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Wayne Patterson. ***William Franklin Sands in Late Chosŏn Korea: At the Deathbed of Empire, 1896–1904.*** Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021. ix, 161 pp. (ISBN: 9781793649270). doi:10.18399/acta.2023.26.2.012

Building on the critiques on the "impact-response" model and modernization theories, historians of premodern East Asia have increasingly observed that Chosŏn 朝鮮 and the Qing 清, as well as Meiji Japan, exercised considerable agency in their relations with other states during the late nineteenth century. For one, the inner workings of the Chosŏn court as it tried to sustain its precarious autonomy in dealing with the great powers at the turn of the twentieth century, amid unadulterated imperialist maneuvers and "diplomacy without gloves, perfume, or phrases," are a theme that still needs to be further explored in East Asian historiography. Likewise are the microscopic analyses through the lens of significant contemporary individuals, be they of the Chosŏn state or others, looking into their activities and influences on the fluid power dynamics in and surrounding the dynastic court "at the deathbed of empire." Wayne Patterson's book *William Franklin Sands in Late Chosŏn Korea: At the Deathbed of Empire, 1896–1904* is a superb work in this regard. Within each chapter and largely as a whole, it records the words and experiences of William Franklin Sands 山島 (1874-1946), nominally the highest-ranking foreigner in the Chosŏn government during the years 1900-1902, along with those of others closely involved in Sands' life and career trajectory mostly during the Taehan Empire 大韓帝國 period, in a sleek way and with an effective approach of narrative analysis.

In his preface Patterson informs us that he has *not* relied on the material in Sands' autobiographic memoir *Undiplomatic Memories: The Far East, 1896–1904*. He gives the reason why the memoir, standing alone, is a conveniently 'diplomatic' – not 'undiplomatic' – account of Sands' time and events during the final years of an 'autonomous' Chosŏn: written almost three decades later, it naturally reflects Sands' own retroactive perspectives and biases, with many of the events having been either omitted or glossed over such that there are noticeable discrepancies between it and the primary documentary evidence. By competently utilizing *William Franklin Sands Papers* at the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Historical Research Center and supplementary papers deposited at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, the author provides detailed accounts of what Sands did and went through in Japan (briefly before

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settling in Chosŏn) and in Chosŏn for a span of eight years from early 1896 to early 1904, deftly complemented by, among other materials included in the *Papers*, the correspondence between Sands and his father James Hoban Sands and between Sands and Horace Newton Allen, the latter a former United States Minister in the Chosŏn capital of Hansŏng 漢城 and Sands' superior during his first two-year stint as First Secretary to the Minister in 1898-1899. *Undiplomatic Memories* and Patterson's work complement each other so well that anyone wishing to get a more accurate picture of Sands' experience both as part of American diplomatic corps and as advisor to the Chosŏn court during the time would find the latter highly informative.

Chapter 1 is a prologue that sets the tone for how Sands came to settle in Chosŏn for six years after staying in Japan from mid-1896 to mid-1897 as Second Secretary to the U.S. Legation in Tokyo. Here three facts are worthy of note: the spoils system from which Sands benefited handsomely for his career as a professional diplomat (even after his tenure in East Asia); William Woodville Rockhill's influence on Sands' decision in 1898 to take up the opportunity to come to Chosŏn; and some Japanese anti-foreign sentiment personally felt by Sands himself while in Nagasaki in January 1898. First, the elder Sands, a rear admiral in the US Navy, made use of his political connections, even arranging for his son to meet President Grover Cleveland and State Secretary Richard Olney for appointment to the Tokyo legation. Later, when the younger Sands lost that position with the change in administration in Washington, his father got him a meeting with President William McKinley and Secretary John Sherman that got him appointed to the vacant position of First Secretary to the U.S. Legation in Hansŏng. These events are chronicled with relevant quotations so as to give a sense of how the spoils system worked in the U.S. administrations at the time. Second, it was William Woodville Rockhill, then Assistant Secretary of State, who apparently induced Sands to go to Hansŏng, as he is quoted as saying, "Korea is the place… it is there you will see diplomacy in the raw; diplomacy without gloves, perfume or phrases" (p. 12). Concerning the interview with Assistant Secretary William R. Day over this appointment, Sands wrote, "Had I had more presence of mind and less scruple, I would have been Minister at 22[23]" (p. 12), but he was obviously vain on this point, for Allen had already been appointed as Minister. Patterson could have mentioned this, but the author inserted Admiral Sands' mild rebuke for his son's 'reticence,' instead of commenting on both the father and the son's vanity in mistaking Day's misinterpretation of McKinley's promise of 'any vacancy' for a chance left unexploited. Two unpleasant episodes in Nagasaki serve as useful additions with which to help understand how Sands got to have a more balanced evaluation – which would work to prevent him from becoming unduly pro-Japanese – toward the Japanese presence in Chosŏn.

The clash of personalities between Sands and Allen, which would be a key element in Sands' struggle in navigating through his public life during the period in question, is gradually revealed starting in Chapter 2 over official duties and self-interested affairs and those that would border on both, with Allen as Sands' superior from 1898 to1899 and not even in Sands' chain of command from 1900 to 1903. Sands' early, unsanitized evaluation of Chosŏn and its people and its King-turned-Emperor Kojong 高宗, one conspicuous element that sets

this volume apart from his memoir, is also introduced in this chapter. How he eventually came to accept Kojong's offer of 'Advisor to the Imperial Household Department' (宮內府贊議官) in "a very awful country" (p. 20) plagued by official corruption ("the squeeze" on page 23) and endemic factionalism, with people who might improve only "under a foreign protectorate" (p. 29) could have been explicated further. Except the deaths of Charles Legendre and Clarence Greathouse, who had been the Advisor to the Imperial Household Department and the Foreign Office respectively, there may be more essential parameters that brought Sands into the Chosŏn court. Note 25 on page 34 cites Yun Ch'i-ho's diary entry that hints about an indigenous pull working for it. This, if elaborated upon, could have led to an illuminating account of domestic factional interests combined with the court's calculation to walk a tightrope amid Japanese and Russian encroachments.

Sands' activities from his first year as Advisor to the Imperial Household Department to early 1901 are the main theme of Chapter 3. As shall be proved in the following chapters as well, Sands, like Allen, would have problems with Li Yong-ik 李容翊, one of the most prominent government officials at the time, and when things did not go his way, he was not averse to threatening to resign. The author points out another noteworthy episode in which Sands would find himself at odds with John McLeavy Brown, British Chief Commissioner of the Chosŏn maritime customs, that caused a split with Allen. While previously having a high opinion of Brown's penny-pinching methods, now Sands – as hired by the Chosŏn court – would develop a strong dislike for Brown, due to the commissioner's stringent financial control that left necessary expenses unpaid for, on top of the house occupancy issue where Sands found that Brown "had taken my house and put a lady in it" during his leave of absence in Japan before embarking on his new career as advisor in January 1900, thus leading to a violent quarrel with Brown (pp. 39-41). There were already several reasons for which Allen attempted to run Sands out of town: Sands' bookkeeping mismanagement during Allen's leave in mid-1899; his defiant temper that evidently annoyed Allen; his overspending and massive debts that would prompt Allen to label him as "a miserable failure here… and a disgrace to his country" (p. 96) and would later cause considerable trouble to Allen and the U.S. Legation. Thus the disagreement over Brown's retention was just one reason among others, many of which involved Sands' clash with Allen: "I have had nothing but trouble from him [Allen] ever since I entered the Korean service" (p. 45).

Chapter 4 chronicles Sands' deep involvement in putting down the 1901 Cheju Uprising, also covered in Chapter XI ("The Amazons") of *Undiplomatic Memories*. This chapter stands out for its narrative value and description of Sands' view on the event. Handwritten materials from the *Sands Papers* and Japanese newspaper articles, along with other sources cited, give a fuller picture of the background and significance of the rebellion on the island of Quelpa(e)rt, which is not readily available in the memoir. One slightly questionable point is where the author writes that Sands "appointed a new governor for Cheju, Yi Chae-ho" and he "also appointed a military officer, Kim Chang-su, to conduct mop-up operations since there was still residual unrest" (p. 57). In *Undiplomatic Memories*, Sands does not mention whether he 'appointed' the governor. Although it can be inferred that Sands was officially

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commissioned to be part of the quelling operation since he was afterward honored for his role by the Chosŏn government, the reader may want to know whether Sands had indeed been invested with such power to appoint a provincial magistrate.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 deal with the factors that either institutionally or personally undermined the status and official activities of Sands while he served as the chief advisor to the Imperial Household Department and, provisionally, as 'acting advisor to the Foreign Office' (外部顧問官事務署理). The various quotes reveal how he had to fight against Chosŏn officials (including the notorious Li Yong-ik , who was "now practically Emperor, supported by the French-Russian-Belgian party" (p. 66)), the Japanese who were hostile to him for "his championing of American business interests" (p. 69), and the Russians who tried twice to unseat him, and how he would carry on to stay in his position, all the while he gradually lost influence with the fickle emperor Kojong despite his efforts to cultivate 'American Party' and some support from his business friends. But Patterson convincingly demonstrates that the most consistent antagonist Sands faced was ironically American Minister Allen, who would consider Sands "still as his subordinate and a most ungrateful one" "daring to share His Majesty's confidence" (pp. 77, 84). The author effectively shows how Allen would, unwittingly or not, undercut Sands in an increasingly toxic relationship all through Sands' struggle against the Japanese, the Russians, and the Chosŏn courtiers, which constitutes a set of highly intriguing episodes.

Several issues Sands found himself trapped in are featured in Chapter 7. He had practically been eased out by early 1903, with a Belgian adviser appointed in his place while he was away on a business trip to Peking. In another blow to him, the Chosŏn government asked him to vacate his residence, Taegwanjŏng 大觀停, in order to house distinguished guests, but he initially refused to leave arguing that the hiring of the Belgian adviser was a breach of his contract. According to the author, Sands eventually complied with the request after receiving assurances from the emperor. The specific content of the sovereign's message, either transmitted by Sands' interpreter or otherwise, if available, could be a cue on whether Kojong really wanted to keep Sands on his side.

Sands' memorials to Kojong – some not dated – that linked the deeply entrenched official corruption or seemingly inexorable internal decay to cold-blooded foreign 'intervention' are introduced in Chapter 8, which makes the chapter, though brief, a valuable reference for scholars of East Asian states' external affairs at the turn of the twentieth century. It would have been helpful to see the translated version of such memorials, if any, particularly in regard to Sands' advocacy of absolute neutrality. His policy suggestion of neutrality to bring together the four powers—France, Japan, England, and Russia—in order to prove "to the world our ability to govern our country wisely" (p. 108) might sound, in retrospect, somewhat naïve. Although he himself asks rhetorically, "is not that which is affirmed by the Russian or French Minister immediately denied by the Japanese or English?" (p. 109), still, it is remarkable for its orientation toward promoting genuine independence. His argument for the need for competent advisers and for enhancing their ranks and power would seem valid as well. It would thus have been better if the author had presented the memorials more fully or

at least had given as much detail as possible about Sands' suggestion of Chosŏn neutrality in opposition to the Anglo-Japanese alliance that required Britain to endorse Japan's overriding interest in Chosŏn, especially if such proposal for neutralization was in accord with Kojong's own wishes (p. 101).

Sands' last full year, as he tried to settle pressing matters before departing Chosŏn in February 1904, is narrated in Chapter 9. In a retort to Homer Hulbert, who belatedly argued for permanent neutrality for Chosŏn in the early 1904 issue of the *Korea Review*, Sands claimed that earlier in 1900 he "proposed to the Emperor that the assent be obtained of all the powers not territorially interested in Korea" to establish the empire "as a neutral and inviolable zone, as are Belgium, Switzerland, and certain smaller states of Europe" (p. 118). Sands offered an explanation of his own as to why his connection with the Chosŏn government was severed: his vigorous endeavor in 1902, with his potential visit to England to attend the coronation of King Edward VII, to carry through the policy of neutrality which "was approved by the Emperor" (p. 119); and his attempt to enlist the cooperation of the Belgians – both of which backfired. But this slightly contradicts what Sands told his mother in January 1902, as for the reason why he did not accept the government's request to accompany an embassy to England: "for it is only a polite way of getting rid of me" (p. 82). The author, however, does not give an extensive content analysis of what Sands would say in this respect. By the way, a furious Sands firing back at Allen's letter asking him to give his indebtedness statement for use in paying out money owed by him after his departure, calling it "not only unnecessary, but insulting" and adding that "[m]y word has generally been considered good" (p. 122), may serve as a negative role model [反面教師] as one with a temper and undue self-congratulation.

Chapter 10, "Epilogue: *1904–1946*," shows how Sands mellowed in his opinions of those he had previously criticized – most prominently, Allen and Kojong – and, more importantly, how he, 'having been bitten by the [East] Asian diplomatic bug' earlier, would never forget his years in Japan and Chosŏn even three decades later. How he kept his eye on things Korean is well evidenced by his assertion made to the Assistant Secretary of State, Donald Russell, in 1945: "I know Koreans as few others do" (p. 139). His continued interest is similarly evident in his writings on Chosŏn/Korea (including *Undiplomatic Memories*) and by his repeated proposals through the 1930s and until 1945 to be of service to the U.S. Army, the Navy, and the State Department, all in connection with the U.S. government's involvements in the affairs of Japan and the Korean occupation. Patterson's conclusion in the final pages gives a taut summary of the previous chapters.

Sands' prescient prediction that the Japanese would not hesitate to take away that 'independence' falsely promised to Chosŏn, and his observation that the Chosŏn people "would be the finest people in the East" who "need only a ruler" (pp. 105-106), are quite notable and make us wonder how intimate knowledge of the inner working of the Chosŏn court was made available to him. On the other hand, Sands was a solid beneficiary of the spoils system at the time in the United States, whose father was not above exploiting his government contacts for his son. In depicting these two sides, Patterson has skillfully interweaved Sands' picturesque public life with his personal opportunities and constraints,

producing an exemplary work for its methodological approach, meticulous treatment of firsthand sources, and the extra effort he made – such as the interviews with the protagonist's descendants – to collect complementary evidence to back up the existing textual evidence.

Throughout the book, Sands' relationship with Allen has been relatively well illustrated with the various quotes. But why and how Sands' conflicts with Li Yong-ik ended up as described, or how Sands actually came to be employed as advisor to the Chosŏn court in the first place, could have been explained in more depth, considering Sands' apparent influence at the top level despite some contradictory narrative and a little self-conceit on his part.

One thing could be mentioned on the technical side. Too often, two or more quotations by two or more different persons are combined in one citation in the notes. This might leave some readers wanting to know which is which, if they wish to locate exactly where each quotation fits. Additionally, it is curious that while Sands writes of 'Corea' in March 1898, he speaks of 'Korea' in August 1899 (pp. 25, 29).

Overall, Patterson has brought to life many hitherto unknown, intricate layers that characterized not only intergovernmental rivalry enveloping the Taehan Empire but also personal-level intrigue centered on Sands and involving Horace Allen and other foreign diplomats as well as Chosŏn court officials, weaving them in an abundant amount of direct quotations throughout this volume in such a way that readers may find themselves easily relating to the characters of the story. The end result is this pleasantly readable biographical work, well-researched and insightful, that will be found worthy of attention by scholars of East Asian history, politics, and culture during the era of high imperialism.

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Namhee Lee. ***Memory Construction and the Politics of Time in Neoliberal South Korea.*** Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022. 232 pp. (ISBN: 9781478016342).
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Memory Construction and the Politics of Time in Neoliberal South Korea is in essence about the "afterlives" of the *minjung* project[1] but is also about how neoliberalism has had a profound impact on historiography in post-1987 South Korea. The book illustrates how it is not only the economy, social and political systems, and culture that have undergone neoliberal transformations, but also how collective memory has been reshaped by neoliberal rationality. It is an essential guide for scholars and students interested in post-1987 South Korea given

[1] In her previous monograph, the author defines the minjung project as "the articulation and projection of minjung as endowed with a coherent and unifying political identity." Namhee Lee, *The Making of Minjung: Democracy and the Politics of Representation in South Korea* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 2.

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