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William Franklin Sands in Late Chosón Korea: At the Deathbed of Empire, 1896-1904.

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written from the perspective of fans. This approach to scholarship—from the standpoint of one's own "fangirl" position—is one that certainly will be of interest to students. In fact, I believe some chapters will act as models for younger researchers of culture. For example, Jieun Lee and Hyangsoon Yi's chapter on the ongoing image of a strong female ("strong sisters" or *ssen-unni* in Korean) in K-pop stage performances is exemplary of how even just the visuals of a K-pop phenomenon can be highly informative when analyzed and contextualized properly within the country's social history, musical genealogy, and ongoing gender discourses. Equally helpful to students will be the introduction, which, albeit short, offers a list of literature on the Korean wave to date. Maud Lavin's casual tone, which goes back and forth between theoretical ruminations to subjective observations as a fan, was especially refreshing to me, as my own scholarship also often stems from my consumer identity as a fan. Lavin's writing will no doubt also act as an inspiration to students interested in translating their screen interests into academic projects.

While I was left wishing for more chapters providing textual analysis of the femininities that we absorb as viewers, an edited volume cannot cover all topics and what it lacks in depth, it makes up for in diversity. Therefore, I end the review with this quote from the introduction, which pinpoints the core essence of not only this book, but also most academics and readers of Hallyu studies: "We are K-pop and K-drama fans, we are queer, we are international, we are academics of Asian histories, sociology, gender and sexuality, art history, and visual culture" (7).

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WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS IN LATE CHOSŎN KOREA: At the Deathbed of Empire, 1896–1904.

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Veteran historian Wayne Patterson's careful study of an American diplomat, William Franklin Sands (1874–1946), is a welcome addition to the study of modern Korean history and diplomatic history. To my knowledge, this is the first book-length study on Sands in any language, despite his important contribution to the foreign policy of Chosŏn Korea amidst the great transformation of the international world order.

Sands first set foot in Korea in January 1898. His initial impression of Korea was decisively negative: "What a very awful country! Bleak, desolate, forlorn." "Not a sign of civilization, an awful place" (20).

Despite his decidedly negative assessment of the country, Sands wanted to explore a more active American policy in Korea. Like the US Minister to Korea, Horace Newton Allen, Sands pushed for "dollar diplomacy," where the increased American investment in Korea might spur further political interest from Washington in the East Asian state (24).

Moreover, Patterson adds that, despite his self-professed inability to forecast the future course of events for Korea, Sands shared some Koreans' concerns about the encroachment of Russian influence on the Korean Peninsula (Korea's new "big brother"). Noting that China had lost its primacy in Korea after Beijing's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, Sands vividly illustrates how the Independence Club, the pressure group formed in 1896, decried St. Petersburg's perceived intrusion in Korean affairs (25).

Ironically (considering his subsequent service to the Korean court), Sands was highly critical of Korea's governance system during this period. For instance, his description of the Korean monarch, Kojong, was hardly flattering: "The King [*sic*] is absolutely untrustworthy, utterly without conscience" (29).

One would be forgiven for thinking that, upon his appointment as an adviser to the Korean court in January 1900, Sands would only work for America's interests rather than Korea's. True enough, the Sands did want to increase his country's interest in Korea. As subsequent events attest, however, Sands' relationship with Allen (and, by an extension, America) would become more complex, as the young American was no longer content to play second fiddle to his former boss (38).

Meanwhile, Sands had to grapple with a rival much closer to home before fending off stiff challenges from major powers—John McLeavy Brown. The Irishman oversaw the Korean customs as its chief commissioner, and Brown liaised closely with the British government. The attempted dismissal of Brown in favour of Kir Alexieff from Russia's Finance Department under pressure from the Russian minister to Korea, Alexis de Speyer, and the anchoring of the British fleet in Inch'ŏn to bolster Brown's position, illustrates this tendency vividly (39).

If dealing with Brown, the man Sands accused of being a "constant source of trouble" (41), was hard enough, as an acting adviser to Korea's Foreign Office, the young American also had to deal with internal turbulence. Sands' unexpected intervention in a domestic incident in Korea evinced the connectivity between domestic and external spheres in policymaking.

In May 1901, a cable was sent from Mokpo by a Cheju Christian to the French Bishop Mutel concerning the outbreak of an anti-Catholic rebellion on Cheju Island (51). Upon his arrival on the Korean island, Sands had to deal with accusations that the uprising was instigated by French missionaries instead of the oppressive tax system exploited by corrupt Korean officials (53). In the end, having fended off the Korean government's sceptical attitude toward missionaries, criticisms from some American protestant missionaries

on Catholic priests, and bitter reproaches from the Japanese media, Sands prevented the possible French annexation of Cheju and saved French priests and the remaining Christians from rebels (60).

"I am absolutely independent of all Legations, and refuse to take part in any intrigue, or join any party, and so I have no friends, but several very bitter enemies" (65). These words, in Sands' exasperated letter to his mother, encapsulate the young American's stance: no major power held sway over him.

While maintaining a neutral stance on the surface, Sands refused to abandon his goal of cultivating the "American party"—the Koreans who studied or worked in the United States (67). The unexpected death of the mayor of Seoul, Ye Cha Yun, a prominent member of the pro-US faction, however, marked the beginning of the end of American influence in Korean politics.

As it turned out, Japan and Russia would emerge as Sands' most potent enemies, and he even accused Tokyo of monitoring his postal messages (69). What about Russia? Russian Chargé d'affaires Alexander Pavlow charged Sands with giving "unwise advice" to the Korean court (71). St. Petersburg would eventually succeed in replacing Sands with Henry J. Muhlensteth as acting adviser to the Korean Foreign Office (72).

The tensions mentioned above between Japan and Russia may have compelled Sands to explore an alternate diplomatic option to protect Korea's territorial integrity. In fact, upon the announcement of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in early 1902, Sands was convinced that the time was ripe for neutrality: "Unless Korea is an absolutely neutral country there cannot only be no progress, but Korea must inevitably lose her independence…" (107). Neutrality earned the Korean monarch's backing, but Sands lamented the lack of support both within and outside Korea (119). Ultimately, Sands could not bring his vision, "neutral Korea," to reality. His final year in Korea was marked by homelessness, joblessness, and indebtedness (151). Even worse, with Russia's defeat by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War, it now appeared that Tokyo had gained "the upper hand" over Korea, forestalling the beginning of the end of Korean independence (151).

Even after he left Korea, the country remained on Sands' radar. As Patterson recounts, the American diplomat later tried to offer his expertise in Japan and South Korea to Washington. Indeed, Korea was a "country that [Sands] knew so well and that he had experienced up close like no other foreigner" (152). By shedding new light on Sands's much-overlooked encounter with Korea, Patterson has provided a new tool for re-examining modern East Asian history through the prism of Chosŏn Korea.

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