

# Korean Studies in Early-Nineteenth Century Leiden



Eine Fisherfamilie

## INTRODUCTION: BOUDEWIJN WALRAVEN

Although in the West Korean Studies as a truly independent subject largely is a phenomenon of recent decades, significant contributions to the study of Korea were made in the first half of the nineteenth century by Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866) and Johannes Hoffmann (1805–1878), well before the opening of Korea in 1876. Born in the German city of Würzburg, Siebold lived for seven years at Dejima, the Dutch trading post in Nagasaki, where he had been sent to act as the resident physician. Actually, only Dutchmen were allowed to live there and the

Japanese interpreters in Nagasaki initially were suspicious of him because they noticed that his Dutch sounded quite unfamiliar. They were reassured by the explanation that Siebold was a *yama-orandajin*, “a mountain Dutchman.” During his stay in Japan Siebold did a lot more than tending to the health of the Dutch on Dejima. He founded a school where he taught medicine to Japanese students and engaged in scientific fieldwork. He collected a huge amount of information about Japanese fauna and flora, and after a while also developed an interest in Japanese customs and culture. Upon his return to Europe he

TOPPUS VE

TAB. A.

SCRIPTURA COORAIANA.

SYLLABAE.														LITERAE			
Syll. compositae.	Syll. simplices.													Vocales.	Consonantes.		
															aspiratae.	lenae.	
ㅂ	과	하	가	타	파	차	자	아	사	바	마	라	다	나	가	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅅ	귀	하	까	타	파	차	자	야	샤	바	마	라	다	나	가	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅈ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅊ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅌ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머	러	더	너	거	ㅏ	ㅑ ㅓ ㅕ ㅗ ㅛ ㅝ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ ㅛ ㅟ
ㅍ	와	하	까	타	파	차	자	어	서	버	머						

Scriptura cooraiana

settled in Leiden and between 1832 and 1852 published his findings about Japan and Japan's neighbouring countries in what eventually turned into a five-volume work: *Nippon: Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan und dessen Neben- und Schutzländern Jezo mit den südlichen Kurilen, Sachalin, Korea und den Liu-Kiu-Inseln* (Nippon: archive for the description of Japan and its neighbouring and protectorate countries, Jezo with the southern Kuriles, Sachalin, Korea and the Ryukyu Islands).

In Nagasaki Siebold sometimes had opportunities to meet shipwrecked Koreans who lived in the Chōsen yashiki ("Korea House", an establishment maintained by the lord of Tsushima) near his own quarters, and tried to elicit information about their country from them. He also interrogated Japanese who had been to Tsushima and the Japanese trading post in Pusan about Korea. Already in 1824 he sent a han'gŭl chart to The Netherlands (where it aroused no interest whatsoever at the Royal Dutch Academy, as Siebold sourly remarks in a footnote in *Nippon*). After his return he was joined in Leiden by his fellow-Würzburger Hoffmann, whom he had accidentally met in a hotel in Antwerp where he had asked him to become his research assistant. Hoffmann was a somewhat curious choice for the job, as he had been trained as a singer. Nevertheless, he proved to be a competent scholar and even-

tually, in 1856, became Leiden University's first professor of Japanese. Together Siebold and Hoffmann devoted 162 pages, not counting the illustrations, of *Nippon to Korea* (which they called Koorai, in the Japanese way). In this enterprise they were assisted by a Chinese gentleman, Ko Tsching Dschang (Guo Chengzhang).

Siebold first wrote in general about the Korean castaways he observed in Nagasaki. In his description one of the most notable features is his keen interest in race. Whereas in Hendrik Hamel's seventeenth-century description of Korea race is not mentioned at all, by the early nineteenth century the discourse of race (often phrased in anatomical terms, but also covering less tangible characteristics like temper and mentality) structured an important part of Siebold's descriptions. Subsequently, Siebold provided a detailed account of a meeting he had with a number of Korean castaways on 17 March, 1828. An English translation by Frits Vos of these two descriptions is given below.

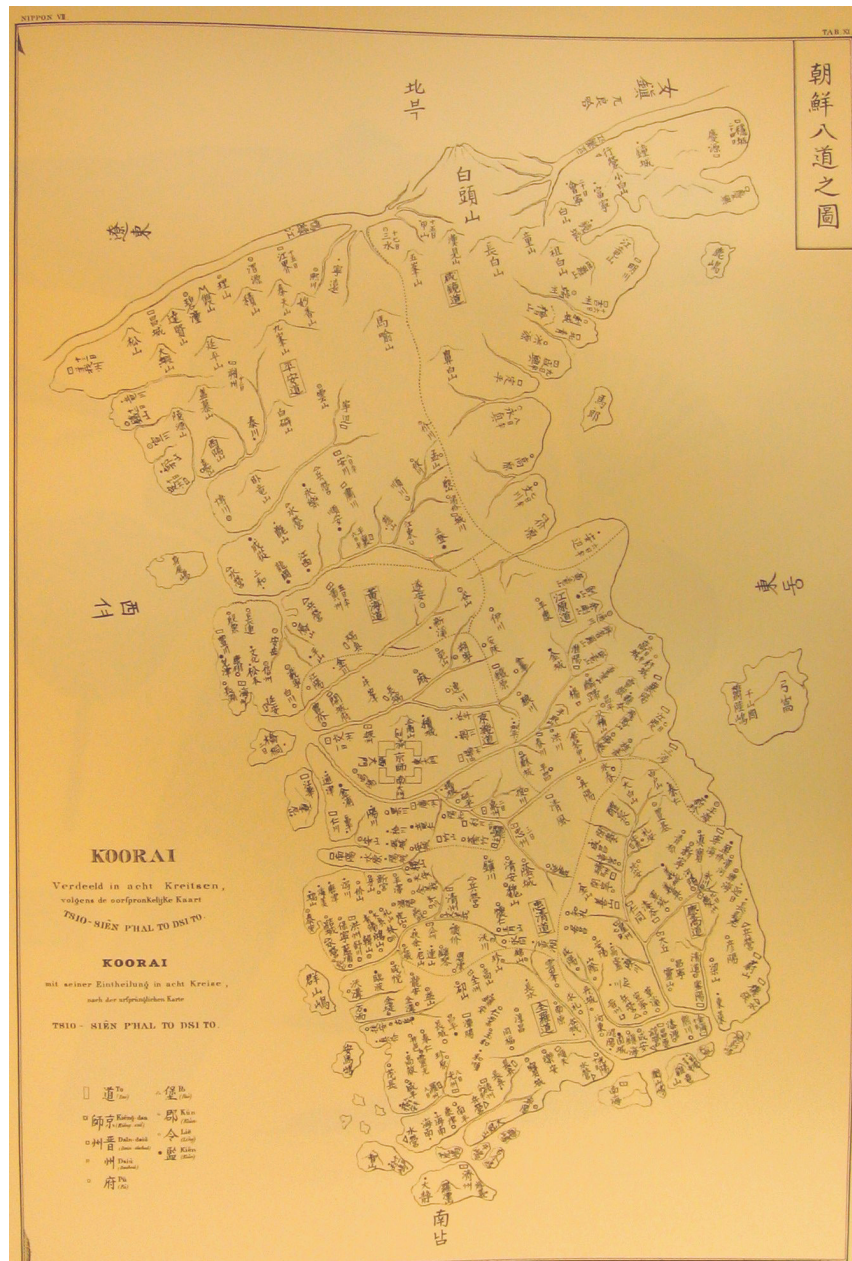
Not translated from the first section with information about Korea, are remarks about language and writing systems, translations into German of a vernacular song and Chinese poems the Koreans wrote down or composed during the meeting, and brief general information about the geographical features, the climate, the economy, the administration and the religions of the peninsula



obtained from the Koreans Siebold met as well as from Japanese who had been in contact with Koreans on Tsushima and in Pusan. The first chapter about Korea was followed by a list of 455 Korean words, based on a list of characters, of which the Korean pronunciation and the Sino-Korean reading are given, together with the Sino-Japanese and Japanese readings. The next section was a translation from a Japanese book, *Chōsen monogatari* (Tales of Korea) published in Edo in 1750, in which it is related how Japanese traders in 1645 drifted to the coast to the north of Korea and via Manchuria and Korea were sent back to their fatherland. From the same source a description of the administrative structure of Korea, with the names of various civil and military offices was extracted.

*Nippon* was published in installments and so it could happen that after the wordlist mentioned above had been printed, a similar list was obtained which was included in a following edition of the book. A version of the Yuhap 類合 (a primer to learn Chinese characters) was put at the disposition of the scholars in Leiden by the Freiherr von Schilling-Canstadt, who in turn had obtained it from a Catholic priest, Father Hyacinth, archimandrite of the mission in Beijing. Hoffmann prepared a critical translation of this book with an introduction about the Korean language and writing systems. He also edited a similar text, the *Thousand Character Text* 千字文 (published as an appendix), the original of which now is held by the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden (which grew out of the collections Siebold had assembled).

Hoffmann also spent a great deal of effort on the next chapter, a survey of "Japan's relations with the Korean peninsula and China, based on Japanese sources," preceded by an outline history of Korea. He began with the myth of Tan'gun, on the basis of the account of the



Koorai

Tongguk t'onggam 東國通鑑 Comprehensive Mirror of the Eastern Country, which he could not consult directly but found quoted in Japanese sources, and concluded his account with the Manchu campaign against Chosŏn in 1637. Although he had to rely on Japanese sources, he was aware of their limitations, and attempted to maintain critical distance and qualify their value. He did not have the means to question Japanese accounts of influence on the Korean peninsula in ancient times, but sometimes used the term legends to characterize the sources. He also devoted considerable attention to the transfer of culture from Korea (particularly from Paekche) to Japan,

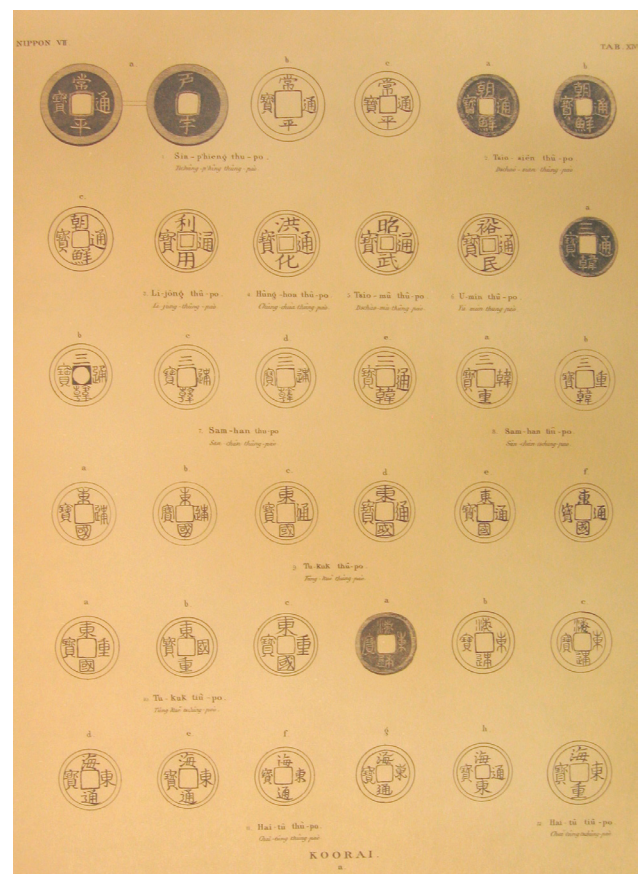




Kaufleute und Schiffsvolk

with for instance seamstresses arriving in 282 and scholars who introduced Chinese writing in 284. Interesting is his qualification of Parhae as created by “a special branch” of the nation of Koguryō (p. 98).

The final part of the sections of *Nippon* about Korea consists of explanations of the illustrations. The contents are mostly similar to the general description in the first section. Sometimes a few details are added. About the portrait of Hō Sach'ōm (Siebold writes Hōsa tsēm), one of the people he met on 17 March, 1828, Siebold remarks that among all those present his features were the closest to the Caucasian race, although “less fine” because of the pronounced bone structure. Hō was judged to be most representative in looks of the elite and Siebold praises his educational achievements. He was “ein Mann von Bildung” with refined manners. Siebold was also impressed by his headgear, a fur cap that only left the face uncovered: “a very effective piece of clothing in cold climes, which really deserves to be copied.” The last illustration is a copy of a Japanese map of Korea. Siebold notes that Hoffmann had gone to great lengths to render the place names on this map in Sino-Korean pronunciation, and utters the desire that henceforth all geographical works about Korea will use this terminology.



Korai coins



## NOTES ON KOORAI

### from contact with some Koraaians stranded on the Japanese coast

---

#### *Pictures of Korean Fishermen*

---

**ORIGINAL TEXT:** PHILIP FRANZ VON SIEBOLD,  
**TRANSLATION:** FRITS VOS,  
**REVISION:** BOUDEWIJN WALRAVEN

Nearly every year Kooraiian (*kooraïsche*) fishing boats and coastal vessels drift off to the Japanese coast because of the north-westerly storms that are predominant in spring. Therefore the Japanese government has made arrangements to transport these stranded vessels and the castaways to Nagasaki, the only place where foreigners may reside, where under the protection and at the expense of the Lord of Tsusima, who has been put in control of the political and commercial affairs between Japan and Koorai, they are taken care of in a building belonging to him, and from there returned to the island of Tsusima and then to their homeland. And so one sees fishermen, sailors and merchants, often with several families, with wives and children, arrive in Nagasaki, and because the Lord of Tsusima's trading post is located quite near the Dutch factory on Dezima, we have the opportunity to observe these people closely in all their comings and goings and in their daily life. They often live there for several months waiting for a favourable wind, and keep themselves occupied by repairs to their vessels, the making of utensils and other manual labour. Although the place where they live is very simple, even poor, this is amply compensated for by the food, the excellent Japanese rice, the fine vegetables and fish, and the unlimited freedom they enjoy to visit the town and to enter the houses of the kind and, to the unfortunate, so hospitable Japanese, which even makes these poor castaways an object of envy to us, who are living in affluence and European luxury, but are state prisoners all the same.

The Kooraiian is taller than the Japanese, although rarely more than 5½ Parisian feet, with a strong build, and well-balanced features, calm and nimble. The shape



Ein Kuestenfahrer (all picture plates reproduced here are from *Nippon*)

of his face in general has the characteristics of the Mongolian race: the wide, coarse face, with prominent cheekbones; the strong jaw; the flat bridge and wide wings of the nose; the rather big mouth with wide lips; the curious, apparently slanted form of the eyes; the coarse, thick, blackish hair, often inclining to a reddish-brown; the prominent eyebrows, the thin beard, together with a reddish-yellow or whitish complexion – all these make it possible to recognize him as an inhabitant of North-East Asia. The majority of the Koraaians I have observed belong to this type, and they themselves recognize it as the most characteristic of their nation.

However, in the facial features of the Koraaians one can see the characteristics of two races (*Volksstämme*). The nose that is flat next to the corners of the eyes, then spreads wide lower down, the slanted eyes that stand far





Ein Schiffsjunge



Ein Schiffsknecht

apart, and the more prominent cheekbones are marks of the race described above (to which the likenesses in pictures VI, VII and VIII belong); but if the top of the nose is high, and the nose more pronounced, then the facial features are closer to those of the Caucasians, and the shape of the eyes, too, becomes more like that of Europeans. Here the cheekbones are less pronounced, and the sharp profile that is absent in the Mongolian race becomes visible. The closer a person's facial features are to the race described first, the less beard that person will have, whereas individuals with a sharp profile often have quite a heavy beard. The skull of the latter is less compressed, their foreheads are straighter, rather than sloping back, and in their entire appearance they possess a kind of nobility, which one misses in the rough features of the Mongols (cf. pictures IV, V and IX).

The Kooraians behave in a serious, resigned manner, but in certain circumstances are cheerful, uninhibited; the way they walk is steady and nimble. The way they carry themselves betrays more independence and freedom than with the Japanese; also their posture exudes more energy and a more warlike spirit (*ein mehr krieg-erischen Geist*) than that of the Japanese or Chinese; in



Kumtsjun





Ein Schiffer



Ein Kaufman



Hosatsem

intellectual polish (*Bildung des Geistes*) and refinement of manners, however, they lag far behind the Japanese of the same social class; they also miss the dexterity in daily social life, and the *savoir-vivre* that we admire to such a high degree in the most humble Japanese. They are reputed to be honest, loyal, and amiable; I would have less praise for their cleanliness and orderliness. They are hearty eaters, like alcoholic drinks, and seem much more than the Japanese to tend to the Asian inclination to favour leisure.

The Kooraians' clothes are very simple, and, for both sexes, mostly white, rarely blue, made from cotton for the common people and from silk for more distinguished persons. The white lends the common people a dirty appearance, because of a lack of cleanliness. Men wear a jacket that falls a little over the hips, and wide trousers, both often lined with cotton wool; the trousers are either tied up above the ankles, over socks that cover the feet, or hang loose around the legs, in which case the feet are bare. For shoes, they have a kind of straw sandal, in the case of women and children, daintily interwoven with threads of coloured cotton. Distinguished people wear shoes like the Chinese. The men's hair is twisted together in a kind



of knob-like knot. In summer they shave away the hair right at the top of the head, which makes the knot a bit thinner, and improves cleanliness and evaporation. With boys, and in general with those men who have not married, the hair is parted vertically on the head and plaited to the back in a thick, more or less long, braid that hangs over the nape of the neck. The men usually sport a moustache, and it is not uncommon for them to have a beard too, which in the case of old people is often quite long. The men often wear a headband like a net, woven from horse hair, and also a kind of hood of the same material. These headbands, called *man-gong*, are woven from horse hair with remarkable dexterity and are part of the national costume; nearly every Kooraian wears one, and keeps it on also under the wide sun-and-rain hat. The latter is a kind of remarkably large, wide-brimmed hat, made from straw or bamboo, and covered with varnished cotton, sometimes white, sometimes black. With its conical upper part it neatly fits over the knot of hair on the top of the head; in addition, it is fastened with a band around the chin. Men wear these hats to protect themselves from the sun and rain, and in winter exchange them for caps that reach down to the neck, with an opening in the front that leaves the face free. These winter caps are lined with fur, often from a kind of grey squirrel. Men of higher social status wear, over the clothes mentioned, a coat, also white. The costumes worn for official occasions and at court are said to be of precious worked silks and follow the ancient Chinese fashion.

The women, too, are simply dressed. A linen jacket, trousers, almost like those of the men, and over these a short skirt with many folds fastened around the hips; that is the way they dress, and so the wide trousers that stick out from under the skirt give them a funny appearance. Judging from a drawing we obtained from a Kooraian, distinguished ladies wear a coat that widens below, with sleeves that cover the hands, and have a tuft of hair that curls over the forehead, and a braid in the neck that is done up in a chignon with the help of a richly decorated hairpin. Among the commoner women I observed that their hair was parted in two equal halves and hung, combed back, about a hand's breadth, either loose or plaited, behind the ears down the neck. They often wear a black piece of cloth around their head. The costume of the children differs little from that of the adults. Parasols and fans are in general use, as in China and Japan, and the latter are often very tastefully made and decorated



Koorai objects

with charming trinkets (pictures I, II, XII).

The vessels I had the opportunity to see were light and simple, 30 or at most 50 Parisian feet long, and had two masts. The boards and beams are roughly worked and, remarkably enough, nowhere are they joined with iron or another metal. Instead of iron or copper, wooden nails are used. This way of building ships indicates a scarcity of metal, which can also be deduced from other circumstances, as we will show below. Each mast carries a sail made of straw mats that is fixed to a heavy yard in such a way that the sail can be easily moved up and down with the help of a pulley fixed at the top of the mast. The vessel has light, low railings, a winch on the foredeck to lift the anchor, and a rudder and oars like the Japanese ships. The anchors are of wood, the lashings made of straw rope and from the fibres of the stalks of the hemp palm (*Chamaerops excelsa Thunberg*). The attached picture (III) is a coaster, found lying on the beach in front of the Kooraians' house in Nagasaki. The rudder and the sails had been removed, and the midship-beams attached lengthwise to the masts over the deck, in order to create a hut, covered with bamboo and with mats on the deck.

As mentioned above, the Kooraian castaways often spent several months in our vicinity. They were quite resigned to their fate, and their hope of soon seeing their homeland again made them bear their adventure with



good cheer. At daybreak, they prayed while a drum (picture XIII, item 4) was beaten; afterwards all the members of the family would go about their business for the day and prepare for the journey home, while singing and games, and their beloved tobacco-smoking would fill the empty hours.

The drumming, when it is for a religious service, begins with strong and slow single strokes; the strokes then become faster and faster, before they slowly decrease, ending in a muffled roll, which turns into the strong single strokes again. It is in the same way that the call for morning, afternoon and evening prayers is beaten on the big drums in the *Buttoo* temples.

These simple people seem to like games a lot, unless it is the boredom they suffer from on Japanese soil that has accustomed them to this vice. I have often seen them play Japanese checkers and *Go-ban*, with a whole group of people sitting around them, absorbed in the game (Picture I). They place black and white pieces on the square fields of the board, and try to surround the pieces of their opponents, or push them back, to claim territory.

They also know the game of chess, a game that has been known to the Chinese and Japanese since ancient times; the 20 figures have names that are similar to those of our own game of chess, but consist of oblong, quadrangular pieces of wood, on which the names of the figures are written. With the poor fishermen and sailors it is difficult to find household items or similar objects that might give us an impression of their handicrafts. However, I did have the opportunity to see such objects belonging to more distinguished Kooraians and their Japanese supervisors and interpreters, and I will return to this in the course of this treatise.

The balmy days of the month of May at last bring the long longed-for south-easterly wind, and we see our Kooraians happily preparing themselves for their departure. The vessel has been patched up in a makeshift manner and after they have gone up and down the Bay of Nagasaki a couple of times to test it, they sail away to their destination, accompanied by a few Japanese vessels and supervisors in the service of the Lord of Tsusima. From Nagasaki they go to Iki – a distance of 13 *ri*, from Iki to Tsusima – 14 *ri*, and from there to Fusankai – 48 *ri*. The Japanese factory there hands them over to the Kooraian officials and their homeland.

*Translated by Boudewijn Walraven*

---

### *A Visit to Some Korean Merchants Who Were Shipwrecked off the Japanese Coast*

---

Every time shipwrecked Koreans came to Nagasaki, I tried to seize the opportunity of visiting them in order to observe them in order to obtain some information about their country, which is so little known to us Europeans. Such visits, nevertheless, involved great difficulties. First I had to apply for permission from the commissioner [bugyō 奉行] of Nagasaki, for the Japanese superintendent of the Koreans was –as a subordinate officer to a Japanese feudal lord– allowed neither to receive me in his house nor to give me access to Koreans without the commissioner's knowledge. My Japanese friends, however, always knew how to wangle this permission under some pretext or other and to obtain access for me. Each time, the Koreans welcomed me very kindly. This was especially so on the occasion of a visit on March 17, 1828, when I was very pleasantly impressed by their behavior, and I found opportunity to make some interesting observations about their physical appearance, their customs, language, writing and the like. Since I happened to come upon a group of persons who were, after their fashion, rather educated, I was at last able to examine the level of culture, science and arts in Korea to some extent, and to obtain some reliable information about this unknown country.

A group of 36 Koreans, consisting partly of fishermen, partly of sailors, as well as some merchants and travelers from the Province of Dsiên-la-to [全羅道], which –in three vessels– had been grounded at the west-coast of Kiusiu and at the Go-too Islands, found itself in the trading-house of the afore-mentioned Lord of Tsusima. I had already made the prior acquaintance of the superintendent and some officials and officers in the service of this lord, and –in accordance with Japanese custom– welcome gifts announced me as a guest who was to appear soon. The hospitality of the Japanese, which cannot be sufficiently praised, was again manifest on this occasion. In the reception-room of the superintendent, everything had been prepared to receive a guest from such an esteemed nation as The Netherlands is in Japan, in accordance with his rank, and to show the representatives of a neighboring Asian nation, inhospitable toward Europeans, the respect due to a country with which peaceful commercial

relations had been maintained for 200 years.

From the group of shipwrecked Koreans my Japanese host had selected four of the most respected and most educated men and, because of the difference in costumes, he had added a sailor and a ship's boy. Dressed in their best attire, these people entered the reception-room with a dignified gait and let themselves down on the mat in proper order, some in the Japanese way, others cross-legged according to their own custom.

These unfortunate persons had obviously put on their best clothes saved from their possessions on the occasion of the shipwreck. Some were dressed up in several jackets in a nearly awkward manner; head-dress and head-gear had been divided among them in such a way that one could easily guess their good intentions to give me an impression of their costumes. Some of them wore a long white top-coat over the jacket mentioned, and wide trousers of the same material. One of them was dressed in a jacket of bright blue silk, padded and stitched, and similar silk trousers. Their headgear was varied: some wore a hairnet, mangong [망건], one a steeple-crowned cap –likewise braided from horsehair–, another one a winter cap lined with fur, and yet another wore a large hat on top of the hairnet. Moreover, the others had brought large hats with them, from which fact I deduced that these belong to their festive attire. The sailor wore his hair simply twisted into a topknot, and the ship's boy let his parted hair hang down in a long thick braid. The broad-rimmed extremely light hat and the fur-cap protecting the neck and part of the face appeared to me very practical types of headgear.

In this way I mustered the Koreans who were facing us in a half-circle. Then I saluted them, and had an interpreter explain the aim of my visit and place some presents in front of them. The first one in the row replied to my speech in such a manner that it betrayed a certain proficiency in rhetoric and even resembled declamation, and gave vent to his regret that they were, as miserable victims of a shipwreck, incapable of offering presents in return. Thereupon the second one took over and tendered his thanks which he expressed more by signs than through eloquence. During the ensuing lull in our conversation it struck me that none of them remained sitting quietly, but that they all moved the upper part of their body continuously to and fro. They turned out to be two merchants, a teacher of Chinese and Korean writing and language as well as of Confucian ethics, a traveling



Koorai clothes

tradesman and the skipper –the one with whom I was now talking. These alert men had excellent manners, and their initially somewhat shy looks seemed gradually to brighten up. In this odd company I spent a very curious and instructive day. One of the merchants, however, was extremely dejected, I may even say diseased in mind. He had lost all possessions, had physically suffered during the shipwreck, and was –as was told to me– continuously occupied with the sad memories of the dead ones. His portrait may speak for him. The other one, who called himself Ho sa tsiém [許士瞻], was a cheerful and at the same time serious person who seemed that day to have forgotten his misfortune, and who really exerted himself to show the European strangers that he was not a common man. The scholar looked cunning, but not very scholarly; there was something vulgar in his features. When I asked Ho sa tsiém who among them had the typical features of the lower classes, he pointed on the sly at Kum Tsiun [金致潤] (which was the name of the scholar) and availed himself of the occasion to pay a warm tribute to himself and to recommend himself as a typical specimen of the aristocracy. The skipper had that look in his eyes com-



mon to sailors of most nations: a fixed and serious stare under lowered eyebrows which seemed to protect the eyes simultaneously from the lustre of heaven and that of the water-level. The sailor's build furnished a good example of the coarse osseous system of the lower classes, and the ship's boy showed the smooth round face that is so typical of youths of the Mongolian race. The men had moustaches and beards around the chin; their beards and hair were essentially black, but shaded into auburn. From their features the characteristics of the two entirely different races mentioned earlier could easily be observed. The scholar had the type of the Mongolian race, whereas Ho sa tsiém's features approximated those of a Caucasian. As regards the skipper and one merchant, whose faces had rather lost flesh, the nose seemed to protrude more than actually was the case. The form of the boy's eyes confirmed my former observation concerning the so-called slanting of the eyes, and elsewhere I have given a description and picture of his eye.

Because of my former association with Koreans as well as my acquaintance with several Japanese who had been to Tsusima and Fusankai [釜山?], I had gained some knowledge of the Korean language and writing system, about the country, its customs and manners etc., and was now able to enlarge it greatly thanks to these intelligent people. Especially with regard to language and script, the present meeting provided me with the information I had longed for. As we still know extremely little about these subjects, I am convinced I shall be rendering a service to students of linguistics by communicating the results of my research in a separate chapter.

The presents I offered to the Koreans consisted of a few yards of colored cloth, cottons and some bottles of arrack and gin, and were joyfully accepted by them. They seemed to deliberate as to what they would give me as counter-presents, and the one in the upper-seat, who had spoken before, now apologized in an embarrassed way for their poverty, and asked me to accept some of the objects they had saved. These were some manuscripts, picture scrolls, a small table, some jugs and dishes, to which each of them added a garment or trinket which he could spare. The speaker had a very easy delivery; nevertheless, he did not give the impression of someone speaking impromptu, but his form of address was that of someone reciting something without understanding the meaning of it – a peculiarity of Korean delivery which is also characteristic of Japanese public speech. The Koreans pronounce their

words emphatically between the teeth and in a drawing way, yet in such a manner that one can easily distinguish the division into syllables, words and sentences. In the meantime writing utensils and paper had been brought in, and some of them were busily committing something to paper. From three of them I received compositions in Chinese and Korean. These written communications are –because of their contents and way of writing– too interesting not to be added, in copies of the originals with translation, to my remarks on writing and language.

My friend Carl Hubert de Villeneuve, whom I cannot praise and thank enough for his active assistance as a draughtsman, but even more for his friendship and companionship in prosperity and misfortune during my Japanese career, had been busy drawing some portraits, while my Japanese painter Toiosuke [登與祖] made drawings of the costumes and the like. This day we succeeded better than ever, and these people were more willing to be measured and portrayed than the Koreans we had visited formerly. In general they showed more refinement than would have been expected from a people which had been described to us as being uncouth; repeatedly they expressed their gratitude for the presents and the entertainment.

We, De Villeneuve and I, afterwards visited our Korean friends, who showed a marked attachment to us, several times. They often conveyed their regards to us and occasionally sent us trifles, specimens of their writing, farewell letters, etc. From one of them I received a small landscape painted in Korea and executed in the Chinese style.

*Translated by Frits Vos*

This article has made use of the 1975 facsimile edition of von Siebold's original work: Philip Franz von Siebold, *Nippon: Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan. Vollständiger Neudruck der Urausgabe zur Erinnerung an Philipp Franz von Siebolds erstes Wirken in Japan 1823-1830*. Herausgegeben vom Japanisch-Holländischen Institut, Tokyo. Tokyo : Kodansha, 1975. Six volumes.