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Review of the Joseon-Qing Communication and Commerce Rules

MOON Myungki, Inha University

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This article aims to explain the historical meaning of the change of Sino-Korean relations from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, especially focusing on the connotation of 'the opening of Hanseong'(漢城開棧) as a treaty port. The 'Joseon-Qing Communication and Commerce Rules,' established in 1882, regulated Hanseong (Seoul), the capital of Joseon, should be opened to Chinese merchants, and it was also regulated that the opening of Seoul should be exclusively applied to Chinese merchants.

Western Powers such as Great Britain, Germany and Japan, who successively established treaty with Korea, also insisted that they have the equal right for the opening of Hanseong, based on the most privileged clause. As a result, Hanseong was opened to every country for communication and commerce, which was very unusual in terms of international law only to bear various problems for Seoul.

First, the Korean merchants in Seoul had to suffer from the loss in their profit (especially because of Chinese and Japanese merchants), which resulted in reduction of revenue for the Joseon Government. Korean Government. Second, the opening of Seoul and Incheon at the same time offended the status of Han River and resulted in the conclusion of 'Mapo Regulations (麻浦章程).' Due to the influx of foreign goods and merchants, Seoul's stability was increasingly threatened and it resulted in serial arsons (presumably) by Korean merchants.

After the Sino-Japanese War, Korea and China had to make a new treaty, but the process of the new treaty was jeopardized. Korean Government insisted on abolishing the regulations concerned with the opening of Seoul, and Chinese representatives resisted it. After ferocious conflict, the new treaty did not include the clause to abolish the regulations on the opening of Seoul. The problems that the regulation on the opening of Seoul induced anti-Chinese sentiment among Seoul citizens, and this led to everyday attacks on Chinese merchants in Seoul. In this sense, the opening of Seoul was one of the worst byproduct of 'the Rules' which was forced on Korea by the Chinese Government, which had claimed suzerainty without due capability to protect Korea.

Keywords: Opening of Seoul (漢城開棧), Mapo Regulations (麻浦章程), Sino-Japanese War, Joseon-Qing Communication and Commerce Rules, Anti-Chinese sentiment

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I. Foreword

The Joseon-Qing Communication and Commerce Rules (“the Rules”) signed in 1882 served as an occasion for the Qing Dynasty of China to start a proactive interference in affairs concerning Korea (Joseon), which meant the end of the period in which Qing took a non-interference stance as long as Joseon presented tribute to it regularly. Many researchers have conceptualized changes in the Joseon-Qing relations and their significance in diverse ways, i.e. transformation into a protectorate, imperialization, modern realignment of the master-protectorate relations, and reinforcement of suzerainty. These studies have one thing in common: they focus on the nature of the pressure exerted by Qing on Joseon, and generally have one voice concerning the interference by Qing in Joseon, which was strengthened through the Rules and continued to be in place until the Sino-Japanese War.

However, there is suspicion that most of the existing studies stress the imperialistic (or oppressive) nature of Qing so much that they fail to

pay proper attention to why the Joseon government agreed to sign the Rules with a result that it was portrayed as a minor player in the Rules. The unexpectedly positive attitude by the Joseon government over in the Rules appears in *The Historical Materials Concerning Relations between China, Japan, and Korea*, which contain the details of the situation surrounding the Rules, and *Ŭmch'ōngsa* and *Chongjōng Yōnp'yo* written by Kim Yunsik and Ŏ Yunjung, who acted as the representatives of Korea in the process of signing the Rules. The positive attitude is pause to consider the generally accepted theory that the “protectorate” stipulation in the preamble, which constitute a crucial part of the Rules, was imposed forcefully by Qing.

This study deals with the issue of the opening up of Hanseong (Seoul), which emerged as a controversial point in the process of signing the Joseon-Qing Trade Treaty in 1899 and had become one of the major pending issues of the diplomatic disputes since it was stipulated in the Rules, as a material for reconsideration of what were generally accepted theories. Article 4 of the Rules allowed Koreans and Chinese to be engaged in commercial activities in the capital of the other country, i.e. Beijing or Hanseong, granting privileges to China that other powers did not enjoy. The commercial activities of Koreans (mostly in the ginseng trade) in Beijing did not cause particular diplomatic disputes, whereas Chinese commercial activities in Hanseong caused diverse political, diplomatic, and economic disputes, as noted.

It is thought that the issue of the opening up of Hanseong to foreign traders is a subject that clearly brings the historical significance of the Rules to light, as such a case was rarely paralleled in modern East Asian history. This study intends to shed light on how the stipulation concerning the opening up of Hanseong was included in the Rules in an effort to consider the historical significance of the Rules again through the analysis of various problems raised in the process of execution, such as 1) the process of the enactment of the Mapo Regulations following the opening up of Yanghwajin and Hanseong, 2) the foiled effort of the

Joseon government to withdraw the decision to open up Hanseong, and 3) the cases of arson that occurred following the opening up of Hanseong.

II. Opening of Hanseong and the enactment of Mapo Regulations

Under the Rules (Article 4) the capitals of the two countries were opened up to traders from the each respective country. This put China in an advantageous position to use Incheon and Hanseong as open ports for traders, but it also caused new problems concerning cargo transportation between Incheon and Hanseong. Chinese traders wanted to reach Yanghwajin (an entrance to Hanseong) on the sailboats they took from China after going through customs clearance in Incheon, rather than changing to land transportation for the Incheon-Hanseong route. However, the right to use the Han River for transportation between Incheon and Seoul was not clearly stipulated in the Rules and caused disputes.

In early 1884, Chen Shutang (總辦朝鮮商務) lodged a protest with Min Yōngmok (督辦交涉通商事務) against the Joseon government for not allowing Li Mingjin, a merchant from Shandong, to move between Incheon and Yanghwajin on the sailboat he took from China. The Joseon government explained that Article 4 of the Rules did not say that Chinese merchants could enter the Han River on sailboats they took from the China and that it had made that point clear in the preceding year, when Li Mingjin came to Joseon.¹

Chen Shutang complained that it was unreasonable not to let cargo ships sail to the place of trade via the river, when Hanseong was opened

¹ *Ch'ōngguk Sangsōnūi Yanghwajin Saip Puhōe Taehan Hang'ūi* (February 16, 1885), *Ch'ōng'an* (Diplomatic Documents)-1, p. 43.

to Chinese traders. It was stated that there was no such case of prohibiting the sail of cargo ships via the river in a country that opened ports to foreign traders in trade carried out between China and a Western country. He also pointed out that the clause to the effect that traders should follow the sailing regulations of the host country in Article 4 of the Rules, was the one that applied only to tax and did not mean that a cargo ship taken from China could not sail to Yanghwajin and Hanseong via the river.²

The Joseon government was not ready to yield to what the Chinese side said. Kim Hongjip (署理督辦交涉通商事務) stressed that the Korean side would not allow Chinese trade ships to enter the Han River under the existing regulation stipulating that no merchant ships should be allowed to sail where the customs office was not operated. He added that the Korean government allowed two Chinese merchant ships to sail to Mapo via the Han River as an exception in the previous year and such an exception would not be made again.³

Chen Shutang insisted that merchant ships from China should be allowed to sail to Yanghwajin via the Han River. He pointed to the Rules, Article 3 stipulating, “Merchant ships of the two countries shall be allowed to enter each other’s trading ports.” He also pointed out that the Rules did not specify “trading ports” and that Yanghwajin and Hanseong should be regarded as trading ports.⁴ Min Yōngmok countered, saying that the Rules, Article 8 did not specify the names of trading ports of Joseon, as there were only three trading ports opened up (i.e. Incheon, Busan, and Wōnsan). He also made it clear that a place where no

² *Ch'ōngguk Sangsōnūi Yanghwajin Saip Puhōe Taehan Hang'ūi* (February 16, 1885), *Ch'ōng'an* (Diplomatic Documents)-1, pp. 43-44.

³ *Tongsang Ch'ōngguk Sangsōūi Yanghwajin Kihang Puhōe Taehan Hoedap* (February 17, 1885), *Ch'ōng'an-1*, pp 44-45.

⁴ The remarks by Chen Shutang are not left in *Ch'ōng'an-1*, but can be reconfigured roughly based on the remarks made by Min Yōngmok quoted in the following.

customs office was operated should be regarded as an inland place, not a trading port. He also stressed that the matter did not apply only to the Joseon-Qing relations, saying that the Korean government had no intention to let the precedent apply to other countries of allowing merchant ships from China to sail via the Han River.⁵ To reinforce this position, he quoted what Paul George von Möllendorf (總稅務士) said (“No merchant ship from China will be allowed to sail to Mapo via the Han River. All merchant ships should discharge all cargo and pay import duties at Incheon.”)

Chen Shutang remained persistent, repeating what he said earlier (that there was no such case of prohibiting the sailing of cargo ships via the river in a country that had open ports for foreign traders in trade between China and a Western country.) He also pestered Min Yŏngmok, pointing out that the latter failed to respond to what he said (that the abrupt prohibition of ships from sailing via the Han River constituted a grave procedural error.) He also insisted that the wording of the Rules, Article 3 did not limit the ports in Joseon where foreign ships could enter the stated three ports and allowed Chinese merchant ships to approach inland areas where they were allowed to engage in trade, such as Yanghwajin and Hanseong.⁶

As for the concern by the Joseon government about having to open up the Han River to merchant ships from other countries, he said that there was no need to worry about it, as such a matter could be settled case by case between individual countries as Western countries were doing. He asked for the flexible decision by the Joseon government on the sailing of ships from Qing laden with 1,445 items of cargo via the Han River up to Hanseong.⁷ In response, Min Yŏngmok allowed it one

⁵ *Ch'ōngguk Sangsōnūi Mapo Kihang Pultangūi Kōn* (February 21, 1885), *Ch'ōng'an-1*, pp. 51-52.

⁶ *Ch'ōngguk Sangsōnūi Mapo Kihang Puhōe Taehan Hang'ūi* (February 23, 1885), *Ch'ōng'an-1*, pp. 55-56.

time in consideration of the difficult situation of Chinese merchants, although the position of the Joseon government was that no foreign ship could sail via the Han River under the Rules, Article 3 would be enforced.⁸

However, similar requests were made by the Chinese side on a continual basis. They said that the trading ports on each side (where Chinese merchant ships could enter) stated in the Rules, Article 3 should be interpreted to indicate Yanghwajin and Hanseong, as it was not necessary to make a mention of the three trading ports, which were already opened to merchant ships from foreign countries, in the Rules. Concerning the suggestion by Min Yŏngmok that the Rules should be amended to clarify the right of Chinese merchant ships to sail down the Han River, Chen Shutang said that it was an issue that should be decided through negotiations between the King of Joseon and the Minister of Beiyang of Qing. As for the notice by Min Yŏngmok that only a month would be given for the exceptional permission for Chinese merchant ships sail down the Han River to offload cargo, Chen Shutang said that a decision would be made after making a report to the Minister of Beiyang.⁹

The confrontation between Chen Shutang and Min Yŏngmok concerning the permission for Chinese merchant ships to sail down the Han River was a byproduct of the system of the Rules, as the contents of the Rules that should exclusively apply to the two countries, were faced with the demand for the provision of equal opportunity for other countries. The confrontation was a clash between the position of the Joseon government concerned about future results of the provision of

⁷ Op Cit, *Ch'ŏng'an-1*, pp. 55-56.

⁸ *Sandong Pŏnsŏnŭi Han'gang Saip T'ŭkchun'gwa Ch'ahu Pujunŭi Kŏn*, which was later withdrawn (March 2, 1885), *Ch'ŏng'an-1*, p. 60.

⁹ *Sanggŏnŭi Puyang Taeshin Pibok Suryŏng Hu Chaejohoeŭi Kŏn* (March 6, 1885), *Ch'ŏng'an-1*, pp. 60-61.

equal opportunity to countries other than Qing and that Qing wishing to protect the interests of merchants in Joseon by obtaining the exclusive permission of the Joseon government to allow Chinese merchant ships to sail down the Han River.

Then, did it make sense for Chen Shutang to say that the rights and obligations stipulated in the Rules as a matter of exclusivity between the two countries had nothing to do with the right of other countries to ask for the equal opportunity “as stated in the preamble?” It was in 1884 or 1885 that the issue of the right of Chinese merchant ships to sail down the Han River was brought to light in earnest. The Joseon government signed sequel treaties in November 1884 concerning the existing respective treaties made with Britain and Germany.¹⁰ Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the sequel treaty said, “Effective the day of implementation of this treaty, Chemulp’o (Incheon), Wŏnsan, Busan and Yanghwajin and Hanseong (or proper places close to them) shall be opened as ports for trade with Britain.¹¹ The same applied to Joseon’s treaties made with Russia, Austria, Italy, and Belgium.¹² Not only that, the U.S. and Japan, whose respective treaty did not include such a clause, came to enjoy the same benefit under the understanding that “when Joseon provided particular benefits to other countries, they also had the right to enjoy equal opportunity.”¹³ The concerns of the Joseon government were realistically reasonable, as the right to sail down the Han River (which was not stated in the Rules) should eventually be granted to other Western powers due to the existence of the understanding.

Chen Shutang appears to have tried to interpret relevant ambiguous

¹⁰ Wang Mingxing, 韓國近代外交與中國 *Korean Modern Diplomacy and China* (1861-1910), Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1998, p. 206.

¹¹ 漢城撤棧問題ノ再起竝之ニ關スル處分法ニ付意見上申(July 13, the 28th year of the Meiji Period), Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan’s Diplomatic Documents, Vol. 23, p. 187.

¹² Lee Yangja, Yuan Shikai in Joseon, Shinji Sŏwŏn, 2002, p. 95.

¹³ *Joch’ŏng Sangmin Suryuk Changjŏng Che Ajo Kaejŏng Yoch’ŏngŭi Kŏn*, Article 4 (February 2, 1891), Ch’ŏng’an-1, p. 653.

clauses in the Rules in a personal way, although the right to sail down inland waterways should have been handled separately from the opening up of Hanseong. He made an unreasonable attempt to link Article 4 (which stipulated the opening of Hanseong) of the Rules with Article 3 (which stipulated matters concerning the entrance into trading ports of the two countries for trade) of the Rules in an effort to secure an exceptional right, asking the Joseon government to grant rights beyond the framework of the Rules to protect the economic interests of Chinese merchants.

The situation made a definite development after the reply of Minister of Beiyng Li Hongzhang was delivered to the Joseon government. Li said,

Concerning the Joseon government's prohibition of Chinese merchant ships' sailing down the Han River, such a measure is as good as blocking Chinese merchants' business activities in Hanseong, as there are no solidly built private ships that can carry cargoes on the Han River. It does not correspond to the intention of the Rules. Neither does it make sense. We will discuss the matter with the King of Joseon to permit Chinese merchant ships to sail down the Han River.

Using this reply from Li, Chen Shutang could pressurize the Joseon government effectively.¹⁴ Supposedly under the pressure from Li, the Joseon government decided to "allow merchant ships smaller than 200 tons to enter Yanghwajin, based on the judgment that it would not cause inconvenience to the normal operation of the port and would do good to trade with other countries."¹⁵ It was an abrupt change in the position

¹⁴ *Ch'öngsang Pömsönüi Yanghwajin Saip Chaeyoch'öng* (April 14, 1885), Ch'öng'an-1, pp. 80-81.

¹⁵ *Ch'öngsang Pömsön Ibaekt'on Ihaüi Yanghwajin Tobakkwa Hwamul Sahömüi Kôn* (April 14, 1885), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 82.

from the previously stiff opposition. However, Chen Shutang even asked for the abolition of the limitation concerning “ships smaller than 200 tons.” He also made the following proposals: a branch customs office be established in Mapo so that merchant ships could go through customs inspections at either customs office in Incheon or Mapo, and that merchant ships be allowed to offload cargo themselves when the customs inspection was not carried out within 24 hours of the arrival a ship for a more efficient operation.¹⁶

The tug of war between the Joseon government and Qing ended one-sidedly in the favor of Qing. However, it did not put an end to the dispute completely. The permission of merchant ships to sail down the Han River led to smuggling. Many Chinese merchant ships entered the Han River without going through the customs office in Incheon in violation of the regulations. There was an increase in the number of cases in which Chinese goods were smuggled into the country without going through the customs inspection at Yanghwajin. At that time, the Joseon government was experiencing dire financial difficulty. The Joseon government could not ignore such practices, which could result in the depletion of financial resources. The Joseon government came to enact the Mapo Regulations in an effort to block smuggling.

Effective April 5, 1890, the Joseon government put in force the Regulations for Sailboats Stopping at Mapo Port (“the Mapo Regulations”), while complying with the request from Merrill (總稅務士) for a crackdown on smuggling and practices of tax evasion perpetrated in ports, including Mapo.¹⁷ Some contents of the Mapo Regulations can be conjectured from the documents exchanged between Yuan Shikai (駐紮朝鮮總理交涉通商事宜) and the counterpart in the Joseon

¹⁶ *Tongsanggōnūi T'onsu Chehan Ch'ōlp'yewa Mop'o Punsegwanūi Sōlch'I Yoch'ōng* (April 15, 1885), Ch'ōng'an-1, pp. 82-83.

¹⁷ *Mapo ChangJeongūi Ch'ōngsange Taehan Kuaejōm Sujōnge Taehan Hoedap* (April 1, 1890), Ch'ōng'an-1, pp. 541-542.

government. The main purpose was to reinforce customs inspections at Mapo and collection of duties and to have cargoes offloaded only at designated places along the Han River.

Concerning the steps that taken by the Joseon government, Yuan Shikai made requests as follows: a) Not to set Mapo as the only place where customs clearance and offloading can be carried out, as merchants would like to offload cargo at Yongsan to utilize the convenient road linking Yongsan with Hanseong. 2) Not to unpack cargoes carried by sailboats to avoid unnecessary loss/damages (Instead, only the number of packages need to be checked). 3) Not to delay the customs clearance procedures. 4) To make it possible to load or offload cargoes anywhere along the Han River convenient for traders. 5) to carry on customs clearance business even on Sundays.¹⁸ Cho Pyöngjik, a trade official, made counterproposals item by item.¹⁹

The Mapo Regulations were put into force on November, 1890, following negotiations with the ministers of other countries in Korea,^{20, 21}

¹⁸ Op Cit and another similar reply (May 4, 1890, Ch'öng'an-1, pp. 547-548.

¹⁹ Contents of Cho Myöngjik's itemized reply: 1) We are already allowing merchants' cargoes to be offloaded either at Mapo or at Yongsan, having those offloaded at a branch customs office go through inspection first. 2) There have been cases in which sailboats enter the Han River without going through the customs office in Incheon since last year to deliver goods at Mapo for tax evasion. The Trade Office took steps for a crackdown on smuggling and cases of tax evasion. As for cargo inspection, only the number of packages is checked for cargoes that have certificates issued by the customs office in Incheon. The cargoes whose number of package is not in accordance with what is stated in the document should be opened to see if there is a problem with smuggling. 3) The Mapo Regulations require port officials to carry out cargo offloading from sunrise to sunset every day except on public holidays and carry out cargo inspection immediately when ordered. 4) Cargo can be offloaded either at Mapo or at Yongsan under the Mapo Regulations per traders' wish. 5) When the Mapo Regulations are put into force following the approval of Yuan Shikai and ministers of foreign countries in Korea, warehouses and other necessary facilities will be built near Mapo and Yonsan in a way that can provide convenience to merchants. Cargo inspection will also be carried out on a boat or at a riverside place or *haengjan* per traders' wish. Even on Sundays, cargo loading/offloading will be carried out if required, and public holidays and other special off-duty days will be notified to traders in advance. (*Mapo ChangJeongüi Ch'öngsange Taehan Kuaejöm Sujöngae Taehan Hoedap* (May 4, 1890), Ch'öng'an-1, pp. 547-548.

and finally the confirmation from Li Hongzhang.^{22, 23} With the implementation of the Mapo Regulations, the dispute between Joseon and Qing concerning Chinese merchant ships to sail down the Han River after the opening up of Hanseong to traders was settled.

The opening up of Hanseong (which was stipulated in the Rules as a privilege for the Chinese) led to the opening up of the capital of Korea to other powers and this made the Joseon government concerned about the possibility of having to grant the permission to foreign ships to sail down the Han River. The Joseon government had to consider the withdrawal of the opening up of Hanseong for a fundamental settlement of the problem.

²⁰ *Mapo ChangJeonge Tahaee Ilbon Kongsu Chakchŭngjŏgŏi Songgyo Mit Ch'angbang Madu Sŏllipkwa Shilshie Kwanhan Ch'alham* (July 9, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 574-575.

²¹ *Mapo Changjŏng Shilhaenge Kwanhan Chohoe* (July 15, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 577-578; *Mapo Changjŏng Shilshi Kiile Kwanhan Hoedap* (July 15, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 579-580; *Kaesŏnhan Mapo Changjŏngŏi T'asŏn'gwa Shilshi Ilgi Jeongjŏng Kwanhan Hoedap* (September 21, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 614; *Mapo Changjŏng Shilsh Kiil P'oyue Kwanhan Chohoe* (September 24, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 615-616; *Mapo Changjŏng Shilshi Kiile Kwanhan Hoedap* (October 11, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 624

²² *Ch'ŏngsangdürege Mapo Changjŏng 'ül P'ogo Chunsuke Hame Kwanhan Chohoe* (October 28, 1890), p. 632. Through this inquiry, Yuan Shikai obtained Li Hongzhang's approval of the implementation of the Mapo Regulations. Yuan Shikai said that he got an instruction to make Chinese observe the regulations by informing Beiyang and Jianghai provinces and Chinese merchants of it.

²³ The implementation of the Mapo Regulations was delayed to a great extent, perhaps due to Yuan Shikai's delay in making his final decision. Min Jongmuk, a Joseon government official, sent a letter to Yuan Shikai [A letter concerning the timing of the implementation of the Mapo Regulations (September 7, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 601], urging him to take prompt action, drawing his attention to the fact that 6 or 7 months had passed since the Joseon government's dispatch of relevant personnel to Mapo and relevant discussions were made on several occasions. Earlier, Yuan Shikai said that the clauses of the Mapo Regulations made sense, but he changed his attitude, raising problems concerning two points, thus delaying the settlement of the Mapo Regulations further. (*Mapo Changjŏng Shilshi Ilgi Sangsun'gŏnŭi Sangse Shimyŏng Yoch'ŏng* (September 9, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 603; *Mapo Changjŏng T'ajŏng'e Issŏ Changnae Igaejŏi Kyŏngjŏng'e Kwanhan Hoedap* (September 17, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 610-611; *Mapo Changjŏng Nae Igaejŏi Kaesŏn Songdare Kwanhan Ch'alham* (September 19, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 612).

III. Foiled Efforts for the withdrawal of the opening up of Hanseong

The Joseon government had to consider the withdrawal of the opening up of Hanseong due to disputes concerning the business activities of Chinese merchants carried out in the capital city of Joseon under the Rules. Minister (外衙門 督辦) Kim Yunsik led such a movement. *The Discussion on Opening up of Hanseong* compiled by him in 1886 makes it possible to guess problems concerning the opening up of Hanseong. It took the form of the compiler answering a variety of questions made by anonymous people.

First, concerning how the decision was made on the opening up of Hanseong and problems caused by it, Kim Yunsik said,

The decision to allow Chinese merchants to do business in Hanseong was made to protect our interest, i.e. to strengthen familial relationships and prevent Western powers' arrogance. However, unexpected problems occurred. As the country's business activities are not brisk, large Chinese businesses did not pay attention to the opening up of Hanseong for trade, and those who came were all small businesses looking for chances of making fortune. They were not expected to know (the Qing Dynasty's) intention to protect and maintain good relations (with Joseon) They often caused disputes, as they looked down on Koreans. Thus, all Koreans, including government officials, tried to keep their distance from them. It is very regretful.²⁴

Kim Yunsik mentioned eight harms done by the Rules²⁵ summarized in three points as: 1) The shrinkage of business interests of Korean

²⁴ Kim Yunsik, *Hanseong Kaejan Saui, Unyangjip* (Vol.7), edited by 한국학문헌연구소, A Collection of Kim Yunsik's Writings, The Asian Culture Press, 1980, pp. 464-465.

²⁵ Kim Yunsik, *Hanseong Kaejan Saui*, pp. 467-469.

merchants, particularly those in Yugŭijŏn Market, following the opening up of Hanseong to foreign traders. 2) Aggravation of the financial situation of the Joseon governments due to the shrinkage of business interests of Korean merchants. 3) Difficulty in maintaining the social order due to mingling of foreigners with Koreans. Having stressed the need for the withdrawal of the opening up of Hanseong, Kim Yunsik said, “The Honorable Minister (referring to Li Hongzhang) is said to express his deep concern whenever they discuss affairs of Joseon (concerning the withdrawal). So, he will gladly accept a proposal for amendment to the Rules” showing that he was optimistic about the amendment to the Rules for the withdrawal. He put an emphasis on the importance of settling the matter in a hurry, saying, “Unless the matter of the withdrawal is settled right now, there will be a rush of trade envoys from various countries, which will make the situation even more difficult and the amendment to the Rules will be a hundred times more difficult.²⁶ As he predicted, the situation became more difficult to handle, as the amendment could not be made soon.

Even prior to the signing of the Rules, the Joseon government was expressing concerns about the opening up of Hanseong to foreign traders. Ŏ Yunjung, who was in Tianjin, China for discussion about matters concerning the Rules, said in concern of Article 4 of the Rules, “Being a poor country, (if the capital of the country is opened up to foreign traders) merchants will surely blame the government for their loss. I am deeply grateful for regarding Joseon as something as precious as your own by granting the permission for reciprocal exchanges of the peoples of the two countries, but is there a guarantee that other countries will not ask for the equal opportunity” predicting the possibility that other powers may ask for the application of the clause concerning the opening up of Hanseong to them prior to the signing of the Rules.²⁷ Zhou

²⁶ Kim Yunsik, *Hanseong Kaejan Saŭi*, pp. 468-470.

Fu, Ǿ Yunjung's Chinese counterpart in the negotiation, responded, saying,

As for your concern that the opening up of Hanseong may do harm to your merchants, I think that it is a matter that can be handled properly in the future... If you want to delete the clause concerning the opening up of Hanseong, I would like to know whether you want the clause concerning your merchants doing business in Beijing also deleted. We have also opened up the capital of our country to your merchants and are not concerned about the possibility of other countries asking for the application of the clause to them, and why should you?

This ignored the possibility of the clause of the opening up of Hanseong being utilized by other powers.²⁸

The Rules are unclear if they should be regarded as a one-sided concession by the Joseon government. The fact that the Joseon government signed the Rules in a hurry had something to do with the need to encourage Korean merchants to do business (particularly ginseng) briskly in Beijing to enhance the financial capability to provide support for reformist politics carried out by King Gojong. Accordingly, the Chinese government could effectively use the threat of withdrawing the opening up of Beijing to Joseon traders. The Joseon government needed to expand the ginseng trade and had to open up Hanseong to Chinese traders on a reciprocal basis.²⁹

²⁷ *Chorok Joseon Shigang Ŏyun Chungjŏllayk*, Relevant Historical Materials, Vol.3, pp. 983-984.

²⁸ *Chorok Chinhae Kwanjudo Husŏn Madobok Ŏyun Chungjŏllayk*, Relevant Historical Materials, Vol.3, pp. 985.

²⁹ Joseon took a positive attitude in the signing of the Rules, as it needed to seriously supplement financial resources (or reduce expenses). Ǿ Yunjung, who actually played a leading role in the trade negotiation, raised the following problems to Qing's representatives (Acting Minister of Beiyang, Zhang Shusheng and 天津海關道, Zhou Fu): 1) innovation of markets opened in northern provinces of Joseon and abolition of the practice of having merchants bear necessary

Despite the concern expressed by Ŏ Yunjung, the opening up of Hanseong was included in Article 4 of the Rules. The Joseon government was under a very troublesome burden of having to open up Hanseong only to Chinese merchants. At that time, the respective treaties Joseon made with Britain and Germany in 1883 or the 19th year of the reign of King Gojong failed to win the ratification from the Parliament of the two countries, which meant that the respective treaties needed a process of renegotiation. A major agenda of the renegotiations included matters concerning bilateral trade and import duties, including the opening up of Hanseong. The explanation made by Joseon that the opening up of Hanseong was included in the Rules signed with Qing on an exclusive basis was not accepted by Britain and Germany. Seeing that the situation forced Joseon to open up to traders from Western powers, Min Yŏngmok

expenses, 2) having an envoy stay in Beijing, 3) prohibition against maritime passage and commercial issues. As for markets opened in northern provinces, such as Ŭiju, Hoeryŏng and Gyeongwon stated in the above-said 1), Qing's trade supervisor 章京 led 350-plus merchants and 670-plus horses and cows. The Joseon side should pay for all meals for Qing's officials and merchants, as well as horse and cow feed. Expenses required for the opening of such a market were: 9,200 bales of rice and 90,000 copper coins in the case of a double market (兩市) or 7,200 bales of rice and 50,000 copper coins in the case of a single market (單市). As for the proposal stated in above-said 2) for having an envoy stay in Beijing rather than continuing to hold events designed to please Chinese as those of a superior country, the background for such a proposal was the dire financial situation of the Joseon government. At the time of a negotiation held in April 1883 (the 19th year of King Gojong's reign) concerning the Rules, Ŏ Yunjung drew the Chinese side's attention to the fact that the annual revenue won by the Joseon government stood at only 300,000 copper coins, about half of the annual revenue of the Hamgyŏng Provincial Office was spent to maintain the border trade, the lion's share of the annual revenue of the P'yŏng'an and Hwanghae Provincial Offices was spent for envoys exchanged between the two countries and the Financial Ministry was in a very difficult situation. Concerning above-said 3), the intention of the Joseon government hidden behind the positive trade negotiation with Qing was to set right problems related to customs clearance and duties stipulated in the Joseon-Japan Treaty of Kanghwa, an unequal treaty made in favor of Japan. At that time, Japan was enjoying an advantageous position at trading ports of Joseon, including the privilege of duty-free and the Joseon government needed to pressurize Japan into amendment of the duty-free regulations through the enactment of new trading rules. (Refer to Kim Chongwŏn, *Chojung Sangmin Suryuk Muyŏk Changjŏng'e Taehayŏ*, Yŏksahakpo, Vol. 32, pp. 134-142). To summarize, at that time of the negotiation with Qing concerning the Rules, the Joseon government made the three-item proposals to reduce the financial expenditure and secure new financial resources.

asked Zhou Fu (天津海關道) for the amendment to Article 4, the Rules, reminding him that, at the time of the negotiation between Lee Choyun (問議官) and Ŏ Yunjung and Zhou Fu in Tianjin the preceding year, he (Zhou Fu) said that they would handle the situation properly if the economic interest of poor Koreans is harmed due to the opening up of Hanseong.³⁰

It is not clear how Qing or Zhou Fu responded to the request. In his meeting with the British Minister Parks, who had just returned from Joseon after signing a sequel treaty, Li Hongzhang made a comment on the sequel treaty as follows: “I see that there is a drastic change in the contents of the trade rules and import duty regulations from the original rules and regulations made last year. However, matters concerning foreign trade and duty regulations are within the jurisdiction of the Joseon government and have nothing to do with China.” This shows that he did not pay attention to matters concerning foreign trade and duty regulations, including the matter concerning the opening up of Hanseong, and his only interest was whether the Joseon government was complying with the protector-protectorate relations (屬邦體制) as pursued by Qing.³¹

The Joseon government could never afford to handle the matter of the opening up of Hanseong to Western powers lightly. The Joseon government persistently asked Qing for an amendment to the Rule for withdrawal of the clause concerning the opening up of Hanseong until the Second Sino-Japanese War.

In December 1886 or 1886, Kim Yunsik officially asked Yuan Shikai for the withdrawal of the clause concerning the opening up of Hanseong. He stressed that the Joseon government had to accept the strong request by Western powers for equal opportunity concerning the

³⁰ *Kakkuk T'ongsang Changjǒng Mit Sech'ik Kaejǒng'e Kwanhan Hoedap* (November, the 20th year of King Gojong's reign), Ch'ǒng'an-1, p 11.

³¹ Joseon T'ongsang Changjǒng Ishipsajo Ch'ogǒn Isudo (the Minister of Beiyang Li Hongzhang's letter) (November 9, 1883), *Relevant Historical Materials* (關係史料), Vol. 3, p. 1227.

opening of Hanseong following the enactment of the Rules. He referred to the fact that Western powers were saying that if Qing accepted the withdrawal of the clause concerning the opening up of Hanseong they would follow suit and Article 8 of the Rules stipulated that the contents of the Rules might be amended as required.³²

In response, Yuan Shikai said that it was possible to move the Chinese merchants' shops out of Hanseong to Yongsan in consultation with the Chinese Foreign Ministry (總理衙門) and the Minister of Beiyang.³³ He said that he would discuss the matter with the Foreign Ministry (外衙門) of Joseon.³⁴ In this way, the matter of relocation of the Chinese merchants' shops out of Hanseong progressed. As a subsequent step, the Yongsan Trade Office was appointed to take care of matters concerning the relocation.³⁵ The Joseon government paid the rent for the new shops in Yongsan. In the fall of 1887, the Foreign Ministry (外衙門) of Joseon sent 1,222 silver coins to Yuan Shikai as rent.³⁶

Little progress was made for the relocation of the Chinese merchants' shops in Hanseong to Yongsan due to a general reluctance,³⁷

³² *Ch'öngsangüi Hanseong Kaejan Ch'ölp'owa Yongsan* (December 14, 1886), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 285; 總署收北洋大臣李鴻章文：韓擬將漢城華商行棧移赴龍山口 (January 17, 1886), Relevant Historical Materials (關係史料), Vol. 4, p. 2028.

³³ *Ch'öngsangüi Hanseong Kaejan Ch'ölp'oe Taehan Hoedap* (December 19, 1886), Ch'öng'an-1, pp. 286-287; 總署收北洋大臣李鴻章文：韓擬將漢城華商行棧移赴龍山口 Op Cit.

³⁴ *Hanseong Hwasang Haengjanüi Yongsan Iseore Taehan Tong'üi* (February 26, 1887), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 302.

³⁵ Notice of appointment of Yongsan Trade Official Chen Tongshu (October 28, 1887), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 331.

³⁶ *Ch'öngsang Chanbang Kajönüi Chamshi Oesö Chonch'ie Kwanhan Chohoe* (December 11, 1889), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 509. Yuan Shikai tried to return the money sent by the Joseon government as rent for Chinese merchants to the Foreign Ministry of Joseon, saying that many Chinese merchants returned home to China, many merchants from other countries had opened stores in Hanseong over the past two years and the long-term stay of Chinese merchants in Hanseong made it more difficult for them to move to Yongsan. However, the Foreign Ministry of Joseon refused to receive the money, saying that the Chinese side had better use the money in the future relocation of stores to Yongsan. (*Ch'öngsang Chanbang Kajönüi Oesö Chonch'I Mip'yön Hoedap* (December 17, 1889), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 511).

the lack of cooperation from Yuan Shikai,³⁸ and friction between relevant countries.^{39, 40} The Joseon government made repeated requests for the relocation. Trade Minister Cho Pyōngshik pointed out that the matter became more complicated with Chinese merchants refusing to comply with the year-long request for relocation and the Japanese opening of shops in Hanseong. He also stressed that the opening of Hanseong to foreign merchants caused job losses to many Korean residents in Seoul. He asked that Chinese merchants take an immediate action, setting an example, saying, “At present, Chinese merchants are refusing to comply with the request for relocation, pointing to the opening of new Japanese shops, who in turn point to Chinese merchants refusing to comply with the request. The situation makes us unable to predict when the relocation can be materialized.”⁴¹

Efforts by Kim Yunsik and others to relocate Chinese merchants' shops to Yongsan in 1886 ended in failure. It became more difficult to

³⁷ It appears that Yuan Shikai had a positive opinion on the relocation and obtained Li Hongzhang's consent. However, Chinese merchants in Hanseong refused to receive the rents sent from the Joseon government, saying that they would incur a loss, if the amount paid was the price they paid to purchase houses in Hanseong and the relocation was stopped. At that time, the number of Chinese stores in Hanseong stood at only 13 or 14, which meant that the Joseon government lost a good chance for the relocation in the face of the opposition of Chinese merchants. (日清商民撤棧ニ關スル爾後ノ現況具申ノ件, Japanese Foreign Ministry, Diplomatic Documents of Japan, Vol. 23, p. 171).

³⁸ Lee Yangja, Yuan Shikai in Joseon, p. 97.

³⁹ *Ch'ōngsang Haengjanūi Yongsan Ch'ōni Chaeyoch'ōng* (September 24, 1888), Ch'ōng'an-1, p. 384.

⁴⁰ As Yuan Shikai's report stated, the reason for the failure of the relocation of foreign merchants' shops out of Hanseong in December 1886 or 1886 was the Joseon government's inability to pay the expenses required for the relocation of Japanese stores. His report said that it was not difficult to relocate ten-plus Chinese stores in Hanseong and Japanese agreed to the relocation in writing. However, the plan for the relocation was delayed for a few years due to the inability of the Joseon government to pay for the relocation expenses for Japanese merchants whose number stood at five times that of Chinese merchants. (總署收北洋大臣李鴻章文: 袁世凱稟報朝鮮閉市定形(Febuary 17, 1890), Relevant Historical Materials (關係史料), Vol. 5, p. 2734-2736).

⁴¹ *Ch'ōngsang Haengjanūi Yongsan Ch'ōni Chaeyoch'ōng* (September 24, 1888), Ch'ōng'an-1, p. 385.

push ahead with the relocation plan, as the number of foreign merchant in Hanseong had already increased sharply. The Joseon government took a step to prevent foreigner individuals from purchasing land and houses in an effort to block the increase in the number of foreigners in Hanseong. However, it immediately faced opposition from Yuan Shikai. Yuan Shikai asked the Foreign Ministry of Joseon for mitigation of the regulation banning foreigners from purchasing real estate in Joseon, saying that Chinese merchants were incurring a loss.⁴²

The tension between the Joseon government (and Korean merchants in Hanseong) and Yuan Shikai (and Chinese merchants) was intensifying. In January 1890, Korean merchants in Hanseong closed shops and gathered in front of the Foreign Ministry building to demand the relocation of Chinese and Japanese shops out of Hanseong.⁴³ In the public notices put up in many places in Hanseong, Korean merchants stressed that they were not those merely engaged in eking out a living, but those who served the country and the King, and asked foreigner merchants to return to Incheon, leaving Hanseong to Korean merchants.⁴⁴ The Foreign Ministry tried persuade them to go back home, saying that it would try to discuss the matter with other countries, although it was not easy to make an amendment to an existing treaty. However, Korean merchants did not normalize business activities.⁴⁵

The closure of markets resulted in inconvenience for people due to the lack of everyday necessities. A rumor spread among residents in

⁴² *Ch'öngsang Haengjanüi Yongsan Ch'öni Chungjie Kwanhan Chohoe* (September 21, 1888), *Ch'öng'an*-1, p. 395.

⁴³ 京城城内ノ韓商政府ニ日清兩國商民ノ撤棧ヲ迫リ督辦ヨリ追テ沙汰スベク面論中ナル旨報告ノ件(January 30, the 23rd year of the Meiji Period), Japanese Foreign Ministry, *Diplomatic Documents of Japan*, Vol. 23, pp. 159-160.

⁴⁴ 通論, *Diplomatic Documents of Japan*, Vol. 23, p. 161.

⁴⁵ 京城城内ノ韓商政府ニ日清兩國商民ノ撤棧ヲ迫リ督辦ヨリ追テ沙汰スベク面論中ナル旨報告ノ件(January 30, the 23rd year of the Meiji Period), Japanese Foreign Ministry, *Japan's Diplomatic Documents*, Vol. 23, p. 160.

Hanseong that a large number of peddlers were soon to gather in Hanseong and it might lead to an extraordinary situation (in connection with the ongoing confrontation between Daewongun and the Min family).⁴⁶ On January 30th, high-ranking officials of the Joseon government, including the Foreign Minister, met with Yuan Shikai and asked for his cooperation.⁴⁷ Yuan Shikai said that it did not make sense for the Joseon government to yield to the pressure of ordinary people. He urged them to drive away the demonstrators and force them normalize business activities, saying that the issue of the relocation could be discussed later in accordance with the procedure.⁴⁸ Seeing that Yuan Shikai was not willing to cooperate, the Joseon government decided to have a discussion directly with the Minister of Beiyang Li Hongzhang. They ordered Korean merchants in Hanseong to return to normal business activities, saying that they would present a solution to the problem 20 days later (in consideration of the time taken for a meeting with Li Hongzhang.)⁴⁹

Concerning such a move taken by the Joseon government, the Japanese Legation in Joseon thought that it was not prudent for the Joseon government to fix the deadline, telling Korean merchants to wait

⁴⁶ 辦ハ以後二十日間以内ニ日清兩國商民ノ撤棧ノ回答ヲ約束セル商民一同納得退散ニ日ヨリ開店セル旨具申ノ件(February 2, the 23rd year of the Meiji Period), Japanese Foreign Ministry, Japan's Diplomatic Documents, Vol. 23, p. 164.

⁴⁷ 督辦ハ以後二十日間以内ニ日清兩國商民ノ撤棧ノ回答ヲ約束セル商民一同納得退散ニ日ヨリ開店セル旨具申ノ件(Op Cit, p. 165).

⁴⁸ 督辦ハ以後二十日間以内ニ日清兩國商民ノ撤棧ノ回答ヲ約束セル商民一同納得退散ニ日ヨリ開店セル旨具申ノ件(Op Cit, p. 166). Yuan Shikai judged that the Joseon government and Korean merchants in Hanseong were taking an action in collusion to push ahead with the relocation and people's everyday life would become more difficult, as the small number of merchants would monopolize the market if foreigner merchants relocate out of Hanseong. (總署收北洋大臣李鴻章文: 袁世凱稟報朝鮮開市定形(February 17, 1890), Relevant Historical Materials (關係史料), Vol. 5, pp. 2734-2736).

⁴⁹ 日清商民ノ撤棧確約期限經過後發シノ懸念アル紛擾防止ノ爲更ニ軍艦一隻仁川ヘ回航方意見具申ノ件(督辦ハ以後二十日間以内ニ日清兩國商民ノ撤棧ノ回答ヲ約束セル商民一同納得退散ニ日ヨリ開店セル旨具申ノ件(February 4, the 23rd year of the Meiji Period), Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan's Diplomatic Documents, Vol. 23, pp. 167-168.

another 20 days. This was because even if the Korean envoy could meet Li Hongzhang for a discussion (although even that was not certain), Li should make a report to the Foreign Minister, who would need the approval of the Chinese Emperor. The Japanese Legation asked the Japanese Foreign Ministry to dispatch warships to Incheon, in case the Korean merchants became a violent mob when the situation could not be settled 20 days later.⁵⁰ The fact that the Joseon government was considering bypassing Yuan Shikai (the representative of the Chinese government in Joseon) in an effort to find a solution to the matter was quite extraordinary. What made the Joseon government so earnest about the relocation of the Chinese merchants' shops out of Hanseong?

The remarks of Kim Kajin about the matter are very indicative. Even if the foreign merchants' shops were relocated to Yongsan (which was just 4 km from downtown Hanseong) and Korean merchants gained control of the right to sell sundry goods, foreign merchants could still sell goods in downtown Hanseong.⁵¹

Korean business districts in Hanseong shrank due to the existence of Chinese merchants. If merchants from other countries were allowed to open shops in Hanseong, the results would be clearly predictable. If the relocation was not carried out as planned, then there would be a possibility of an outbreak of an extraordinary situation within 2-3 years. If those supporting the attempts of Daewongun in a political comeback by using the relocation issue succeeded, then those supporting the Min family who ruled the country would be faced with an unfavorable situation.⁵² In a meeting with a Japanese diplomat, Daewongun said that

⁵⁰ 日清商民ノ撤棧確約期限經過後發ノ懸念アル紛擾防止ノ爲更ニ軍艦一隻仁川ヘ回航方意見具申ノ件(Op Cit, p. 168.

⁵¹ 京城撤棧ノ難キニ拘ラズ拋棄セザル理由ニ付金嘉鎮ノ談話報告ノ件(February 25, the 23rd year of the Meiji Period), Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan's Diplomatic Documents, Vol. 23, p. 176.

⁵² 京城撤棧ノ難キニ拘ラズ拋棄セザル理由ニ付金嘉鎮ノ談話報告ノ件(Op Cit, p. 177.

the current situation was caused by a group of villainous officials. If the discontented merchants become a violent mob, it may lead to a crisis like the rebellion by discontented uniformed servicemen in 1882.⁵³ The Joseon government could not stop pushing ahead with the planned relocation.⁵⁴

Despite the opposition of Yuan Shikai to the relocation plan, the Joseon government eventually dispatched Foreign Ministry officials Pyŏn Sukwŏn and Kim Myŏnggyu to Tianjin.⁵⁵ The letter by King Gojong that Pyŏn and Kim presented to Li Hongzhang showed that the eventual opening of Hanseong to Western powers (i.e. Britain, Germany) and Japan against the wishes of the Joseon government stemmed from

⁵³ 日清商民ノ撤棧確約期限經過後效發ノ懸念アル紛擾防止ノ爲更ニ軍艦一隻仁川へ回航方意見具申ノ件(February 4, the 23rd year of the Meiji Period), Japanese Foreign Ministry, Japan's Diplomatic Documents, Vol. 23, pp. 167-168. On several occasions, Daewongun said to Kondo Shinsuke, Acting Japanese Minister in Korea, "I am not a stubborn old man of the past any longer. I have been transformed into a reformist through and through. And does Japan still have a doubt about me?" or "Real statesmen in Asia are: 이등백 of Japan, Li Hongzhang of China and me of Korea. I am old, but can endure the burden of an official duty for at least 10 more years." (京城撤棧ノ難キニ拘ラズ拋棄セザル理由ニ付金嘉鎮ノ談話報告ノ件(February 25, the 23rd year of the Meiji Period), Japanese Foreign Ministry, Japan's Diplomatic Documents, Vol. 23, p. 177).

⁵⁴ According to the report made by Japanese Vice Consul Hayashi in Incheon, the Japanese side appears to have thought that the Joseon government had no financial means required to carry out the plan for the relocation. Hayashi said that the Joseon government borrowed 30,000 won from the First National Bank of Japan in the previous year and asked the Japanese Minister in Joseon to look for foreign lenders willing to lend money to Joseon. He also referred to the fact that 총세무사 paid a visit to Incheon and asked [the Japanese side] for a step having the First National Bank of Japan lend 100,000 won to Joseon, supposedly in preparation for the demise of Queen Dowager Cho, as it was feared that the expense for the funeral ceremony might not be imposed on Korean merchants in Hanseong. The Japanese government judged that it was very unlikely that the relocation of foreign merchants' stores out of Hanseong could actually be carried out. (撤棧ニ關シ邊錫運赴津竝ニ韓政府財狀報告ノ件(February 26, the 23rd year of Meiji Period), pp. 178-179).

⁵⁵ In a report, Japanese Vice Consul Hayashi in Incheon said that Pyŏn Sŏkun was a 서기생 who once served in Tianjin and carried out duties at the office supervising Incheon Port while the Supervisor was away, adding, "His position is too low and it would be difficult for him to persuade Li Hongzhang even if he could meet Li." (撤棧ニ關シ邊錫運赴津竝ニ韓政府財狀報告ノ件(February 26, the 23rd year of the Meiji Period, p. 178).

the Rules. The letter stated that they asked for the equal opportunity in the permission by Joseon for foreign merchants running shops in Hanseong. The letter indirectly pointed out that Li himself could not be free from the responsibility of having to open up Hanseong to Western merchants, as Joseon's relevant treaties with Western powers and Japan were carried out in consultation with him, saying,

In terms of the number of foreigners (not counting Chinese) opening shops in Hanseong in the few years following the enactment of the Rules, Japanese top the list. The number of shops opened by those from other countries has also increased. The largest share of the commercial business in Hanseong has come to be occupied by foreigners, making Koreans worry about losing their businesses and being driven out of the city. This made us ask for your consideration of the need to amend the clause concerning the opening up of Hanseong on many occasions.

The letter went on to say that if the matter was left unattended, the problem could worsen in an uncontrollable way and the Joseon government could not but think about measures, as it was not possible to accommodate so many foreigners in a small city. It referred to the fact that if Chinese merchants relocated out of Hanseong, Western powers could not ask for the equal opportunity concerning the running of shops in Hanseong under respective treaties made with Joseon, stressing that it was the Chinese government that should settle the problem.⁵⁶

The diplomatic initiative of Joseon ended in failure despite the dangerous decision made by it to bypass Yuan Shikai and discuss it directly with the the Minister of Beiyang. Although the the Minister of Beiyang met the envoys of Joseon, his position was not different from

⁵⁶ *Choch'ŏng Sangmin Suryuk Changjŏng Che 4jo Kaejŏng Yoch'ŏng'ui Kŏn* (February 2, 1891), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 653.

that of Yuan Shikai. Li Hongzhang remained cold, although Kim Myōnggyu explained the urgent need for the relocation saying,

As a result of the situation, the number of foreigners doing business in Hanseong has come to be greater than that of Koreans. The city is experiencing an unheard-of situation in which no boundary distinguishing local people from foreigners exists and no tax can be imposed on traded goods. With foreigners occupying most of the commercial districts in so small a city, nine out of ten Korean merchants suffer a loss and have had to close down their businesses. The country and the people have come to be in a very dire situation.⁵⁷

Li Hongzhang said,

The opening up of Hanseong as the capital of the Chinese protectorate was a measure exceptionally permitted for Chinese merchants. In reciprocation, we allowed Korean merchants to do business in Beijing. The Joseon government should have prevented the problem by refusing to accept Japanese demand for equal opportunity. It does not make sense to put Japan on an equal footing with China, a powerful country. Do you think that it is possible to have Japanese merchants in Hanseong follow suit after Chinese merchants' relocation out of the city, now that you say that the number of Japanese merchants is larger than that of Chinese merchants in Hanseong?⁵⁸

Li was saying that granting the “equal opportunity” to Japanese

⁵⁷ 朝鮮駐津陪臣金明圭呈李鴻章片(December 1, 1889), Relevant Historical Materials (關係史料), Vol. 5, pp. 2696-2699; 在天津理事官金明圭韓廷ニ向ケ貴國方發電ノ真相ニ關シ報告ノ件, 附屬書: 別紙筆話寫(October 26), Japanese Diplomatic Documents, Vol. 23, p. 184.

⁵⁸ 李鴻章駁金明圭呈片(December 1, 1889), Relevant Historical Materials (關係史料), Vol. 5, pp. 2700-2701; 在天津理事官金明圭韓廷ニ向ケ貴國方發電ノ真相ニ關シ報告ノ件, 附屬書: 別紙筆話寫(October 26), Japanese Diplomatic Documents, Vol. 23, p. 185.

merchants was entirely the responsibility of the Joseon government and that the Joseon government could not expect Chinese merchants to relocate one-sidedly, when the number of Japanese merchants in Hanseong became as large as that of the Chinese merchants.

To Kim Myōnggyu, who undauntedly continued to make his point, Li Hongzhang said,

All foreigners know that the current commotion was incited by your government. How could you dare to let this happen? This discussion will not go anywhere, as the Joseon government is not able to pay for the relocation expense, even if we agree to the relocation. How are you going to prepare the relocation expense of 200,000 won? It will be reasonable to start discussion of the relocation after you have secured the expense and obtained the definite answer concerning the relocation from the Japanese Minister in Joseon.⁵⁹

The issue of relocation of Chinese merchants' shops out of Hanseong, which emerged as the most serious pending issue following the enactment of the Rules in the bilateral relations between Joseon and Qing, was left as it was until the commencement of the second Sino-Japanese War. The conflict between Yuan Shikai, Li Hongzhang, and the Joseon government combined with the dissatisfaction felt by Korean merchants with the encroachment of foreign business rights resulted in strong anti-Qing sentiment among Koreans that was mainly expressed in the form of arson perpetrated against Chinese shops and the murder of Chinese merchants.

⁵⁹ 李鴻章駁金明圭呈片(December 1, 1889), Relevant Historical Materials (關係史料), Vol. 5, p. 2701; 在天津理事官金明圭韓廷二向ヶ貴國方發電ノ真相ニ關シ報告ノ件, 附屬書: 別紙筆話寫 (October 26), Japanese Diplomatic Documents, Vol. 23, p. 187.

IV. Cases of serial arson

Cheongan-1, which is a collection of documents exchanged between the Joseon government and the officials of Qing in Joseon in the period up to the Second Sino-Japanese War, frequently mentions cases of arson perpetrated against Chinese merchants' shops. As an example, a fire occurred in four shops, including Samhwahŭngho in early October 1888, another one that occurred in a store named Tonghŭngho in May 1889, and another one that occurred in Tŏkhŭngho in May 1890. Such cases of fires involving Chinese merchants' shops were not "frequent," but the types and timing of the fires are noteworthy as follows:

First, the one involving a store named Samhwahŭngho and three others:

A fire occurred in Samhwahŭngho located in the northern section of Nammundaega at or about 1:00 a.m. on October 6, 1888. The fire was started on the outside of the building. Three store employees lost their lives. The entire inventory of goods kept was damaged. The amount of the damage was estimated at 1,000 ryang. Yubalho in the southern section of the same Nammundaega and Chŭngsunho and Tonghwahŭngho near Namdaemun also became victims of fires that occurred at or about 1:00 a.m. The distance between Yubalho and the other two was about 1 *li* (=400 meters). These fires also occurred on the outside of the buildings.⁶⁰

Second, the one involving Tonghŭngho:

⁶⁰ *Samhwahŭngho Tŭng Sagaŭi Hwajaewa Panghwabŏm P'ohoek Yoch'ŏng* (October 8, 1888), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 387-388.

A fire occurred in the sundry store located in the northern section of Sömullo at or about 2:00 a.m. on May 2, 1889. No casualty was reported, but the entire inventory of goods was damaged. The fire also occurred on the outside of the building.⁶¹

Third, the one involving Tökhüngho:

Zheng Yizhi from Guangdong, the owner of the store named Tökhüngho in the southern section of Chongnu Sögaro went out at 8:00 p.m. on May 5, 1889 and returned at or around 10:00 p.m. The store door remained open and a fire was already started. Zheng Yao, a store employee, lay dying on the floor, with pierced wounds on his body. Cash amounting to 1,100 won and the credit book were gone (Total credit stood at 1,400 won). Goods damaged amounted to 6,000 won.⁶²

It is noteworthy that the three cases all appear to have been arson. The third one seems to have been an arson intended to cover up robbery. The disappearance of a credit book (which had nothing to do directly with money and goods) leaves a possibility that a person (or persons) who had some business (particularly debt) relations with the store might have been involved.

Chen Tongshu (辦理龍山通商事務), who reported the first case to Yuan Shikai, said that Chinese merchants were frightened, as the four fires that occurred almost at the same time were all started on the outside of the buildings and targeted Chinese shops.⁶³ It was suspected that the cases were perpetrated by a group of people in consideration of the

⁶¹ *Tonghüngho Hwajaee Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 6, 1889), Ch'öng'an-1, pp. 452-453.

⁶² *Tökhüngho Punsal Köpcha Chökpöümü Shinsogömnæ Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 9, 1890), Ch'öng'an-1, pp. 549-550.

⁶³ *Samhwahüngho Tüng Sagaüi Hwajaewa Panghwaböm P'ohoek Yoch'öng* (October 8, 1888), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 387, Ch'öng'an-1, p. 387.

distance between the shops and the commencement of fire on the outside of the buildings.⁶⁴ The owner of Samhwahŭng Wang Jiachun said that, based on his three years in Joseon, the night curfew was imposed in Hanseong with the ringing of the bell and streets were guarded by uniformed soldiers and that the important areas, such as Nammun, would have been guarded by a larger number of uniformed soldiers than other areas. Arson by someone in such an area indicated some kind of evil plot.⁶⁵

Second concerning the case involving Tonghŭngho, the store owner Wang Xianyuan said, “I make a point of handling fire and candles with care. This fire, which started on the outside of the building, is suspected to have some evil intention,” showing a similar response to the one made by the owner of the store Samhwahŭngho.⁶⁶ Such suspicions of Chinese merchants were fueled by a rumor spreading throughout Hanseong. Chinese merchants in Hanseong pointed to the rumor that groups of Koreans are setting fire to foreign shops and murdering the owners saying that Chinese merchants are frightened to death, although the rumor was groundless. They also blamed the inefficient measures taken by night guards to keep public peace.⁶⁷

Seeing that the Joseon side failed to arrest arsonists for a considerable period of time, Yuan Shikai urged the Joseon government to take prompt action and reinforce night guard activities.⁶⁸ In addition,

⁶⁴ Foreign Ministry official Jeong Hunsu, who investigated the case along with Chen Tongshu also shared the suspicion. (*Samhwahŭngho Tŭng Sagaŭi Hwajaewa Panghwabŏm P’ohoek Yoch’ŏng* (October 8, 1888), Ch’ŏng’an-1, p. 387, Ch’ŏng’an-1, p. 387.

⁶⁵ *Samhwahŭngho Panghwabŏm Ch’ep’o Chaech’okkwa Ijaemin Kuhyure Kwanhan Chohoe*, (October 23, 1888), Ch’ŏng’an-1, p. 390.

⁶⁶ *Tonghŭngho Hwajaee Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 6, 1889), pp. 452-453. Yuan Shikai also suspected arson based on the fact that only Chinese stores were the targets in several cases and the fires were started on the outside of the building. (*Tonghŭngho Panghwa Chŏkpŏm Shinsok P’och’age Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 12, 1889), Ch’ŏng’an-1, pp. 454-455.

⁶⁷ *Ch’ŏngsangdŭng P’ihwasaii Ōmmil Sunsae Kwanhan Hoedap* (May 17, 1889), Ch’ŏng’an-1, p. 459.

a reward was offered for those reporting suspects,⁶⁹ negotiations started with the Joseon government for the compensation of the losses incurred by Chinese merchants,⁷⁰ and the increasing of self-protective measures that included having Chinese merchants reside in a designated district. Yuan Shikai stressed the need to take a self-protective measure, as not a single suspect had been arrested after one year. He asked for the positive cooperation of the Joseon government and informed it of the plan to hire five or six night guards for Chinese merchants in Tongmun and Nammun, effective May 20.⁷¹

Judging that Chinese merchants could become easy targets of arson because they lived far apart from one another, Yuan Shikai made all Chinese merchants to move to areas within Nammun and Tongmun to

⁶⁸ *Samhwahŭngho Panghwabŏm Ch'ep'o Chaech'okkwa Ijaemin Kuhyure Kwanhan Chohoe*, (October 23, 1888), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 389-390; *Samhwahŭngho Panghwabŏm Shinsok Nap'o Yoch'ŏng* (December 5, 1899), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 404-405; *Samhwahŭngho Panghwabŏm Shinsok Nap'o Chaech'ok* (December 15, 1888), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 422; *Samhwahŭngho Tŭngch'ŏ Chŏkpŏmŭi Shinsok P'och'age Kwanhan Chaeyoch'ŏng* (April 29, 1889), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 451-452; *Tonghŭngho Panghwa Chŏkpŏm Shinsok P'och'age Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 12, 1889), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 454-455; *Samhwahŭng, Tŏkhŭng, Yangho, Jeongsang Punsal Chŏkpŏmŭi Shinsok P'och'age Kwanhan Chohoe* (June 4, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 565; *Tŏkhŭngho Punsal Kŏpcha Chŏkpŏmŭi Chong'ŏm P'och'age Kwanhan Chohoe* (June 12, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 567-568; *Tŏkhŭngho Punsal Kŏpcha Chŏkpŏmŭi Nŭkhan P'och'age Kwanhan Hoedap* (June 14, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 569-570.

⁶⁹ *Tŏkhŭngho Punsal Kŏpcha Chŏkpŏmŭi Hyŏnsang Ŏmsae Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 10, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 552; *Tŏkhŭngho Punsal Chŏkpŏmŭi Sokp'orŭl Wihan Hyŏnsanggŭm Chŭng'aek kwa Kakchi Kunmin Hyoyue Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 16, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 555-556.

⁷⁰ *Yubalho Panghwabŏm Ch'ep'owa Kuhyul Yoch'ŏng* (October 30, 1888), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 391-392; *Tonghŭngho Panghwa Chŏkpŏmŭi Sanajingbyŏn Mit Shoshil Hwamulŭi Ch'usange Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 20, 1889), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 459-460; *Wanggach'un Soyŏng Samhwahŭng Panghwabŏme Taehan Annyulgwa Hwaŭn Ch'usange Kwanhan Chohoe* (September 4, 1889), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 484-485; *Wanggachun Soyŏng Samhwahŭng Panghwabŏmŭi Shinsok Chingguwa Hwaŭnŭi Ch'ubae Yoch'ŏng* (September 18, 1889), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 486-487.

⁷¹ *Chaehan Ch'ŏngsangdŭrŭi Sunch'arwŏn Koyonge Ŭihan Chawi Pangjŏgeŭi Hyŏpcho Yomange Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 14, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 553-554; *Chaehan Ch'ŏngsangdŭrŭi Sunch'arwŏn Koyonge Ŭihan Chawi Pangjŏgeŭi Hyŏpchoe Kwanhan Hoedap* (May 19, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 557; *Tongsanggŏne Kwanhan Kongmun Chobok Yomang* (May 20, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 557-558.

make it easy to cooperate with each other in times of need in May 1890.⁷² Yuan Shikai tried to enhance the level of self protection for the scattered residences of the Chinese merchants' by having them form a cluster. This initiative was based on his judgment that the cases involving arson and murder were partly due to the inability of the Joseon government to maintain public security.⁷³

The examples of arson perpetrated against Chinese merchants in Hanseong in 1880 (once) and 1890 (twice) were not a sufficient number of cases for efficient analysis. However, as long as the records kept by Ch'öng'an were concerned, the cases of arson that occurred following 1887, in which the conflict between Chinese merchants and Korean merchants was deepening after the number of Chinese merchants gradually increased. According to a previous study, the number of Chinese merchants in Hanseong stood at 356 (including those staying temporarily) in 1884, at 111 in 1885, at 376 in 1888, at 600 in 1889, at 751 in 1891, and at 1,254 in 1893.⁷⁴ Although the reliability of the

⁷² However, seeing that asking prices for houses were high, he asked for cooperation in setting fair prices through joint survey of prices between the two countries. (*Nammunnae Tüngch'öüi Minogül Ch'öngsangü Kumaehal Kyöng'üüi Kakyök P'yöng'yune Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 16, 1890), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 556; *Nammunnae Tüngch'öüi Minogül Ch'öngsangü Kumaehal Kyöng'üüi Kakyök P'yöng'yune Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 23, 1890), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 558).

⁷³ However, it seemed that it was not so easy to obtain the cooperation of the Joseon government. The Joseon government said that it would do its best to help Chinese merchants take self-protective measures and night patrol steps, in addition to striving to pin down criminals [(Tonghüngho Hwajae) *Tongsanggöne Kwanhan Hoedap* (May 12, 1889), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 455; (*Ch'öngsangdüng P'ihwasäüi Ömmil Sunsaek Kwanhan Hoedap*) (May 17, 1889), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 459; *Chaeon Ch'öngsangdürüi Sunch'arwön Koyonge Üihan Chawi Pangjögeüi Hyöpchoe Kwanhan Hoedap* (May 14, 1890), Ch'öng'an-1, pp. 557], Yuan Shikai expressed discontent, saying, "Despite efforts on our side, your side appears to have treated the arson cases as just ordinary ones and failed to make prompt efforts." He added that he would withdraw what he had said concerning fair house prices in Dongmun and Namnun and self-protective measures taken for Chinese merchants, if the Joseon authorities arrested the criminals within 10 days, and provided the guarantee that such unhappy cases would not be repeated again. (*Chaeon Ch'öngsangü Chawi Pangjöek Tüngsäüi Pihyöpchoe Taehan Hang'üi Ch'alham* (May 27, 1890), Ch'öng'an-1, p. 562).

⁷⁴ Lim Myöngdök, Yuan Shikai in Joseon, p. 199.

statistics is dubious, these figures show a sharp increase in the number of Chinese merchants from 1888. With the addition of Japanese merchants, it appears that the business activities of Korean merchants had shrunk.⁷⁵

For fear of aggravation of the situation, the Joseon government asked for the relocation of Chinese merchants' shops out of Hanseong to Yongsan on many occasions, including those in 1886 and 1889. However, it was not accepted due to the mentioned reasons and the situation led to the conflict between Chinese merchants and Korean merchants. Did Korean merchants make attacks on Chinese in Hanseong so that the latter might consider voluntary relocation when the possibility of finding a solution through the negotiation between the Joseon government and Yuan Shikai disappeared? As noted, Korean merchants, particularly those of Yugŭijŏn Market had considerable bargaining power toward the Joseon government.⁷⁶ There is a possibility that the systematic

⁷⁵ Yuan Shikai once estimated the number of Chinese merchants in Hanseong in connection with the relocation plan. In 1886, when the number stood at less than 100, the likelihood of the relocation was very high. However, the plan did not materialize due to the inability of the Joseon government to pay for the relocation expense for both Chinese and Japanese merchants. In 1891, the number exceeded 600 (in 80 houses) with the aggregate asset of more than 2 million-ryang (f兩). The relocation to Yongsan was recognized as conspicuous loss to Chinese merchants. Yuan Shikai boasted that the number of Chinese merchants in Hanseong increased sharply as a result of the effective emigration policy of the Chinese government, compared to that of merchants from Western countries, whose number failed to show a noticeable increase. The sharp increase in the number of Chinese merchants could be regarded as a threat to the right of existence for Korean merchants. (總署收北洋大臣李鴻章文: 袁世凱稟報朝鮮開市定形 (February 17, 1891), Relevant Historical Materials, Vol. 5, pp. 2734-2736).

⁷⁶ Yugŭijŏn merchants made considerable contribution to the King of Joseon. However, they could not earn as much money as before after the opening up of Hanseong to foreign merchants. If 당소익's analysis made sense (i.e. he thought that the Joseon government continued to ask for the relocation to help Yugŭijŏn merchant enjoy more commercial interest, which would increase their contribution to the government), (總署收北洋大臣李鴻章文: 早(淸摺) (January - February 1890), Relevant Historical Materials, Vol. 5, pp. 2737-2738), then the estimation is that the Joseon government could not afford to ignore the shrinkage of Korean merchants' commercial interest. The Korean merchants' closer of the market in early 1891 was also likely to stem from the symbiotic relations between the Joseon government and Yugŭijŏn merchants. According to the analysis made by the Japanese Legation in Korea, it was Yugŭijŏn merchants that suffered from the most loss following the opening up of Hanseong to foreign merchants and they pressurized the Joseon government for the relocation, threatening that they could not bear

serial arsons were carried out with the acquiescence of the authorities.

It is noteworthy how the Joseon government responded to the suspected arsons. Judging from the attitude of Yuan Shikai, the Joseon government must have been inactive in efforts to arrest arsonists or prevent the repetition of similar cases, with the exception in payment of compensation to victims.⁷⁷ Was that not a situation caused by the inability of the Joseon government to coordinate the conflict felt by Korean and Chinese merchants (and Yuan Shikai)?

V. Conclusion

The Rules exerted an impact (direct or indirect) on the foreign policy of the Joseon government right before the second Sino-Japanese War. The Rules were supposed to apply exclusively to the bilateral relations between Joseon and Qing. However, Western powers asked for the insertion of the clause concerning the most favored nation status in the respective treaty signed with Joseon. Concerning the opening up of Hanseong to Qing as stipulated in the Rules, they asked for the “equal opportunity” so that they could also enjoy such a status. Joseon had to open up the capital to Western powers and Japan as well as to Qing. A casual examination raises the question of a mistake or that there was a

the expense required for the funeral ceremony of Queen Dowager Cho, whose condition was worsening in early 1891 (京城城内ノ韓商政府ニ日清兩國商民ノ撤棧ヲ迫リ督辦ヨリ追テ沙汰スベク面諭中ナル旨報告ノ件(January 30, the 23rd year of the Meiji Period), p. 160). 당소의 also makes a similar analysis. (總署收北洋大臣李鴻章文: 附(清摺)(January - February 1890), Relevant Historical Materials, Vol. 5, p. 2738).

⁷⁷ *Samhwahŭngho Sosa Saminŭi Hyurŭm Kŭbyŏe Taehan Saŭi* (December 2, 1888), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 397. However, some compensation was made only for the case concerning Samhwahŭngho. In the cases concerning Tonghŭngho and Tŏkhŭngho, little compensation was made despite Yuan Shikai's repeated requests. (*Tonghŭngho Panghwa Chŏkpŏmŭi Sanajingbyŏn Mit Soshil Hwamurŭi Ch'usange Kwanhan Chohoe* (May 20, 1889), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 459-460; *Wanggach'un Soyŏng Samhwahŭng Panghwabŏme Taehan Annyulgwa Hwaŭn Ch'usange Kwanhan Chohoe* (September 4, 1889), Ch'ŏng'an-1, pp. 484-485; *Ch'ŏngguk Sang'in Samhwahŭngho Tŭng'ŭi P'ihae Posang Ch'okkuŭi Kŏn* (January 12, 1890), Ch'ŏng'an-1, p. 651-652).

diplomatic error committed by the Joseon government, as it failed to predict possible negative impacts of the opening up of Hanseong. However, it was inevitable that the Joseon government took such a course of action, as it needed to establish a balance of power by the opening up and reducing various expenses occurring in bilateral trades with Qing. This was to be accomplished by taking innovative measures, such as the innovation of markets opened in the northern provinces of Joseon, the abolition of the practice of having merchants bear necessary expenses, having an envoy stay in Beijing, and securing financial resources through foreign trade (including trades in Beijing and establishment of customs offices).

The Joseon government was not in a position to choose from many alternatives in the selection of diplomatic partners that could help it push ahead with measures of opening up. The country took the first step of opening up through the Treaty of Kanghwa in 1876, but in the period up to 1882, the modernistic reforms pushed it ahead with the cooperation of Japan (such as the opening of the Port of Busan and the creation of Pyölgigun [Special Skills Force]) were frustrated in the face of deeply-rooted anti-Japan sentiment among Koreans. Korean troops dissatisfied with the Japanese-style military system staged a rebellion in 1882. The rebellion was partly caused by the discrimination of old-style troops against Pyölgigun. Ŏ Yunjung had to hide the fact that he has been to Japan to examine the extent of the modernization process going on in Japan. Such a state of things finally made Joseon give up the process of modernistic reforms through the cooperation with Japan (or the equidistant diplomacy with both China and Japan).

Under the circumstances in which China and Japan were the only countries ready to cooperate with Joseon, the “Japan card” meant an overriding political burden for both King Gojong and the Joseon government. The only alternative left was cooperation with Qing. The Joseon government could not relativitize the relations with Qing by exercising diversified diplomatic strategies and had to accept the

interference from Qing, including the stipulation of the “protectorate status.” Particularly in the period following 1884, Qing started to take a policy of blatant interference toward Joseon, with Yuan Shikai acting as the supervisor of Joseon in both domestic and foreign affairs. The Joseon government did not afford to take the “learn by example” (取輕論的) approach, which was an important way of thinking contained in the foreign policies of China in modern times. Accordingly, the relative self-reliance that the Joseon government could have had in the relations with Qing between the late 1870s and 1881 disappeared with the signing of the Rules.