

When he [a Japanese person] adopted Western methods, it was in a purely utilitarian spirit. He gave no thought to the principles on which our civilization is based. It was the finished product he was after and not the process. He judged, and rightly, that energy and determination were sufficient to the donning of the habiliments of the West, and he paid no attention to the forces by which those habiliments were shaped and fitted ... what if the West, instead of merely lending its superficial integuments to China and Korea, should leave all the harmless and inconsequential customs of those lands intact, and should attempt instead to reach down to some underlying moral and fundamental principle and begin a transformation from within, working outward; if instead of carrying on campaigns against pinched feet and infanticide, we should strike straight at the root of the matter, and by

giving them the secret of Western culture make it possible for them to evolve a new civilisation embodying all the culture of the West, but expressed in terms of oriental life and habit? Here would be an achievement to be proud of, for it would prove that our culture *is* fundamental, and that it does not depend for its vindication upon the mere vestments of Western life ... the transforming power of Christianity has done a fundamental work without touching a single one of the time-honored customs of the land ... Which, think you, is the proper way to go about the rehabilitation of the East? The only yellow peril possible lies in the arming of the Orient with the thunderbolts of the West, without at the same time giving her the moral forces which will restrain her in their use.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp.6–9.

⁸⁷ Robert Eskildsen, "Of Civilization and Savages: The Mimetic Imperialism of Japan's 1874 Expedition to Taiwan," *American Historical Review* 107.2 (2002): 388–418.

⁸⁸ Henning, *Outposts of Civilization*, pp.137–64.

⁸⁹ Millard, *The New Far East*, pp.28, 48–9.

⁹⁰ Hulbert, *The Passing of Korea*, p.464.

By the end of the Russo-Japanese War, Japan had moved beyond the stage of 'mimesis of Western imperialism' and had actually joined the imperial league of the West through ongoing social and political reforms commensurate with those of modern Western nation-states.⁸⁷ Japan was then perceived as the equal of the West. However, Hulbert's discourse indicates that he does not believe in the moral power of Japan because it only imitates the superficial and material aspect of Western modernity without learning the 'principles' and moral forces of Western civilization. The moral forces here are, of course, based in Christianity. Being modern yet 'heathen' critically identifies the essentially lower status of Japan *vis-à-vis* Western civilization supported by Christianity. Without the moral power of Christianity, Japan's imitation of Western modernity renders it into a real 'yellow peril.' Prominent missionaries and scholars in Japan worked hard to alleviate American fears of Japan by describing the Japanese as "the most un-Mongolian people in Asia," similar to Anglo-Saxons.⁸⁸ However, this discourse of Hulbert's reflects the general sentiment of Americans, who on the whole believed firmly in the superiority of Christianity and the white race. As Thomas Millard put it in 1906, "the plain truth is that the time is still far off when Japan can be regarded except as an Oriental nation." He even argued that Japan's modernizing policies are based on the "inherent gambling instinct of the Oriental" and that Japan's "nerve to play the game" is not lacking.⁸⁹ Japan's relentless effort to assume the role of civilizer of the Other was subtly but undeniably rebuked. Especially in the case of Korea, whose civilization had made a significant impact on Japan, Japan's assumption of a civilizing role is absurd from Hulbert's point of view. By acknowledging Japan's metamorphosis into a powerful modern nation on one hand and doubting its civilizing power on the other, Hulbert suggests that education is the only way in which Koreans can reinstate an intellectual capacity equal to that of their conquerors. More importantly, he concludes that the most powerful agents in doing the job of civilizing are American missionaries residing in Korea. He believes that their role in changing political affairs is "a stiffening of Korea's moral fibre and a thorough awakening of her dormant intellectual life."⁹⁰ With these words he asserts the superior power of Christian morality as a way for Korea to vindicate itself and achieve not only modernity but also the requisite accompanying moral power.

*Tensions with the Mission Boards: Public and Private
Discourse of William Arthur Noble and Mattie Noble*

⁹¹ Kim, "Hanmal Ilche Ch'imnyakki Ilche wa Sönkyosa üi Kwangye e taehan Yön'gu," pp.88–91.

⁹² When some reports suggested that missionaries were hostile to the new Japanese authorities in Korea, two leading Methodist missionaries, George Heber Jones and William B. Scranton, went to Itō Hirobumi to assure him of their full cooperation. Yi Man'yöl, "The birth of the national spirit of the Christians in the late Choson period," in *Korea and Christianity*, pp.64–5; Ryu, "Treaties, Extraterritorial Rights, and American Protestant Missions in Late Joseon Korea," pp.174–203.

⁹³ *Naehan Sönkyosa Ch'ongnam, 1884–1984* [A comprehensive bibliography of missionaries in Korea] (Seoul: Han'guk Kidokkyo Yöksa Yön'guso, 1994), p.399. When he was charged with these two most active and important districts, the *Korea Mission Field* pointed out that "there are few men capable of such strenuous service as is Dr. Noble." See *The Korea Mission Field* 4.5 (May 1908): 71.

⁹⁴ For example, he talks about Korean people's sacrifice and devotion to the Christian faith in comparison with Western Christians: "The world lauds the American people for their readiness to give their money to help philanthropic causes. We boast of it as a mark of civilization. But I stand ready with this and other factors to challenge any people, whether white, brown, yellow or black, to show a better record than the Korean." W.A. Noble, "Korean Decadence," *The Korea Mission Field* 2.9 (1906): 176.

Many missionaries reported incidents of exploitation of Koreans by the Japanese, but those reports remained largely within the inner missionary circle.⁹¹ In the interests of maintaining their mission stations, missionary leaders sought to maintain a friendly relationship with the Japanese authorities, confirming that "missionaries have only the pastoral functions of moral and spiritual uplift of the people of Choson and do not engage in political activity."⁹² In this context, the public and private narratives of William Arthur Noble (1866–1945) and his wife Mattie Noble (?–1956), sent by the US Methodist Episcopal Church, offer a significant insight into the ways in which missionaries tried to conform to their principal role as agents of the mission by engaging in exclusively spiritual matters and yet felt compelled to speak up about Korean suffering in the midst of the turbulent political crisis, and also to express dissatisfaction with the way either the US government or the mission board was dealing with the Korean situation.

The Nobles came to Korea in 1892. Arthur Noble took up his first post, as a teacher at Paejae Hakdang 배재학당 (1892–94) in Seoul. He then moved to P'yöngyang 평양, and remained there for most of his career in Korea. From 1908 to 1911, he was responsible for almost seventy per cent of the Methodist church organizations operating around P'yöngyang and Seoul, the two largest districts.⁹³ He contributed essays to mission journals, reporting anecdotes from his interactions with Koreans and sometimes challenging Western views of Korea as lacking 'civilization.'⁹⁴ But Noble's book, *Ewa: A Tale of Korea*, best represents his standpoints on the complex relationship between religion, culture and politics in a transcultural context. Mattie Noble was also a prominent missionary, engaging actively in evangelical and educational work. From the time of her arrival in Korea until her return to the USA in 1934, she kept a personal journal, recording her daily activities, experiences and observations as a wife, mother and missionary. The journal was not published during her lifetime. Only in 1986 did her daughter-in-law and other family members make it available as a type-written manuscript.

In the preface to his book *Ewa* (published in 1906), Arthur Noble states that his goal in writing it is to "awaken sympathy for a people who have become the victims of an unjust exploitation by a foreign power." To this end, he intends to "represent Korean affairs from the standpoint of the Korean" and to "look through Korean eyes at the acts of foreigners, in their attitude toward Korea." Noble claims that "the characters and incidents here related are historical. Where it has been necessary to enlarge upon them, the traditions and spirit of the people have been faithfully followed. For obvious reasons names of persons still living and names of some places connected with them have been changed."

The novel touches on the fluid intersection of political, cultural and religious dynamics involving Korea, Japan and the West.⁹⁵ It weaves fictional stories and characters into some actual events (such as the Sino-Japanese War, the Tonghak Uprisings, and the murder of Queen Min), to represent the political disaster of Korea and then the presumed role of Christianity in guiding a new Korea. The story line is rather simple: two men—Sung-yo and Tong-siki⁹⁶—represent young men in transition from old Korea to new Korea with their gradual awakening to love, modern ideas, nationalist consciousness and passion for social reforms. Ewa, the title character, has been a victim of old Korea, but she is empowered by the love of Sung-yo and her discovery of the Christian faith to serve as a model of self-sacrifice for the family and nation.

In narrating the story Noble adopts the voice of Sung-yo, the son of an upper-class Korean family, presenting a first-person narrative that engages in an intimate yet extensive discourse on the crisis of war-torn Korea and the clash between East and West. Another major character is Sung-yo's trusted family friend, Tong-siki, whose vision and action most closely reflect the broader nationalist movements in Korea. Noble juxtaposes Sung-yo and Tong-siki as representatives of old and new Korea respectively in terms of their character, vision, and attitude, which guide both characters to find a common heightened goal for the nation. Noble assigns the two young men intimate dialogues in which they reflect upon and critically scrutinize the old customs of Korea *vis-à-vis* Japan and the West and try to find the right path for new Korea. As well as writing of Korean customs, Noble also imagines through his characters how Koreans might perceive western people and customs. The reader can perceive how this missionary regards material modern achievements without spiritual commitment.

Given Noble's specific goal to expose "an unjust exploitation by a foreign power," his assessment of Japan is worthy of examination. Himself located in the midst of the tripartite relations of Korea, Japan and the United States, Noble portrays Japanese aggression in a negative tone, but shows some aspects of Japan in a positive light; for instance, he describes the effects of the Sino-Japanese War on Koreans and the distrust of Koreans towards the Japanese. Sung-yo, for example,

learned that the country was helpless in the hands of its old enemy, the Japanese. They had taken possession of the army and our national independence was threatened. While they introduced many reforms which seemed salutary, yet their insidious hand of greed seemed to be closing on the throat of our national life. Everywhere Japanese citizens clashed with Koreans, always to the confusion and rout of the latter.⁹⁷

However, the overall condemnation of Japanese aggression is balanced with the positive accomplishments of Japan in terms of modernization. The strongest voice advocating a Japanese model of modernity is Tong-siki's.

⁹⁵ Noble's discourse on the East and the West does not take a simple binary approach. He wrote that he wished to show readers that "the Asiatic loves, hates, fears, hopes and sacrifices for his ideals, the same as does his Western brother"; he therefore puts Asian and Western on an equal level.

⁹⁶ I have used Noble's spelling for characters' names.

⁹⁷ W. Arthur Noble, *Ewa: A Tale of Korea* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1906), p.219.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.50–1.

Tong-siki had gone to Japan to study the Japanese system of government, and had been thoroughly impressed with the friendly and open-minded attitude of the Japanese in showing and sharing their knowledge and experience. Recollecting his positive experiences in Japan, Tong-siki makes a distinction between the Japanese people he met in Japan and those who came to Korea to exploit it. Through this distinction Noble attempts to offer nuanced and multifaceted aspects of Japan and its modernity. However, what lies underneath this view is the observation that Japan had made impressive progress in modernizing by emulating western models. Noble expresses his reservations about the standardizing global capitalist mode and points out the frenzied lifestyle concomitant with the pursuit of materialistic modernity. In the voice of Sung-yo, he says:

The scene inside the city was all animation, not the wild rush that I have since observed in American and British concessions of the Chinese ports, but a dignified moderation of which the East has always been proud. I have pondered much over the contrasted peculiarities of the East and West, and I protest against the popular insinuation that our poverty is the result of our moderation. It seems to be childish to scream and rush after one's dollars; to be indifferent to the immaculate character of one's suit while one works; to contort the face; to laugh with abandon; to leap and run; to enjoy the hurly-burly of competition Such things bewilder one and border on violence. We love self-repression, dignity of carriage, and calm demeanor. Reflection and moderation are the ideals of our sages, yet foreigners refer to us as childish. I think they mean by that the smallness of our ideas and our petty prejudices.⁹⁸

Noble draws a contrast between materiality, unlimited ambition and a fast-paced life (the West) on one hand and ethics, moderation, and self-repression (the East) on the other. The positive valuation given to 'eastern' ways may be interpreted as Noble's own critique of the prevailing 'western' faith in material wealth and advancement, which had become a marker of civilization and a requirement for a strong nation-state. His choice of a Korean narrative perspective allows him to present readers with his own take on how the Other problematizes the modern West—not as the superior center or the standard-setter, but just as part of the world. In this way, Noble implicitly invites readers to think about alternative modernities as well as expressing his own critique of prevailing sentiments of western capitalist modernity.

This critique goes hand in hand with his call for 'sacrifice' on behalf of the nation through the characters of Tong-siki and Ewa. Both Tong-siki and Ewa become devoted Christians, and therefore they draw on the exulted spirit of sacrifice from the Western Christian tradition as well as ancient Eastern ethics. Tong-siki, who is consistently portrayed as a man of vision and self-sacrifice, tries to persuade Sung-yo to go beyond personal gratification and think of a principle that is good for the nation. He comments, "Renunciation, Sung-yo, is a doctrine of the ancient masters. Do you not remember

the Christians' meeting? Did not the Westerner urge renunciation? They have improved upon our philosophy of self-repression and command devotion to the good of others. The needs of the times show their teachings true"⁹⁹ It is Ewa, however, who is the ultimate figure of self-sacrifice for the nation in the story. She sacrifices her own happiness in order to honor her husband, Sung-yo, who is in return inspired to commit his life to the greater cause of national sovereignty.

In this nationalistic discourse, the symbol of the cross is a useful illustration of Noble's multifaceted writing strategy. Ewa, who has been enslaved, bears a tattoo of a cross on her wrist as a sign of her slave status. Here the cross symbolizes the oppressive, inhumane and unequal society of old Korea. The sign of the cross is also employed to represent the hopeful future with Christianity firmly embedded in it. Ewa puts the same tattoo on Sung-yo's wrist as a sign of their bond—an unlikely bonding of two people from drastically different social classes, made possible through the Christian faith. The cross engraved in the bodies of Ewa and Sung-yo comes to signify new Korea and passion for change. In this mixing of old and new, East and West, crisis and reform, one witnesses the unmaking and remaking of Korea. The last words Ewa speaks before her death are, "The cr—oss, S—Sung-yo."¹⁰⁰ Metaphorically and literally, the cross and Sung-yo represent the future of a Korea that "shall be made free." The cross, or Christianity, becomes a marker for a better future. Sung-yo as the future of Korea is expected to make sacrifices in the same way as Ewa had demonstrated at the expense of her own life. Thus it is suggested that the future national leader, Sung-yo, should follow the female model of self-sacrifice, Ewa.

If Arthur Noble's fictionalized historical account represents a politically entangled mission field with sympathy for politicized Koreans on one hand and a keen interest in the future of a Christian Korea on the other, Mattie Noble's private journal records in detail Korean sufferings in the midst of political upheavals, troubles caused by highly politicized Christian groups in Korea (such as the Epworth League and YMCA),¹⁰¹ and tensions between higher-up mission tactics and the day-to-day reactions of missionaries. Sharing her husband's point of view about the injustice of Japan's colonization of Korea, she offers a detailed description of the widespread violence against and exploitation of Koreans by the Japanese forces after the 1905 Protectorate. She writes:

The Japanese in housing their soldiers on the Koreans are causing such discomfort to the people. Day by day, for many months, some family is made homeless, without any redress, and the Japanese are continually so insolent to the Koreans. All travelers who come say that outside of Korea the world cannot understand conditions here, for the news has been kept from getting beyond Korea ... when they [Koreans] try to have justice given them, they are told by the Japanese officials that all Korea belongs to the Japanese.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp.222–3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 321.

¹⁰¹ Diary of Mattie Noble ("Diary" hereafter), 9 December 1905; Paik, *History of Protestant Missions in Korea*, p.352.

¹⁰² Diary, 30 April 1906.

¹⁰³ Diary, 16 June 1908.

¹⁰⁴ Diary, 16 August 1906.

¹⁰⁵ Diary, 5 May 1907.

¹⁰⁶ Ladd, *In Korea with Marquis Ito*, pp. 4–5.

¹⁰⁷ Diary, 9 December 1905.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*; also 12 February, 1908. On the latter date Mattie Noble and her husband Arthur hosted a dinner party in honor of Bishop Harris, inviting prominent Japanese officers as well as fellow missionaries and Korean officers. She wrote, “having so many diplomats, it was a delicate matter to seat them.” Bishop Harris suggested that she “put the matter to Mr. Murata [a Japanese preacher],” and following Murata’s advice, she seated the Japanese Resident of P’yŏngyang in the seat of honor. Although the dinner was in honor of Harris, it was politically expedient to put the Japanese colonial officer in the seat of honor—an indication of how mindful she was of the delicate position of the missionaries with respect to Japan, even within such a domestic and cultural domain as a dinner reception.

¹⁰⁹ Diary, 30 April 1906; 16 August 1906; 2 January 1907; 16 June 1908.

Sympathetic towards “the poor Koreans [who] did not have anyone to help [them],”¹⁰³ she specifically comments on the uneven observations about Korea by American representatives, such as Bishop Harris and Professor George Trumbull Ladd, who were exceptionally favorable toward Japan and firmly believed that Japan’s colonization of Korea was justified. For example, she writes, “Our dear Bishop Harris, having such faith in the Japanese and so sure they will make all things right, seems to us to forget to even mention the trials of the Koreans and the indignities to which they are subject.”¹⁰⁴ When Professor George Trumbull Ladd visited Korea as the guest of Marquis Itō, Noble wrote that he and his wife

are wonderfully in love with Japan and the Japanese, so much so that they are prejudiced against everything that the Japanese wish them to be against. When in a casual remark about a great injustice that the Japanese had done Korea, Mrs. Ladd said, “To tell the truth, I don’t believe it.” [*sic*] That was and is their whole attitude while in Korea.¹⁰⁵

It should be noted that Ladd was specifically recruited by Itō Hirobumi to write a book partly in order to dissipate “complaints of various sorts ... not only against individual Japanese but also against the Japanese administration, as unjust and oppressive to the Koreans.”¹⁰⁶ Ladd must have been aware of Arthur Noble’s book, *Ewa*, which had been written precisely to reveal the “unjust exploitation” of Koreans by Japan. In Mattie Noble’s comments on Bishop Harris and George Ladd, one can detect a hint of lamentation about the sheer lack of empathy on the part of leading Americans. The discrepancy between the Nobles’ own sympathy with Koreans in the midst of Japanese colonization and the full support that American leaders expressed for Japan’s actions was a source of concern and difficulty for these missionaries. As a ‘missionary wife’ not directly involved in larger political considerations and mission policy-making, Mattie Noble expressed these concerns quite frankly in her journal. Her concern does not necessarily mean that she openly defied mission policy, however. To the contrary, she records Bishop Harris’s visits to Korea in detail, saying that “The people all love Bishop Harris He has called on the Japanese Consul and Mayor, and he has been called on by a great number of distinguished Japanese.”¹⁰⁷ Along with other missionaries, she participated in the mission board’s effort to establish friendly relationships with the Japanese officers in Korea by hosting dinners and serving tea and cake for guests.¹⁰⁸

Like her husband Arthur, Mattie Noble avoids overgeneralizing about the Japanese as entirely bad or good people. In measuring good or bad character, she uses the Christian faith as the criterion, drawing a vivid contrast between Christian Japanese and non-Christian Japanese. The former are gentle, compassionate and somewhat resistant to the Japanese invasion, while the latter are violent and ruthless.¹⁰⁹ Throughout her journal, she demonstrates her strong faith in the Christian Japanese in Korea as important mediators

between Korea and Japan in building “the Kingdom of God.” This attitude was shared by her fellow missionaries. For instance, Frederick S. Curtis, a Methodist missionary in Japan, observed during his visit to Korea that “the Japanese and Korean Christians will not only be the spiritual bond of union between the two countries, but ... Christianity is destined to be a large factor in determining the future of the empire.”¹¹⁰ He further comments that despite Japan’s material influence on Korea, its “moral and spiritual” influence depends on “the measure of Christianity they [the Japanese] possess.”¹¹¹ Emphasizing the presumed superiority of Christianity as the foundation of moral and spiritual power, Mattie Noble and other missionaries envisioned the future of Korea and Japan as part of the Kingdom of God in which secular, national and political strife would subside.

Seizing the Spiritual Moment: James Gale and Horace Underwood

The Great Revival movement of 1907 in P’yŏngyang and its far-reaching impact on other parts of the country was a watershed moment for Protestant missionaries in Korea, and a leap forward in the dramatic expansion of Christian churches. *The Korea Mission Field* captures the moment, stating that

Evangelistically, the opportunity of the Asiatic continent of the present day is to be found in Korea. No other field compares with this in the urgency and the promise of its conditions. This is the strategic people and the present is the strategic time in this land. Ten millions of souls await help and instruction which the Christian Church can give.¹¹²

With the outpouring of demands from Koreans for churches and schools, the missionaries tried to seize this strategic historical time for spreading the gospel as fast and as widely as they could. It was within this context that Horace Grant Underwood (1859–1916) and James Scarth Gale (1863–1937) published their books *The Call of Korea* (1908) and *Korea in Transition* (1909), which were designed as textbooks about Korea for American audiences and future missionaries. The most obvious goal of both books is to urge Americans and the mission boards to reinforce the Korea mission in order to maximize the effect of this unprecedented opportunity in Korea.

Gale and Underwood were two of the most active and influential missionaries of the time. Both worked for the US Presbyterian Church, although Gale was first sent to Korea by the Young Men’s Christian Association of Toronto University in 1888.¹¹³ They were both closely associated with the Korean king, intellectuals and other Christians, and gained an intimate knowledge of Korean society and culture. On the basis of his numerous publications on Korea, Gale was described as “the foremost literary interpreter of the Korean mind to the occidental world” by the 1909 edition of

¹¹⁰ “An Account of the Travels of the Rev. Frederick S. Curtis among the Japanese in Korea.” Reprinted by Request from “*The Japan Evangelist*,” *The Korea Mission Field* 4.2 (February 1908): 29–32 (at pp.29–30).

¹¹¹ Frederick S. Curtis, “Work among the Japanese in Korea,” *The Korea Mission Field* 4.10 (October 1908): 155–9.

¹¹² *The Korea Mission Field* 4.3 (March 1908): 1.

¹¹³ Richard Rutt, *James Scarth Gale and his History of the Korean People* (The Royal Asiatic Society Korean Branch: Seoul Computer Press, 1972); Paik, *History of Protestant Missions*.

¹¹⁴ Lillias H. Underwood, *Underwood of Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 1983), pp.265–73; Paik, *History of Protestant Missions*, pp.364–5.

¹¹⁵ Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, p.39; Gale, *Korea in Transition*, pp.56–7.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.114–15.

¹¹⁷ Cited in Yoonmi Lee, *Modern Education, Textbooks and the Image of the Nation: Politics of Modernization and Nationalism in Korean Education, 1880–1910* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc. 2000), pp.8–9.

¹¹⁸ Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, p.128.

¹¹⁹ Gale, *Korea in Transition*, p.39.

¹²⁰ Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, p.95.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.12. See also the “Report on the Mission in Korea of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission” by Robert E. Speer, Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, 1897, p.33.

Canadian Men and Women of the Time. Underwood traveled widely in the United States to give lectures on Korea, pleading for ‘reinforcements’ for the Korean mission, especially once the Great Revival movement had begun in 1907.¹¹⁴ In their leadership positions, Gale and Underwood went along with the Board’s institutional decision not to get involved in any political affairs and to focus exclusively on evangelical work. However, although they were careful to state that it was not their province to talk about political matters, Gale and Underwood both acknowledged the “rapacity of both foreign officials and colonists” and expressed their sympathy for the Koreans, whose feeling of desolation reached its peak when Korea was forced to hand over its sovereignty to Japan.¹¹⁵

Like many other missionaries (including Hulbert, Allen and Noble), Gale and Underwood attributed Korea’s failure to keep its sovereignty to Korean national characteristics and wrongdoings in the past. While being kind, generous and peace-loving, Koreans are described as people who cling to the past and the familiar, and who have no desire to move beyond what they already know—unlike modern people, who value change and progress. In these missionaries’ view, a lack of independent thinking and action, coupled with inherent conservatism, caused Koreans to be blind to rapid changes in the world.¹¹⁶ Gale draws a contrast between the Japanese as “an in-moving race” and the Korean “whose life is passive, whose thought is peaceful, whose average activity is summed up in sitting still, whose motto is statu [*sic*] quo, and whose vision is confined to the courtyard and the limit of to-day.”¹¹⁷ Based on the social Darwinist ideology of the modern era in which an “unwarlike and isolated” character would ensure that a nation would be brought under the grip of more “manly and adventurous” nations,¹¹⁸ Korea’s present crisis is viewed as a logical end. In this context Gale states, “If it had not been the Japanese, certainly the twentieth century single-handed would have crushed the old emperor and all he represented out of existence.”¹¹⁹

Both Gale and Underwood also bemoan the failure of Korean religions in “giving any real moral tone to the nation.”¹²⁰ In the Introduction to Underwood’s book, Arthur T. Pierson quotes from the 1897 report of Robert Speer, who cites a ‘leading Korean man’ to the effect that:

the only hope of the country is in the churches. There is no moral character in Korea. It is being created in the churches. There is no cohesion, or unity, or confidence among men. There is no company of men, however small, capable of acting together. The churches are raising up bands of men who know how to combine for a common object, who are quickened intellectually, and are full of character, courage, and hope. To convert and educate the common people is the only hope of the land.¹²¹

By quoting the sentiments of a Korean leader, Pierson indicates that the conversion of Koreans to Christianity is not imposed from the outside, but derived from within. The Korean leader Pierson refers to might well be Pak

Yŏnghyo 박영효, who told William Scranton, a Methodist missionary in Korea, that the two most urgent needs in Korea were education and Christianity.¹²² Or it might have been Yun Ch'ihŏ, another prominent politician, intellectual and educator, whose 'confession' was often cited by missionaries as a demonstration of how 'heathen natives' had accepted the gospel and changed their view of their old practices.¹²³ Seeing Confucianism as lacking moral power, Yun found Christianity to be "the salvation and hope of Korea."¹²⁴ Yun Ch'ihŏ, along with Sŏ Chaep'il, An Ch'angho, Yi Sangjae 이상재 and others, advocated the broadly-termed 'enlightenment, self-strengthening ideas' (*kaehwa chaganŋon* 개화자강론) from the 1890s and used Christian ethics and social Darwinism for its base of principles.¹²⁵ These Christian and enlightenment-oriented Korean intellectuals provided further justification for the necessity of spiritual guidance from American missionaries in renewing a nation in crisis.

Gale and Underwood see the lowest point of Korean political history to be the highest point of religious transformation not only for Korea but also for the whole of Asia. Describing Korea as "the most hopeless of lost humanity,"¹²⁶ Gale understands the situation in Korea to be part of God's great plan. In this plan, Korea is chosen to serve as "a missionary advertising agency for the whole Far East," offering a model for emulation in Christianizing Asia.¹²⁷ He notes the strong interconnectedness of Korea with China and Japan, stating that

Korea's heart beats one with China. The chords struck across the Yalu find response here. She is under Japan tighter than lock and key can make her. Has God a purpose for the Far East with his hand upon her, and she between these two mighty questions of the world, China and Japan?¹²⁸

Korea thus offers a strategic entry point for the spread of the gospel throughout Asia. Underwood uses a more dramatic metaphor in his expression of the opportunities available in Korea. He specifically asks future missionaries, "What strategic points in Korea have been laid siege to by missions? What new strategic points should be besieged? How can the land be taken? What would be the effect on China and Japan if Korea became a Christian nation?"¹²⁹ These questions are listed under the title, "Best Points of Attack." The central metaphor for the mission is one involving war and conquest, a common image in missionary discourse at the time. Korea is envisioned as an object for conquest by Christian morality and, even more importantly, as a strategic bridge for the spread of Christianity to the wider region of East Asia.

With Japan assuming a leadership role in creating "outposts of civilization on the Asian continent" and transforming the "stagnant" civilizations of other Asian countries,¹³⁰ the discourse of Gale and Underwood questions the role of non-Christian Japan as a cultural and moral force in the region. With their belief in the superiority of Western civilization based in a foundation of Christian ideals, they envision Japan as yet another field to be conquered.

¹²²No, *Ilcheba Han'guk Kidokkyo Minjok Undong Yŏn'gu*, p.40.

¹²³*The Gospel in All Lands* (June 1887): 274-5.

¹²⁴Yun Ch'ihŏ's Diary, 19 February, 1893, cited in Wells, *New God, New Nation*, p.53.

¹²⁵Pak Ch'ansŭng, *Han'guk Kundaeb Chongch'i Sasangsa Yŏn'gu* [A study of the history of modern political thought in Korea] (Seoul: Yŏksa Pip'yongsŏ, 1993), pp.29-107; Kenneth Wells, "Yun Ch'i-ho and the Quest for National Integrity: The Formation of a Christian Approach to Korean Nationalism at the end of the Choson Dynasty," *Korea Journal* 22.1 (1982): 42-59.

¹²⁶Gale, *Korea in Transition*, p.89.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, p.131. See also pp.89 and 245.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, p.24.

¹²⁹Underwood, *The Call of Korea*, p.190.

¹³⁰Henning, *Outposts of Civilization*; Eskildsen, "Of civilization and savages."

¹³¹ Henning, *Outposts of Civilization*, p.148.

¹³² Cited in Paik, *History of Protestant Missions*, p.385.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p.26.

Imagining denationalized Korea as a strategic point of attack for winning Asia to Christianity, Gale and Underwood appropriate Korea's semi-colonial moment for their own spiritual conquest of East Asia. It is interesting to note that during and after the Russo-Japanese War, missionaries in Japan were able to distribute the gospel to barracks and hospitals. They considered their missionary success in Japan to be an important springboard for expanding their mission to Korea and Manchuria,¹³¹ making use of Japan's colonizing force for spiritual conquest beyond Japan. Both the colonizer Japan and colonized Korea are reconfigured here according to the missionary desire to conquer East Asia spiritually. With their militaristic metaphors of conquest, Gale and Underwood see the rise of modern Japan and the decline of the Korean nation as "the supreme moment"¹³² for expanding the Christian world. In the face of an "undone" Korea, the analogy embedded in one of Gale's questions to future missionaries is quite telling: "If Korea were made over to you as a gift, what measures would you take to improve your property?"¹³³ In this trope for colonialism, Korea is conceived in terms of ownership or possession, as a "gift" or "property" and moreover, as a possession that needs to be "improved." In a word, "undone" Korea emerges as a blank territory to be mapped out with Christian morality as its core foundation.

Annie Baird's Daybreak in a Denationalized Colonial Korea

¹³⁴ Annie Baird, *Daybreak in Korea: A Tale of Transformation in the Far East* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.5.

On the eve of Korea's colonization by Japan, as we have seen, the suffering caused by the loss of the nation becomes for the missionaries fertile soil for religious awakening; the sense of national humiliation, it is implied, enabled Koreans to see a higher purpose in life, that is spiritual (rather than the secular and political) devotion. The most melodramatic portrayal of this irony can be found in *Daybreak in Korea: A Tale of Transformation in the Far East* by Annie Baird (1864–1916), published in 1909.¹³⁴ Annie Baird, sent by the US Presbyterian Church, served as a missionary in Korea from 1891 to 1916. She was one of the most prominent women missionaries involved in educational, literary and evangelical work. Despite her acknowledged status as a veteran missionary, in the preface of *Daybreak in Korea* she modestly describes the book as "little more than a compilation and rearrangement of facts and incidents such as come daily under the observation of missionaries in Korea." With its vivid portrayal of "heathen" social and cultural practices, such as early marriage, indulgence in drinking and the idol worship seen in Shamanism and Buddhism, the book centers on the mission's liberation of the Korean people from the "utter degradation of a Christless world."¹³⁵ The book's title, *Daybreak*, symbolizes the hope, beginning and new possibilities brought by Christianity—and yet, ironically, it is located in the secular reality of loss and darkness brought about by Japanese colonization.

Given the timing of the book's publication, right after the Great Revival movement of 1907 and on the eve of Korea's colonization, Baird's work should be understood as part of the consistent effort by missionaries to make a strong case for the Korean mission field as one of the most fertile sites for Christianization in the world. What distinguishes Baird's narrative from that of the male missionaries is that it makes no explicit references at all to the political turmoil in Korea. Rather, Baird makes use of highly individualized, personal, and intimate descriptions of the people and their culture, focusing on one village rather than the entire country and on individuals rather than the Koreans as a race.¹³⁶ Nonetheless, the seemingly depoliticized nature of her intense gaze at individual villagers and her detailed portrait of "pagan" customs has an effect that is strikingly similar to the prescriptive tone of male missionaries in that they all engage in a discourse that centers on Korea's loss and failure in politics and culture, which is seen to herald "a real awakening" and "daybreak" in the spiritual sense.

Baird tells her story through two protagonists, Mansiki and Pobai, a stereotyped Korean man and woman whose married life is marked by abuse and cruelty because of the 'pagan' customs and oppressive gender relations of old Korea. Baird portrays religious traditions in Korea in great detail, looking specifically at Shamanism, Buddhism and Confucianism, whose philosophical, cultural and social influence constitutes the 'old Korea.' A village shaman is depicted as greedy and manipulative, Buddhist monks are shown as lazy and obsequious, and Confucians as rigidly class-bound. Misguided and abused by pagan customs, the village people suffer and lead despicable lives. Naturally, all these old customs are doomed; the eventual abandonment of these old belief systems by village people will signal 'daybreak' in Korea, proving the ability of Korea to resume "something of its first God-like character" that had been "wasted and misused."¹³⁷ One conspicuous result of conversion to Christianity is that the relationship between Pobai and Mansiki changes from loveless, cruel and manipulative to a caring and mutually respectful one. This is read not only as a change in religious belief but also as a step into the modern world.¹³⁸

The depiction of Mansiki also evokes a "weak, despised, denationalized Korea."¹³⁹ Given the specific historical moment, Baird's portrayal of the male protagonist is particularly fascinating. Mansiki may be seen as an allegorical figure, representing the troubled nation of Korea in the face of encroaching foreign powers. Though Baird's narrative is not overtly political, she uses Mansiki's outrage at the political, economic and cultural invasion by foreigners to hint at the general despair of Koreans over their situation. Mansiki is portrayed as an ignorant, violent, superstitious and greedy person. In addition, he holds Confucianism in the highest regard and despises anything foreign, including the Christian faith. He resists foreigners, whom he thinks of as "upstart barbarians, every one of them." When his wife Pobai starts going to church, Mansiki "resented the idea of obtaining it [a useful thing for life]

¹³⁶ Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1991).

¹³⁷ There is a strikingly similar logic in the missionaries' belief in the possibility of "heathens" becoming civilized with Christian morality and the capitalist vanguards' sense of mission about the natural resources of the Other, waiting to be discovered and cultivated by the West. See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writings and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp.146–55.

¹³⁸ Changing the status of women was one of the major reasons for bringing modernity to the "heathen" in the foreign missionary enterprise. Among their many projects, missionaries focused on providing educational opportunities for women and abolishing early marriage and foot binding. See Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility*; Chaudhuri and Strobel, *Western Women and Imperialism*; Leslie A. Flemming, ed., *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia* (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1989). Homer Hulbert took the status of women as one of the criteria for the achievement of true modernity. To his dismay, he concluded that "the position of woman [in Japan] has experienced no change at all commensurate with Japan's material transformation," implying Japan's imperfect modernity. See *The Passing of Korea*, p.6.

¹³⁹ "Annual Report of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the USA," 1908, p.268.

¹⁴⁰ Baird, *Daybreak in Korea*, pp.79–80.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp.75–6.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, pp.80–5.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp.72–3.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.79, 69–85

through the medium of foreigners.” He believes that those foreigners “only came here to steal our land and put foolish notions into the heads of our women. What doctrines have they that are better than those we have? Our Confucius, has there ever been a sage like him?”¹⁴⁰ Defending Confucianism as the proper moral foundation for Korea, Mansiki laments that foreign invasion is not only economic but also cultural. Through the character of Mansiki, Baird records the existence of anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiment among Koreans.

Despite his initial antagonism, however, Mansiki eventually converts to Christianity. Two events alter his view of the Christian faith. The first involves his wife. Abhorring Pobai’s church attendance, Mansiki “threw her to the ground and bound her with rope” to prevent her from going. Instead of resisting or fearing Mansiki’s violence against her, Pobai “did not feel much pain [from Mansiki’s beatings], but instead her spirit was possessed by a sense of high privilege in sharing Christ’s suffering.”¹⁴¹ There is a stark contrast between the violence of the pagan Mansiki and the suffering of the Christian Pobai. The “power of meekness” displayed by Pobai in this moment eventually wins over Mansiki’s heart. The second crucial event for Mansiki is the humiliation he feels after trying to buy literati-class (*yangban* 양반) status. Longing to belong to the coveted rank of Confucian scholars and gentlemen, he forges a genealogy book (*chokbo* 족보) but is humiliated when the forgery is detected. Mansiki’s despair at his fixed lowly class status in the hierarchical Confucian society brings about a dramatic shift in his attitude, and he suddenly finds hope in the new faith.¹⁴² Confucianism as the backbone of old Korea fails to serve Mansiki, and he reacts by turning to Christianity. This plot partakes of the discourse of early missionaries and some enlightenment-oriented Korean intellectuals who viewed Confucianism as the chief barrier to Korea’s modernization and propounded Christianity as a new moral force.

In her account of bringing Christian modernity to Korea, Baird makes a subtle but obvious contrast between missionaries and ‘foreigners’ (that is Japanese) in Korea. She portrays missionaries as agents in delivering “the transforming power of the Gospel” for the creation of a new Korea, while at the same time implying the coercive nature of Japanese colonial power. As noted above, the image of foreigners, described in the furious voice of Mansiki, is one of violence, greed and injustice. In contrast, using the voice of Pobai this time, Baird describes a missionary as a person whose “strange features [bright blue eyes and red and white skin] radiated a look of kindness”; one could find “only goodness and purity in his eye.”¹⁴³ This contrast is employed to emphasize differences in the intent and nature of these foreign powers: that is, the Japanese colonizers came to Korea “to steal our land” for their capitalist interests, while missionaries came to bring peace and comfort.¹⁴⁴ Baird deliberately downplays the wrongdoings of certain foreigners, but through the voice of Mansiki she shows the political and economic despair Koreans experienced. It is not clear if Baird endorses Japan as a secular modern force

in Korea or not. Her use of “daybreak” in the title of her book, on the eve of Japan’s colonization of Korea, might reflect a sense that the beginning of Japanese colonial rule would provide relief from “the wreck and wastage of their former lives,” just as the acceptance of Christianity would.¹⁴⁵ The more salient point is that consistently throughout the book Koreans (represented by Pobai and Mansiki) willingly concede the superiority of the Christian faith. Given a historical situation of Japanese colonial power in Korea and the prevalence of anti-Japanese movements, the spontaneous concession of Koreans to Christianity gave the missionaries ultimate legitimacy—greater than the more directly coercive power of Japan in guiding new Korea. Here the discourse of Baird echoes that of the other missionaries who questioned the moral and spiritual leadership of Japan, privileging Christianity and the missionary role as fundamental and irreplaceable.

Conclusion

In the face of imminent colonization by Japan, the leading American missionaries in Korea actively engaged in representing this time of crisis to their home constituencies. Positioned in a dynamic nexus of religion, politics and culture, they envisioned their role as agents in constructing a new Korea with a primary focus on spiritual regeneration. The significance of the missionary discourses produced during the particular historical circumstances between 1905 and 1910 lies in the fact that the typical binary analysis of the missionary enterprise—i.e., East versus West, or Civilized versus Primitive—is insufficient to explain the complex relations involving the United States, Japan and Korea.

Analyzing the interplay between the institutional tactics of the American mission boards and the discursive representations of the unique historical moment facing missionaries, I argue that the idea of ‘Christian modernity’ runs through the diverse missionary discourses of the time. Whereas modernity is characterized by secular forms of political power, a market economy, divisions of labor along social and gender lines, and the rise of a secular and materialist culture, Christian modernity places Christian spirituality at the center of the social and cultural formation as the essence of any modern civilization. Facing the challenges posed by modern but ‘heathen’ Japan, the idea of Christian modernity was a strategic way of justifying the indispensable role of missionaries as the agents of Christian morality and spirituality. The accomplishments of Japan in the realm of material and capitalist modernity are presented as insufficient for true civilization. Thus there emerges a division of labor between Japan as a secular power and missionaries as a spiritual and moral power in constructing a modern Korea.

¹⁴⁶Gale, *Korea in Transition*, p.39.

This ideology of Christian modernity was not presented uniformly but in a complex manner, depending on who enunciated it, when, for what purposes and in what capacities. Although they cannot claim to be entirely comprehensive, the different types of account analyzed here represent various differing points of view. It is clear that this time of political disruption was cautiously observed with respect to the future of mission activities under Japanese power. Somewhat to the missionaries' surprise, however, this crisis hour also offered a 'golden opportunity' to spread the gospel. At this anxious yet opportune time, prominent missionaries produced a particular kind of knowledge through their public and private writings that reflects not only their Western/Christian-centered worldview but also tensions within their civilizing mission. These tensions were heightened when the institutional policy of the foreign mission board was to endorse Japan's colonial aims but the individual missionaries had to work with Korean people, who were often anti-Japanese.

The ambiguous status of Japan was another source of tension in itself. Despite Japan's phenomenal success as a modern imperial power, it was still viewed as deficient because it was 'heathen'; indeed Japan was seen as a potential zone of conquest for Christian spirituality, and Korea's colonization by Japan was counted as a strategic moment for realizing this possibility. Constrained by mission policies and imbued with the idea that Christianity was the ultimate foundation for any true civilization, the discursive responses of leading missionaries to these tensions center on the idea of Christian modernity. Entangled in the complex political and cultural circumstances in East Asia at the turn of the twentieth century, they reveal both unifying and differentiating tendencies. As neither a modern state nor a Christian nation, Korea was seen as a *tabula rasa* for mission work. As encapsulated in Gale's imagined cry on the part of Korea, "All is lost, I am undone,"¹⁴⁶ the missionaries imagined their role to be the remaking of Korea with Christian spirituality, while the secular power of modern Japan provided elements of modernization. In this new mapping of East Asia, colonial Japan and colonized Korea were equally desirable as spiritual conquests, but for the missionaries (despite the differences in their discursive styles) Christian morality was, of course, seen as superior to secular modernity in any form.

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