

Japan's Response to Korea's Dispatch of Special Envoy to The Second Hague Peace Conference*

Sungmin Han

Asiatic Research Institute, Korea University

Introduction

The Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), emanating from a confrontation between Russia and Japan over Korea, led to various changes in world affairs. As a result of this war, Japan's 'preeminent interest' in Korea was confirmed by the Great Powers. It also allowed Japan to become a member of the Eight Great Powers and the dominant power in Northeast Asia. Furthermore, the decline of Russia and the rise of Japan in Northeast Asia triggered a rebalancing of power in international relations.

France, which was allied with Russia, and Britain, which was against it, signed the Entente Cordiale in April 1904 to prevent the Russo-Japanese War from escalating into a full-scale war between the allies. Germany's attempts to expand into the Middle East with its '3B Policy'—a railroad link between Berlin, Byzantium, and Baghdad—also provoked Britain and Russia, the two major powers in these regions. Particularly, the German attempt meant the breakdown of Russo-German relations on the ground that Russia was in the middle of faltering from the defeat of the Russo-Japanese War and domestic revolutions; Russia, then, reoriented its foreign

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policy from its previous focus on East Asia back to Europe.

This new development brought out the formation of the Triple Entente system of Britain, France, and Russia with the common goal of keeping Germany in check in Europe and ran in counter to the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy. Extending the confrontation between the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance to the rest of the world, the countries of the Triple Entente entered into agreements with Japan, a newly emerging power in East Asia, to secure their interests in the region, including the Second Anglo-Japanese Alliance.

On a global level, this Triple Entente system was finalized during the Second Hague Peace Conference in 1907; in that year, the Franco-Japanese Treaty was signed in June, the First Russia-Japan Secret Agreements in July, and finally, the Anglo-Russian Convention in August. In other words, the Second Peace Conference was ostensibly an international conference for the peaceful resolution of international conflicts, but in reality, it was aimed at reorganizing the contemporary power relations in world politics that engendered the 1907 system under which Japan became the unbeatable hegemon in East Asia. This system would be reset once again in Europe after World War I but in East Asia it functioned as the utmost order until Japan's 'the Mukden Incident' in 1931.

Studies of the Second Hague Peace Conference and the 1907 system in Korea have focused on the significance of the dispatch of envoys to The Hague and their activities in The Hague. With the enforced signing of the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905, Korea's diplomatic powers were ceded to Japan, and the newly established Resident-General took over Korea's diplomacy through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Two years later, Emperor Kojong (r. 1897-1907) sent Lee Sangsöl (1871-1917), Lee Chun (1859-1907), Lee Wijong (1884-?), and the American H. B. Hulbert (1863-1949) as special envoys to the conference, which was held in The Hague, Netherlands from June 15th to October 18th of 1907, with representatives from 45 countries. This was Kojong's last effort as emperor to maintain Korea's independence.

The issue of Korea's participation in The Hague Peace Conference was a crucial event that could have dealt a major blow to Japan's push

for the annexation of Korea. Korea's formal participation in the conference would not only invalidate the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905, which stripped Korea of its diplomatic rights, but would also serve as an opportunity for Korea to be recognized as an independent country in the international community. The Japanese government was already aware of this move by the Korean government. In response, the Japanese government sought to align its interests with the western powers to build a systematic way of preventing the Korean envoys from participating in the conference. However, it did not directly interfere with the dispatch of Korean envoys and their public activities in The Hague. This step taken by Japan had significant political implications for Japan's Korean policy.

It has been generally known that Korea secretly dispatched three envoys to The Hague and that even though their participation in the conference was frustrated by Japan's interference, the envoys did not give up their activities and continued to appeal to the international community about the illegality of the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905. The overlap between the patriotic image of the secret envoys and Lee Chun's tragic death in The Hague had evoked compassionate sentiments towards Korea since then. The heroism of the envoys and their passionate activities were emphasized in the dichotomy of Japanese oppression and Korean resistance in scholarship.¹ This approach, I believe, is significantly limited in terms of characterizing the activities of the Korean delegation that occurred amidst the arrangement of international relations during the peri-

¹ Yu Ja-hu, *Biography of Mr. Lee Joon, Tongbang Munhwasa*, 1947; Shin Ji-hyun, "Appealing to the World: Emperor Gojong's Secret Envoys," in *Modern Korean History* 3, Shin'gu Munhwasa, 1969; Yoon Byeong-seok, *Biography of Lee Sang-seol*, Ilchogak, 1984; Kim Ki-seok, "Emperor Gwangmu's Diplomacy to Defend Sovereignty, 1905-1907: Focusing on the Declaration of Nullity of the Eulsa Treaty," in Lee Tae-jin, ed., *Japan's Occupation of the Korean Empire*, Kkach'i, 1995; Park Hee-ho, 1999, "Dispatch of Special Envoys to the Hague Peace Conference," *Korean History* 43; Yoon Byeong-ui, 2007, "The Family and Activities of Lee Beom-jin, Ki-jong, and Wi-jong," in *The Life and Anti-Japanese Independence Movement of Lee Beom-jin, the First Resident Minister to Russia*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2003; Lee Myung-hwa, "The Influence of the Hague Envoys on Overseas Independence Movements," *Han'guk tongnip'undongsa yon'gu*. 29; Seo Young-hee, 2008, "Emperor Gojong's Diplomatic Strategy and the Dispatch of Envoys to the Second Hague Peace Conference," in Lee Tae-jin et al. eds., *Meeting the Hague Envoys a Hundred Years Later*, T'aehaksa.

od. As the narrative of the heroism of the envoys were emphasized, the response of the Japanese government to this Korean strategy was simplistically left out and portrayed as the dark side of a valorous challenge.

In 2007, around the centennial of the dispatch of the delegation to The Hague, Korean scholarship made various efforts to overcome the limitations of conventional understanding and placed the event under the complex context of international relations of the time.² In the process, they richly explored the dynamics of power relations that prevented Korea from participating in the conference, the policies of the host country Russia, and Japan's response to the diplomatic crisis. However, there is relatively less research on the response of Japan, which had a direct stake in the envoys' activities.

Therefore, this article will examine Japan's response to the Korean delegation in three parts: first, Japan's proactive detection of Kojong's dispatch of the envoys at The Hague; second, the activities of the Korean envoys at The Hague and the response of the Japanese plenipotentiaries; and third, Japan's reinforcement of control over Korea by way of using that case. For this purpose, this study will use Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for The Hague International Peace Conferences (海牙萬國平和會議日本外交文書), Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy (日本外交文書), which contains diplomatic documents of Japan and related countries related to the Second Hague Peace Conference, and *Osaka Daily News* (大阪毎日新聞), which was the only Japanese media organization at the time to send a correspondent to report on the activities of the Korean envoys. Through this study, I contend, Japan's response to the Korean

² Three international symposia were organized to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the dispatch of The Hague envoys in 2007. The Korean Independence Movement Research Center, the Independence Hall of Korea held the 'International Symposium on the 100th Anniversary of the Korean Delegation to The Hague: The Historical Significance of the Peace Conference and the 100th Anniversary of the Korean Delegation to The Hague.' And, the Centennial Commemoration of Patriotic Martyr Lee Chun Project Committee hosted the 'The Centennial Commemoration of Patriotic Martyr Lee Chun Conference: Lee Chun and the Second Peace Conference.' Last, the Research Institute of Korean Studies, Korea University organized the 'International Conference on the 50th Anniversary of the Research Institute of Korean Studies: The 1907 Hague Peace Conference, the Korean Empire, and the Great Powers.'

delegation and Japan's policy towards Korea, aimed at "annexing Korea," will be more clearly comprehended.

Japan's Proactive Detection of the Korean Delegation's Dispatch to The Hague

The Second Hague Peace Conference was initiated by U.S. President T. Roosevelt in 1904 during the Russo-Japanese War. However, at the request of Russia and with the concession of the United States, Russia hosted the second conference following the first conference in 1898. In this process, consultation between Russia and the United States was of crucial importance since the United States was the original initiator of the second conference.

In April 1906, Russia sent the U.S. State Department a proposal for a second peace conference, in which the main goal was geared towards finding a peaceful solution to international conflicts, and listed 47 countries, including Korea, as invitees.³ At the time, the Russian plan had already been shared with Korea. When Kojong sent a French school teacher, E. Martel (1874-1949) to the Russian ambassador in China at the end of October 1905, Martel was informed that Russia, recognizing the inviolability of the sovereignty of the Empire of Korea, would invite Korean representatives to the conference at The Hague and help raise the voice of Korean independence at the international conference. Additionally, the invitation letter in a form of diplomatic document was already delivered to the Korean Ambassador to Russia on October 3rd and the Russian government informed the Emperor that it still recognizes Lee Pömjin (1852-1911) as a legitimate diplomat of Korea.⁴ This cordial relation between Korea and Russia suggests that the keynote of Russia's East Asian policy—expanding its influence in Asia while keeping Japan in check—

³ Yun Byeong-seok, "The Second Hague Peace Conference and the Historical Significance of the Korean Special Envoy," *Han 'gukdongnip 'undongsa yŏn 'gu* 29 (2007): 7-8.

⁴ Seo Young-hee, "Emperor Gojong's Diplomatic Strategy and the Dispatch of Envoys to the Second Hague Peace Conference," 69.

had not changed since the Russo-Japanese War and the Korean question assumed the central stage.

The Russian policy, however, changed when A. Izvolsky (1856-1919) took over as Russia's new foreign minister who supported the shift of the focal point of Russian foreign policy back to Europe and sought to improve relations with Japan in East Asia. The issue of Letter of Credence revolving the Consul-General in Korea, G. D. Planson (1824-1919), from early 1906 was resolved and the settlement of the issue became a symbolic event in the shift of Russia's policy toward Japan. Right after the Russo-Japanese War, Russia recognized that Korea lost its diplomatic rights under the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905 and withdrew the Russian Embassy in Korea. Still, after sending Planson to Korea as a consulate general in charge of protecting Russian people in Korea, the Russians would regard the Emperor of Korea as the recipient of Planson's Letter of Credence on the ground that Korea remained a sovereign nation without diplomatic power of its own. In response, accusing Russia of violating the Treaty of Portsmouth, denying the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905, and ultimately refusing its loss of Korea's diplomatic rights, Japan strongly demanded that the recipient of the credence be changed to the Emperor of Japan who subrogates Korea's diplomacy. The two sides confronted with each other over the issue for some time. However, after the appointment of Izvolsky as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Russia changed the recipient of the document to the Emperor of Japan at Japan's insistence, resent it to Japan, and ended the diplomatic tension between the two countries.⁵

Coincidentally, Japan was first alerted to Korea's plan to participate in the peace conference by Russia. After the issue of Planson's credential was being finalized, in June 1906, Russia, through G. Bakhemeteff (1847-1928), the Russian legation in Japan, inquired of the Japanese gov-

⁵ Choi Deok-gyu, 2006, "Izvolsky's 'Diplomatic Revolution' and Russia's East Asia Policy (1905-1910): Focusing on the Russo-Japanese Agreements," in *Tongbua yöksanonch'ong* 9; Kim Jong-heon, 2011, "A Study on Planson's Arrival at His Post as the Consul-General in Seoul and Matter of Granting Exequatur," in *Sach'ong* 72.

ernment whether Korea would participate in the Second Peace Conference. Japan replied that Korea would not attend and demanded a guarantee from Russia—the host country of the conference—that Korea would be excluded. On October 9, Bakhemeteff responded that Korea would not be invited.⁶ However, this meant that Korea would not be invited, not that Korea would not be allowed to participate, so the Japanese government decided not to rely on the Russian government's assurances that Korea would be absent in the conference.

In fact, on October 24th, Kusakabe Sankurou (1870-?), the Chargé d'affaires ad interim at the Japanese Embassy to Italy reported that Korea was still listed as an invitee on the list of countries that Russia sent to the Italian government for the peace conference but was classified as a country that had not responded to the invitation. In November, Japan's Ambassador to the United States, Aoki Shuzo (1844-1914), forwarded a similar report.⁷ Based on these reports, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hayashi Tadasu (1850-1913) once again called on Russia to exclude Korea from the conference.⁸ However, the Japanese government was unable to receive any clear answer from Russia.

In response to the ambiguous Russian attitude, Ito Hirobumi and

⁶ Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ed., 1955, *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, Japan International Association, (hereafter referred to as *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2), #62 "Response to the Russian Minister in Japan Regarding Korea's Non-participation in the Second International Peace Conference," #66 "Response Notification Regarding the Method of Accession to the Treaty on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes," #67 "Verification of Japan's Response Concerning the Second International Peace Conference," 112-116.

⁷ *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #74 "The Russian Government's Proposal Regarding the Second International Peace Conference and the Japanese Government's Response (Part 2)," #82 "Documents Exchanged Between the U.S. and Russian Governments Regarding the Convening of the Second International Peace Conference," 121, 129-130.

⁸ *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #80 "Response to the Russian Government's Proposal Regarding the Agenda for the Second International Peace Conference and the Method of Accession to the Treaty on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes," 126-127.

the Japanese government were concerned that Russia would use the issue of Korean participation in the conference as a diplomatic leverage to conclude a Russo-Japanese treaty even after the Russo-Japanese War. With the rise of German expansion in West Asia, centered on the '3B Policy,' Russia shifted the focus of its foreign policy back to Europe. Russia approached the Anglo-French Entente Cordiale, designed to isolate Germany internationally, and established the Triple Entente while Russia and France were engaged in a policy of appeasement toward Japan in order to eliminate the threat from Japan in Asia located in the rear part of the Great Containment of Germany. In actuality, France had been engaged in the Franco-Japanese negotiation since November 1906 and Russia in the Russo-Japanese negotiations since February 1907.

Ito sought to take advantage of this situation to secure Japanese control over Korea. Through these negotiations among the Great Powers in Europe, he hoped to secure not only Korea's exclusion from the conference, but also, if possible, Russia's recognition of Japan's annexation of Korea. However, Russia, knowing Japan's objectives, did not guarantee Korea's exclusion from the conference but demanded a quid pro quo for the 'future development' of relations between Korea and Japan. Specifically, Russia demanded recognition of Russia's superior status in the Chinese borderlands outside of Mongolia and Manchuria.

As early as August 1906, however, Russia's new foreign minister, Izvolsky, had warned Planson, appointed consul general in Korea in August 1906, not to interfere in Japan's Korean policy and not to do anything that would arouse suspicion or displeasure from Japan. Izvolsky, then, instructed Aleksandr Nelidov (1838-1910), the head of the Russian delegation and chairman of the conference, not to contact a Korean envoy. Although Russia took this new step, it never provided the Japanese government with a firm guarantee that the Korean envoy would not be allowed to participate in the peace conference, which is a clear indication that it might use the matter of Korean envoy as a leverage in the new

Russian-Japanese negotiations.⁹

When negotiations with Russia reached an impasse, Ito attempted to exert pressure by finalizing a Franco-Japanese Treaty before the conference.¹⁰ As a consequence, Japan's primary focus in preparing for the conference shifted from originally pursuing peaceful resolution of international conflicts and disarmament, to preventing the Korean envoys' participation and securing the conclusion of the Franco-Japanese Treaty before the conference. In anticipation of the peace conference, the Japanese government established the Preparatory Committee for The Hague Peace Conference. This committee, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, initiated inquiries with Russia and other relevant countries regarding Korea's invitation to the conference. Additionally, they closely monitored the activities of the suspected Korean figures who were expected to serve as envoys. At that juncture, the Japanese government possessed some foreknowledge of Korea's endeavor to dispatch a special envoy. However, it lacked precise identification of the Korean government's envoy. With the passage of time, it gradually acquired a more comprehensive understanding of the unfolding situation.

On May 19, 1907, Ito dispatched a confidential telegram to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hayashi concerning the information that he gained. The contents are as follows.:

The covert scheme, orchestrated by the Korean emperor via foreign countries, has been on the move once the preceding year, and he has endeavored to reclaim its sovereignty through exclusive reliance on the

⁹ Park Jong-hyo, ed. and trans., 2002, *Summary of Korea-related Documents in the Russian State Archives, Korea Foundation for International Culture Exchange*, 767; *Diplomatic Documents of Japan*, vol. 40-1, #438 "Report on the Russian Foreign Minister's Remarks Regarding the Korean Emperor's Secret Envoys," 428.

¹⁰ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan*, vol. 40-1, #120 "Report on the Reasons for Delay in the Opponent's Response Regarding the Japan-Russia Treaty," #122 "Request for Clarification Regarding the Division Line of Japanese and Russian Spheres of Influence," #123 "Japanese Proposal Regarding the Japan-Russia Treaty and Russia's Counterproposal," #125 "Opinions Submitted Regarding Mongolia in Russia's Counterproposal to Japan's Proposal for the Japan-Russia Treaty," 120-122.

support of Russia and France... Previously, the French had declined to acquiesce during negotiations mediated by Yi Yongik (1854-1907) while the Russian consul had acceded to the request. By the time the peace conference convened, the Korean government asked both the Russian and French consuls to recommend the American, Hurlburt, funded with a substantial amount of money by the Korean government, to their respective governments. The French consul deemed it a futile stratagem and dismissed it, and this diplomatic reaction aligned with an official order by the French government. However, the Russians purportedly acquiesced to the request... It was by means of intelligence provided by the French Consul General that we could know more clearly about the Korean Emperor's financial and strategic intentions and we also received identical intelligence from other foreign sources... So it is quite unfortunate that we haven't concluded negotiations with Russia and France at this point. It would be very good if (negotiations) could be concluded before the peace conference, especially with France. Thus, it is indeed regrettable that negotiations with Russia and France remain unresolved at present. It would be highly advantageous if such negotiations could be finalized prior to the peace conference, particularly with France. Given the relatively straightforward nature of negotiations with France, I am inclined to endorse the acceptance of the last-minute offer extended by the French Foreign Minister. This issue carries significant sensitivity, yet I beseech you to disseminate it among your cabinet members and esteemed elder statesmen within the government.¹¹

As previously demonstrated, Ito possessed detailed information into the circumstances surrounding Hulbert (1863-1949)'s dispatch to the peace conference, gleaned from Belin, the French consul in Korea, and other foreign entities. Moreover, he deemed the issue significant enough to discuss with the cabinet and esteemed statesmen. In the aforemen-

¹¹ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan*, vol. 40-1, #436 "Dispatch of Korean Emperor's Secret Envoy 'Halbert' to the Hague Peace Conference," 427.

tioned telegram, Ito expressed confidence in the Russian government's willingness to accommodate Korea's request, and ardently advocated for the conclusion of a Franco-Japanese treaty prior to the peace conference. This idea stems from the understanding that a resolution between France and Japan ahead of the peace conference would bolster Japan's stance against Korea, at the conference by way of securing the collaboration of Britain and France—the two principal powers in disarmament matters.

One week later, on the 24th, a notification from Nomura Motonobu, the trade attaché stationed in Vladivostok, Russia, addressed to Tsuruhara Sadakichi (1857-1914), Secretary of State at the Japanese Resident-General of Korea, regarding the dispatch of a different Korean envoy from Hulbert, was transmitted to the Japanese Resident-General of Korea, as follows:

As a result of the meeting with Lee Chun, La Yuseok, Lee Bumyoon, and Lee Sangsöl, the Koreans referred to earlier in Vladivostok resolved to dispatch a delegation to directly petition the Russian government regarding the future of Korea. Three among them—Lee Chun, Lee Sangsöl, and the anonymous son of Cha Seokbo—departed for the Russian capital on the 21st of the current month. . . . These delegates will also capitalize on the convening of the Peace Conference in The Hague to advocate for Korean independence to the representatives of the Great Powers.¹²

Despite the detailed report provided by Nomura concerning the Korean envoys, neither the Japanese government nor the Resident-General of Korea applied any pressure on the Korean government to preempt the departure of the envoys or to impede Korea's endeavor to engage in the peace conference. However, they persisted in their endeavor to thwart Korea's dispatch of an envoy. The Japanese government and the Resi-

¹² National Institute of Korean History, ed., *Documents of the Governor-General's Office*, vol. 3, "Regarding the Cooperation of Former Korean Officials Lee Sang-jwa, Lee Joon, and Lee Beom-yun," 168.

dent-General of Korea regarded this matter with utmost significance, indicative of Japan's concerted effort to leverage this incident to bolster its dominance over Korea.

Tsuzuki Keiroku (1861-1923) and Kurachi Tetsukichi (1870-1944) were selected by the Japanese government to tackle this diplomatic issue. Tsuzuki, an esteemed bureaucrat, had been handpicked by Inoue Kaoru (1835-1915) and had garnered recognition from Ito, Inoue, and Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922)—three paramount figures in Japan's political landscape at the time. He was held in such high regard by Ito that when *Rikken Siyukai* (Association of Friends of Constitutional Government) was established, he was designated by Ito as one of the thirteen founding members. In 1905, he arrived in Korea to aid Ito in his capacity as the general secretary of the Privy Council of Japan, where he played a pivotal role in orchestrating the signing of the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905. Subsequently, he was also instrumental in crafting the framework for the Resident-General of Korea and its corresponding regional administrative offices.¹³ Kurachi had received acclaim as a distinguished bureaucrat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ever since his appointment by Tsuzuki. He has concurrently held positions as the secretary of the Resident-General of Korea and as an attaché to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since the inception of the Resident-General of Korea. In this capacity, he has served as a liaison between the two entities, even playing a pivotal role in mediating the 1905-1906 School Dropout Movement led by Korean students, which was financially backed by the Korean imperial house, in Japan. Kurachi also served as Ito's secretary whenever Ito was in Japan, and it was Kurachi who assumed responsibility for managing the aftermath of the assassination of Ahn Chunggün (1879-1910) in 1909; additionally, he was tasked with formulating the subsequent plan for Japan's "annexation" of Korea.¹⁴ In essence, Tsuzuki and Kurachi possessed ex-

¹³ Regarding Tsuchizaki, 1926, please refer to Sawada Akira, *Biography of Tsuchizaki Keiroku*, Kinko-kai.

¹⁴ Regarding Kurachi, please refer to Kurachi Tetsukichi, "The Process of Korean Consolidation," Research Division, Fourth Section, Investigation Department, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Af-

tensive knowledge of international law, exhibited a profound understanding of the core of Korea-Japan relations during that period, and enjoyed a close relationship with Ito.

In August 1906, following discussions with Prime Minister Saionji Kinmochi (1849-1940) and the President of the Privy Council of Japan Yamagata, Hayashi proposed Tsuzuki, the general secretary of the council, as Japan's plenipotentiary for the peace conference. Hayashi charged Tsuzuki with all preparatory tasks, including the selection of the plenipotentiary team, for the conference.¹⁵ Tsuzuki promptly initiated preparations and in November established the Preparatory Committee for the Second Peace Conference within the Japanese government, assuming the role of chairman. He had previously designated Kurachi as one of its members.

Subsequently, Kurachi collaborated with Tsuzuki and played a proactive role in shaping the agenda for the conference. The committee, overseen by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, convened members of the preparatory committee and managers of pertinent ministries once or twice weekly prior to the departure of the Japanese delegation. The purpose was to deliberate on pertinent matters and consolidate Japan's stance on the conference agenda.¹⁶ The Japanese government appointed the following members as plenipotentiaries to represent Japan at the Second Hague Conference in April 1907.¹⁷

fairs, 1939 (Archives of the Diplomatic Documents, #N.2.1.0.4-1); Han Seong-min, 2010, "The Plan Formulation and Activity for the Japanese Annexation of Korea by Kurachi-Tetsukich," in *Han'guk gŭnhyŏndaesa yŏn'gu* 54, 2010.

¹⁵ Letter from Lin Tong to Tsuchizaki Keiroku, August 9, 1906. This writing is included in Sawada Akira, *Biography of Tsuchizaki Keiroku*, 212.

¹⁶ *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #163 "Resolution of the Preparatory Committee of the Second International Peace Conference," 218-219. The structure of establishing a preparatory committee, centered on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to make arrangements for international conferences ahead of time has since become a standard practice of the Japanese government. Reference to Tadao Yamakawa, *My Toes*, 1962, 31, *Yamakawa Tadao Related Documents*, Reel NO.5, held at the National Diet Library in Japan, Archives Division.

¹⁷ Official Gazette of Japan, April 20, 1907, "Appointment of Delegates to the Second International

[Table 1] Japanese plenipotentiaries to the Second Hague Peace Conference

Envoy Status	Incumbency	Name	Notes
First Delegate Plenipotentiary	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary	Tsuzuki Keiroku	
Second Delegate Plenipotentiary	Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at The Hague	Sato Aimaro	Minister Plenipotentiary to the Netherland
Technical Delegate	Major General of the Army	Akiyama Yoshihuru	
	Rear Admiral of the Navy	Shimamura Hayao	
	Legal Advisor to Imperial Minister for Foreign Affairs	H. W. Denison	
Secretary of the Delegation	Councilor to Imperial Minister for Foreign Affairs	Kurachi Tetsukichi	Lead Secretary
	Councilor of Imperial War Ministry	Yoshimura Yasozo	
	Councilor of Imperial Navy Ministry	Yamakawa Tadao	
Secretary of the Delegation	Commander, Naval Attache to the Imperial Embassy	Moriyama Keisaburou	
	Major	Takatsuka Ksuyoshi	
	First Secretary of the Imperial Embassy at Paris	Tatsuke Shichita	Affiliated to the Embassy of Japan in France
	Third Secretary of the Imperial Legation at The Hague	Nagaoka Haruzaku	Affiliated with the Embassy of Japan in the Netherlands

As per the arranged scheme, Tsuzuki was appointed as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary while Kurachi was designated as the delegation's principal attendant. The initial directive outlined in their or-

Peace Conference.”; *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #172 “Submission of Imperial Commissioner Appointments for Participation in the Second International Peace Conference,” 224-226.

ders stipulated that “Korea would be prohibited from asserting its independent status at the Second Peace Conference.”¹⁸

In this way, Japan was well aware of Korea's move to send an envoy, and the first article of the Japanese delegation's instructions was to prevent Korea from participating in the Peace Conference. Nevertheless, the Japanese Resident-General of Korea and the Japanese government refrained from intervening to dissuade Emperor Kojong from sending an envoy to The Hague. There also appears to have been a pragmatic acknowledgment of the challenge posed by the Korean strategy. Despite Japan's rigorous surveillance of Emperor Kojong and the Korean government, it was virtually unfeasible for Japan to detect and intercept every dispatch of Korean envoys through diverse channels. There existed no practical means for Japan to impede the Korean diplomatic initiative, particularly if they were to dispatch a foreigner like Hulbert as their envoy. Hence, instead of preemptively obstructing the envoy's dispatch, Japan concentrated its endeavors on establishing a framework to prohibit anyone from attending the conference, irrespective of the identity of the appointed Korean envoy. Japan deliberately overlooked the actions of the Korean envoy, thereby leveraging this circumstance to bolster its authority over Korea.

Reactive Activities of the Japanese Plenipotentiaries at The Hague

The Japanese plenipotentiary embarked from Tokyo on April 27, 1907, traversing Russia and Germany *en route* to The Hague in the Netherlands, the venue of the Peace Conference, where they arrived on June 2nd. Shortly after inaugurating their offices, Tsuzuki and Kurachi embarked on week-long business trips to London and Paris. Tsuzuki provided a straightforward rationale for the journey, stating it was primarily for

¹⁸ *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #174 “Request for Discussion on the Draft Instructions for Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Second International Peace Conference, and Decision Thereon,” 226-227.

consultations regarding an upcoming meeting.¹⁹ However, upon reaching The Hague, the Japanese plenipotentiaries proceeded to travel to the third countries—Great Britain and France— after not having received confirmation from either the chair country, Russia, or the host country, the Netherlands, regarding the fundamental mandate that Korea would be barred from participating in the conference. This hasty itinerary suggests a profound and multifaceted purpose behind the trip.

In this context, the actions of Kurachi and Tsuzuki prior to the departure of the Japanese Plenipotentiary warrant attention. Kurachi undertook a sudden trip to Korea in late March and early April. Given the transportation conditions of that era, the Japanese Plenipotentiaries had to begin their journey from Japan no later than April to ensure arrival in The Hague before June 15th, the commencement date of the Peace Conference. The gravity of the circumstances can be seen by an immediate telegram from the Japanese Foreign Ministry on April 2nd to Kurachi, who remained in Korea on a business excursion, urging his prompt return home. This urgency stemmed from the imminent Peace Conference scheduled for June 15th, even though his departure date had not yet been finalized.²⁰ This marked the period during which Japan's stance on the Peace Conference was being solidified by the Preparatory Committee for the Peace Conference while the official designation and departure date of the Japanese Plenipotentiary were being determined. It is significant that Kurachi, a member of the Preparatory Committee for the Peace Conference and the chief attendant of the Plenipotentiary, stayed in Korea at the pivotal juncture. On April 22nd, before the departure of the Japanese Plenipotentiary, Tsuzuki submitted the following request to the Foreign Minister:

¹⁹ *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #184 "Report on the Departure of the Imperial Commissioners and Their Delegation to The Hague for the Second International Peace Conference, and Their Business Arrangements Including Their Visit to London and Paris," 260-261.

²⁰ *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #161 "Response Regarding the Date of the Second International Peace Conference and the Departure Date of the Japanese Delegates to the Conference," 218.

When journeying to The Hague for the forthcoming Second Peace Conference, which will convene in the Netherlands, individuals, myself included, within the plenipotentiary mission may necessitate travels to London and Paris for consultations, alongside selected members of the expert committee and entourage accompanying the mission; moreover, should any business matters arise during the conference proceedings, individuals, including myself, may be required to travel to diverse locations intermittently; such requests may also be granted prior approval.²¹

In the aforementioned official document, Tsuzuki petitioned the Japanese government for the authority to undertake frequent travels, including discretionary trips to locations beyond his designated jurisdiction, at any juncture during the Peace Conference. Importantly, he sought exemption from the obligation of pre-reporting the purpose of such travels to the Japanese government. It is profoundly perplexing that an ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary, designated with the specific task of attending the Peace Conference, would petition the government for discretionary authority to travel beyond his designated duties, especially five days before his scheduled departure. Furthermore, considering that Tsuzuki and Kurachi promptly traveled to London and Paris upon their arrival in The Hague, with only a brief notification, it appears that the Japanese government acquiesced to this perplexing request.

During this period, Britain strongly advocated for the Triple Entente involving Britain, France, and Russia, aiming to isolate Germany in Europe while securing Japan's cooperation alongside France and Russia. Ito and heads of the Japanese government shared the objective of finalizing both the Russo-Japanese Treaty and the Franco-Japanese Treaty, envisioning a resolution to the Korean question and the issuance of Japanese government bonds in France. Particularly, Japanese Resident-General Ito was eager for a swift conclusion of the Franco-Japanese Treaty, es-

²¹ *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #175 "Request Concerning the Temporary Business Trips of the Delegation during the Participation in the Second Peace Conference," 253.

pecially given the impasse in Russo-Japanese negotiations due to Japan's insistence on 'the future development of relations between Japan and Korea' and Russia's insistence on 'Russia's superior status in Outer Mongolia.' When it comes to the Franco-Japanese agreement, its progress was hindered until April due to the unresolved issue of determining the sphere of influence over Fujian Province in Qing China.

Due to the constraints of available sources, it remains elusive to ascertain the precise purpose or details of Kurachi's visit to Korea and Tsuzuki's frequent travel requests. Nevertheless, considering the context of the Franco-Japanese and Russo-Japanese negotiations, along with Ito's urgency in concluding the Franco-Japanese Treaty, we can generally deduce the underlying motives behind the perplexing actions of Kurachi and Tsuzuki prior to their departure. It can be inferred that Kurachi traveled to Korea to receive confidential directives from Ito endeavored to expedite the resolution of the Franco-Japanese negotiations and address the handling of the Korean delegation while Tsuzuki made the aforementioned requests to facilitate the execution of these instructions. Hence, it is surmised that their journey to London and Paris aimed to swiftly finalize the Franco-Japanese Treaty and secure diplomatic support from Great Britain as Japan's ally and have France, through the conclusion of the treaty, to oppose Korea's attendance in the conference.

Shortly following their journey, the Franco-Japanese Treaty was signed on June 10th, 1907.²² Upon Tsuzuki and Kurachi's return to The Hague, the Japanese delegation engaged themselves in diplomatic endeavors to sway Russia and the Netherlands into obstructing Korea's participation in the peace conference. On the eve of the conference's commencement, confirmation was received from Russia that Korea had never been extended an invitation to the conference.²³ Despite the assurances

²² *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #88 "Report on the Conclusion of the Japan-France Agreement," 84.

²³ *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #197 "Report on the Signing of the Protocol of the 60th Article of the Treaty for the Peaceful Resolution of International Disputes," 269-270.

provided by Russia, the Japanese plenipotentiaries remained vigilant regarding any developments concerning the Korean delegation. By the opening day of the conference on June 15th, there had still been no updates.

The Korean delegation arrived in The Hague around the 25th, 10 days after the commencement of the peace conference. On the 27th, they dispatched a Notice of Appeal to the plenipotentiaries representing all participating nations except Japan and its ally Great Britain. In this communication, they sharply denounced the legality of the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905 and decried Japanese aggression, acting in the capacity of the Korean Plenipotentiary.²⁴ The Japanese plenipotentiaries were informed of the arrival of the Korean envoy in The Hague by way of intelligence provided by a correspondent, Takaishi Shingoro (1878-1967), who was the sole journalist dispatched from the entire Japanese press corps to cover the Second Peace Conference, from the *Osaka Daily News*.

Around June 28th, when the official notification from the Korean delegation was likely dispatched to the plenipotentiaries of the participating countries,²⁵ Takaishi was engaged in reporting on the activities of the British and American plenipotentiaries. During this time, he fielded a query from a correspondent from the *New York Herald* concerning the arrival of a Korean delegation. Concerned, he inquired once more about their location and identities but was unable to obtain any specifics. However, recalling a remark made by Shimamura Hayao (1858-1923), an expert of the Japanese Plenipotentiary Delegation, regarding the potential dispatch of a Korean delegation, Takaishi promptly approached Kurachi, the Lead Attendant of the Japanese Plenipotentiary, for clarification. Kurachi's response mirrored almost exactly his initial reply following the inquiry from the reporter of the *New York Herald*. He canvassed the ho-

²⁴ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #439 "Regarding the Efforts of Three Koreans Who Arrived in The Hague to Attend the Peace Conference as Representatives," 428-429.

²⁵ *Documents on Japanese Foreign Policy for the Hague International Peace Conferences*, vol. 2, #197 "Report on the Signing of the Protocol of the 60th Article of the Treaty for the Peaceful Resolution of International Disputes," 269-270.

tels in downtown of The Hague, then a small city with a population of 150,000, and located the lodging of the Korean delegation within mere 30 minutes.²⁶

The arrival and endeavors of the Korean delegation in The Hague were promptly communicated via telegram to the Japanese government and the Resident-General of Korea on July 29th by the Japanese Plenipotentiary. Subsequently, on July 3rd, this information was disseminated to the broader Japanese populace through the *Osaka Daily News*.²⁷ During that period, the primary focus of the news concerning the Korean delegation revolved around its arrival, the dispatch of the Notice of Appeal to the plenipotentiaries of the participating countries, save Great Britain, and the presence of three unidentified Korean individuals in it.²⁸

Upon being informed of the arrival of the Korean delegation at The Hague on July 2nd via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ito petitioned the ministry to ascertain the identities of the three Korean envoys, their association with Hulbert, and the connection between their activities and the intentions of the Korean emperor. Ito even endeavored to exploit this diplomatic situation as a pretext to wrestle control from Korea over matters of taxation, jurisdiction, or military authority.²⁹ Even before receiving Ito's request, the Japanese plenipotentiary in The Hague had already identified the Korean envoys and obtained knowledge of the contents of the notice, their travel itineraries to The Hague, and their then locations. This information was relayed to Japan on June 30th, and surveillance of their activities was maintained thereafter.³⁰

²⁶ *Osaka Mainichi Newspaper*, January 22, 1930, "The Incident of Prince Yi's Secret Envoy - The Important Role I Played (Part 1)".

²⁷ *Osaka Mainichi Newspaper*, July 3, 1907, "Telegram from The Hague - Korean Activities" / "Appeal of a Fallen Nation" and July 4, "Telegram from The Hague - Continued Report on Korean Activities".

²⁸ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #439 "Regarding the Efforts of Three Koreans Who Arrived in The Hague to Attend the Peace Conference as Representatives," 428-429.

²⁹ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #443 "Inquiry Regarding the Names and Qualifications of the Korean Emperor's Secret Envoys in The Hague and Measures Concerning Korea," 430-431.

³⁰ *Collection of Confidential Documents of the Japanese Government Related to the Hague Peace*

The Japanese Plenipotentiaries responded to the Korean protest through two distinct approaches. Initially, they leveraged diplomatic channels to methodically obstruct the participation of the Korean envoys in the peace conference. Additionally, they established indirect communication with the Korean envoys through Takaishi, aiming to surveil their activities and discern their intentions and future plans. Most significantly, the Japanese delegation engaged in discussions with the government of the Netherlands, the Russian delegation, and other influential delegations from major countries in order to secure their rejection of the Korean appeal. Furthermore, upon establishing contact with individuals who had been approached by the Korean envoys, Japanese diplomats commenced thorough investigations into 1) the nature of the relationship between the Korean envoys and Hulbert, 2) any potential direct involvement of the Korean emperor in this affair, and 3) if such involvement existed, whether the envoys possessed credentials from the Korean emperor. Throughout this investigative process, the Japanese plenipotentiaries refrained from direct engagement with the Korean envoys; rather, this responsibility fell to Takaishi.

From the moment he discerned the presence of the Korean envoys, Takaishi made regular visits to the De Jong Hotel, where the envoys were quartered, to confer with them and provide the Japanese plenipotentiary with updates on their activities. Additionally, Kurachi tasked Takaishi with the two objectives of 1) authenticating the letter of credence carried by the Korean envoys and, if available, obtaining photographs of them, and 2) persuading the Korean envoys to request a meeting with the Japanese plenipotentiaries. However, Takaishi's endeavors proved futile as the Korean delegation adamantly refused to comply with the latter request.³¹

Conference, "Telegram Received No. 2651," page 35 and "Telegram Received No. 2648," page 37; *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #442 "Investigation into the Actions of the Korean Emperor's Secret Envoys in The Hague," 430.

³¹ *Osaka Mainichi Newspaper*, July 6th: "Telegram from The Hague - Status of Korean Trust," July 8th: "Telegram from The Hague - Mr. Kurachi and Koreans," and January 23, 1930: "The Inci-

The Japanese plenipotentiaries were unsuccessful in substantiating the authenticity of the credentials as incriminating evidence against the Korean government, nor were they able to sway the envoys to align with Japanese interests. However, this setback did not deter the Japanese plenipotentiaries from dissociating the diplomatic activities of the Korean envoys from the Japanese agenda in the peace conference. On July 3rd, Tsuzuki conveyed to Ito and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that due to the Korean envoys' deliberate avoidance of Japanese diplomats, direct meetings with them were currently improbable. Nevertheless, he proposed to enact all conceivable preliminary measures to ensure that neither the Dutch government nor the various delegations would entertain their appeals. He reported to Ito and Ministry of Foreign Affairs that this strategy also helped mitigate any potential adverse repercussions for Japan in The Hague.³²

Takaishi's daily reports on the precise schedule and movements of the Korean envoys enabled the Japanese plenipotentiaries to anticipate their forthcoming actions, proactively respond to them, and effectively thwart the Korean envoys' endeavors to engage in the peace conference.

The Korean envoys' endeavors to unequivocally assert Korea's sovereignty and advocate for Korea's representation at the Second Peace Conference were impeded by Japanese interference in the end. As the Korean envoys shifted to an alternate strategy, geared toward publicizing the illegality of the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905 through media channels, Japanese sabotage extended to include the media outlets that began to take notice of the Korean envoys.

The primary media that exhibited considerable interest in the Korean envoys at that time was the *Courrier de la Conference*, which was published in The Hague by the pro-Russian British journalist William T. Stead (1849-1912). With Stead's assistance, the Korean envoys were undeterred by their exclusion from the peace conference. Instead, they re-

 dent of Prince Yi's Secret Envoy - The Important Role I Played (Part 2)."

³² *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #446 "Report on the Arrival in The Hague of Koreans and the Relationship with 'Halbert' and the Korean Emperor," 432.

mained active in the media, composing letters to the editor of the newspaper to raise their voice regarding the illegality of the Treaty of Versailles. Furthermore, they participated in public rallies attended by influencers and social activists from various countries. In response, the Japanese plenipotentiaries employed a combination of appeasement and pressure tactics on Stead and the press.

In particular, on July 7th, Tsuzuki corresponded with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stating that he had taken “precautionary measures to hamper his pro-Russian stance that led him to become anti-Japanese.”³³ He did not delineate the proactive measures, but their nature can be reasonably inferred. At the time, Stead was in The Hague accompanied by his son, Alfred Stead (1877-1933), who, unlike his pro-Russian father, held the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in high regard.³⁴ This time was the final stage of the First Russo-Japanese Secret Agreement. In light of these circumstances, it seems that the preliminary steps here included both persuasion from Alfred Stead and pressure from the British and Russian governments on Stead.

Following the Japanese pre-emptive measures, Stead eventually reassured Tsuzuki of his sole intention of expressing sympathy towards the Korean envoys, subsequently disclosing information about them to the Japanese plenipotentiaries. During a public assembly on the 9th, he declared, “I extend my sympathies to the Koreans, but we have to give up on the mice under the cat’s chin. Don’t make the cat angry anymore”, aiming to thwart the anti-Japanese resolution pursued by the Korean envoys.³⁵

Japan’s efforts to obstruct Korea’s involvement in the peace conference were meticulously orchestrated. The Japanese plenipotentiaries

³³ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #452 “Regarding the Actions of the Korean Emperor’s Secret Envoys in The Hague,” 434.

³⁴ *Osaka Mainichi Newspaper*, July 6, 1907, “Emperor of Korea’s Envoys and the Peace Conference”.

³⁵ *Collection of Confidential Documents of the Japanese Government Related to the Hague Peace Conference*, “Telegram Received No. 2808,” 105 and “Telegram Received No. 2814,” 108.

found themselves under immense strain, as they were inundated with inquiries from global newspaper correspondents and compelled to partake in a series of diverse gatherings hosted throughout the duration of the conference, in addition to engaging in conference negotiations. Consequently, the entourage of the Japanese plenipotentiaries became overburdened with numerous investigative tasks, resulting in the unfortunate demise of the two members.³⁶ This record provides a hint regarding the magnitude of Japanese sabotage during that period.

Nevertheless, what stands out significantly regarding the Japanese delegation's sabotage is the observation that, despite their vigorous efforts to obstruct the Korean delegation's involvement in the peace conference, they refrained from directly impeding the Korean delegation's operational endeavors. So, although the Korean diplomats were barred from accessing the peace conference, they nonetheless conducted their political affairs openly and without hindrance. The Korean delegation hoisted the national flag of Korea at the De Jong Hotel as a symbolic assertion of their status as representatives of Korea. Additionally, they engaged with numerous media outlets and notable figures to assert Korea's stance while denouncing Japan's unlawful aggression, particularly highlighting the unjustness related to the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905.³⁷

On July 7th, Tsuzuki dispatched the subsequent telegram to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in response to the endeavors of the Korean delegation.

In accordance with Article 1 of the Korea-Japan Treaty signed on November 17, 1905, I deem it reasonable to promptly summon the Koreans to this location and request an explanation for their actions. [But, even if] They would decline to either appear at the (Japanese) Legation or provide their letters of credence, I will refrain from bringing to the attention of the Dutch Government the absence of valid official

³⁶ *Biography of Tsuchizaki Keiroku*, 210.

³⁷ *Osaka Mainichi Newspaper*, "Telegram from The Hague," July 1907 article reference.

credentials on their part. Furthermore, I will not request them to cease their agitation even if such a request was feasible.³⁸

In summary, the Japanese delegation actively campaigned with the governments of numerous participating countries, including the host country, the Netherlands, and the presiding country, Russia, to hinder Korea's participation in the conference. However, as indicated in Tsuzuki's statement, Japanese diplomacy adopted a stance whereby direct engagement with the Korean delegation was avoided and direct interference with their activities in The Hague was refrained. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Hayashi, adhering to Tsuzuki's strategic approach, instructed him to shun any action beyond admonition, assuring that appropriate measures would be enacted in due course.³⁹

Consolidating Control over Korea by Japan

Japan took no measures to obstruct the arrival of the Korean delegation at The Hague, nor did it intervene directly in their proceedings there. It seems to me that the Japanese response was driven by two political motives. First, by preventing the Korean delegation from participating in the conference, itself would have been a recognized endorsement of Japan's deprivation of Korea's diplomatic rights within the international community. Japan did revoke Korea's diplomatic privileges in accordance with the Treaty of Portsmouth. However, the extent of Japan's "protection, guidance, and supervision" over Korea, as stipulated in the treaty, remained ambiguous and thus insufficient to justify the immediate deprivation of Korea's diplomatic rights. Furthermore, since the legality of the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905 had been internationally contested since its inception, Japan sought to garner international recognition of Korea as a

³⁸ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #451 "Request for Instructions Regarding the Examination of the Korean Emperor's Trust Status Among Koreans in The Hague," 433-434.

³⁹ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #457 "Instructions Regarding the Handling of the Korean Emperor's Secret Envoys in The Hague," page.

legitimate protectorate. Consequently, the issue of Korea's participation in the peace conference presented a favorable opportunity for Japan to address its concerns without necessitating special diplomatic consultations with the major world powers at that time.

The Hague Peace Conference could be described as a global assembly convened for the formulation and enforcement of international law. The primary aim driving the participation of numerous countries at The Hague was to institute legal frameworks on an international scale that would mitigate armed conflicts and foster global peace. As a result, the countries participating in these conferences are recognized as sovereign states under international law. Conversely, a country, neither invited nor able to participate, ceased to be recognized as a sovereign state and instead was regarded as a colony or its equivalent.⁴⁰ Hence, the omission of Korea from the peace conference was intended to serve as a formal and public affirmation by the Great Powers of Korea's status as a Japanese protectorate. Japan could thus exploit this diplomatic juncture to exert pressure on the Korean government and advance its efforts to solidify control over Korea.

Although the actions of the Korean delegation in The Hague laid bare Japan's direct and excessive meddling in Korea's internal and external affairs, there was no notable reaction from the Great Powers. This lack of attention indicated their tacit endorsement of Japan's policy towards Korea. Concurrently, in early July 1907, significant developments unfolded, including the Franco-Japanese Treaty signed in June as a supplement to the British-French-Russian Triple Entente. Moreover, there was optimistic anticipation of the first Russo-Japanese Secret Agreement following the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905. Consequently, Japan endeavored to take advantage of the silence of the Great Powers and expand its influence over Korea, with Resident-General Ito spearheading these efforts most assertively.

⁴⁰ Choi Jeong-soo, 2008, "The Second Hague Peace Conference and the U.S. World Peace Strategy: International Police and Weak State Question," *Han'guksa hakpo* 30: 426-427.

Upon learning of the arrival of the Korean delegation in The Hague, instead of expressing concern over potential repercussions, Ito promptly articulated his view that the dispatch of the Korean delegation presented “an opportune moment to alter the situation in Korea, enabling Japan to assert direct authority over matters such as taxation, jurisdiction, and military affairs.” Subsequently, once Japanese authorities confirmed the identities of the individuals dispatched as Korean representatives to The Hague, Ito initiated the process of solidifying the scheme aimed at consolidating Japanese dominion over Korea.

Initially, on July 6th, Ito summoned Yi Wan'yong (1858-1926), the prime minister of Korea, and issued a threat, stating, “Emperor Kojong himself bears responsibility for this incident. This action constitutes a breach of the treaty, demonstrating overt hostility towards Japan, thereby granting Japan the prerogative to declare war against Korea.” Ito demanded that Lee report this to Emperor Kojong. Additionally, he sought an official directive from the Japanese government outlining the protocol for managing affairs pertaining to Korea as follows:

Special Classification No. 57

To Prime Minister Saionji:

Concluding Remarks

[W]ith regards to the strategies and approaches to be pursued by our government, such as negotiating a treaty with Korea which would have it relinquish certain aspects of internal governance to us, I request that the government solicit opinions and provide counsel. We must exercise great caution regarding any covert actions taken by Korea, such as the abdication of Emperor Kojong, to absolve Japan of any responsibility for this kind of impulsive action. However, in my opinion, I believe that if we let this go on, we will never be able to stop the Emperor's plots and schemes. This issue is of utmost gravity and I implore elder statesmen and high-ranking dignitaries to deliberate upon it and bring it to the

attention of His Majesty.⁴¹

In this official document, Ito explicitly referenced ‘abdication’ while stipulated that the decision must undergo approval by the Emperor of Japan subsequent to deliberation by both the Cabinet and the Privy Council. Essentially, Ito advocated for a unified determination by the entirety of the Japanese government regarding the abdication of Emperor Kojong. This represents a rather uncommon instance of Ito’s execution of Korean policy since the inception of the Resident-General of Korea. At that time, Ito held the highest position within the Japanese government with the greatest authority concerning Korean affairs. Throughout his tenure as Resident-General of Korea, all Japanese policies pertaining to Korea were entrusted to him, with minimal interference from the Japanese government.⁴² Consequently, the abdication of Emperor Kojong emerged as a significant event.

However, the context of the above document suggests that abdication was not a priority in the first place. While Ito is confident that he will ‘pay close attention’ to the issue of the abdication and ‘not let the responsibility fall back on Japan’, it was such a burdensome matter that he had to worry about ‘the responsibility falling back on Japan.’ Thus, the earlier part of the above-quoted passage, coupled with the statement that ‘the emperor’s intrigues and schemes cannot be stopped if this is allowed to continue.’ suggests that Ito’s first consideration for dealing with Korea at this time was to deprive Korea of any rights over its internal affairs and to create a mechanism to constrain the emperor’s behavior.

In the meantime, the Japanese government prioritized its control over Korean internal affairs regarding the abdication of Emperor Kojong.

⁴¹ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #473 “Request for Decision on Severe Warning to the Korean Emperor Regarding the Dispatch of Envoys to The Hague and Policy Towards Korea,” 454-455.

⁴² Kurachi Tetsukichi, “The Process of Korean Consolidation.” Research Division, Fourth Section Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1939. (held at the Archives of the Diplomatic Documents, Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, #N.2.1.0.4-1), 1.

Terauchi Masatake (1852-1919) stood alone in advocating to stop this, while Yamagata Aritomo (1838-1922) and the entire cabinet opposed the proposal. The Japanese government resolved that 'the Imperial Government is determined not to let slip the current opportunity to assert complete control over the internal affairs of Korea, entrusting the execution of this matter solely to the Resident-General of Korea, in accordance with the prevailing circumstances in Korea.' The specifics of this directive were classified and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hayashi was instructed to personally travel to Korea and brief Ito on the required course of action. The decision, sanctioned by the Emperor, was dispatched to Ito on July 12th, along with the pertinent instructions as follows:

Main Plan Outline

- Proposal 1: Entrust the Resident-General of Korea with the power to implement internal and political policies that belong originally to the Emperor of Korea.
- Proposal 2: Secure a commitment from the Korean government to ensure that significant decisions regarding internal affairs are made in consultation with the Resident-General of Korea and, additionally, seek guidance from the Resident-General of Korea in enhancing governance practices.
- Proposal 3: Appoint Japanese officials to the Minister of War and of Finance.

The Second Plan Outline

Require the Emperor of Korea to abdicate in favor of the Crown Prince. This measure is deemed necessary to prevent potential future tensions. Nonetheless, it would be preferable for the Korean government to undertake this action autonomously. Neither the monarch nor the government of Korea shall enact public policies without the co-signature of the Resident-General of Korea (who should hold the title of viceroy or regent).

Key administrative departments in Korea will be overseen by officials dispatched by the Japanese government, who will be appointed as acting

or deputy ministers.⁴³

The aforementioned “plan outlines” were not intended to be mutually exclusive options according to the circumstances prevailing in Korea. The latter proposal was briefly designated as the Second Plan Outline, in addition to the Main Plan Outline. It appears that this succinct annotation reflects the viewpoint of Terauchi who, stood alone in advocating for the abdication of the Crown. The Main Plan Outline was not preferred in comparison to the Second Plan Outline but rather constitutes a ‘treatment plan’ contingent upon implementation. In essence, the removal of Emperor Kojong was not a proactive strategy of the Japanese government at this juncture.

Nevertheless, the circumstances underwent a profound shift. With the *Osaka Daily News* reporting on the Korea delegation at The Hague and disseminating the specifics of their endeavors throughout Japanese society, public sentiment in Japan towards Korea plummeted drastically. At that moment, Japanese public opinion perceived the Korea delegation’s actions as ‘a betrayal that disregarded Japan’s earnest benevolence toward Korea and brought humiliation upon Japan before the Great Powers.’ Consequently, there was a clamor for an apology from Emperor Kojong and an insistence on his abdication.⁴⁴ Public sentiment swiftly pivoted, laying blame on the Japanese government for its inability to preempt the actions of Korea, and called for more resolute measures against Korea in response to this incident.⁴⁵

Having endured the Hibiya Riots just two years prior as a response to the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905, the Japanese government found it

⁴³ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #474 “Notification of the Policy Directive on Handling Korea Regarding the Korean Emperor’s Dispatch of Secret Envoys,” 455-456.

⁴⁴ *Osaka Mainichi Newspaper*, July 5th: “Incident of Peace Envoy Secret Mission,” July 9th: “Opportunity for Decisive Action Against Korea,” July 11th: “Issue of Responsibility of the Korean Emperor,” and July 13th 1907: “Stubbornness of the Korean Emperor.”

⁴⁵ *Osaka Mainichi Newspaper*, July 12th: “The Korean Emperor and Governor-General Ito,” July 14th: “Great Courage and Great Resolve,” and July 17th 1907: “Disposition of Korea - Change the Form of Preservation of Sovereignty.”

self compelled to take more robust action against Korea in order to deflect the vehement criticism directed at the government. Nonetheless, the Japanese government also harbored concerns about the reaction of the Great Powers, which was surprisingly easy to resolve. Shortly after Hayashi's departure for Korea, the British, French, and American ambassadors to Japan visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inquire about Japan's stance toward Korea. In response, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Chinda Sutemi (1856-1929) formally stated that the decision would be made in consultation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hayashi and the Resident-General of Korea Ito. However, astoundingly, the ambassadors of the three countries unanimously asserted that 'whatever Japan chooses to do, it is unavoidable.'⁴⁶ Bolstered by the responses of the major powers, the Japanese government promptly directed Hayashi to 'reach a decision expeditiously after consulting with Ito, while considering the unexpectedly hardline shift in domestic public opinion.'⁴⁷ In short, it entailed an instruction to enact the Second Plan Outline. Ito compelled Emperor Kojong to abdicate on the 19th of 1907, citing the dispatch of the Korean delegation and their anti-Japanese activities. Five days later, the Third Korea-Japan Treaty of 1907, which divested Korea of its internal governance, was ratified.

Meanwhile, I believe the second political aim of the Japanese government was to demonstrate that Japan had not been properly exercising its authority to "protect, guide, and supervise" Korea, as acknowledged by the Great Powers. Moreover, Japan aimed to showcase its advancement to a level where it could offer Korea appropriate guidance, akin to the civilizing missions undertaken by the Great Powers or Western countries.

In The Hague, the Korean delegation asserted that the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905 was an illegitimate agreement imposed by Japan through

⁴⁶ *Diplomatic Documents of Japan* 40-1, #482 "Visit of Ambassadors of Great Britain, France, and the United States in Relation to Foreign Minister Hayashi's Visit to Korea," 459-460.

⁴⁷ *Collection of Confidential Documents of the Japanese Government Related to the Hague Peace Conference*, "Telegram Received No. 1967," 187.

coercion, resulting in the deprivation of Korea's status as an independent nation. The Japanese representatives, led by Tsuzuki, intentionally permitted the Korean delegation to engage in anti-Japanese activities before the global audience, which sympathized with Korea at the time. By doing so, Japan overtly unveiled Korea's autonomous status enough to publicly declare their position. This ultimately symbolized a supposedly civilized approach to Japanese guidance for Korea, analogous to the colonial policies adopted by Western powers. Hence, the Japanese plenipotentiaries meticulously curated the media coverage from Western powers, encompassing Europe and the United States, regarding the Korean delegation and Japan's reaction. These reports were then relayed to the Japanese government and the Resident General of Korea.⁴⁸ Even so, Tsuzuki declined Ito's directive to personally meet with the Korean delegation to verify the authenticity of their credential. During that period, Tsuzuki made every effort to prevent the public from perceiving Japan as applying pressure on Korea.

During that period, Japan's ambassador to the United Kingdom, Komura Jutarō (1855-1911), penned in *The Times*, "if Japan handles Korea wisely with firmness, skill, and patience, it may succeed in persuading the dissenters within Korea to support the notion of foreign governance for the betterment of the indigenous populace, similar to what the British accomplished in Egypt."⁴⁹ The writing provides a compelling ra-

⁴⁸ *Documents of the Governor-General's Office*, National Institute of Korean History, 1998-2000, vol. 5., (11) "Telegram No. 133, Report on the New York 'Herald' Paris Edition Article Regarding the Korean Emperor's Secret Envoy," 6; (32) "Telegram No. 153, Report on German Newspaper Commentary Regarding Japan's Policy Towards Korea Related to the Korean Emperor's Secret Envoy," 14-15; (61) "Telegram No. 160, Report on French Newspaper Commentary and Public Opinion Regarding the Korean Issue, Transmitted Letter from Ambassador Sone to France," 27-28; (63) "Telegram No. 162, Report on American Newspaper Commentary on the Korean Issue, Transmitted Letter from Ambassador Aoki to the United States," 29; (112) "Telegram No. 2, Report on German Newspaper Commentary on the Korean Issue," 55-56; (113) "Telegram No. 3, Regarding the Above Document (2)," 56-57.

⁴⁹ Murase Shinya. "Telegram from Ambassador Komura Jutarō to Foreign Minister Rintarō Komura" in "Revisiting the 1907 Hague Peace Conference - Envoys of the Korean Emperor (II)," *Diplomatic Forum* (July 2007): 70.

tionale for Japan's tolerance of the actions of the Korean delegation, without any overt obstruction or interference.

Japan seized upon the episode of the Korean delegation at The Hague to reinforce its authority over Korea and reaffirm its entitlement to safeguard Korea against the Great Powers. However, it's important to acknowledge that Japan's strategic maneuvering couldn't simply overshadow the efforts of the Korean envoys. The Korean delegation assertively represented an independent country on the global stage, fearlessly confronting Japan's unlawful and forceful interventions in Korea. Had it not been for their endeavors, the international community might have misconstrued Korea and its people as embracing Japan's purported narrative of a civilizing mission that masked the intricate machinery of a colonial project. It might have been perceived that Korea was undergoing civilizing and modernization under Japan's supposed benevolent guidance, as propagated by the Resident-General of Korea and the Japanese government.⁵⁰

Conclusion

Japan nullified Korea's diplomatic privileges in accordance with the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905. However, the extent of Japan's 'protection, guidance, and supervision' over Korea, as outlined in this treaty, remained ambiguous and thus insufficient to serve as a legal foundation for stripping Korea of its diplomatic rights from the outset. Recognizing the legal vulnerability of the treaty, Emperor Kojong dispatched Yi Sangsöl, Yi Chun, Yi Wijong, and Hulbert as special envoys to the Second Hague Peace Conference in 1907. Korea's formal participation in the conference would not only have invalidated the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905, which

⁵⁰ Japan had been generating reports on Korean reforms since the establishment of the Resident-General of Korea, disseminating them to Western legations. *The Annual Report on Reforms and Progress in Chosen*, initially published in English by the Bureau from 1907, underwent a name change to *The Annual Report on Administration in Chosen* in 1923 before its discontinuation in 1938.

deprived Korea of its diplomatic privileges, but also would have represented a stride toward acknowledgment as a sovereign entity in the international arena. Upon arriving in The Hague ten days after the peace conference commenced, the Korean delegation commenced their activities by issuing a Notice of Appeal to the plenipotentiaries of the participating countries—excluding Japan and its ally Great Britain—and denounced the illegitimacy of the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905.

Meanwhile, if the Korean representative were denied participation in the conference, it would present an opportunity for Japan to formally assert its control over Korea within the international community. In anticipation of the conference, the Japanese government prioritized two key objectives of preventing the Korean delegation's participation in the conference and finalizing the Franco-Japanese Treaty prior to the conference. The latter objective aimed to support Japan's standing in the international arena by solidifying the Triple Entente System comprising Britain, France, and Russia as partners in Northeast Asia. To achieve these goals, the Japanese government established a plenipotentiary committee led by Tsuzuki Keiroku and Kurachi Tetsukichi, tasking the Japanese delegation with the primary mission of ensuring that "Korea will not be permitted to represent itself at the Second Peace Conference." Specifically, the Japanese plenipotentiaries pursued two strategies in response to the activities of the Korean delegation. Firstly, they utilized diplomatic channels to systematically thwart any Korean participation in the peace conference. Secondly, they enlisted the assistance of Takaishi Shingoro, the only journalist there, employed by the *Osaka Daily News*, from the entire Japanese press corps sent to The Hague to cover the peace conference, and had him take closer note of the delegation's activities, and gained insight into their perspectives and future plans. Despite their concerted efforts to methodically interrupt the Korean representatives from attending the conference, they refrained from directly interfering with the Korean activities. There were two political objectives involved. First, they intended to further consolidate Japanese control over Korea. Second, they intended to show the international community that Japan was capable of governing its colonies in the same way as the Western powers, since Ja-

pan was providing liberal and civilized guidance to Korea, even to the point of allowing openly anti-Japanese activities by the Korean envoys.

In the end, through the successful exclusion of the Korean representative from the Peace conference, Japan reclaimed acknowledgment from the Great Powers of its authority to safeguard Korea and achieved its objective of further solidifying its control over Korea. However, the Korean delegation, protesting the illegitimacy of the Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905 signed under Japanese coercion, stood resolutely as representatives of an independent country amidst an international conference. What cannot be overlooked is the dynamic interplay between Korea's anti-Japanese strategy, undeterred by Japan's organized and persistent interference, and Japan's counterstrategy, orchestrated by the Japanese government to secure international recognition of its colonial policy over Korea, at The Hague.

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