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**PERCEPTIONS OF CHOSŎN KOREA**  
**IN WESTERN TRAVELOGUES**

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## Perceptions of Chosŏn Korea in Western Travelogues

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For our collaborative research project since 2005 on the mutual perceptions of Chosŏn Korea and the West reflected in travel literature (1700~1910), two of my colleagues (Eunjin Jung and Grace Koh) and I have examined Westerners' travel accounts to understand their perceptions of Korea. The materials we have considered include accounts by contiguity and firsthand accounts. The first category includes secondhand reports and records of encounters between Western missionaries and Chosŏn envoys in Beijing, while the second obviously refers to accounts based on immediate personal experience in Korea, which increased in number in the late 19th century when Chosŏn finally opened her ports to the West.

My research over the past few years has focused on three different travel accounts, written by Yi Kiji (李器之, a young scholar who accompanied the Chosŏn envoys to Beijing in the early 18th century), Charles William Campbell (a British diplomat based in China and Korea in the late 19th Century), and Alfred Edward John Cavendish (a British captain based in Hong Kong in the late 19th Century).<sup>1</sup> All these works illustrate how Europeans understood Chosŏn Korea and her interests. After meeting Western missionaries in Beijing in the early 18th century, Yi Kiji wrote *Iram yŏn'gi* (一菴燕記), which belongs to a genre of travel accounts known as *yŏnhaengnok* (燕行錄, 'Journals of Travel to Beijing'). His journal conveys the Western missionaries' reception of the Chosŏn envoys and their intention to expand their mission to Chosŏn Korea. Campbell and Cavendish, who both travelled to Korea in the late 19th century, described what they saw and experienced in Chosŏn society during their visits. Campbell's work is a comprehensive account of the Koreans' lifestyle and culture, as well as the natural resources of Korea in which he showed great interest as a diplomat. Cavendish, who resided in Hong Kong as a captain of the British navy, travelled to Chosŏn for leisure. Hence, his travel account contains detailed descriptions of his personal interest (hunting and game) as well as the Koreans' way of life

I will summarize my research to date, then offer suggestions for further discussion and questions to consider in relation to space and perception.

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<sup>1</sup> The titles of my research published as articles are "The Relationship between Joseon (Chosŏn) Envoys and Western Missionaries in Beijing in the Early 18th Century", "Joseon (Chosŏn) and Her People Shown in the Travel Report of Campbell in the Late 19th Century", and "The Adventures of Two British Nationals in Choson during the Late 19th Century: With a special focus on Cavendish's account of his voyage to Mt. Paektu". In addition, I also presented a paper entitled, "Sacredness and Mundanity: Westerners' Perceptions of Baekdusan (Paektusan) or Changbaishan during the Pre-modern Period" at the 2008 AAS Annual Conference.

1) **“The Relationship between Joseon [Chosŏn] Envoys and Western Missionaries in Beijing in the Early 18th Century: Focusing on Lee Gi-ji’s *Iramyeon-gi* [Yi Kiji’s *Iram yŏn’gi*].”** *The Review of Korean Studies* Volume 9 Number 4 (December 2006): 33-43.

In *Iram yŏn’gi*, Yi Kiji described in detail his experiences of meeting Westerners when he followed his father and the *Yŏnhaengsa* (燕行使, ‘Royal Envoys to Qing’) on a diplomatic mission to Beijing in 1720. Unlike other visitors of his day, Yi visited all three churches (South, East, and North Church) of the Catholic (Jesuit) mission. He developed a close relationship with the Western missionaries during his two-month stay in Beijing. While Yi’s encounter with Western missionaries was not originally planned or intended, he appears to have had the most contact and communication with them when compared with other Chosŏn envoys in the eighteenth century. Through meetings and conversations with the missionaries, Chosŏn envoys including Yi conveyed their interest in Western astronomy, the calendar system, and Catholicism (this will be discussed by Professor Shin). On the missionaries’ part, they tried to find out if Chosŏn Korea was ready to accept Catholicism.

The *Iram yŏn’gi* demonstrates that Yi Kiji and his group were able to meet and converse with Western missionaries without political or ideological constraints, and their meetings were based on mutual respect, unbiased curiosity, and friendship. The Chosŏn envoys’ meetings and interaction with the missionaries are significant because from the late eighteenth century onwards, Chosŏn visitors were usually not welcome by the missionaries and visits to the Catholic mission in Beijing were eventually prohibited by the Chosŏn government due to political policies that antagonized Catholicism.

In this article, I investigate the relationship between the Chosŏn envoys and the Western missionaries in Beijing in the early 18th century, based on Yi Kiji’s travel journal. I analyze Yi’s descriptions of meetings with the Westerners and discuss the significance of their encounters and relationship.

Yi Kiji frequently visited the Catholic churches during his two-month stay in Beijing. On his first visit to the South Church, the caretaker introduced Yi to the missionary priests who showed him many ‘exotic’ objects from Europe, including telescopes, feather pens (plumes), and clocks. For the second visit to the South Church, Yi Imyŏng and other members of the *Yŏnhaengsa* accompanied Yi Kiji. At the end of the visit, Yi Imyŏng invited the missionaries to his guesthouse and they accepted his invitation. With this visit, the missionaries grew closer to the Chosŏn envoys and presented them with gifts such as ‘antidote stones’, nuts, a knife, a crystal box, pictures of Western churches, and books related to Catholicism. In return, the Koreans offered rice cakes, abalone, and cinnamon wine, and presented paper, knives, dried octopus, and folding fans as gifts to the missionaries.

The relationship between the Chosŏn envoys and the Western missionaries during the first half of the eighteenth century was marked by mutual respect, affability, open-mindedness, and willingness for cultural exchange. Chosŏn envoys were ready to experience foreign customs and understand different cultural values. One of the reasons why Yi Kiji was able to maintain a close relationship with the missionaries seems to be his genuine, unbiased curiosity to learn more

about foreign people and cultures not yet well known to Koreans.<sup>2</sup> Just as Koreans did not have opportunities to meet Westerners, the Western missionaries did not have opportunities to meet the Chosŏn people other than on the Catholic mission site in Beijing. Therefore, both parties were full of curiosity and open for discussion and exchange, which helped build a mutual trust of one another.

This relationship between Chosŏn envoys and Western missionaries in Beijing changed, however, in the second half of the century as attested by later visitors to the mission.<sup>3</sup> Whereas visitors in Yi Kiji's time were welcomed even without advance notice, missionaries refused entry of later Chosŏn visitors to the churches even if they received advance notifications of request to visit. From travel accounts of the late 18th and 19th century, it appears that the missionaries were informed of Chosŏn's policy prohibiting Catholicism and of the persecutions of Catholics in the 19th century. This is likely to have affected encounters between the missionaries and Chosŏn envoys, which over time no longer based itself on mutual respect or friendship.

**2) "Sacredness and Mundanity: Westerners' Perceptions of Baekdusan [Paektusan] or Changbaishan during the Pre-modern Period."**

Paper presented at the 2008 Annual Conference of the AAS;

**"The Adventures of Two British Nationals in Chosŏn during the Late 19th Century: With a special focus on Cavendish's account of his voyage to Mt. Paektu."**

*Papers of the British Association for Korean Studies* 12 (2007).

The 19th century saw a marked rise in foreign interest in Chosŏn Korea by not only its neighboring countries (Japan and China) but also Western nations. Increase in the number of foreign visitors to Korea in the late 19th century resulted in the introduction of in-depth

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<sup>2</sup> Compared to other Chosŏn literati scholars of his time, Yi Kiji was extremely open-minded to the extent that he was not wary of Western religion spreading to Chosŏn, but rather seemed to encourage it. "They [missionaries] were about to give me a small picture of a woman holding a baby, but then returned it to its place with airs of regret. When I asked the reason, they explained that it was an illustration of the Mother of God, and that it should not be treated badly or passed around here and there. I replied, 'If the teachings of the Lord of Heaven reach and become practised in Chosŏn, this will be to your merit. So what harm would there be in passing around the icon of the Lord of Heaven?' To this they replied, "You are truly right," and gave the picture to me." (*Iram yŏn'gi* 2: '20<sup>th</sup> day of the ninth month') This is perhaps one of the reasons why the missionaries' relationship with Yi was closer than with any other Chosŏn envoys at the time.

<sup>3</sup> Hong Taeyong, who visited Beijing between 1765 and 1766, wrote in his travel journal:

"Since Emperor Kangxi's time (r.1662-1722), Chosŏn's envoys visited the Catholic churches in Beijing and were warmly welcomed by the missionaries. The missionaries used to show unusual items such as paintings, icons, and various objects in the churches, and even offered their visitors with exotic gifts from the West. As time went by, Chosŏn envoys wanted more exotic items and increasingly enjoyed the unusual setting and experience (of the churches), so visiting the Catholic churches became customary practice for the envoys travelling to Beijing. However, as our country's customs are arrogant and inclined to exaggeration and cunning, the envoys have often failed to behave with propriety and sometimes did not offer gifts in return. Moreover, members of their entourage, who were often uneducated, frequently smoked, spat, and touched everything inside the churches, which tested the patience of the missionaries who appreciated cleanliness. Recently, the Western missionaries have come to dislike visitors from Chosŏn more than ever before. They emphatically turn down our requests to see the churches, and do not treat us affably. I have come to realize that unless we treat the missionaries with utmost respect and politeness, their attitude towards us will not change. Therefore, I have sent two rolls of paper and three fans, three boxes of ink sticks, and three tablets of tonic medicine with a letter to two Westerner missionaries, August von Hallerstein (劉松齡) and Antoine Gogeisl (鮑友官)." (*Tamhŏn yŏn'gi* "Oejip" 7: 9)

accounts and firsthand impressions of Chosŏn. The increase in the number of Westerners who travelled to Chosŏn to see and experience the country firsthand was occasioned by not only political agencies that resulted in Chosŏn opening up her ports for trade, but also other private activities including missionary work (Protestant missions), business (private merchants), and travel for leisure (individuals). Westerners traveling in the Manchurian region of China and the northern end of the Korean peninsula often visited Paektusan 白頭山 (or Changbaishan in China), a relatively remote area which became increasingly popular to foreign visitors.

Paektusan is a mountain range that sits on the northern end of the Korean peninsula and shares its borders with China. The Manchurian (Qing) border, consists of Paektusan and two rivers, Amnok (Yalu) River 鴨綠江 and Tuman (Tumen) River 豆滿江. In the time of Chosŏn Korea (1392-1910) and Qing China (1644-1911), the mountain range was the only land border which people of the two countries were able to cross relatively freely in spite of the two governments' restrictions. Historical records show that since the late seventeenth century there were discussions between Chosŏn and Qing courts through official letters regarding Paektusan and border issues. Emperor Kangxi (r. 1662-1722) of Qing wanted to confirm the borderline on the mountain and ascertain the symbolic significance of the area as the birthplace of his empire. To ensure that Paektusan was considered as Chosŏn territory, Kings Sukjong (r. 1674-1720) and Yŏngjo (r. 1724-76) of Chosŏn tried in turn to counteract Qing's claims and territorial venture. Sukjong did not show positive cooperation and support for Kangxi's plan to survey the border area, and Yŏngjo initiated a national offering to the deity of Paektusan, which became the grounds for Chosŏn to officially designate the mountain as the birthplace of the kingdom.<sup>4</sup> To this end, the Paektusan area was considered sacred by both Koreans and Chinese, and there were numerous traditional legends surrounding the mountain range and region.

Western travelers became aware of Chosŏn and Qing's continuing competition to ascertain national significance of Paektusan, so while their travelogues include detailed descriptions of the topography, they also discuss the mountain's significance in historical and folkloric terms, as well as the lifestyle and customs of the local people who were in effect living in a cross-cultural region. It appears that for Western travelers to Paektusan, the surrounding region was perceived as an open space where Korean and Chinese culture and historical contexts merged and co-existed, rather than as clearly demarcated frontier lands separated by explicit territorial lines and restrictions. While the majority of Western travelers (both officials and private individuals) were usually primarily interested in natural resources and cultural elements that might be of benefit to their own countries, with regard to Paektusan their interest in the cultural and historical narratives surrounding the mountain conveys different inclinations and curiosity. In other words, if Western travel accounts from this time period were usually marked by attitudes affected by the burgeoning imperialist enterprise, those that deal with Paektusan appear to be the exception.

Although it was among the most remote regions of East Asia that Westerners explored,

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<sup>4</sup> By the order of Kangxi, Juwluo Wumone (覺羅武默訥) and Le Zhe (勒輒) visited Changbaishan in 1677 and 1684 respectively, and after Wumone's return from his journey to the mountain, Kangxi expressed his will to pay national homage to the mountain, which he declared to be the home of the Qing dynasty. In 1712, Kangxi also sent Mu Kedeng to erect a stele demarcating territorial boundaries on the top of the mountain. In Chosŏn, King Yŏngjo initiated national homage for Paektusan on an annual basis from 1768.

Paektusan's sacred as well as mundane characteristics became known to the West through a few travelers (mostly British) and their travelogues in the late nineteenth century. However, traveling in peace to Paektusan and its surrounding region suddenly became a thing of the past with the advent of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5), the effects of which were felt in the area. As a result, the travelogues of Charles William Campbell and A. E. Cavendish belong to the few firsthand accounts that convey Westerners' encounters of this area in detail in the nineteenth century.

Campbell's work, *Report by Mr. C.W. Campbell of a Journey in North Corea in September and October 1889*,<sup>5</sup> is an official travel record that was sent to the British prime minister together with a letter of then British Consul-General Hillier, which was published as a 'travel report' and submitted to the British parliament. Cavendish's work, *Korea and the Sacred White Mountain* (1893),<sup>6</sup> is a travelogue that was compiled during his trip to Korea (travel for leisure). Together with another British Captain named H. E. Goold-Adams, Cavendish set sail from Hong Kong and travelled through Shanghai before arriving at the Chosŏn port of Chemulp'ŏ in 1891. Cavendish's main purpose of activity in Korea was to climb Paektusan, but he was unable to do so due to time constraints. Instead, Cavendish contented himself with accompanying Goold-Adams into the town of Poch'ŏn at the foot of the mountain range; thus leaving the task of completing the scaling of the mountain to his friend. Cavendish supplemented his account of his voyage by transcribing in exact detail Goold-Adams' own account of his trek up the mountain. Cavendish's account also included references to the documents and records compiled by Campbell, during the latter's own voyage to Paektusan in 1889, and pictures taken by Campbell, Walter C. Hillier (British Counsel-General in Seoul), and a customs officer in Wŏnsan by the name of Brazier.

Judging by the title of his work (*Korea and the Sacred White Mountain*), it appears that Cavendish identified 'sacredness' as being the most prominent attribute of Paektusan. Although Cavendish and Goold-Adams' main objective in traveling to and climbing Paektusan had been to hunt tigers,<sup>7</sup> they naturally began to focus increasingly on the mountain's features as they

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<sup>5</sup> Campbell, Charles William. *Report by Mr. C.W. Campbell of a Journey in North Corea in September and October 1889*. London: Printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office by Harrison and Sons, 1891.

<sup>6</sup> The official title and bibliographical information for this book is as follows: Captain A. E. Cavendish, F.R.G.S. *Korea and the Sacred White Mountain: Being a Brief Account of a Journey in Korea in 1891, together with an Account of an Ascent of the White Mountain by Captain H. E. Goold-Adams, R.A. with forty original illustrations and two specially prepared maps*. London: George Philip & Son, 1894.

<sup>7</sup> "Our original object in going to Korea was to shoot tigers or leopards, for the tales we heard of their number, size, and ferocity, and of the beauty of their fur, made our mouths water; but the mysterious White mountain lured us on to hasten to make its acquaintance, and partly on that account the shooting was somewhat of a failure. Without doubt there is a great quantity of game in Korea, but there is only one way to get at tigers or leopards, and that is to let them come to you, and not you to go to them. The natives are so lazy, untruthful, and afraid of these animals, that no persuasion will induce them to act as beaters. In vain did we offer at length, extravagant prices for the beasts. Even fifty dollars, with the bones and carcase thrown in, for each tiger we shot, would not tempt them. The bones and part of the body are greatly prized by the Chinese physicians, as imparting youthful vigour to old or worn-out constitutions. We also offered twenty-five dollars for a shot at a tiger, and ten dollars of the mere sight of one, but equally in vain. Although the people at Pochŏn strenuously denied the death of any one there from tigers, and even the very existence of these beasts, yet Mr. Campbell, when he visited that village in 1889, was told that in the last year eighteen people had been killed by them, and that three tigers, one a confirmed man-eater, infested the district....." (Cavendish, 1894, pp. 202-203) Cavendish found himself hard-pressed to secure the cooperation of the local residents in tracking down these wild animals. The local residents were not only unwilling to accompany the foreigners on their search for tigers, but also refused to provide them with any information pertaining to the great beasts. Although the local residents' general fear of tigers was one factor in their

drew closer to it. For Cavendish and his companions, Paektusan's sacredness had to do with the various landscapes created by the magnificent geographical features of the mountain that gave off a unique and transcendental air. Cavendish believed that Chosŏn people's perception of Paektusan as a sacred mountain was essentially rooted in the aura of mystery which hung over the area and emanated from its permanently white features. He also believed that the sense of sacredness which flowed effusively from the mountains' slopes had led to the creation of numerous legends and myths, and had also motivated those who revered nature to seek residence around its slopes. On his way back to Wŏnsan, Cavendish came across three different shrines. While visiting these shrines, he realized that on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the eighth month of every year, royal envoys dispatched by the Chosŏn king performed ritual ceremonies for the mountain god and to secure the influence of their monarch. He also learned that the mythical ancestor of Chosŏn had originated from Paektusan. As such, this represented a good opportunity for Cavendish to reconfirm the sacredness of Paektusan, and to gain some insight as to why this mountain so dominated the people of Chosŏn.

The records compiled by Cavendish and Goold-Adams also reflect the locals' perceptions of Paektusan. Chosŏn people believed that the white features of Paektusan were the result of the mountain being covered with snow year around,<sup>8</sup> which meant that the mountain, in effect, never revealed its true features, which further enhanced the sense of sacredness. Fear was another factor that enhanced the sacredness of Paektusan. For the people of Chosŏn, Paektusan was a divine and sacred space that remained beyond the realm of humans. Believing that entering its realm was akin to invading a sacred space, many Chosŏn people were afraid to climb Paektusan altogether.<sup>9</sup> However, for Europeans such as Cavendish and Goold-Adams, Paektusan was a natural force which humans could interact with, and the fear expressed by the Koreans conveyed humbleness before nature on the one hand, and superstitious beliefs on the other. Hence, it could be said that the different reactions reflect to some extent the differences between Chosŏn and Britain, or by extension East Asia and Europe, in terms of general perceptions of nature.

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refusal to go hunting with Cavendish and his companions, their decision to not provide the foreigners with any precise information pertaining to the great beasts was in part motivated by their awareness of the monetary value of tigers. This failure to kill any tigers was also related to the period of the year in which the journey took place. As Cavendish himself was also well aware of, tigers usually descend from the mountains into the villages to get food during the winter season. However, as his trek had to come to an end before the onset of winter if he and his group were to achieve their other goal of climbing Mt. Paektu, there was a very real possibility from the outset that their attempt to hunt tigers would end in futility.

<sup>8</sup> Cavendish, 1894, p. 153

<sup>9</sup> The reaction of the Chosŏn aides who accompanied Cavendish and Goold-Adams on their trek was one of genuine fear that they had imprudently entered a sacred realm associated with Paektusan.

"The interpreter and Yeung were evidently in a desperate fright at going to the mountain, accounting for it by saying there was no joss-house on the top, and that although once upon a time a Korean did get to the top, yet the Spirit was so offended at his presumption, that he caused his neck (other accounts say his leg) to grow a yard longer! Yeung gave me a farewell letter to his wife to take down-country, thinking his last days were to come, and his bones would be left on the "White Mountain." This letter I sent on to Mr. Stripling at Soul from Won-san, but I never heard if Mrs. Yeung received it." (Cavendish, 1894, pp. 153-154)

3) “Joseon [Chosŏn] and Her People Shown in the Travel Report of Campbell in the Late 19th Century.” *The Review of Korean Studies* Volume 11 Number 1 (March 2008): 47-66.

This article focuses on the travel record by the British diplomat Charles William Campbell (1861-1927),<sup>10</sup> who journeyed around the north of the Korean Peninsula soon after the establishment of diplomatic relations between Chosŏn and Great Britain in the late nineteenth century. While his work, *Report by Mr. C.W. Campbell of a Journey in North Corea in September and October 1889*, was in some measure an ‘official record’ since it was submitted to the British parliament, the narrative style is marked by personal reflection and power of observation. Given its ‘official’ nature, to some extent the work could also be seen to represent British attitudes and perceptions. There is no doubt that Campbell’s travelogue was written for the benefit of Great Britain, but his objective description of the domestic situation of Chosŏn at the time provides interesting insight into the attitudes of particularly the common people of Chosŏn during a turbulent period in Korean history.

Since the end of the eighteenth century, British navigators approached the shores of Chosŏn and tried to persuade contact with the people to grasp a better understanding of the country’s position and situation, but were unsuccessful. It was not until the end of the early nineteenth century when Basil Hall and McLeod who investigated the shores of Chosŏn encountered and engaged with Koreans, albeit in very limited context. They concluded from their limited contact that Chosŏn was an ‘improved’ and somewhat ‘civilized’ nation and thought she had potential as a future trading partner.<sup>11</sup> These views were confirmed to some degree later in the late nineteenth century by Campbell.

At the turn of the latter half of the nineteenth century, Chosŏn faced many serious challenges at home and abroad. In particular, the strong oppression against Roman Catholicism became a catalyst for various changes, and brought much turmoil to the domestic socio-political situation resulting in strong isolationist policies. The Western powers’ will to negotiate diplomatic relations with the Chosŏn government grew stronger to the point of coercion, whereupon military conflicts between Western nations and Chosŏn, who had maintained a strong isolationist stance, became inevitable. Chosŏn fought against the warships of France and the United States and suffered great loss, especially from the French attack in 1866 and the American attack in 1871. Chosŏn opened up her ports to foreign countries to settle the increasingly tumultuous situation quickly. It was not long before Korea established diplomatic relations with many countries such as the United States, France, Great Britain, Russia and Germany, all of whom Chosŏn had regarded as ‘barbarians’ and shunned until the 1880s. This

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<sup>10</sup> Campbell had performed diplomatic duties in East Asia including China at the end of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Since 1884, he had served as a consul in China and remained in China until 1911. He had even been consul-general in Guangdong and Sichuan. However, it seems that his major service area was Beijing. During the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), he participated as secretary on the Chinese side in negotiations to win concessions such as railroad construction and mine development and also joined in negotiations to demarcate the frontier line between Burma and Yunnan Province of China. While doing diplomatic activities, he enjoyed journeying overland in China and was keenly interested in East Asian areas that neighbored China such as Chosŏn and Mongolia.

<sup>11</sup> See Koh, Grace. “British Perceptions of Joseon Korea as Reflected in Travel Literature of the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century.” *The Review of Korean Studies* Volume 9 Number 4 (December 2006): 103-133.

was a solid indication of the end of seclusion and isolation. The number of Western diplomats, merchants, and missionaries entering Chosŏn increased rapidly.

At the end of the nineteenth century when the Western powers tried to make their own profits through trade with Chosŏn, the journey of Campbell in Chosŏn had great significance. Campbell travelled to both Kŭmkangsan (金剛山) and Paektusan during this journey, which was a rare course for foreigners at that time. He confirmed that the religious or spiritual mind of the Chosŏn people was strongly projected onto these two mountains. With regards Chosŏn's potential as a trading partner, Campbell indicated that Korea's conditions for trade with Western countries had yet to reach certain standards, but that there was a latent possibility for the people of the lower classes to contribute to the vitalization of trade. As a diplomat, Campbell had a strong interest in the resources of Chosŏn and the conditions of foreign trade. His intention to contribute to securing the profits of British interests in Chosŏn is confirmed in his travelogue. He concluded that trade with Chosŏn would be profitable for Britain, and that with the administrative support of the Chosŏn government to make productive use of labor, the people of the lower classes of Chosŏn would break the barrier of status and contribute to the development of trade to a considerable degree. In a situation where Western nations were busy making their own profits in Chosŏn, it could be viewed that the Chosŏn government should have considered Campbell's point seriously as a way of self-improvement and self-innovation.

Campbell met various different local people while visiting the northern villages and local government offices, and during his travels to Kŭmkangsan and Paektusan. In particular, he had many opportunities to meet people of the lower classes since they formed the majority of Chosŏn society in numbers. Campbell had a great interest in their lifestyle, and it appears that he estimated their standard of living as a measure for appraising Chosŏn society, and that they had potential as major contributors (labor force) to the vitalization of trade in the long term. It seems that Campbell saw little hope in the future of the upper classes of Chosŏn. While travelling to the north of the Korean Peninsula, Campbell often encountered corrupt officials who were not trusted by the people, and felt embarrassed by their lack of economic ability.

While Campbell had both positive and negative impressions of the lower classes, and though the negative aspects are mentioned more often, he emphasized the positive aspects in his accounts. One example of his negative assessment of the lower classes is when Campbell summarizes his impressions of those who supplied transportation and portage during his travels. He describes them as inefficient and lazy because the schedule of his journeys were always delayed owing to the talkative packhorse driver hanging around and the attendants quarrelling over allowances (Campbell 1891:3). Similarly, when Campbell visits immigrant homes of both Korean and Chinese people in the Amnok (Yalu) River area, he reiterates the inactive and lazy lifestyle of the lower classes of Chosŏn, and describes their characteristics concisely by comparing them with the Chinese people who had immigrated empty-handed, reclaimed wasteland, employed Koreans, and engaged in farming with Koreans who owned fertile land but had little interest in doing the work (Campbell 1891:31-2).

The people of the lower classes of Chosŏn who received positive assessments from Campbell were those whom he recognized as being faithful to their duties. One example is with regard to

his interpreter, Kang Yö-hoa (Yöhwa). During one of Campbell's journeys, Kang played the role of interpreter and personal attendant, and he was quick to put to work the lazy attendants and employees from their lodging house and was not short of providing various information necessary for the journey (Campbell 1891:2). Anywhere they went, Kang always made sure that things were in order and made sure to settle unresolved or hanging matters before they moved on. Kang even endured being stoned (which was an outdated practice at this time) by the local inhabitants at Kapsan because of the inability and corruption of the chief of the province. Campbell recorded this incident in his entry of 4 October (Campbell 1891:31).

Campbell also had a positive interest in the merchant class of Chosŏn. An old merchant from Ŭiju whom Campbell met on the way from Tongch'ŏn to Hyöpgok resolved money problems that the local government could not finance. Campbell thought highly of such a person with economic ability (Campbell 1891:14). The ability of the merchant drew Campbell's attention to the incompetence of the government. He also thought that in spite of their laziness, people of the lower classes could easily contribute to change in Chosŏn more so than those from the upper class who were bound by social position and formality. Campbell regarded the appearance, physical strength, courteousness, and bright character of the lower class people as very good qualities (Campbell 1891:35). He also regarded lack of skills and laziness to be symptomatic of passive ways of thinking, and that this was not an individual problem but rather the problem of the government system that failed to encourage productivity.<sup>12</sup> Campbell strongly believed that the ability to perform one's role and duty properly along with economic aptitude could vitalize the commerce in Korea, and that the people of the lower classes had latent abilities that would surface with changes in the national system that would implement 'an incentive to honest exertion'.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The Korean [Korean] system of forced labour thus unwittingly made use of is in constant and universal operation. It bears a resemblance to the old French *corvée*, in that it is chiefly restricted to roads, and helping people over them. A Korean official travelling on public business naturally expects to do so at the public cost, but his conception of public cost is usually anybody's cost except his own; and the Government rule being that travelling expenses must be borne by the districts passed through, in other words, that a locality must provide food, lodging, money, bearers, and beasts of burden on the spur of the moment whenever it is so unlucky as to have an official visitor, ...if not, bulls or men are requisitioned (without remuneration) through the Headman; rooms are swept and garnished, and money collected. (Campbell 1891:4-5)

<sup>13</sup> Campbell 1891:37.

### **Suggestions for Further Discussion**

Based on my research thus far, further discussions can be developed as follows:

1) In examining the Chosŏn-Western encounters in the 18th and 19th centuries, a comparative analysis of mutual perceptions and changing perceptions in relation to time and space in critical terms is crucial. In the 18th century, Koreans encountered Europeans in a contiguous zone outside Korea and Europe – the Catholic missions in Beijing. Hence, Chosŏn-Western encounters were in effect mediated in terms of space. However, in the late 19th century, Europeans and Americans travelled to the Korean peninsula, and Koreans travelled to Europe and America, whereby Chosŏn-Western encounters were direct encounters. If we characterize the two different types of encounters – i.e., cultural exchange by contiguity and firsthand experience – the historical significance of Chosŏn-Western encounters in each period could be clarified. For example, Western perceptions of Chosŏn changed, from Korea as an imaginary realm or space (18th century), to Korea as an actual, physical place with natural / human resources which could be nurtured for profit (19th century). Likewise, Chosŏn perceptions of the West changed from a collective, abstract, and mediated cultural concept of the 'West', to distinctive individual Western nations of political power and affluence. The implications and significance of these changes in perception need to be considered systematically.

2) Chinese and Japanese attitudes toward the 'West', and Western attitudes towards China and Japan should be compared with the Korean case. Similarities and differences should be identified and analyzed in relation to historical context. This enquiry would have to involve contribution from specialists in Chinese and Japanese studies. It would also be interesting to examine the extent to which Western cultures regarded the three East Asian countries in collective terms (as a collective cultural space rather than as individual countries).

3) In relation to imperialism and colonialism, it would be desirable to investigate how the West's interest in Chosŏn Korea in the 18th~19th century compares with European interest in the Americas during the Age of Discovery (15th~17th century). If European perceptions of the 'other' change and differ in time and space and we are able to map the differences, this would help our critical understanding of imperialism and colonialism in more profound and concrete terms. In relation to this, whether there are diverse and drastically different accounts about Korea and Koreans by Western travellers from the same country and time period could also serve as an interesting case study.