

Korean Embassy Trips Around the World and an Understanding of Global Civilization During the Enlightenment Period (1894-1910): *Haecheon chubeom*, *Sagu sokcho* and *Seosarok*

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This paper surveys the experiences of and attitudes about Western civilization by analyzing the travel records of the Korean embassies dispatched to Western Europe from 1896 to 1902. Since these were important diplomatic missions of the Joseon government, personal expression of emotions was restrained in the travel records and the objective fact-centered description was given a great deal of weight.

Nevertheless, there appear some differences in the travel records based upon the writer's intention of consciousness and descriptive attitude. In Min Yeong-hwan's *Haecheon chubeom* (1896), the so-called first record of a round-the-world trip, his admiration and praise of Western urban culture and scientific civilization appear openly. It shows an aspect of Occidentalism because it projected and was selectively composed of the standard of civilization that he had imagined and desired, one which uncivilized Joseon should strive for in the future. In *Sagu sokcho* (1897), recorded the next year, Min Yeong-hwan shows an interest in the lifestyle of various peoples in the world, the cultural climate, and natural environment using a rather objective viewpoint, but there still exists a dichotomy between civilization and barbarism. Lee Jong-eung's *Seosarok* (1902) is a bit freer from such prejudices because it interprets Western civilization based on the classics of the East.

Keywords: round-the-world trip, recognition of civilization, Orientalism, Occidentalism

1. Survival Tactics Among Empires and Travel to Western Europe

Until the first half of the nineteenth century, what Joseon knew about Western civilization came through partial experiences or indirect information by Joseon embassies traveling to Beijing and visiting the Catholic churches or the Russian Diplomatic Office. Thus the mental map of then Joseon intellectuals toward Europe was gradually formed through such partial information, rumors, and their own imagination. For example, Seo Yu-so, who visited Beijing as a recorder of the winter solstice embassy in 1822, described with almost mysterious imagination rather than objective observation: “British people are all very quick and fierce and like to loot... Its product is an aromatic tree. Because it is hard, its grain is straight, and it is not decayed, it is used to build houses and ships... Also, British people are good at swimming and can swim as good as a duck.”¹

However, with the expansion of Western imperialist power, foreign ships were frequently observed. Violent and antagonistic confrontations with the West like the conflicts with French ships in 1866 and American ships in 1871 forced Joseon to open her ports through an unequal treaty with Japan in 1876. Joseon was, thus, forcibly incorporated into the world system of capitalism. Afterwards, Joseon became an arena for competition by the imperialist world powers. Realizing that Joseon’s survival was dependent on these imperialist powers, the Joseon government was forced to use diplomatic tactics with imperialist countries in order to survive. This survival was also the reason for the dispatch of governmental congratulatory embassies to Russia and Great Britain, and the reason for the round-the-world travel records. Joseon tried to protect her national rights through reciprocal check among imperialist countries.

In the first round-the-world travel record, there are mixed feelings of shock, admiration, and a desire to catch up when they were confronted with the imperialist centers who were building a global system through the expansion of colonialism, which was based upon scientific and technological revolution. However, since the records were written from the standpoint of an official embassy, there appears an effort to restrain one’s personal feelings and maintain

1. Seo Yu-so’s *Yeonhangnok*, Vol. 14 “An Extra to the Travel Records to Beijing: Chapter Foreign Countries.” This is a shortened version of the quotation used by Shin Ik-Cheol in this issue of *The Review of Korean Studies*.

an objective description whenever possible. Also, as the accomplishment of the embassy's superficial duty was the dispatch of a congratulatory embassy to the treaty countries and had an internal motive of stopping a Japanese invasion by a secret treaty with Western power countries as well, the record was basically dubious and so was the descriptive system of the texts. Diplomatic security like a secret treaty could not be exposed. Therefore, this paper will briefly cover the internal motive of the embassy concealed in the texts (Kim 2002a; Kang 2005).

Haecheon chubeom is a travel record written by Min Yeong-hwan (1861-1905), who was dispatched as an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to the coronation of the Russian Emperor Nikolai in 1896. Min Yeong-hwan also wrote *Sagu sokcho* when he was appointed to the ambassadorial mission to Great Britain as part of the congratulatory embassy for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. *Seosarok* was written by Lee Jong-eung (1853-1920), who joined as an attendant of the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary in the congratulatory embassy for the coronation of Britain's Edward VII in 1902.²

According to Kim Won-mo, the dispatches of the embassy were devised according to the diplomatic tactic of the Joseon government to prevent Japanese imperialism from seizing Joseon's national rights through the check of Western imperialist powers such as Russia, Germany, France, and Great Britain (Kim 2002a: 88-120). Japan emerged as the supreme ruler in East Asia and strengthened its control over Joseon after its victory of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894. When Japanese control became likely with the pro-Japanese cabinet of Kim Hong-jip, a pro-Russian group aligned with Queen Min tried to bring Russia into Joseon to stop Japanese expansion. Therefore, Japan caused the Eulmi Incident in October 1895 and assassinated Queen Min. The threatened pro-Russian group saved the king through *agwanpacheon* (moving King Gojong and the crown prince to the Russian Legation) in February 1896 and dispatched Min Yeong-hwan to the coronation of Russian Emperor Nikolai in order to negotiate a secret treaty. This treaty would guarantee the following: Joseon independence from Russia, the dispatch of military teaching staff and advisers, financial support for the king's protection, a loan for redeeming a national loan

2. The data this paper refers to are as follows: Min 1959, which contains *Sagu sokcho*; Min 2007, which was edited and translated by Jae-gon Cho; Kim 2002b; *The Diary of Yun Chi-ho* written when Yun was an attendant; and Kim Deuk-ryeon's travel poem *Hwangugeumcho* in Chinese.

from Japan, and construction of a telegraph between Joseon and Russia. None of these stipulations appear in *Hacheon chubeom* but detailed descriptions are in *The Diary of Yun Chi-ho*, a personal record. This diplomacy seemed to succeed in part because Russia actually dispatched a military teaching staff and financial advisers. The following year, the government of Joseon dispatched Min Yeong-hwan as part of the congratulatory embassy to Britain's Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee and allegedly tried to contract a secret protectorate treaty with Germany and France, but without success. The purpose of dispatching the congratulatory embassy in 1902 was to check Japan through the strengthening of friendship between Joseon and Great Britain, but the standpoint of Great Britain was entirely different. Pursuing a policy on strengthening Japan to stop the southward advance of Russia, Great Britain and the United States of America finally approved Japan's control over the Korean Peninsula with the Taft-Katsura Agreement and the second Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1905.

The efforts of the Joseon government to escape from the Sino-centered worldview and the actual control of the Qing and maintain an independent country through enlightenment, national prosperity, and military power resulted in failure after all. However, these travel records on advancing to the centers of Western Europe and confirming the essence of civilization to cope with the serious national crisis are very important because they show their experiences recognizing Western civilization. At the end of the waning dynasty, what did they see and how did they feel when searching the centers of the modern civilization of Western Europe? What kind of recognition of Western civilization was innate in their eyes?

2. *Hacheon chubeom*: Selective Reproduction of Western Urban Civilization and Technological Civilization

Min Yeong-hwan and his company left Seoul on April 1, 1896, traveled via Yokohama, Japan, sailed the Pacific Ocean, took a train across North America from Vancouver, Canada to New York, sailed the Atlantic Ocean, went to Germany via Great Britain, attended the coronation in Petersburg, and returned to Seoul via Siberia on October 21, 1896. This round-the-world trip lasted for almost seven months. Kim Jin-yeong described this work as "the first record of an embassy of the Joseon dynasty traveling to the West and also a group recording of impressions directly showing Occidentalism during the early Daehan

Empire” (Kim 2005:326). Generally speaking, it is an agreeable opinion. It is because *Hacheon chubeom* describes selectively the one-sided admiration for Western civilization, conspicuous technological civilization, and the well-organized system and enables people to imagine Western Europe. The travelogue recorded everyday experiences in a diary form and gave a great deal of weight to describing Petersburg.

[Japan] When staying in Yokohama the day before yesterday, the mountain and the stream were gorgeous and excellent, the pier solid, the pavilions and houses tall and large, the roads in good condition, and the connection of electric lights and gaslights made the field of vision bright all of a sudden. Meanwhile, in Tokyo, all establishments and distribution were perfect, very precise, and very new-fashioned. This resulted from the diligence and enlightenment of the Japanese people studying Western methods for themselves. (April 17, 1896)

[Canada] The prairie we passed through for a few days is 4-5 thousand *li* [1 *li* equals 0.4 kilometers] in width and belongs to Great Britain. British people’s reclaiming the wasteland made the country profitable and the people comfortable. The development was speedy beyond prediction. On the way, the train stopped in Winnipeg. It was a very big city with gorgeous roads, pavilions, and houses. It is said that the city was ruled by British officials. (May 3, 1896)

[London] The population of this city is five million. The streets, the stores on the streets, houses, automobiles, and horses are similar to those of New York. The grandeur is better that way. The area is not large and there are so many people. On many streets, they excavated several-storied underpasses. There are also living spaces. There are stores, railroads, cars, and horses coming and going and the prosperity is the best in the world. Also, pedestrians are gentle and calm. No one makes a noise at all. (May 16, 1896)

[Germany] Since the war with France, prosperity continued every day and no country can be compared with Germany. Schools are detailed and beautiful. The army is strong and the best. Medicine and music are excellent. All the scholars who have come from every country and have

already graduated get lessons again in this country and then can go out into the world. All the facilities are not worse than those of London but are a bit simple and archaic. (May 17, 1896)

The appearance of cities never failed to catch the interest of the embassy. All the cities from Yokohama to Berlin are recognized as typical symbols of modern intensive Western civilization by their well-arranged streets, majestic buildings, electric and gas lights, cars, and trains. Herewith, the image of orderliness and cleanliness is added. Urbanites as constructors of such a civilization are described in general as courteous, diligent, and creative. However, why on earth do only beautiful cities and admirable civilians exist? *Down and Out in Paris and London*, which George Orwell wrote using the form of an autobiographic travelogue in 1933, introduces the dark and miserable metropolitan lives of lower-class laborers, poverty-stricken people, and vagrants (Park 2005:111-30). At that time, even in the central city of a global empire, the lives of the lower classes under a capitalistic system couldn't help but be miserable. Then, the image of wealthy and clean cities was eventually no more than an imaginary Western civilization the embassy desired. It is because reproduction was, after all, "the product of control filtered through the eyes and cognitive structure of the observer" (Lee 2006:165). In fact, the basis of describing Western urban civilization shown in this work is not so different from that of Yu Gil-jun's *Seoyugyeonmun* that was published earlier or *Seosarok* published later. They only searched for and confirmed the imaginary scenes carved in their memory through learning.

In Petersburg where they stayed the longest, Min Yeong-hwan marveled every day about the beneficial instruments of Western civilization, the military system, and urban facilities. He actually marveled at unimaginable 'curious' and 'fragrant' scenes: a Kremlin chapel with the netted layers of five different colored glasses that was lit brilliantly by electricity; an artificial waterfall that brought water through iron pipes with layers of stones; a zoo where people could see various rare animals within iron cages in a large garden; and a botanical garden within a high glass house of several hundred *kan* (floor space) where strange flowers and curious grasses were planted in a set indoor temperature.

It is not difficult to assume that the inferior cultural conditions and filthy reality of Joseon were always in the mind of the observer who marveled at 'curious' and 'fragrant' scenes. Thus, there exists no difference between the imaginary Western civilization Min Yeong-hwan dreamed and desired as an enlightened

intellectual and the foreign country he surveyed and observed.

Arrived at a forestry school... The methods of seeding and planting and analyzing the principles of trees were all systemized. Besides, all the studies to survey the principles of things and broaden knowledge, electric science, optical science, and various instruments like a gauge measuring wind and rain were displayed. Various shapes of grasses and roots of trees, leaves, flowers, fruits, living insects, and winged and wild animals of the mountain and forest were treated with medicines, dried and stuffed... The technique to teach people is very sincere. (June 26, 1896)

Went to court at three in the afternoon... Every prisoner doesn't wear cangue and isn't fettered. It is comfortable to stay in prison because there is a desk, a chair, and bedding. Every prisoner is given three meals a day and clothes. There is a bathroom, an infirmary, and a sports room. Every prisoner is made to make things by himself according to what he has learned and his various crafts. Ninety percent of the earnings are given to the government and 10 percent is saved for use after release. Many prisoners are sent to jail after trial. (July 3, 1896)

Went thirty *li* westward on a small steamboat and arrived at an arms factory. The machines are much bigger and stronger than any other machine we have ever seen. There are many guns, small guns, and torpedo guns. The biggest is 8-9 spans in length and 3 spans in circumference. A cannonball is a fathom in length and an armful in circumference and has a range of 50 *li*. Only one cannon can be made in a year. Saw that arms made incessantly on land and at sea. Such is the case in every country in the world. Where will they be used in the future? If God wants to make living people comfortable, someday the arms should be melted and made into farming equipment. (July 18, 1896)

During their stay in Petersburg, Min Yeong-hwan and his company visited every day modern Western civilization, various factories, and education and religious facilities. What surprised them was not only the grandeur of the size but also the Western rationalism that supported them. At a farming school, they accumulate and teach learning through various plant and animal specimens, various instruments to measure the conditions of growth, and various experiments. The deci-

sive characteristic of modern rationalism lies in calculating mathematically everything in the world (Lee 2007:18-43). The Joseon embassy could confirm this when visiting Pulkovo Astronomical Observatory on July 31. Visiting the enormous observatory with high-tech telescopes and listening to an explanation by an astronomical researcher about cosmic phenomena, Min Yeong-hwan expressed his thoughts, “In general, Western people investigate the principles of things thoroughly and are well-informed about astronomy. Though a comet is seen once for several years, they foresee the future mathematically and don’t take it as a disaster” (Min 1959:82).

Such mathematical count possibility becomes the basis for the possibility of foreseeing and controlling natural phenomena and human behaviors; this count possibility works as a basic principle of modernity realizing the control of both nature and society through scientific technology. This principle thoroughly applies to the management of prisons and the armory manufacturing new-fashioned weapons that Min Yeong-hwan and his company visited. Even though Min Yeong-hwan didn’t know that such a principle was suppressing the lives of others through violence and exclusion, he was surely aware of the fact that such new-fashioned weapons became the basic power of imperialist countries as his last sentence suggests. In fact, it may be unreasonable to expect a critical theory toward imperialism from Min Yeong-hwan. The secret motive for dispatching the embassy was to stop the Japanese invasion through such a military power and Min Yeong-hwan was in charge of that. Also, Min Yeong-hwan, an enlightened bureaucrat, might think it necessary for Joseon to join forces with imperialist countries through civilization, national prosperity, and military power as soon as possible so that Joseon might maintain her independence; therefore, he might have avoided mentioning more than his desire for peace.

3. *Sagu sokcho*: Objectification of Recognition of World Culture and Diversification of Viewpoints

While *Haecheon chubeom* was filled with a one-sided concentration and admiration toward the scientific technology of Western civilization, *Sagu sokcho* showed various viewpoints. Perhaps, because it was the second journey, the embassy might have maintained a more composed and objective attitude. Also, the author’s preface revealed, “I record the differences of mountains, rivers, climate, and the prosperity of humans and cities so that future generations may

refer to it” (Min 1959:134).

The route of the embassy dispatched to Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897 was the opposite of the previous year. On March 24, 1897, the embassy started from Incheon port, passed through Shanghai, Hong Kong and Singapore, sailed the Indian Ocean, sailed through the Suez Canal, arrived in Odessa, went to Petersburg by train, and finally reached London, Great Britain. *Sagu sokcho*’s description is more dynamic than *Haecheon chubeom* because it grasped not only the beneficial instruments of civilization but also various human situations and the appearance of things and mostly focused on incidents rather than the focus being fixed on the object itself. For example, the following is a record when in Vietnamese waters.

Hearing that a child died of illness in a rear cabin last night and the parents threw the body into the sea, I was surprised and asked why this was done. A sailor said, “According to Western rules on board, it is customary to immediately bury a dead person at sea so as not to give off a bad smell and carry infection.” (April 17, 1897)

Min Yeong-hwan transmitted the incident vividly through dialogues. Quoting the book he was reading, he concluded the story that when a missionary died and his wife asked the captain to wait a day and she would take the body off of the ship at the port the next day, the captain flatly ordered water burial.

[(Arriving in Singapore and describing children playing at the wharf, sightseeing at a park, British occupation, and the composition of the population)] The natives are all dirty, black, wearing hair long, and barefoot. They wear red wrappers on the upper body and several *ja* [one *ja* is thirty centimeters] of red cloth on the lower body. Some of them wear a ring in their left nostril. Women pierce their earlobes and wear anklets around their shins. When carrying things, some carry them on the head and others carry them on the shoulder. When carrying heavy things, they carry them in a cart drawn by two cattle. All the cattle are white and have horns longer than one *ja*. (April 21, 1897)

At noon, arrived at Aden port. Because there is no pier, they drop anchor in the sea. Got off using a wood block... They are touting ostrich feathers on the streets because the women of the West decorate their millinery

with these feathers. The circumference of the island is several *li* and there is a British governor-general and a commander-in-chief. This is originally an island of Arabia, where the mountain is dry, barren, and sterile and there has been no rainfall for thirteen years at one time. Also it rains once a year at times. Recently, British people make use of distillation to change seawater into fresh water. They also lead a stream from the mountain and make a pond. Whenever it rains, water is stored in the pond without leaking... The number of natives is about four thousand. Half of them belong to another tribe from a neighboring island. They are all ugly and fierce, loot everyday, and feed fish to the cattle and sheep. They live on wooden beds made of grass inside a stone house, a sordid hut. Some of them camp out and their sleeping place is similar to the Mongolian one. The number of British people is two thousand and all of them are soldiers. The products are camels, cattle, horses, feathers, ostrich eggs, and coffee. (May 4, 1897)

Whenever the ship anchors in a foreign country, the embassy investigates the natural environment, cultural traditions, and political circumstances. For example when Min Yeong-hwan landed in Singapore, he recorded concisely the racial characteristic and lifestyle of its inhabitants. The color of skin, clothes, decoration, and the way of carrying things are described. The second quotation is about Aden, an inlet of the Red Sea. A major military stronghold of Great Britain during the colonial period, it belonged to the British East India Company at that time. The author describes the stationing of a British governor-general and soldiers, impregnable military facilities, and the distillation of fresh water from seawater. However, what is more surprising is the tribal and geographical description of the natives. As Kim Jin-yeong indicates, it was a surprising change incomparable to the journey a year before that had indulged in Western civilization wholeheartedly (Kim 2005:325-6). Min Yeong-hwan showed the same interest in the habits and ways of life of the natives and described them equally. Therefore, readers can get new information on unknown, strange tribes.

However, looking around with an impartial viewpoint, there are some problems: There is incorrect information about feeding fish to cattle and sheep and a negative viewpoint of the native's home being sordid. Also, his racist comment that 'they are all ugly and fierce, and loot everyday' is reminiscent of the descriptions made by Western travelers when they traveled to Joseon long ago. There appears an aspect of Orientalism, seeing not cultural differences but bar-

barous customs. Moreover, the characteristics of such racial disposition are too difficult for a traveler on a short visit to grasp.

Thus it is only an arbitrary and imaginary interpretation. In spite of himself, Min Yeong-hwan's viewpoint resembled that of an imperialist. Nevertheless, it is laudable to have more observations, lay more weight on facts, and grasp the peculiarities of others.

[Germany] Since this country appointed Otto von Bismarck as the prime minister, it admires military preparations and even the sons and brothers of the nobility must perform military service for a full three years between the ages of 15-25. Therefore, it has a universal conscription system and it can dispatch three million troops in an emergency and as many as five million troops at the utmost. However, its custom is extravagant and there are so many poor people. (June 3, 1897)

[Great Britain] British people are big, white, and bright in physique and they have black, yellow, or red beards and eyes. They are precise in mind, work very laboriously and are the strongest in Europe. According to their tradition, brothers and sisters can equally inherit from their parents and men must not keep a concubine. Any violation of this rule is punishable with seven years of banishment. When a host and a guest meet, they pay their respects to each other by removing their hats and shaking hands with their right hands. When meeting the monarch, they don't bow deeply. The noble and the humble sit together and there is no rigid distinction between them. (July 1, 1897)

[London] Was invited by the mayor of London and attended a ball at eight. At the ball, about four or five hundred men and women were dancing in pairs, their hands on the shoulder and waist of their partner. Songs and music are played alternately and the sounds are bright and excellent. Cakes and candies are displayed on the table and guests are very free to take them. Returned at midnight. (July 8, 1897)

The admiration of the cities and civilization is not any different in *Haecheon chubeom*, but in *Sagu sokcho* there is a considerable amount of description on the customs of Westerners and various human situations and the appearances of things. The author thought that the reason Germany became a powerful military

state was caused by a universal conscription system and maintained a rather objective attitude by describing ‘its custom is extravagant and there are so many poor people.’ However, when describing the race and disposition of Great Britain, the author seems to emphasize the inherent and biological superiority of the British people unlike the description of the people of Aden. This is another example of Occidentalism. There is also a feeling of envy when describing the etiquette and equal human relations of a civilized country.

Nevertheless, there is a dominant aspect to try to maintain an objective attitude, confirmed by such descriptions as the ball in London and a dog’s tomb in the garden of the British queen. In short, *Sagu sokcho*’s view of the world and cultural interest are rather open and the author generally maintains an objective attitude.

4. *Seosarok*: Lyrical Recognition of Exotic Things and Basis of Oriental Thinking

On January 22, 1901, Queen Victoria of Great Britain died after a reign of sixty-four years. The British government announced that the coronation of Edward VII would be held on June 26, 1902. The government of Joseon appointed Lee Jae-gak as an extraordinary ambassador to Great Britain and dispatched an embassy. *Seosarok* was the record of Lee Jong-eung who joined in the embassy as an attendant. He described his lyrical recognition and subjective interest excellently. The embassy started on April 5, 1902, traveled via Incheon, Nagasaki and Yokohama, sailed the Pacific Ocean, crossed from Vancouver to Quebec by train, sailed the Atlantic Ocean and reached Great Britain. Lee Jong-eung recorded his feelings in the old form of Korean verse, *seoyumun-gyeonnok*, where the feelings on exotic experiences were embodied in an elegant style.

At two in the afternoon, arrived at Mt. Baker on the way to Quebec by train. As the top of the mountain is very high, the railroad meanders from Vancouver to Mt. Baker according to the configuration of the ground. The railroad goes round the mountain, embraces the valley, crosses a bridge along a river, goes over an elevated bridge and an embankment, goes through a tunnel and runs for thousands of miles. What a combination of human work and material power! It is worth mentioning that while Heaven makes mountains and rivers, humans make railroads.

Seen at the base of Mt. Baker, numerous peaks soar to the sky and white clouds round the mountainsides. The sight is full of so many rare and beautiful trees, flowers, and grasses glittering. Looking up, there are green mountains and emerald streams; Looking down, there is snow-white ice water. What a marvelous landscape! Water pours down from the cliffs and water from different valleys mixes together and flows over cliffs and stones unfolded like a screen in awful abundance. All day long, I was fascinated by these brilliant landscapes and I had no idea how many times I gave a shout of joy. The beauty is beyond description. (May 15, 1902)

The train running across the rugged mountain and valley is a typical symbol of Western material civilization and scientific technology, leveling the spatial height and minimizing the time barrier caused by distance and it is incessantly an object of admiration to the traveler. However, unlike in *Haecheon chubeom*, Lee Jong-eung was not indulged in the train, a civilized object itself, but takes the view of seeing it as a landscape together with nature as the setting. He is seeing ‘a combination of human work and material power.’ Later, he was overwhelmed by the beautiful landscape of Mt. Baker. The description of the fascinating natural beauty is mixed with the poetic style of the folk songs *Yusanga*, and contains his inner insuppressible feelings. In *Seosarok*, we often read such scenes. In the description of Niagara Falls, such lyrical recognition is conspicuous. “There stands a precipitous cliff of about one hundred *jang* and water pours down as if it hangs on the cliff. It looks like a mountain collapsing and the ground is cracked. Owing to the crash of water, the water’s color becomes blue and red like hundreds of rainbows. Over the blue water under the falls, there is plenty of snow-white spray in the air. It is an amazing grandeur. Four or five railway bridges over the river look like a long rainbow drinking water” (May 21, 1902). While the vivid visual images spread marvelously and beautifully like the pictures of Western impressionist artists, the auditory images of rotund waterfalls overlap with them. In the expression ‘look like a long rainbow drinking water,’ the reader can figure out his level of aesthetic recognition. What is the basis of thinking of Lee Jong-eung that makes such wonderful aesthetic recognition and embodiment possible?

At three in the afternoon, our company of four persons went sightseeing by carriage with the Korean minister to Great Britain, Min Yeong-don.

Tall buildings stand on the broad ways and it looks like we left this contaminating world. The stone cliffs of tens of gil seem to be built in a row of the same height with only one error. The hotel's guestrooms were as large as a palace's and the roads are paved with stone. Shoulders collide with shoulders and wheels with wheels and ancient Yimchi, the capital of Je during the age of Chinese civil wars, was not better than this... (June 9, 1902)

[At the Zoo] There are a variety of animals such as tigers and leopards like heroes, fierce lions and bears, dangerous rhinos and elephants, stout camels, quick monkeys, sea horses, dolphins, deer, roe deer, foxes, wolves, cats, rats, frogs, and toads. There is an animal with a single horn called a giraffe. Muscles are attached to the end of the horn; the tail resembles that of a cow; the hoofs resemble that of a horse; the body is no shorter than a cow. It is said that the giraffe came from India. Then the saints can also be found in the West! (June 9, 1902)

In a pond especially made of excavated rocks, there are four big fish. Because they are very fierce and hostile, they are separated from other fish. Looking at them carefully, they have four legs and the eyes are blue. The raiser says that they are crocodiles. They remind us of *jaekeomun* of Hanyu. They are too difficult to tame. (June 9, 1902)

The British palace is huge and extravagant. Long ago, Mencius was surprised at the palace of Je and said, "What a huge residence!" The ancient Je country must be the present Great Britain... At four in the afternoon, our company was dressed in formal wear and went to the palace, a two-storied building with eighty-two inner gates and silk curtains drawn. Following the guide with a hat on and a silver stick, we entered the room of the British monarchs whose four walls were decorated with embroidered silk and the ridge of the roof and the end of the eaves were decorated with golden threads. The table is gorgeous, the lights are brilliant and music sounds like thunder. "What a huge residence!" (June 13, 1902)

When meeting, evaluating, and passing judgment on the exotic culture of a

strange world, a kind of comparison indicator is needed. In the case of Lee Jong-eung, it was the classical knowledge of the East he had learned and cherished all his life: his association and analogical thinking that the prosperity of the British capital might excel Yimchi, the capital of Je, and saints might exist in the West seeing that the imaginary animal appearing in the world actually exists in the Western world. Remembering Hanyu's *jaekeomun* when he saw a crocodile and comparing the extravagant British palace with a phrase from the *Book of Mencius*. So to speak, his basic episteme of Western Europe is the oriental thinking system. Also, Lee Jong-eung's thinking is clearly distinctive from the attitude that the origin of today's prosperous Western civilization is China. But Lee Jong-eung is just using classical knowledge for analyzing cultural phenomena. It is proper that Lee Jong-eung's attitude derives from the aesthetic recognition of Western civilization and the way of living on basis of thoughts, which a learned man cherished for a long time as a descendant of the royal family.

This is definitely different from Yun Chi-ho, an attendant of the embassy in 1896. From *The Diary of Yun Chi-ho*, one learns that while doing his duty of the embassy in Russia he then went alone to Paris to learn French and he completely changed his basis of thinking to a Western one. His recognition toward Western civilization is achieved by comparing Western Europe with Western Europe. The oriental attitude of thinking of Lee Jong-eung, though they started in the same condition, is also different from that of Min Yeong-hwan who admired Western civilization, composed it symbolically, and tried to assimilate or place it in the same category. At least in the mind of Lee Jong-eung, the classical wisdom of the East is not inferior or shameful but works as a criterion to judge the values of Western civilization. While Min Yeong-hwan was glad to see equality among people, Lee Jong-eung refused to agree to it. When Lee Jong-eung was going to the Korean Consulate by official carriage and saw pedestrians step aside by order of the policemen, he thought, "Seeing such a scene, it seems there are more serious differences in courtesy between the noble and the lowly in the West than in the East. At a ball onboard the ship returning home, he also thought and was obsessed with this judgment. According to what is courteous, there is clearly a distinction between the noble and the lowly. It is a custom of the West that the lowly cannot dance with the noble" (June 21, 1902). As he maintained the viewpoint of Joseon not to be overwhelmed by brilliant Western civilization, it can be viewed that such a judgment was possible.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to review the characteristics of recognition of the West through *Haecheon chubeom* which is the first Korean travelogue to the West and *Sagu sokcho* and *Seosarok* published soon afterwards during the modern enlightenment period.

The dispatch of a congratulatory embassy to the coronation of an emperor or the diamond jubilee of Western imperialist powers derived from the foreign policy tactics of the Joseon government, who was facing an imminent invasion by Japan and Russia. It was a policy to control a barbarian with the help of another barbarian by utilizing the military power of the Western imperialist powers. After all, owing to the political judgment of Great Britain and the United States of America who were worried about Russia's southward advance, Joseon couldn't escape from an invasion by the Japanese Empire, but the fulfillment of the embassy's duty was severe.

Their records on traveling to the West under such a political situation contain varied views toward Western civilization and a difference of recognition. Min Yeong-hwan's *Haecheon chubeom* had a one-sided admiration toward Western civilization, technological civilization, and refined systems and is described mostly from the viewpoint of Occidentalism. The grand urban civilization and advanced technological civilization he found was nothing but selected composition about Western civilization he had desired and imagined. Seeing the principle of modernity armed with rationality change into imperialist military power, there is no critical confrontation. He likely believed the destiny of Joseon among the power states could eventually be decided with the help of the power states and he judged the security of Joseon's independence could be obtained when Joseon was abreast with the imperialist powers.

Sagu sokcho, the record on traveling to Great Britain the following year, describes precisely not only the urban and technological civilization of imperialist countries but also the natural environment, cultural climate, and political situation of various tribes in the world. The view of the world culture is remarkably broadened and is a rather objective description. Nevertheless, as racial prejudice toward the natives in uncivilized countries and a negative view toward culture are often found, there appears the concept of Orientalism.

In Lee Jong-eung's travelogue *Seosarok*, the lyrical expression and aesthetic recognition toward exotic things seems to be conspicuous. He grasped whole landscapes including nature as well as man-made beneficial instruments and

described them in a beautiful style. In his aesthetic recognition and evaluation of values toward Western civilization, the epistemological foundation deriving from oriental classics is placed. Therefore, he didn't devote himself to Western civilization and could see and judge Western civilization according to oriental criteria and from a critical distance.

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