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Wayne Patterson. *William Franklin Sands in Late Chosŏn Korea: At the Deathbed of Empire, 1896-1904.* Lexington Books, 2021.

In *William Franklin Sands in Late Chosŏn Korea: At the Deathbed of Empire, 1896-1904,* Wayne Patterson has written a fascinating account of the life and times of William Franklin Sands in Daehan Empire Korea and the beginning of the period of Japanese domination. The major strengths of the book lie in detailing the connections between the personal relationships that affected government policy and international relations as well as the machinations of the international struggle to which the Chosŏn dynasty was subjected. The audience is drawn into the inner workings of the American legation in Seoul and the power struggles within the Korean government, with a small taste of the politicking surrounding personnel assignments within the US government in Washington, DC.

Patterson has tapped into the rich trove of primary source materials in the Catholic Historical Research Center of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and woven it into a comprehensive picture of the personal relationships, government decisions, and international politics that character-

ize this period. The personal letters and accounts of Sands and Horace Allen illuminate the personalities and attitudes that were so critical to determining the course of Korean history and its relationships with the United States, Japan, and Russia. On the one hand, domestic and international politics cannot be separated since one affected the other. On the other hand, any attempt at removing the personal relationships, which Patterson details so closely, would remove one of the key elements that determined the decision-making of Emperor Gojong and the Korean government.

Emperor Gojong was obviously the most important figure on the Korean government side due to his power and position at the center of Korean politics and decision-making. Patterson's account highlights the centrality of Gojong to all Korean actions while also illuminating his relative powerlessness in the face of international pressures. One of the most powerful features of Patterson's account highlights the human foibles of all of the major characters. Emperor Gojong is presented as the key figure of Korean court politics. Therefore, one's proximity to Gojong, and the ability to gain an audience with the emperor, was the ultimate sign of one's power within the Korean government. In the beginning of his time in the Korean government, Sands was easily able to gain audiences, which seemed to reinforce Sand's position within court politics. However, the loss of this access shows how Sands was gradually marginalized and ultimately relied on either begging Korean figures for an audience or turning to the distasteful option of asking Horace Allen to arrange an audience.

Another character study of human frailty is Patterson's portrayal of Sands himself who began his diplomatic career as the secretary of the American legation but then found himself elevated to the position of foreign advisor to the Imperial Households as well as advisor to the Korean Foreign Office. While not clearly stated, it seems fairly obvious that Sands lacked the ability to develop the friendships and interpersonal connections necessary to be effective in the halls of Korean power as well as among the various diplomatic legations operating in Seoul. Instead, Sands seems to have been either young or arrogant enough to believe that

his position within the Korean government was due to his own personal abilities. By the end of his story, Sands shows that the position and the period were either too complex or too big for him to fill, and his pettiness and immaturity seem to have been key factors in his own undoing.

This is perhaps one area where Patterson could have explored more deeply, which was the reason why Sands was employed by Gojong in the first place. While the reason itself is not explicitly stated, it seems that Sands was simply another American pawn that Gojong hoped to use to tie Korea closer to the United States and maintain American interest in the small, undeveloped Chosŏn kingdom. Undoubtedly, Sands was seen as a relatively valuable pawn due to the stature of his father, Admiral Sands, who clearly had access to the halls of American power and could meet readily with US Secretary of State Hayes and even with President Theodore Roosevelt.

While Patterson does introduce key Korean figures, such as Yi Yong-Ik, as Sands' mortal enemy, there could have been more exploration of the internal court politics and the machinations that played between the different factions of pro-Russian, pro-Chinese, and pro-American Korean groupings that made this period such a dynamic and dangerous time in Korean history. Clearly, Sands is the central figure in Patterson's story, but the reader is often left longing for a more holistic portrayal of the various schemes, plots, and conspiracies that appear through the Horace Allen Papers and other historical sources.

Along the same lines, Patterson does an admirable job of detailing key historical events within which Sands was directly involved, such as the 1901 Jeju Uprising and the international attempts to supplant Sands with alternative foreign advisors. However, there is a slightly repetitive cadence to Sands' story, particularly in the later portions of the book, that could have been supplemented with additional materials from other sources or a generalized portrayal of the context within which they occurred.

Nevertheless, this book remains a valuable contribution to the field, particularly in a time period for which much more research needs to be conducted. Personally, I was fortunate to meet Wayne Patterson at the

historical archives of the Philadelphia Archdiocese as I was conducting my own research project. While I did not know that I would be writing a review of the fruit of his endeavors, it is clear that his work produced an important addition to the existing canon on Korea at the turn of the twentieth century as it stood at the doorstep between traditionalism and modernity.