

Article

Subtle Changes
in the Joseon's Everyday Life
Based on the Westerners' Discourses
(1800-1880)*

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Introduction

There have been numerous researches on the westerners' views on Korea by utilization of various materials, such as traveling writings, voyage diaries, and photos. However, the most majority of studies try to examine the westerners' impressions and views on Korea after the opening of the door in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Since the 16th to 19th century, there have been several westerners who had happened to visit Korea and left their voyage records or diaries, which became the primary source for studying the early westerners' views on Korea. Early in the 16th century, the first westerner came to the continent, and from then the image of Korea began to be known to the West. Park Chul (1987) specified the first Spanish western missionary Gregorio de Céspedes' experiences in Korea during the 16th century starting from 1593, and illustrated the Korean images shown in his traveling writings. From his analysis, the Korean religious and living style can be found. Later in the 17th century, more specifically from 1653, Hamel as one employee from the Dutch East India Company occasionally came to Jeju Island and lived in Korea for 13 years. Based on his diary, there are some books like *The Dutch Came to Corea: An Account of the Life of the First Westerners in Korea (1653-1666)*¹ illustrating the image of Korea in Hamel's perceptions. Since he was confined to the Korean peninsula by the government, he had suffered from so much wretchedness and misery while Joseon Korea was not that enjoyable land for him. However, his experiences inspired the continuous interests in Korea in the West. For the 350th anniversary marking Hamel's Shipwreck, the Jeju National Museum punished the *Voyages and Shipwrecks on the Korean Coast: A History* in 2003. There are several specific types of research on Hamel's voyage to Jeju Island while some precious antiquities associated with all kinds of voyages to Korea were exhibited as well from the ancient time until nowadays.

Before the open-door policy in 1876, a few voyages directly cruised to the Korean peninsula and left their diaries. For example, there are William Robert

Broughton's voyage in 1797, McLeod John and Hall Basil's voyage in 1816, Karl Gutzlaff and Lindsay H. H. Lindsay's voyage in 1832, Belcher Edward and Arthur Adams's voyage in 1845, St. John Henry Craven's voyage around 1855 and 1856,² and Ernst Jakob Oppert's three times voyages to the forbidden land between 1866 and 1868. When entering Korea, such a new land to the West, explorers always showed great interests, leaving us a range of topics from general knowledge to careful observations of their everyday life.

Along with these direct illustrations on Korea left by voyage diaries, there are also some precious indirect documents worth mentioning.³ These writers may have come across Koreans or Korean stories while cruising around the surrounding countries such as China, Japan, and Manchuria. Since those authors probably did not enter Korea themselves, their illustrations mainly involve history, foreign relations, and trade as well as some geographic illustrations (Anon. 1841, 270-75).⁴

On the other hand, the undeniable drawbacks of indirect sources are addressed in a comprehensive introductory book on Korea, *A Forbidden Land*.

It may, however, be necessary to remark beforehand that P. Regis, who lived in China as Roman Catholic missionary in the 17th century, had never been in Corea himself, but only penetrated to the northern frontiers of the country, and that he had to trust Chinese sources for all the information he collected, although these had not much better means to obtain the same than he had himself...As Roman Catholic missionary reports mostly excel in the explicitness and exactness with which they enlarge even on the most insignificant and trivial subjects, it may be presumed from the concise shortness which characterizes these notes, that the sources from which they were collected were not able to furnish more extensive or more exact information on Corean customs. (Oppert 1880, 121-23)

* This work is an extension of my MA dissertation titled "Westerners' Views of Early Nineteenth-century Joseon Korea Based on the *Chinese Repository* and Voyage Diaries." It was modified for this journal by utilizing more materials with an expansion of time period till 1880s to observe specific subtle changes in Joseon's everyday life.

1. In most nineteenth-century English literature, Korea was written as "Corea" although Korea also appeared simultaneously. This thesis will adopt the original word used in the primary text.

2. He landed on Korea around 1855 and 1856 according to Henry Craven's (1880, 235-38) diary published in 1880: "In 1855 our squadron cruised up the coast of Tartary... After visiting the Tartary coast we came south; he vessel I was in touching at Chosan, in Korea, on our way to Nagasaki... Such was the state of affairs in 1878, when I—being in command of H. M. S. Sylvia surveying the coasts of Japan... However, I was sent, and made for Chosan, where, twenty-three years before, I had first touched these shores."

3. There is a long list of the illustration on Korea from various sources even before the opening of the Korean port. For example, see Anon. 1841; John 1861; Pumpelly 1871; Eden 1880.

4. As a note on Japan, the descriptions of Corea are more like about foreign relations, trade, and history.

Ware of the above-mentioned shortness, Oppert integrated his concise observations of Korean customs in all respects in his book. And this paper will compare the direct and indirect sources together to figure out some mistaken points in order to address the original views.

After the opening of the door in the late 19th century, there have been numerous studies on the westerners' perspectives on Korea as a large number of westerners landed in Korea and recorded their exploration. There are some representative narratives, such as *Corea: The Hermit Nation* (1882); *History of Corea: Ancient and Modern* (1891), *Corea, or Chosŏn, the Land of the Morning Calm* (1895), *Korea and Her Neighboring* (1898), and others.

Associated with these early voyage diaries, few researchers have discussed the westerners' perceptions on Korea. Kim Wonmo (2004) once arranged the three times maritime-cultural interchanges between Korea and Britain under Joseon's isolation policy in 1797, 1816, and 1832. Nevertheless, he mainly focused on the mainstream of these encounters without providing any westerners' perceptions on Joseon. Oh HyunKi (2014) researched the Gutzlaff's contributions to the introduction of Joseon and described several aspects mainly in politics, society, culture, and language through the analysis of his voyage diary in 1834. A certain number of Gutzlaff-associated studies have been performed, but the cultural analysis can be seldom found except his religious influence. In the above-mentioned *Collections on Voyages and Shipwrecks to Korea*, the voyage of H. M. S. Samarang to Jeju Island in the 19th century (1845) was briefly covered.

However, western scholars started to work on Korea covering the period earlier than 13th century. One representative study is Boulesteix's book *Kind Barbarian—The Oriental Sage* (2001), where he made the most use of French materials to illustrate all the 800 histories of western perceptions on Korea from the first source in the 13th century till present-day time. Although he arranged the changing images of Korea in French materials and characterized each period in detail, due to the limited French materials, he failed to cover neither the other western missionaries' opinions nor the period of the first era of 19th century. Apart from French, Britain was another country curious about Joseon and left important English primary sources. Grace Koh (2006) utilized the travel literature to analyze the British views on Joseon in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. She mainly examined four British authors: John Green (d. 1757), William Robert Broughton (1762-1821), Basil Hall (1788-1844),

and John M'Leod (1777?-1820) (Koh 2006, 103-33). In her work, she also mentioned that English saw Joseon as one of the most "civilized" nations or even a "potential trading partner." James Huntley Grayson (2007) praised that Hall Basil's account of his voyage was a valuable record of a British naval officer's experiences, graphically illustrating the location of Joseon Korea. Considering the account's written time, it was of great historical significance during the period of British industrial development and imperial expansion. Kim Sun-ju (2003) discussed *A Forbidden Land* written by Oppert, and commented that Korea was represented as "other" and "uncivilized." However, during the period from the 1820s to the 1880s there was still a myth of how westerners perceived Joseon Korea.

Due to the policy of sea banning, Joseon was not easily accessible to the outside world. Before Joseon's opening door, the voyage diaries and indirect notes became the two main sources which provide the west with knowledge of Korea. However, either direct observations or indirect hearing could sometimes lead to some misunderstandings among westerners. Besides, the scattered sources also contribute to the current academia lacking in the westerners' perceptions of Korea in the 19th century. Therefore, this paper will combine the two sets of sources to address the everyday life of Joseon Korea and its changes during the period of 1800-1880.

Clothing Materials Improved

After exploration in the Joseon Korea around 1845, Adams (1870, 150) commented on the appearance of Joseon people, saying that their rough appearance almost remained unaltered since 1653 when shipwrecked Dutchmen first came across Joseon natives there. Adams left similar rough illustrations of Joseon labors' images but with Tartar features and their unique beards.

The boatman was rough, brawny fellows, with coarse Tartar features, bronzed by exposure to the weather, with unkempt hair, shaggy beards, and uncouth bearing...The aspect of the old man, with his grey flowing beard, bushy eyebrows, solemn visage, and mild observant eyes, was very imposing. (Adams 1870, 128-29)

Adams also stated that the costume of the poorer people was still the same compared to Hamel's simple description. Hamel visited Joseon Korea around the late 17th century and left one single sentence but with sufficient information. "These men," he wrote, "are clad after the Chinese fashion, excepting only their hats, which are of horsehair;" and again, "The poorest sorts have no clothes but what are made of hemp and pitiful skins" (Adams 1870, 132). Hamel addressed two main points that the poor even could not afford any clothes and Joseon people paid special attention to their hats.

If the appearance did not alter in a century, however, their clothing styles, especially the materials, did improve a lot from the poor's hemp and pitiful skins-made clothes to cotton-made clothes during the period from the 17th century to the 19th century. Broughton visited Joseon in the late 1790s, people there were universally dressed in trousers and boots made of linen. However, the sandals were still made of rice straw, which was probably worn in warm days.

They were universally clothed in linen garments made into loose jackets and trousers, quilted or doubled; and some of them wore large loose gowns. The women had a short petticoat over their trousers; and both sexes, Linen boots, with sandals made of rice straw. The men wore their hair in a knot tied up to the crown, and the women had their twisted and plaited round their heads. (Broughton [1804] 2000, 332; emphasis mine)

Some people might still wear linen garments, however, when Adams arrived Joseon around the middle 19th century, he witnessed ordinary people dressed in jackets made of coarse cotton material.

The serfs, or coolies, as we may term them, don a loose wide jacket of *coarse cotton material*, tied across the chest, in a somewhat slovenly manner, by a string. This jacket, which reaches as far as the waist, is furnished with short, wide sleeves. The lower portions of their bodies are protected by short, wide trousers, reaching down to just above the knee, their legs and feet being bare. (Adams 1870, 132; emphasis mine)

Although cotton appeared in Joseon at an earlier time, it was not until Adams when cotton coarse cotton clothes were noticed and recorded by the westerners. Since then, cotton clothes appeared more frequently in the

westerners' notes. According to Raphael Pumpelly, Korean ambassadors also wore cotton at that time. He was during a trip to China and met two Korean embassies in Beijing, leaving some concise illustrations of Korean officers.

The attendants were dressed in white cotton clothes, padded throughout with cotton batting, and quilted. Their hair was arranged in a knot, secured under cotton covering; over this, they wore broad-brimmed hats of very open horse-hair work. (Pumpelly 1871, 303-04)

Sometime later around the 1880s, we could find that most ordinary people were able to be dressed in more or less common quality based on Oppert's descriptions on the appearance of the natives. When Oppert's team cruised close to the Korean coast, they met some boats with more than sixty crew on board. And he described, "they were all dressed in cotton of more or less common quality, the sashes of several who seemed to be in easy circumstances, and to which pipes, tobacco-pouches, &c., were fastened, being of coarse Korean silk" (Oppert 1880, 189). Despite its inferior quality, Oppert (1880, 167) still spoke highly of the Korean cotton's manufacture, seeing it as one fundamental Korean industry excel: "The cotton-shrub thrives very well, frequently even on the hill-slopes growing wild."

The manufacture of the coarse cotton and hempen goods forms the principal item of native industry. They are much inferior in texture to the commonest English unbleached cotton, the materials used for children's and soldiers' dresses are dyed, the latter dark blue. (Oppert 1880, 174-75)

Despite Joseon's limited acreage, there might be some differences from the north to the south. According to Dr. Williamson, he noticed that in the north, clothes made of a kind of fibrous plant were more universal while in the south much cotton was worn (qtd. in Eden 1880, 323-24).⁵ Meanwhile, when the ordinary could afford cotton jackets, the upper class had already worn silk to represent their superiority. Although Joseon domestic silk sash or girdle appeared, most of their silk clothes came from China.

5. Dr. Williamson also pointed out, "The products of the country include rice, wheat, rye, millet, vegetables of every kind, but very insipid, cotton, tobacco, and several plants, the fiber of which is used for making country cloth" (qtd. in Eden 1880, 287).

Silks are only worn by the noble classes and the high functionaries; generally several wide jackets of different hue one over the other, like violet, dark yellow, blue, and brown. (Oppert 1880, 125)

Silk piece-goods are not made in the country, the only home-made article I have seen was a kind of twisted silk sash or girdle worn by the upper classes. All silks worn by the nobles and officials are of Chinese manufacture. The cloth used for stockings I a trifle finer and woven in one piece. (Oppert 1880, 174-75)

The highest officials wear garments of shining silk of a light pink color, and large, heavy shoes. (Eden 1880, 323-24)

Compared to the universal clothing style, superior people would have other special items to show their loyalty, such as their leather boots unlike the poor's bare feet or sandal made of rice straw. According to the westerner's evaluation that Joseon's leather boots were similar to the West, the Joseon aristocracy were relatively extraordinary in dressing.

He (a noble old man) was dressed in a loose violet-colored robe, with the cuffs of the sleeves turned up with scarlet, which covered, and partly concealed, an inner crimson tunic reaching below the knees. His loose, wide pantaloons of green were tied in above his ankles, and on *his feet he wore white socks and black leather boots, much pointed and turned up at the toes, resembling those worn by the countries in the reign of Charles the Second.* (Adams 1870, 129; emphasis mine)

Joseon had strict restrictions on clothing, so that different statuses wore differently, which also contributed to the huge gaps between high officials and the poor. How they wore hats is a representative example. As is known to all that the hats play an important role in western culture, Joseon's hats also attract the westerners' interests. First, the aristocracy wore hats decorated with a peacock feather as follows, "A few other men about him had rather an air of superiority to others. These were distinguished by a single peacock's feather attached to the apex of the pointed crown of their hats and hanging down gracefully over the extensive brim" (Adams 1870, 129). According to Adams' statements, peacocks' feathers were granted by Chinese emperors in favor.⁶ This style is similar to the

Chinese nobility's head dressing.

Second, in Joseon, the classes of *yangban* (aristocracy) and *jungin* (bureaucratic middle people) were allowed to wear a kind of hats called *heukrip*, or black hat.⁷ Officers like ambassadors and soldiers wore the hats with tails of horse hair which were delicately hand-made by Joseon women. Different to the western culture, Joseon did not really put the hats off while greeting. Probably, the reason comes from that Joseon's hats were tightly tied under the chin, which was not handy to loosen them.

Grouped around this central figure were a few soldiers, with tails of red horse-hair depending from their hats and armed with short swords. (Adams 1870, 129-32)

The head-dress is a large, broad-brimmed, round hat, fastened by means of strings passing under the chin. These hats are said to be made of horse-hair by the native women, but they are also made of fine grass, or fibrous material, which is beautifully woven. It is customary for a man to place his hat on his head when greeting a friend. (Eden 1880, 325)

Just as what Eden has illustrated in the above passage, apart from the horse hair, the hats were also made of fine grass or fibrous material. The truth is that these styles of hats were called *heukrip* in Joseon, which was exactly made of three main materials: horse hair, straw, bamboo, and sometimes graze. Interestingly, despite the scattered information given by the westerners, we could even elaborately depict how Joseon looked like thanks to their pictures.⁸ Joseon was also famous for its large numbers of *seonbi* (Confucian scholars), whose hats were manufactured with a strong gauze. This style of hats was commonly seen in westerners' illustrations and pictures. For example, Broughton once described the scene as follows.

being unknown in the Korea, these feathers, as is the case among the Chinese, are brought, no doubt, as tribute from India, and have been bestowed upon those by whom they are worn, as marks of distinction that the Emperor of China presents a peacock's feather to such of his higher functionaries as he desires to reward with some emblem of his especial favor."

7. For more details and related studies, see National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage 2012, 90.

8. A certain number of pictures where the westerners drew Joseon people have survived. For example, see Pumpelly 1871, 303-04.

6. Adams (1870, 129) expounded the origin and features of the peacock feather decoration: "Peacocks

They (superior people) had on large black hats, with high crowns, manufactured with a strong gauze, not unlike horse hair, very stiff and strong. They tied them under the chin; and these hats, serving as umbrellas, were three feet in diameter. (Broughton [1804] 2000, 332)

His (a noble old man) venerable head was protected by the broad-brimmed, high-crowned hat of the black-stained bamboo network, a hat peculiar, I imagine, to the people of this remarkable country. (Adams 1870, 132)

Not only Adams had praised Joseon's Black Hats as a remarkable symbol of Joseon, but also Oppert (1880, 174-75) appreciated the straw-plaiting hats manufacture as if it were a kind of British industry: "There are two articles in which the Korean industry excels, in the manufacture of paper, and in that of the splendid wire and straw-plaiting used for the commonly worn hats, etc."

The hats functioned a lot in protecting the hair as well as, inadvertently showing the statuses. Last but not least, there were the *sangmin* (common people), and *cheonin* (base people) at the bottom of Joseon class stratification. They were frequently seen bare-headed and sometimes if possible, they were also wearing brown felt hats.

Their (The serfs, or coolies) hats, when they have any, are large slouching sombreros, made of brown felt. Many men whom I saw striding in from the villages, with long staves like alpenstocks in their hands, were clothed in thick, padded coats, and had on their heads shaggy conical caps of fur. (Adams 1870, 129-32)

We chose a sheltered bay and commenced paying out seine. Koreans, seated in groups, bare-headed, or wearing their broad-brimmed hats, were smoking their pipes in silence, as they inquisitively observed our proceedings. (Adams 1870, 154)

Along with hats, hair style would draw the observers' attention at the same time. Joseon young men also had long hair tied on the top of the head, leading to the westerners' great misunderstanding at first. For foreigners from the far exotic culture, they mistook Korean men as women. Once married, "the hair is all drawn upwards towards the crown of the head is tied at the summit in a

neat and rather graceful topknot."⁹ In the westerners' perspectives, this hairstyle appeared more delicate, beautiful, and even graceful.

The Koreans wear a kind of short tail, which is tied together on the top of the head and stands upright; the hair around is allowed to grow and is not shaved as with the Japanese. There were a good many children and young people present whose hair was parted in the middle, and who had one or two tails tied around the head. They had so womanish an appearance that we naturally took them to belong to the female part of the population; on inquiry, however, I learned that we had been mistaken and that all unmarried males wear their hair in this style. Indeed, there was not a single woman in the whole crowd, a circumstance which was fully explained when I became better acquainted with the customs of the country. (Oppert 1880, 189)

When comparing the above passage with Adams' illustration, we could find that Joseon men's long hair remained unaltered before the restrictions on cutting hair were published in late 1895 with the influence of revolution and modernization.

With all these detailed illustrations of Joseon's dressing style on either clothing materials or hairdressing, after all, Joseon natives left the westerners a deep impression of white-robed race. At the first glimpse from a far place, regardless of gender and status (Pumpelly 1871, 303-04), they were all dressed in pleasing plain white although the white dresses might not be in cleanliness at a closer look at.¹⁰ Besides, even though they put on jackets in sky-blue or rose-color, they unquestionably wore the white dresses inside.

9. Adams ([1847] 2000, 445) gave a detailed description and explanation about the hair style of Joseon males: "One of the most striking peculiarities which all who have seen them have noticed is the method of confining the hair of the head in a delicate network, beautifully formed of a fine material resembling Coir, and of a glossy black color. The hair is all drawn upwards towards the crown of the head is tied at the summit in a neat and rather graceful topknot, without the help however of pins, as at Loo-Cho. *The young unmarried men and boys, however, have the hair parted in the middle, gathered behind, and descending in two long plaited tails, that hang down the back somewhat in the fashion of those of the sons of Han. Frequently a white band of bark or leaf is worn across the forehead, to restrain the loose and straggling hairs*" (emphasis mine).

10. Oppert (1880, 126) revealed his view on the double-edged white dresses of Joseon people: "The effect of the white dresses from a distance is a very pleasing one; but as the Koreans do not excel in cleanliness, the original white hue degenerates by degrees into a dirty grey, which renders the same much less nice and inviting on closer inspection."

The dress of the Coreans is very plain...The color of the dress, both of men and women, is, almost without exception, white; that of the jacket, very rarely, sky-blue. Children are more often met with clothed in colored stuff, mostly light-blue or rose-colored, seldom in gaudy or dark hues. The material of the clothing of the people and of the citizens consists of more or less finely spun leached cotton of native manufacture...The female dress, equally white, is of the same simple description as that of the men. It consists of a pair of loose trousers and of a short jacket, over which a long wide robe is worn, attached around the waist. (Oppert 1880, 124-28)

There are a few rude huts, and, perchance, a solitary woman, in the universal white Korean garments, may be seen pounding millet near the low doorway, while the husband smokes his pipe on the threshold. (Adams 1870, 163)

While the direct sources are correct and reliable enough, the indirect sources based on these observations could also provide a more general illustration. Although Eden (1880, 291) had never been to Joseon himself, he utilized Dr. Williamson's remarks. Despite this fact, it is amazing to get to know that there were such a number of the westerners familiar with Joseon's dressing style, close to the truth.

As regards clothing, both the upper and lower garments of the people are of white and are undyed and unornamented in any way. Some of the officials wear silk, but of very coarse texture. Seen from a distance, the Coreans presented to their Japanese critics the appearance of *snow-white herons*, but on closer inspection, all similitude vanished, for their garments turned out to be of a very dingy-white color. *Most of the higher officials dress in white silk, and the lower grades wear garments of a sky-blue color, without sleeves.* The long sleeve is the badge of high rank and is always worn by the official when on duty. The skirts of dresses are described as resembling those of Japanese priests and are called "additional wings" and in some sense, they may be said to resemble wings. (Eden 1880, 323-24; emphasis mine)

According to the westerners' descriptions before the opening ports, Joseon had its own styles of clothes and hairdressing. Especially, the clothes had experienced a change from "nearly no clothes" when Hamel first wrote, to the linen, cotton, and even silk clothes as written in the 19th century records. The manufacture of

cotton was already formed, thereby earning much praise from the West. And they also had a deep impression of Joseon as a white-robed race.

Various Food Alternatives

Food is one essential part for both the locals and outside explorers. Although explorers brought food with them, it would be natural to have a taste of the local food once coming to a new land. If given the chance, they would like to get to know the food tradition here. In this vein, there are many voyage diaries full of this kind of records, and some westerners were even lucky enough to be invited to and served by the locals.

The Korea's mountainous landscape has been known to the West from an early age. This also leads to much difficulties in cultivating in such a bumpy surface of rocks. Besides, with the Korean peninsula's limited lands, natives had to cultivate between hills in valleys as what Broughton ([1804] 2000, 343) witnessed, "The lands were cultivated in the Japanese manner, rising in ridges above each other between the hills, which gave them an opportunity of easily conducting water to the rice grounds."

Because of limited lands to farm, the accessible food was insufficient at the ancient time. In 1845, the food shortage problem was confirmed in Belcher's records, and he blamed it on the poor quality of the soil instead of the low deficiency. The agricultural activity he witnessed was completely confined to the fields bordering the coast in the present-day Jeju Island, and Belcher ([1847] 2000, 348) stated, "The productions of the island (Quelpart) do not appear to be at all equal to the needs of the population, and are in very small variety; Rice, Wheat, Barley, Sweet Potatoes, large Russian Radish, Maize, and small garden produce, comprise all that we noticed, either in the grounds under cultivation, or amongst the people. This does not appear the result of any deficiency in a land fit for cultivation, but rather in the very poor nature of the soil."¹¹

Accompanying Belcher, Adams was on the same journey with him and left similar descriptions of Joseon's food supply situations. Belcher listed rice as

11. The above illustrations were totally cited in King W. John's book with one passage on supplies of Joseon's Quelpart (modern day Jeju Islands). For further detail, see John (1861) 2000, 250.

one choice for locals, but, from Adams' notes, we could figure out that not every family could afford rice and the food also differed greatly according to classes. In order to survive, those poorer classes took barley-meal and flour made of millet as their primary food while wealthier families fed on rice.

The food of the Koreans generally is of no great variety, and their dishes are very simple in their composition. The more wealthy and substantial among them have condiments with their boiled rice, and with their chopsticks help themselves to tit-bits of savory pork and boiled fowl; but the poorer classes are obliged to content themselves with the less generous fare, barley-meal, and the coarse flour prepared by pounding millet being the principal means of sustaining life. Rice will grow only in the southern portion of the peninsula. (Adams 1870, 141)

Situations were improved in the late 19th century based on what Oppert's left records. He praised that Joseon blessed with such a beautiful climate naturally must possess extraordinary rich vegetation (Oppert 1880, 165-67). It can be proved that concerning the main meal, rice served as a stable food and people had more varieties for food. Even in the early 19th century, rice or even millet meal could be a luxury to the poor while Joseon locals could have more choices of grains and be even able to eat a kind of bread made of maize. Also, more kinds of meat and vegetables were served on tables. Close to the sea, it would not be surprising to have fish, and other fowls and port were also the alternatives. Thanks to all the improvements, Joseon people gained more nutrition.

The Koreans are very plain and temperate in their style of living; they are moderate in eating, although they are by no means disdainful of good things when they have an opportunity to enjoy them. The main article of nourishment is rice, boiled in the same way as it is all over the east, with additional dishes of vegetables, fish, fowls, and pork; beef is rarely consumed, not from religious motives, as in Japan, but on account of its scarcity. Sheep are altogether unknown in Korea, and there are but few goats kept. The viands are prepared in much the same way as in China, though not perhaps so well cooked. Buckwheat, millet, maize, and the like, form a good part of the nourishment; the latter is crushed and made into a kind of dry bread. Of public cookshops, vendors of cake or sweetmeats, such as are met within the poorest Chinese village, I have seen nothing here. (Oppert 1880, 141)

The fertile soil of the large plains raises produce of the most varied description, alone sufficient to become a permanent source of prosperity to the country in case of commercial intercourse with other nations. Besides all kinds of grain, such as wheat, rye, oats, barley, maize, buckwheat, millet, etc., large quantities of very fine rice are raised in the central provinces, which serves here also as the main staple of food for the people—further on beans, peas, cabbages of various sorts, and all kinds of other vegetables.” (Oppert 1880, 166-67)

Apart from crops and vegetables, there were more fruits available in Joseon. Before, when he stayed in Korean peninsula for one month in 1832, Gutzlaff ([1834] 2000, 343) failed to find any fruits except some wildly growing sour grapes and peach trees in the jungle. Later when Oppert came to Joseon for three times between 1866 and 1868, he witnessed various fruits there, and wrote, “The country likewise produces all fruits current in China, besides strawberries, plums, peaches, apricots, etc. Apple and pear-trees grow wild as the art of grafting are unknown” (Oppert 1880, 166). As Eden (1880, 207) commented, owing to the constant raindrops in summer, fruits were not tasty except watermelons.

Within one month's stay in the Korean peninsula, occasionally, Gutzlaff discovered wild grapes so that he taught locals the manufacture of wine. He felt astonished that Joseon inhabitants did not plant these useful fruits let alone producing the wine. Joseon residents were said to be ignorant of wine, though they occasionally ate grapes, which were somewhat sour. Therefore, Gutzlaff and his fellows described how they cultivated excellent grapes and the pleasant beverage made of the juice of them. Since there were some high officials who had drunk the wine on board, they could not believe that such sweet wine cannot be extracted from sour grapes. Besides, Gutzlaff taught Joseon inhabitants not only the wine producing process but also the potato planting method.¹²

12. This was also recorded in Kim Canghan's 金昌漢 anthology *Wonjeobo* 圓諸譜, saying that Gutzlaff brought potato seeds to Jeonbuk's local residents and taught them how to cultivate. For this, see also Yang 2006, 215; Cho et al. 2003, 841. Both papers mentioned two hypotheses on the Korean origins of potatoes while one is the above-mentioned southern origin and another is the importation of them from Manchuria predicted to be in 1824. However, it is not clear which one became the earliest introduction of potatoes in Jeonbuk areas. At least judging from Gutzlaff's record, it can be presumed that potatoes were relatively new to Jeonbuk residents and had not been widely cultivated yet until 1832.

On the other hand, Oppert got to know that Korean wine was generally made from millet, resembling the Chinese *saki* in its smoky and disagreeable taste very much. It is likely to be *makgeolli* (raw rice wine). Joseon people were said to be fond of strong drinks despite moderate in eating. Whenever the westerners landed, they would offer some western wine or champagne to locals and found they were passionately addicted to these exotic tastes.¹³

Concerning drinking, the Koreans left Oppert an impression of drinking very little tea, nor do they seem much to care for it, though the better classes use it at times. He explained it was because the cultivation of the tea shrub had been so very much neglected in the country, but it grew wild in many parts. On account of the nature of climate and soil, even wild tea was able to grow in quality and quantity (Oppert 1880, 143). Oppert did not know Koreans actually had enjoyed a long history of tea arts since the Goryeo dynasty. In the Joseon period, it is not uncommon that many poems vividly depict people drinking tea (Cho 2006). Splendid springs of the purest water were everywhere found in the Korean peninsula, which makes Oppert believe that Koreans were great water drinkers instead of tea drinkers.

Along with rice wine and tea, tobacco is another consumer goods for Joseon men. From the above part of clothing, there has already been a scene where women were working while men were smoking pipes. Due to the heavy work, Joseon men tended to be more addicted to tobacco, and they were always described to have a pipe in their hands or tied to their waist. This habit also leads to the planting of tobacco in Joseon,¹⁴ despite its origin from Japan.¹⁵

13. Oppert (1880, 141) gave a general idea of how Joseon people enjoyed drinks: "Like Japanese, they (Chosŏns) are extremely fond of strong drinks, and much less moderate in drinking than in eating; they may even be called very immoderate, whenever they have an opportunity to satisfy their craving for liquors, as I often had occasion to observe. To foreign wines and spirits they are passionately addicted; champagne and cherry-brandy they prefer to any other liquors, but they disdain by no means sherry, brandy, and other strong wines and spirits; claret alone they don't much relish on account of its acerbity."

14. According to Oppert (1880, 167), tobacco farming undoubtedly took place in Joseon: "The cotton-shrub thrives very well, frequently even on the hill-slopes growing wild; also hemp, flax, tobacco, dye-stuffs, indigo, and the finest and most valuable species of ginseng, which is paid its weight in gold in China, and for which Coreia is far-famed."

15. Eden (1880, 287) elucidated the origin of Tobacco in Joseon: "Tobacco is said to have been introduced from Japan towards the end of the sixteenth century, and the cotton plant from China about 200 years previously."

Their beards and whiskers which had never been cut, and their fans and long tobacco-pipes, and their strange language and manners, gave a grotesque air to the whole group, which it is impossible to describe. (Hall [1818] 2000, 11)

The aspect of the old man, with his grey flowing beard, bushy eyebrows, solemn visage, and mild observant eyes, was very imposing. Two pages stood behind him with his fan, tobacco pouch, and umbrella, his long-stemmed pipe being in his own hand. (Adams 1870, 129)

To this string, which by common people is worn beneath the jacket, are attached tobacco-pouches, pipes, fans, and similar necessaries. (Oppert 1880, 123-24)

In Joseon, it is customary for a man to sharing some tobacco with the others. The foreigner was even invited to having some.¹⁶ This seems to be an oriental culture. Along with this custom, this paper will introduce some Joseon's eating habits from the westerners' perceptions. According to Lindsay ([1834] 2000, 238), the tasty and delicious Korean cuisine may have gained some reputation in the West, and they even had known how to enjoy it.

The customs of the Koreans at their meals, it appears, are similar to the Japanese; each guest has a separate little table of about a foot high before him, the chop-sticks used are like the Chinese, but they carry a small knife at their girdle to cut their meat with. Most of the dishes, though cold, proved so palatable, that we ended by making a very hearty repast, greatly to the delight of the chiefs.

Different from the West, Joseon, similar to Japan, used a separate table. Different families use different utensils. There were china and earthenware bowls or metal bowls, chopsticks, and wooden or earthenware spoons. Knives and forks were also used sometimes.

The dish was served up on small tables of about fifteen inches in height, convenient enough for the posture of the natives. The rice was served up in

16. Craven (1880, 243) had such an experience: "One day, when on shore, I met quite a rara avis, in the shape of a polite old man, who insisted on my having some of his tobacco."

bowls made of metal, apparently a mixture of brass, with small flat dishes of common earthenware. Uniquely, the chopsticks were composed of the same metal and flat in shape. (MacDonald 1851, 503)

Brass spoons formed part of their very few utensils. (Craven 1880, 244)

The china and earthenware used at meals are very common. Regis' account that plates are used is incorrect. They do not, however, eat with chopsticks, but with wooden or earthenware spoons with very long shafts, and with two-pronged forks and knives, which they handle very well; and their way of eating is decidedly preferable to, and their way of eating is decidedly preferable to, and not so disgusting to look at, as the Chinese custom, of putting the rice-bowl close to the mouth, and shoving its contents into the same with a rapidity really astonishing. (Oppert 1880, 141)

Overall, rice gradually became a staple food for residents while they also had various other options such as corns, meat, vegetation, and fruits. They had rarely suffered from lack of consumer goods, and since the ancient time, Joseon men had been addicted to tobacco and wine. Joseon also had different table manners as shown in the westerners' records.

More Well-Constructed Houses

Although everyday life in terms of dressing and eating was recorded to have witnessed some improvements even before the open-door policy, changes in housing tended to be fewer. Reconstructing houses is a great project, and if not wealthy enough, residents could not afford to repair. In the Joseon period, people were highly likely to hold conventional traditions and would not dare to move or easily repair the houses their ancestors had passed on to them.

Most cases are that different villages are far away from each other while houses in the same villages probably were built compactly together, thereby forming a community. Otherwise, there were also isolated houses directly next to the farms, no other houses nearby. Almost every house was built in small size with one floor, stuck with an artificially raised yard in front (Craven 1880, 243).

The most obvious changes took place in the materials of houses, judged directly from the outlooks. In the early 19th century, houses were still thatched with straw (Broughton [1804] 2000, 343). According to Hall ([1818] 2000,

5), they formed a dirty and muddy image of the Joseon villages scattered throughout the field, with the roof covered with reeds and straws.

The village consists of forty houses rudely constructed of reeds plastered with mud, the roofs are of all shapes, and badly thatched with reeds and straw, tied down by straw ropes. These huts are not disposed in streets but are scattered about without order, and without any neatness, or cleanliness, and the spaces between them are occupied by piles of dirt and pools of muddy water. The valley in which this comfortless village is situated is, however pretty enough, though not wooded.

There may have another reason that the poor families' houses were thatched with reeds while the richer families' dwellings were more well equipped. In other words, different classes lived in totally different houses. According to Adams (1870, 141), humbler classes were grouped in hamlets, and their tall conical roofs, beneath which were their granaries or store-rooms, were usually thatched with reeds. On the other hand, in the cities and large wall towns, the roofs of the houses were covered with tiles, while the even richer inhabitants had gardens and courtyards ornamented with fish-ponds and planted with dwarfed trees in the Japanese style. Wealthy families would have a delicate garden with ponds, flowers, and trees, while the poor would be endeavored to farm rather than arrange such a garden.

Although this gap between villages and downtowns was confirmed repeatedly in Oppert's records, the houses were commonly seen to be constructed of mud or stone covered with mud, instead of straw along. More well-built houses of wood and brick roofed with tiles appeared in the downtown, especially as government offices, which would be referred to as a traditional *hanok*.

The dwelling-houses and larger buildings in the towns are, nearly without exception, one-storied, constructed of mud, and covered with the same material, or thatched with straw. In larger cities, indeed there are a good many buildings of wood and brick, roofed with tiles; in smaller townships, villages, etc. However, only the houses of the local mandarin are constructed of these materials and distinguished by a low wall of badly-hewn stone. (Oppert 1880, 137)

All the Government offices have tiled roofs and are built of brick; they have two gates, an outer and an inner one, and in some respects resemble Japanese temples. (Eden 1880, 322-23)

These Joseon yards were all surrounded by a high stone wall, totally blocking people from any strangers' glimpse inside as what Adams (1870, 141) recorded below, "Each house is separated from its neighbor, and is enclosed within a high stone wall, which entirely conceals from those who might be curious enough to observe them the domestic arrangements of the inmates."¹⁷ It was well depicted by Henry Craven (1880, 243) that in height, "the house was twenty feet by eight, and six feet high in the center, but only four where the roof rested on the walls, which were very thick, made of mud, and whitewashed over." In the square, according to Eden (1880, 322-23), "There is some law limiting the size of the houses of the common people, as they all live in dwellings about ten or twelve feet square."

Due to the strong walls, it was not easy to observe the interior structure. Besides, usually, Koreans were not really willing to invite foreigners to their homes. Oppert and his fellows were enough lucky to receive a welcome in the most friendly way by the host, who guided them into the outer apartments of his house. This was a great deal. As Koreans, in general, were not famous for hospitality, they do not like to let strangers enter their houses (Oppert 1880, 198). In this sense, Henry Craven's account of Joseon houses' interior decorations was precious.

It (the house) was divided into three compartments, each quite separated from the other, and each having an entrance from the outside, which served both as door and window. One end was the kitchen, with several fireplaces, and jars of water ranged round. The other end was a store-room, in which rice and millet-seed, besides dried fish and some corn, was stored in earthen jars. The center compartment was the sleeping-place. A little way from the dwelling-house stood the cow-shed and outhouse, and here also was another store of rice and grain. Their winter-padded clothing was all out airing on the bushes, under cover of which bushes the inhabitants evidently were hiding. (Craven 1880, 243-44)

The houses were divided into three compartments, one for the kitchen, another for store-room, and the other for sleeping. A little way from the main rooms, there was also space for cow-shed and outhouse. And in the Joseon kitchen, there were some earthen jars and a super cauldron, which even surprised the westerners. Around the first half of the 19th century, glasses had not been imported to this land and the Joseon's windows were covered with oiled paper.

The windows were square, and instead of glass were covered with oiled paper; they were furnished, moreover, with moveable wooden shutters. I entered the cooking room, and find it a very dirty, dingy, low, unsavory kitchen, with a bench at the further end, elevated a little above the floor, whereon stood the cooking utensils belonging to the household, a huge earthen jar, and sundry wooden bowls! The "superintendent of the cauldron," as they term the cook in China, cannot, I think, be required to exercise much culinary talent in devising the list of dishes for the table. In this poor household, I ventured to predict they were summed up in one simple word-porridge! (Adams 1870, 141)

Concerning the floors and ceilings, from a westerner's perspective, Oppert considered them as the way to testify the affluence of owners. After Oppert visited Joseon for three times all around the late 1860s, he recalled that their ground was made of hardened earth, scarcely ever floored, while ceilings were also rarely covered, either. The floors were only done in the better houses, where the oiled paper was placed over this, and on it, people sit (Oppert 1880, 137; Eden 1880, 322-23). The flooring was raised about a foot above the ground and Oppert (1880, 137) explained that the raised floors were also to fit with sliding doors and with windows. In this sense, Adams's (1870, 141) illustration of the balcony is easier to understand: "It was a long narrow house, with two pointed gable-ends, and a sloping roof, which projected into wide eaves, forming a balcony, supported by stout wooden posts, under the shade of which a long raised bench or platform extended the whole length of the building." In other words, outside the main rooms, there was a seeming balcony supported by wooden posts with a shadow formed by the long roofs. In order to fit the horizon of the window same as the platform, the floors were raised a foot above the ground.

Underground, there was the traditional Korean heating system, or *ondol*. During his stay in Joseon around 1832, Gutzlaff ([1818] 2000, 345) witnessed

17. Craven (1880, 243) also had a similar description: "This yard is always surrounded by a high wall as if to screen, which it does, the movements of the owners from their next neighbor's observation."

this and described as follows, “The kitchen was a separate building adjoining the house. To heat the room in winter, they had a large hole under the floor, by burning a proper quantity of wood in which, the whole apartment was kept warm.”¹⁸ From the westerners' perception, the *ondol* could be an extremely dangerous one. “The practice,” Eden (1880, 322-23) stated, “appears a dangerous one, for the soot hangs about the eaves and the aperture where the smoke finds its way out and were the flames to catch the straw roof, the house would soon be destroyed.” As the indirect source, Eden's records presented the characteristics of having more comments compared to the direct sources. Despite the wood houses, Joseon's *ondol* was relatively safe because itself was always made of slow thermal conductive materials like muds.

The aristocrats' houses may have been decorated by bricks, floors, and ceilings from an earlier time. Also, the lower classes' houses became solid and stable, varying from thatched ones to those made of mud, stone, and even bricks. They may not have the luxury to have ponds or gardens but could rest and enjoy themselves on the balcony. Thanks to *ondol* system, their winters were not that unbearable.

Conclusion

The previous studies in the nineteenth century used to highly emphasize the uncivilized and unaltered images of Joseon and the brightness of the open-door policy. Nevertheless, this paper tries to concentrate on some changes in the residents' everyday life based on the westerners' records which would be either direct or indirect sources. From the first westerner Hamel's notes, some Joseon people were described to have no warm clothes. Later in the early 19th century, they could wear linen, fiber, and cotton, and in the mid-19th century, the manufacture of cotton was highly praised by the westerners. The varieties of food and fruits became accessible to the Joseon locals since the middle 19th century. Concerning the houses, they were used to be straw-thatched houses, which were changed into even brick ones around the 1860s. These changes might not be giant enough to urge Joseon to achieve the modernization. At

least, the people's life was improved although the poor people may still suffer from poverty compared to the civilized western life which would be read as class consciousness. There are also some further studies worth conducting. The changes were proven to exist in the 19th century of Joseon before the opening port, but where the changes exactly took place was unknown.

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18. Other westerners had also similar descriptions on *ondol*. See Adams 1870, 141; Eden 1880, 322-23.

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Abstract

Despite Joseon being the so-called Hermit Nation in 1882, the then westerners had an awareness of Joseon since there were several navies cruising along the Korean coast and some even landed on the Korean peninsula. Having observed Joseon life there, they could record their experiences as voyage diaries. Thanks to their voyage diaries and some other materials translated from Chinese, even the westerners who had no chances to visit Joseon could understand Joseon and additionally offer other new introductions to Joseon. Drawing on such secondary sources along with the westerners' records based on their hands-on experiences, this paper mainly addresses the image of Joseon's everyday life from the westerners' perspectives before the Open Door policy. Before the 1880s when more westerners started to come to the Korean peninsula, Joseon seemed to remain unaltered. By consulting the westerners' records, however, the paper aims to list some evidence to prove that Joseon's everyday life including the clothes, food, and houses improved gradually and internally.

Keywords: nineteenth century Joseon, westerners, voyages, everyday life