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A DEATH IN THE PHOTO :  
UNDERSTANDING THE  
KOREAN EMPIRE THROUGH  
ALMA KARLIN'S BLACK AND  
WHITE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE  
FUNERAL PROCESSION IN  
FRONT OF DAEANMUN GATE

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Prologue

It was June 1923 when Alma Karlin (1889-1950) first stepped onto the Korea peninsula.<sup>1</sup> The same year in January, Kim Sang Ok (김상옥, 金相玉, 1890-1923), an independent activist, ended his life by executing an honour suicide after resisting Japanese police.<sup>2</sup> That was the same year the first film ever made in Korea, *The Vow Made Below the Moon* (월하의 맹세), was released. The film marks a distinctive point in Korean film history because although the producer was Governor-General of Korea, the chief administrator of the Japanese colonial government, it was made by Korean staff.<sup>3</sup> Karlin travelled to Korea amid a whirlwind period in Korea, as the peninsula was gradually occupied by

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<sup>1</sup> Mückler, Hermann, "Von Celje nach Ozeanien: Alma Karlins Aufenthalt in der Südsee," in *Österreicher in der Südsee. Forscher, Reisende, Auswanderer*, ed. Hermann Mückler (Wien: LIT-Verlag, 2012), 273.

<sup>2</sup> Chŏn, Pongkwan 전봉관. *Kyŏngsŏng chasal kŭllŏp* 경성 자살 클럽 [*Gyeongseong Suicide Club*] (Paju: Sallim, 2008), 236.

<sup>3</sup> Kim, Sunam 김수남. *Chosŏn yŏnghwasa nonjŏm* 조선 영화사 논점 [*The Issue of Joseon Film History*] (Seoul: Wŏrin, 2008), 82-88.

Japan by means of ‘cultural rule (문화통치기)’.<sup>4</sup> The country was in a dynamic state: the undercurrents of repression occurring at the dawn of modernity.

The March First movement, also known as the Sam-il Movement (삼일 운동,三一 運動) was one of the earliest public displays of Korean resistance during the rule by Japan from 1910 to 1945. After the movement Japan decided to change the ruling strategy from military rule to cultural rule. Not much seemed saliently different from the decade before the nationwide protest. Korea was still under the governance of Japan; legal discrimination between Japanese and Korean did not cease; continuous resistance movements sparked in and out of Korea. However, from the year 1919 onward, Japanese rule was somewhat mitigated as the third Governor-General, Saitō Makoto (齋藤 実, 1858-1936), commenced his rule. Makoto allowed group gatherings and freedom of expression through media. He also encouraged education by expanding the opportunity to peasants in farmland. The overall atmosphere of Japanese rule was relatively less tense than during other phases. Karlin’s visit took place during a time when Japan was executing its most generous policies in Korea.<sup>5</sup> The Japanese Government promoted tourism in Korea, resulting in an increased number of foreign tourists, including the Japanese.<sup>6</sup> Karlin entered Busan after departing Japan, and travelled through Seoul and Pyongyang before leaving for China. Like other tourists, she packed her suitcase with authentic souvenirs of Korea. Some of the objects are now kept in the Celje Regional Museum, Slovenia. There are thirty-nine photographs in total that Karlin brought from Korea to Slovenia. Five of them are

<sup>4</sup> Sō, Chungsoek 서중석. *Chibaejaŭi kukka, minjungŭi narar han’gug kŭnhyōndaesa 100nyōnŭi chaejomŏng* 지배자의 국가, 민중의 나라: 한국 근현대사 100년의 재조명 [*State of the Ruler, People’s Country: Re-examination of 100-year Korean Modern History*] (Paju: Tolbegae, 2010), 32-39.

<sup>5</sup> Yun, Haetong 윤해동, Hwang, Pyōngchu 황병주. *Shingminji konggongŏng, shilch’ewa ūnyuŭi kōri* 식민지 공공성, 실체와 은유의 거리 [*Colonial Publicity: The Distance between Reality and Metaphor*] (Seoul: Ch’aekkwahamkke, 2010), 148.

<sup>6</sup> Cho Jung-min 조정민. “Ilchech’imnyakki sajin’gŭrimyōpsōro pon pusan kwan’gwangŭi p’yosanggwa rok’ōllit’i chibaewa hyangyuŭi pada 일체침략기 사진그림엽서로 본 부산 관광의 표상과 로컬리티 지배와 향유의 바다 [The Presentation and Locality of Busan Tourism as Viewed from Picture Postcards in the Japanese Colonial Era],” *Japanese Cultural Studies* 일본문화연구 67 (2018): 35-58.



Photo 1: Funeral Procession in front of Daeamun Gate.

funeral themed photos, and in one photo of the five, one can find a poignant story about a Joseonian woman's death and the Korean Empire. In the present paper, I will scrutinise the details of the photo and attempt to deepen the understanding of early twentieth century Korea as it is observed in the photo. (Photo 1)

#### A Photo Exhibited by the Korean-American Association of Tacoma

On August 15, 2014, the Korean-American Association of Tacoma in Washington, US, displayed 60 photographs that have captured early twentieth-century Korea. One of the photos exhibited is identical with Photo 1 that Karlin brought to Slovenia. Upon revelation, the association announced that the photos are “open to the public for the first time, in joint commemoration of Victory over Japan Day with other Korean communities in the US”. Regarding the acquisition source of the photo, a spokesperson explained, “an American resident in Tacoma

donated around 60 photos to the association, saying that the donor has kept for about 100 years since his/her grandmother lived in Korea during 1914-1919.”

However, the donor was reticent about more information about his/her grandmother. As I will explain in more depth later, the photo is not an image taken during the years 1914-1919. Rather, it is highly probable that the photo was taken before 1914. Moreover, given the identical photo found in Karlin’s collection, it is also highly probable that the photo is not an original but a reprint. Instead of regarding it as someone’s private work, it seems convincing to see the donor’s photo as one of the mass-produced photographs available for tourists at that time. Major South Korean presses, including JoongAng Ilbo (The Korea Daily) quoted James Yang, the president of the association at the time, that the photo is of “Gojong (the last king of the Joseon Dynasty and the first Emperor of Korea)’s state funeral” that shows the image of “procession starting from Daeannmun Gate, a prototype of Deoksugung Palace today (One of five royal palaces in Seoul. The name Deoksugung Palace means “Palace of Virtue and Longevity” in the spirit of praying for long life for Gojong.)”. The report then states, “it seems correct that the photo is taken from a scene of Gojong’s funeral, given the evidence on the internet”.<sup>7</sup> Another JoongAng Ilbo report on the same subject similarly explained the photo as “an image that is presumably a state funeral for the Emperor Gojong on January 21, 1919”.<sup>8</sup> Some other reports, despite admitting the limited information regarding the circumstances around the year when the photo was taken due to the lack of accurate accounts, also concluded the photo is “a scene from Gojong’s funeral that stimulated the March 1 Independence Movement.” In addition, the title of the report is inaccurate. Contrary to expectation there is no written sign naming the gate as Daehanmun Gate. Never-

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<sup>7</sup> The Korea Daily, “Hūigwi yen han’gug sajindūl 100nyōnmane ch’ōn konggae 희귀 옛 한국 사진들 100년만에 첫 공개 [Rare Old Korean Photos First Released in 100 Years],” *The Korea Daily* 중앙일보, August 15, 2014, American edition 3.

<sup>8</sup> JoySeattle, “Ilcheūi han’gugin ch’ongsal changmyōn’gwa kojonghwangje changnyeshing ōgahaengnyōi 일제의 한국인 총살 장면과 고종황제 장례식 여가행렬 [Shooting Koreans by Japanese Army and Gojong’s funeral],” *JoySeattle* 조이시애틀뉴스, August 15, 2014.

theless, the headline is “The funeral procession through Daehanmun Gate” and the sub-head “Fully armed Japanese force”.<sup>9</sup>

As I will explain further, the information used in the report is far from the truth. Speculative assertions without solid ground regarding the photo caused misleading interpretations, more than a false assumption regarding Gojong. There is speculation that the subject of the funeral in the photo is that of either Empress Myeongseong or Sunjong. Cho Poong Youn argues in his monograph “Exploring Joseon through Photographs”<sup>10</sup> that “unlike the general assumption, considering the details of the procession in mourning clothes, the image is not Gojong’s but probably Empress Myeongseong’s funeral, which took place in November 1897.” His claim is partially correct and partially false. He focuses on the funeral procession, rejecting the established theory about the photo that suggests it’s Gojong. Whilst the present paper takes a similar focus to his in regards to the procession, I will disprove his argument that the Empress Myeongseong is the subject of the funeral. The event in the photograph, I argue, took place later than Empress Myeongseong’s funeral on November 21, 1897. As I will address in the paper, some strong evidence clarifies the muddled accounts and confirms that the photo was taken later. There is also some speculation that the photograph shows the imperial Sunjong’s (the second and the last Emperor of Korea) procession. This, too, I reject: not only is there a discrepancy between the dates when the photo was taken and the death of Emperor Sunjong, but also the way people dressed in the photo does not correspond to this suggestion.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, the photo found in Karlin’s suitcase, along with the photo exhibited in Tacoma, US, stirred up many assumptions and interpreta-

<sup>9</sup> Choishiaer’ullyusū 조이시애틀뉴스, “Taehanmun chinaganūn kojong changnyeshik’aengnyōl ch’onggōmch’akyong ilbon’gun 대한문 지나가는 고종 장례식행렬 총검착용 일본군 [The Funeral Procession through Daehanmun Gate and Fully Armed Japanese Force],” *Internet News Shinmoongo* 신문고 뉴스, August 16, 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Cho P’ungyōn 조풍연, *Sajimūro ponūn chosōnshidae* 사진으로 보는 조선시대 [*Joseon Dynasty in Photos*] (Seoul: Sōmundang, 1986).

<sup>11</sup> “Taehanjeung hwangshil-sunjonghwangje 2 대한제국 황실-순종황제 2 [Imperial Empire of Korea-Emperor Sunjong 2],” Songp’ungsuwōl 송풍수월, last modified January 19, 2010, <https://m.blog.naver.com/PostView.nhn?blogId=ohyh45&logNo=20098235277&proxyReferer=h> (accessed August 10, 2019)

tions. In this paper, I designate the date when the photo was taken as November 5, 1904. Then I put forward a proposition that the image presented in the photo is neither the funeral for Gojong nor Empress Myeongsong nor Sunjong. The paper instead proposes that the subject of the funeral in the photo is someone who has a close relationship with those royal figures. The debate surrounding the photo is possibly attributed to the ambiguousness in the photo. Bearing that in mind, I will investigate the detail of the photo which has been less discussed in scholarship. In so doing, the paper aims to rectify sometimes misleading, sometimes obscured, truth about the event presented in the photo.

### Gojong, the first Emperor of Korean Empire

#### Korean Empire

I designate November 5, 1904, as the day when Photo 1 was taken. The Korean Empire was the only 'nation' in the Korean Peninsula that year. The Korean Empire has the shortest history amongst those of other Korean dynasties, lasting from October 12, 1897, to August 29, 1910. As the title 'Empire' suggests, the Korean Empire is the name Emperor Gojong designated to proclaim the Joseon Dynasty as the first independent unified Korean state. Gojong rejected Joseon's position at that time as a perfunctory client kingdom of the Qing dynasty and inaugurated the era of Gwangmoo (광무, 光武, 17 August 1897 to 11 August in 1907). He also elevated his title from King to Emperor to proclaim Korea's equal position to China, executing what is known as Geonwonchingje (건원칭제, 建元稱制). He established the name of a different era from China and named the emperor as was done in China.

The enforcement of Emperorship and enactment of Gwangmu Reform with a focus on the well-equipped royal bodyguards was another of his projects. Despite the efforts, executing a pragmatic reformation was challenging, due to the conflict between the Independence Association and Citizens of Japan's Association, as well as the power struggle between Pro-Japanese and Pro-Russian groups. After the victory of Japan over Russia in the Russo-Japan War in 1904, the Governor-General of Joseon concluded the Eulsa Unwilling Treaty (을사조약, 乙巳條

約), which is also known as the Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty between the Empire of Japan and the Korean Empire, in 1905. The event weakened the power of the Korean Empire, and despite Gojong's last effort to send a group of secret envoys to The Hague, Netherlands, to internationally appeal the abolition of the Treaty, the Korean Empire faded out in history with the announcement of the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty in 1910.

Two Emperors reigned over the Korean Empire: Gojong and Sunjong. Gojong, the First Emperor and the 26th King of Joseon, was born in 1850 and died in 1919, and his reign spanned from 1863 to 1907. Sunjong, the son of Gojong and Empress Myeongseong (1851-1895), whose other title is Queen Min, ascended the throne and became the second Emperor. Born in 1874, he ruled from 1907 to 1910 and died in 1926. He had two wives, Empress Sunmyeong (1872-1904) and Empress Sunjeong (1894-1966). Neither of the couples produced children.

Gojong, Sunjong and Empress Myeongseong, who are often assumed as the subject of the funeral in the Photo 1, were a family. To refute the claim that Photo 1 is the funeral of Gojong, it is necessary to find out more about Gojong's state funeral.

### Gojong's State Funeral

Increasing attempts have been made over the years to research "Gojongtaehwangjeeojangjugam *Uigwe* (고종태황제 어장주감의궤, 高宗太皇帝 御葬主監儀軌, The official book which was written about Gojong's national funeral giving details like the date and time, published in 1919 by the palace.)", a record book about the details of Gojong's funeral, and "Deoksugunginsanbongdohoi Deungnok (덕수궁인산봉도회등록, 德壽宮因山奉悼會臚錄, The non-official book on Gojong's funeral was published by people who dealt with the funeral biers.)", another record about the funeral which was made by the private community in charge of the procession.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> I Uk 이옥. "Kojongüi kukchang 고종의 국장 [Gojong's State Funeral]," in *2019nyöndo changsögagak'ademi wangshilmunhwagangjiwa* 2019년도 장서각아카데미 왕실문화강좌

The studies analyse the procedure of Gojong's state funeral, which, according to their argument, was marginalised and manipulated as it was supervised by the Governor-General of Korea, hence was ordered to be held in the Japanese style. This claim has been accepted both in academic circles and the media in recent years.<sup>13</sup> To raise awareness, the Palace Museum in Seoul holds a short film of Gojong's national funeral in the Room of the Korean Empire. The museum plays a central role in research, surveys, collection, preservation, as well as exhibitions about Gojong's funeral as the institution serves as a subdivision of the Korean Cultural Heritage Administration.<sup>14</sup> The present paper attempts to examine no further detail regarding the topic of the funeral as it does not have a direct relation to the photographs Alma Karlin brought to Slovenia, which is the central concern of the paper.

Nevertheless, it is important to scrutinise which specific passages the funeral bier took when it was heading toward the direction of the Royal Tomb after the ceremony. In order to clarify whether Photo 1 is a partial image of the procession for Gojong or not, one should take a close look into the objects in the photo. According to I Uk (이옥), "six teams took turns (carrying) big and small biers on their shoulders and carried the coffin from Daehanmun Gate to Hongyureung (홍릉, 洪陵) in Geumgok-Ri. There were 16 stops total, 17 including Daehanmun Gate, where they started, followed by Hunryunwon (훈련원, 訓練院), Sinseol-gye (신설계, 新設契), Yongdu-ri (용두리, 龍頭里), Nojeso (노제소, 路祭所) in Cheongnyang-Ri, Old Hwigyeong-Won (구휘경원, 舊徽慶園), Bonghwa Pass (봉화현, 烽火峴), Jujeong-so (주정소, 晝停所) in Bongwhang-dong (봉황동, 鳳凰洞), Upper Mangwoo Pass (망우현상, 忘憂峴上), Lower Mangwoo Pass (망우현하, 忘憂峴下), Lower Injanrijeom (인장리점하, 仁章里店下), Donong-Ri (도농리, 陶農里), Somiha-Ri (소미하리, 素味下里), Bunto Pass (

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[*Jangseoggak Academy: Royal Culture Course in 2019*] (Seongnam: Academy of Korean Studies, 2019), 149-171.

<sup>13</sup> Yun Tongsöp 윤동섭, "100nyŏnjŏn, kojong hwangjeŭi kukchang öttök'e chinhaengdwaessülkka 100년전, 고종 황제의 국장 어떻게 진행됐을까 [100 years ago, What Happened to Gojong's State Funeral]," *Gukjeweus* 국제뉴스, March 1, 2019.

<sup>14</sup> "Sajinŭro pon kukchang-kojong hwangje 사진으로 본 국장-고종 황제 [Permanent Exhibition 'Korean Empire' of the National Palace Museum of Korea]," Gogungmuseum 고궁 박물관, last modified March 19, 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiFFT5oWm\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiFFT5oWm_s).



분토현, 粉土峴), Rear Bongdu-chon (봉두촌후, 鳳頭村後), Upper Bongdu-chon (봉두촌상, 鳳頭村上) and Toegye-Ri (퇴계리, 退溪里)”<sup>15</sup>

The procession, as it is known, was ready to depart at the outside of Daehanmun Gate, specifically at the point where a tent was standing. The time was 5 a.m. when they started the procession. The record confirms the fact that it was Daehanmun Gate through which the procession passed as it commenced. Careful observation is needed here, since the other photographs that feature Gojong’s funeral also mention Daehanmun Gate in the caption. Evidence can be found in the publication by the National Palace Museum, titled “Gojong’s funeral in the photographs”. There the captions are as follows: “A scene in front of Daehanmun Gate upon the announcement of Gojong’s death”, “People wailing day and night in front of Daehanmun Gate”, “Crowd in front of Daehanmun Gate on the third day of the funeral”, “A scene in front of Daehanmun Gate upon the announcement of Gojong’s death”, “A small bier getting out of Daehanmun Gate”, “A funerary procession leaving Daehanmun Gate, with the Emperor’s coffin on the bier”. All of them highlight that it is Daehanmun Gate, not Daeamun Gate where the funeral procession began.

In contrast to the photos, Karlin’s photo as we discuss in the present paper does not have the image of Daehanmun Gate in it. Despite the virtual similarity in pronunciation, Daehanmun Gate and Daeamun Gate refer to completely different objects. If one pays attention to the Chinese characters written on the signboard in the image, it is not difficult to distinguish the letter *An* (安) from *Han* (漢). I would argue, unlike the other images of Gojong’s funeral, Karlin’s photo does not present the same event.

I also disagree with another assumption that was put forward by the media at the time of the Tacoma exhibition. Media reports are prone to deliver a false statement on this subject, as the case of the 2014 report of YTN (Yonhap News Agency, the world’s first 24-hour Korean news channel broadcast, which was founded in 1993 in South Korea)

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<sup>15</sup> I Uk 이욱. “Kojongŭi kukchang” 고종의 국장 [Gojong’s State Funeral], 167.

shows.<sup>16</sup> In the news titled “The image of Empress Myeongseong’s coffin unveiled to the public for the first time”, the reporter states, “at the front of the procession, there seems Sinbaek (신백, 神帛, the mortuary tablet for the dead king and/or queen) and Sinju Gama (신주 가마, a palanquin for the mortuary tablet), an object known as a place where the deceased person’s soul resides, followed by the biers that just departed the Gyeongun-gung Palace of Daeamun Gate.” One should notice the discrepancy between the reporter’s verbal comment, Daeamun Gate, and the image in the footage: the corresponding object is absent. The report was made from the expert advice of Professor Yang Sang Hyun at Suncheonhyang University, who published a journal article about the photographs of modern Korea, titled “The Significance of Korean Photos in the William Elliot Griffis Collection at Rutgers University”, in the 2014 winter issue of *The Journal of Korean Modern History*.<sup>17</sup> In the article, he includes Photo 2 and calls it “Empress Myeongseong’s State Funeral”. He explains that the image shows “the funerary procession that is about to depart Daeamun Gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace”. His account, however, fails to offer a valid identification as the image of the signboard in Photo 2 is not clearly enough seen to support his statement. Moreover, there is no evidence that the photo he uses is of the same event as the one brought back by Karlin and displayed in the Tacoma exhibition.

The question we need to ask is, then, whether the funerary procession of Empress Myeongseong passed through Daeamun Gate as it is seen in Photo 1 (see page 79). Park Carey states the full route in which the coffin was carried: the carriers departed Gyeongun-gung Palace (경운궁) and proceeded to Donryemun Gate (돈례문), Geumchungyo Bridge (금천교), Inhwamun Gate (인화문), Sin-gyo

<sup>16</sup> Hwang Posŏn 황보선, “Myŏngsŏnghwanghu un’gu sajin ch’ŏn konggae 명성황후 운구 사진 첫 공개 [The Image of Empress Myeongseong’s Coffin Unveiled to the Public for the First Time],” *YTN*, December 9, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Yang, Sang-hyun 양상현, Park So-yeon 박소연, and Yu Young-mee 유명미. “Kŭrip’isŭ k’ŏlleksyŏne sojangdoeŏ innŭn han’gung kŭndae sajinjaryoŭi haksulchŏng kach’ie taehan koch’al 그리피스 컬렉션에 소장되어 있는 한국 근대 사진자료의 학술적 가치에 대한 고찰 [The Significance of Korean Photos in the William Elliot Griffis Collection at Rutgers University],” *Journal of Korean Modern and Contemporary History* 한국근현대사연구 71 (2014): 7-50.

Bridge (신교), Hyejeong-gyo Bridge (혜정교), Yiseok-gyo Bridge (이석교), Choseok-gyo Bridge (초석교), Heunginmun Gate (흥인문), The Tomb of King Dong-gwan (동관왕묘), the front of Bojewon (보제원), Hancheon-gyo Bridge (한천교), Chunjangsang (천장상), Cheongnyangni and reached their final point Hongyureung.<sup>18</sup> Unlike the record on Gojong's funerary procession, there is no comment about which gate people passed through in the record on Empress Myeongseong's funeral procession: we only know that Gyeongun-gung is noted as a departure point. To put it in another way, Photo 2 does not provide sufficient evidence to show which gate the procession for Empress Myeongseong passed through. A partially correct account, Yang's research nonetheless made a contribution to scholarship as he used credible references to support his argument. The William Elliot Griffis Collection from which Yang studies his photos features various images about modern Korea. The book was planned and written by William Griffiths, who is renowned for his historical treatise "Corea, The Hermit Nation" (1882). Despite the rich potential in Griffiths's photos as a resource for historical inquiry, not many attempts have been made to look into the photos as they are, since Rutgers University published an introductory book of Korea in 1959.<sup>19</sup> In part, the shortage in research is arguably due to the current interest predominant in Griffiths' personal viewpoint about Korea or the political implications in his writing. Yang's research is exceptional in that it extends beyond Griffiths' implications and revisits the photographs, considering the value of the collection as a resource of historical research.

I would submit the proposition that Karlin's photo as we see in Photo 1 is not the image taken from Gojong's funerary procession. The other major theory, which proposes that the image is of Empress Myeongseong, is also debatable. My suggestion is to focus on the word

<sup>18</sup> Park Carey 박계리. "Myōngsŏnghwanghu parinbanch'adowa parin haengnyŏl <명성황후 발인반차도>와 발인 행렬 [The Funeral Procession of Empress Myeongseong - through the Illustrated Records]," *The Misulshakbo : Reviews on Art History* 미술사학보 (2016): 7-26.

<sup>19</sup> Kim Soo-Tae 김수태. "Williŏm kŭrip'isŭi han'gug kŭndaesa inshik 윌리엄 그리피스 의 한국 근대사 인식 [William Griffiths's Awareness of Korean Modern History]," *Chindanhakpo* 진단학보 110 (2010): 125-156.

“Daeannmun Gate” in the photo since it is the key to investigating the background of the photo.



Photo 2: Empress Myeongseong’s State Funeral.

## Daeannmun Gate, the Main Gate of Gyeongung Palace

### Deoksugung Palace or Gyeongung Palace

Daeannmun Gate, which appears as the background of the image in Photo 1 (see page 79), is the key here because the term is also mentioned in the scholarly accounts on Empress Myeongseong’s funeral. To understand Daeannmun Gate correctly, it should be remembered that it was one of the main gates of Deoksugung Palace. Deoksugung Palace is one of the five royal palaces which remain today in Seoul. Deoksugung Palace, formerly called Gyeongung-gung Palace, was the main place for Emperor Gojong’s governmental administration. The time was tense, caught up in the struggle between Russia and Japan, which was then aiming for control over northeast China and Korea.

At first sight, Deoksugung does not seem to be a fitting place for state affairs. In terms of scale and facilities, Gyeongbokgung Palace and Changdeokgung Palace had more merits than Deoksugung Palace.<sup>20</sup> Why then, did Gojong choose Deoksugung Palace for his residence, despite all the shortcomings? A possible reason might have been his constant dread of assassination, which may have been triggered by notoriously traumatic events in his life: a few days before the Russo-Japanese War, the Japanese forces attacked Gojong's former residence in Gyeongbokgung Palace to put him under arrest. The next year, also in Gyeongbokgung Palace, his wife, Empress Myeongseong, was brutally killed by the Japanese forces. Gyeongbokgung Palace was distant from the British Embassy and the others, which means it was difficult to get help in case of emergency. Gyeongun-gung Palace had advantages that could contribute to the Emperor's safety. Its small size allowed the guards, small in number, to protect the palace. Its location, surrounded by the Legations of US, Russia, UK and France, ensured that the Emperor could use diplomatic power to remain relatively safe from a sudden attack by Japan. For Gojong, Gyeongun-gung Palace was a more secure place compared to Gyeongbokgung Palace, both psychologically and pragmatically. The Emperor fled to the Russian Legation in 1895 after the outbreak of Eulmi Sabyun (the murder of Empress Myeongseong by Japanese soldiers in 1895) and moved back to Gyeongun-gung Palace in 1897 as he returned to Korea. It was around the time of the Emperor's moving back in that he decided to build more court in the palace, which forms the grand scenery of the Royal Palace today. After his return the main palace buildings that accommodated the portrait of former Kings, namely, Jinjeon (진전, 眞殿), in addition to another main building, Joonghwajeon (중화전, 中和殿), were built. Western-style buildings such as Jeongwanhun (정관헌, 靜觀軒) and Dondeokjeon (돈덕전, 惇德殿) also were built at the same time.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Lee, Minwon 이민원. "Ilbonüi ch'imnyakkwa taehanjegugüi kyöngun'gung 일본의 침략과 대한제국의 경운궁 [A Study on Deoksugung Palace during the Korean Empire]," *Han'guktongnibundongsayön'gu* 한국독립운동사연구 22 (2004): 1-5.

<sup>21</sup> Kim, Tonguk 김동욱. *Han'gug köneh'ugüi yöksa* 한국 건축의 역사 [*History of Korean Architecture*] (Seoul: Kimundang), 1997, 294.

Gyeongun-gung is important in Korean history not only because of its role as Gojong's residence. It is important because of the function it played as a royal palace for the Emperor of the Korean Empire, who lived and conducted national affairs there. The first day that Gyeongun-gung Palace began to serve as a royal palace was October 12, 1897. It was a month after he organised Wongudan (환구단, 圜丘壇, a site for the performance of the rite of heaven) in Sogong-dong in Seoul in September 1897. On the day, Gojong declared the commencement of Joseon's new title, the Korean Empire, and performed the coronation ceremony.<sup>22</sup>

To reiterate, the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace, the former name of Deoksugung Palace, was Daeanmun Gate. The fact contradicts the record that Gojong's funeral procession passed through Daehanmun Gate, not Daeanmun Gate. The film about the funeral, made and distributed by the Cultural Heritage Administration, also mentions the throng is in front of Daehanmun Gate instead of Daeanmun Gate.<sup>23</sup> Further investigation is needed regarding whether the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace is Daeanmun Gate or Daehanmun Gate.

#### Daehanmun Gate or Daeanmun Gate

The word that is written on the signboard of the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace, the former name of Geoksugung Palace, is Daehanmun Gate. Daehanmun Gate has a history that is distinctive from other palace gates.

The names of the other palace main gates in Seoul are as follows: Gwanghwamun Gate (광화문, 光化門) for Gyeongbokgung Palace, Donhwamun Gate (돈화문, 敦化門) for Changdeokgung Palace, Honghwamun Gate (홍화문, 弘化門) for Changgyeonggung Palace, Heunghwamun Gate (흥화문, 興化門) for Gyeonghuigung Palace.

<sup>22</sup> Han, Yöngu 한영우. *Myöngsöngghwanghuwa taehanjeguk* 명성황후와 대한제국 [*Empress Myeongseong and Korean Empire*] (Paju: Hyohyöngch'ulp'an, 2001), 227-242..

<sup>23</sup> “100nyönjön kojonghwangjeüi kukchang t'ükyölichön 100nyönjeon gönghwangjei-ui guksang teukbyeolljeon [The Special Exhibition for Gojong's State Funeral 100 years ago],” Korea Cultural Heritage Administration 문화재청, last modified March 25, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oPv9XFoV2o> (accessed August 10, 2019)

One can notice that, unlike Daeamun Gate or Daehanmun Gate as the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace, all the other gates have the letter ‘hwa’ (화, 化) in the names. As Gyeongun-gung Palace was different from other palaces, the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace was different from those of other palaces. The original gate of Gyeongun-gung was Inhwamun (인화문, 仁化門). Notice that the name also includes ‘hwa’. It was 1902 when Daeamun Gate was appointed as the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace, as in the same year Junghwajeon (중화전, 中和殿, one of palace buildings at the Gyeongun-gung Palace) was built and served as the major palace building of Gyeongun-gung Palace. Junghwajeon took a significant space in the courtyard as it was added to the established palace site, resulting in the whole site being packed. Thus, the walls on each side of Inhwamun Gate had to be moved further to the south whilst the main gate, Inhwamun, itself demolished.<sup>24</sup>

Simultaneously, Geuncheon, a stream inside Inhwamun Gate, was altered into the form of an embedded stream. As Inhwamun Gate was deconstructed, a single gate called Gungeukmun Gate was newly built in the southern part of the court to facilitate the passing by. The other two gates, called Jowonmun Gate and Junghwamun Gate, were also newly built as the middle gate since Daeamun Gate began serving as the main gate. It is known that the palace gates during the Joseon era tended to have a three-gate system. Gyeongbokgung Palace had three gates: Gwanhwamun Gate, Heungnyemun Gate and Geunjeongmun Gate; Changdeokgung Palace had Donhwamun Gate, Jinseonmun Gate and Injeongmun Gate. Accordingly, Gyeongun-gung Palace had the three-gate system including Daeamun Gate, Jowonmun Gate and Junghwamun Gate.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> “Hanmanŭn taehanmun 한많은 대한문 [A Long Story of Daehanmun Gate],” Korean History Society 한국역사연구회, last modified December 14, 2007, <http://www.koreanhistory.org/%ec%84%9c%ec%9a%b8%ec%9d%b4%ec%95%bc%ea%b8%b0-%ed%95%9c%eb%a7%8e%ec%9d%80-%eb%8c%80%ed%95%9c%eb%ac%b8/> (accessed August 10, 2019)

<sup>25</sup> “Taehanmun 대한문 [Daehanmun Gate],” Academy of Korean Studies 한국학중앙연구원, last modified December 9, 2017, [http://dh.aks.ac.kr/sillokwiki/index.php/%EB%8C%80%ED%95%9C%EB%AC%B8\(%E5%A4%A7%E6%BC%A2%E9%96%80\)](http://dh.aks.ac.kr/sillokwiki/index.php/%EB%8C%80%ED%95%9C%EB%AC%B8(%E5%A4%A7%E6%BC%A2%E9%96%80)) (accessed August 10, 2019)

In short, Daehanmun Gate was originally Daeannmun Gate. Due to the change of the name, the photographs have often produced different interpretations including Daehanmun Gate and Daeannmun Gate, in front of which the royal procession is passing. For example, Photo 3 shows a clear image of the signboard that says Daeannmun Gate with royal procession, which is different from the funeral procession we see in Karlin's Photo 1. Photo 3 is a donation by the National Palace Museum to Yonhap News Korea.<sup>26</sup> Another photo of the same subject was revealed on August 1, 2016. Photo 4 was taken by an American named Sadie. It is known that Sadie gave the photo as a gift to a missionary named Arthur Welbon in 1904. The granddaughter of Arthur Welbon, Priscilla Welbon, kept it until recently when she agreed to donate the photo to The National Folk Museum of Korea. A specific date of the photograph is difficult to trace yet one assumption suggests the event in the photo may be a scene of leaving for a memorial ceremony at Wongudan after the Emperor returned from the royal refuge at the Russian legation.<sup>27</sup>

To sum up, without doubt it was Gojong's royal procession that passed through Daeannmun Gate several times. Given that Gojong reigned from October 12, 1897, to July 19, 1907, one can notice that during some part of the period the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace was called Daeannmun Gate, not Daehanmun Gate.

To understand the history of Daeannmun Gate more specifically, it is necessary to find out how the name on the signboard of Gyeongun-gung Palace has changed. From April 24, 2017 for 20 days, the Cultural Heritage Administration at the National Palace Museum exhibited 13 models of the signboards that were used for Gyeongun-gung Palace, a royal palace of the Korean Empire during its 10 years. In the exhibition, a signboard was found which confirms that the prototype of Daehanmun Gate was originally Daeannmun Gate. Gyeongun-gung Palace (of

<sup>26</sup> Park Sanghyun 박상현, "Hyŏnp'ani chŏnhanŭn tŏksugung yŏksa... 'taehanmuno'ŭn'taeannmun'oiŏtta 현판이 전하는 덕수궁 역사... '대한문'은 '대안문'이었다 [Deoksugung Palace's History conveyed by the Signboards]," *Yonhapnews* 연합뉴스, April 24, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> P'ok'ŏsŭnyusŭ 포커스뉴스, "Taeannmun nasŏnŭn kojong ōga haengnyŏl sajin konggae 대안문 나서는 고종 어가 행렬 사진 공개 [Photo on Gojong's Royal Procession that did pass through Daeannmun]," *Seoul Shinmun* 서울신문, August 1, 2016.





Photo 3: The Royal Procession Passing through Daeannmun Gate, the Main Gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace.

which the current name is Deoksugung Palace) started to use Daeannmun Gate as its name of the main gate from March 1899 according to Gojong's decision to add the buildings; it was hung until April 1906. In 1906, the gate was reformed and renamed Daehanmun (대한문, 大漢門), according to the records made on April 25, the 43rd year of Gojong's reign in Veritable Records of Joseon Dynasty.

Several rumours augment the confusion about the name change of the gate. Most of them lack not only valid grounds but also any factual relevance.

The historical record found in "Daehanmunsanryanmun (대한문 상량문, 大漢門上樑文)" from "Gyeongungungjungeondogamuigwe (경운궁중건도감의궤, 慶運宮重建都監儀軌)" hints at the possible reason for such a change. The script says "Daehan (대한, 大漢) is a combination of two symbols: Sohan (소한, 霄漢), which means sky, and Woonhan (운한, 雲漢), which means the Milky Way. The Academy of Korean Studies agreed with the explanation thus written in the official online encyclopaedia, affirming that the account is most close to the fact.



Photo 4: Gojong's Royal Procession that Departs at Daeamun Gate.

Considering the circumstances addressed above, one can claim that Gyeongun-gung Palace is the prior name of Deoksugung Palace and it was used during the reign of Gojong. The main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace changed its name to Daeamun Gate from Daeamun Gate. In other words, the name Daeamun Gate was used between March 1899 to April 1906, serving its role as the main gate until it was renamed again as Daeamun Gate.<sup>28</sup> To conclude, the funeral that takes place in Karlin's photo, which is Photo 1 in our example (see page 79), is an event that takes place sometime between 1899 and

<sup>28</sup> I, Sang-hae 이상해, *Kunggwŏl, yugyo kŏnch'uk 궁궐, 유교 건축 [Palaces, Confucian Architecture]* (Seoul: Sol, 2004), 101-102.

1906 when the name Daeannmun Gate was used for the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace.

### Hotel du Palais

There is a notable image of a building on the left side of the image in Photo 1. The building, I would argue, is Hotel du Palais. The building provides crucial evidence toward understanding the historical circumstances of the time when Photo 1 was taken. According to the Korea Creative Content Agency, Hotel du Palais was often phrased as French Hotel, Beobguk-yeogwan (법국여관, 法國旅館) or Central hotel. The location is known to have been around ‘Taepyeong-ro 2 sa, 358 beonji, in front of Daeannmun Gate in Jeongdong. The advertisement, printed in Korea Daily News, also called Daehanmaeilshinbo (대한매일신보, 大韓每日申報), consecutively from August 4, 1904, is useful to find out more detail about the hotel. (The right bottom of Photo 5).

“The only and top-class hotel in Seoul, across from the Gyeongun-gung Palace, located in the city centre: fine dining under the supervision of skilled chefs: well-equipped ventilation, fully prepared facilities: pay according to price list: owned and run by Martin.”

One can identify the location and the class of the hotel as well as who the owner was. Although consensus today is that Hotel du Palais opened in 1901 and closed in 1912 due to the Taepyeongro expansion work, evidence is scarce. My speculation is that the building was demolished soon after 1912 when the Japanese government decided to conduct extension work. An American photographer-traveller Elias Burton Holmes’s account supports the claim. In the series of “The Burton Holmes Lectures”, published by The Little-Preston Company Ltd in 1901, he included a photo of the hotel with the caption ‘French Hotel’ and explained “... a new French Hotel just opened across the street”. According to the advertisement of the hotel, as seen in Photo 5, Holmes describes the hotel as a two-storied brick building with a “general store” running a business on the first floor.<sup>29</sup> The image of Hotel du

<sup>29</sup> Burton Holmes, *1901nyŏn sŏurŭl kŏtta 1901년 서울을 걷다 [The Burton Holmes Lectures: Seoul, Capital of Korea. Japan]*, trans. Lee Jinseok 이진석 (Seoul: P’urŭn’gil, 2012), 110.

<p><b>THE METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.</b> Little West Gate, Seoul.</p> <p>JOB PRINTING, TYPEWRITER PAPER CARBON PAPER, VISITING CARDS STATIONERY, BOOK BINDING BOOK PUBLISHERS AMERICAN SCHOOL BOOKS SPENCERIAN COPY BOOKS PEN CARBON LETTER AND BILL BOOKS</p> <p>S. A. BECK, Manager.</p>	<p><b>E. MEYER &amp; CO.</b> Chemulpo, Korea, Sole Agents</p> <hr/> <p>ROYAL INSURANCE COMPANY, Funds exceed £10,000,000</p> <p><b>FIRE</b> AT CURRENT RATES. <b>LIFE</b> REDUCED PREMIUM. HOLME RINGER &amp; Co., Agents, Chemulpo.</p>
<p><b>KAMEYA &amp; CO.</b> GENERAL STOREKEEPERS Chinkokai - - Seoul (Established 1895, Tokyo)</p> <p>*****</p> <p>Confectionery, Hams, Canned Goods, Cutlery, Hirano &amp; Tansan Water. Provisions, Gents, Furnishing goods, Toilet Articles, Travelling Bags, Tobacco, Cigars &amp; Cigarettes Kitchen Utensils. Coffee, Biscuits.</p> <p>*****</p> <p>Fresh Goods always kept in Stock. Prices Moderate Please come and inspect our goods.</p>	<p><b>HOTEL DU PALAIS</b> SEOUL.</p> <p>The only first class Hotel in Seoul. Situating in the centre of the city op- posite the palace.</p> <p>Cuisine under the supervision of an experienced French Chef. Well ventilated and furnished through- out.</p> <p>TARIFF UPON APPLICATION</p> <p><b>L. MARTIN,</b> Proprietor and Manager.</p>

Photo 5: The Advertisement of Hotel du Palais, Seoul.

Palais that Korea Creative Content Agency recently opened to public adds the specifics about the appearance of the building.<sup>30</sup>

Given the triangle-shaped roof and the shape of the chimney, one can understand that the Hotel du Palais in Photo 6 features the same image as the left side building seen in the left side of Karlin's photo-

<sup>30</sup> “P’allehor’el(p’urangũhor’el) 팔레호텔(프랑스호텔) [Hotel du Palais(French Hotel)],” Korean Creative Contents Agency, accessed August 10, 2019, [http://www.culturecontent.com/content/contentView.do?search\\_div=CP\\_THE&search\\_div\\_id=CP\\_THE001&cp\\_code=cp0710&index\\_id=cp07100211&content\\_id=cp071002110001&search\\_left\\_menu=3](http://www.culturecontent.com/content/contentView.do?search_div=CP_THE&search_div_id=CP_THE001&cp_code=cp0710&index_id=cp07100211&content_id=cp071002110001&search_left_menu=3).

graph. Thus, as a result of the investigation it's fair to assert that the funeral procession in Karlin's Photo 1 took place between 1901, the year when Hotel du Palais opened, and 1906 when Daeamun Gate was the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace.

For whom was it, then, as we see such a grand scale funeral in Photo 1 (on page 79)? What follows suggests a strong possibility that it was another figure from the dynasty.

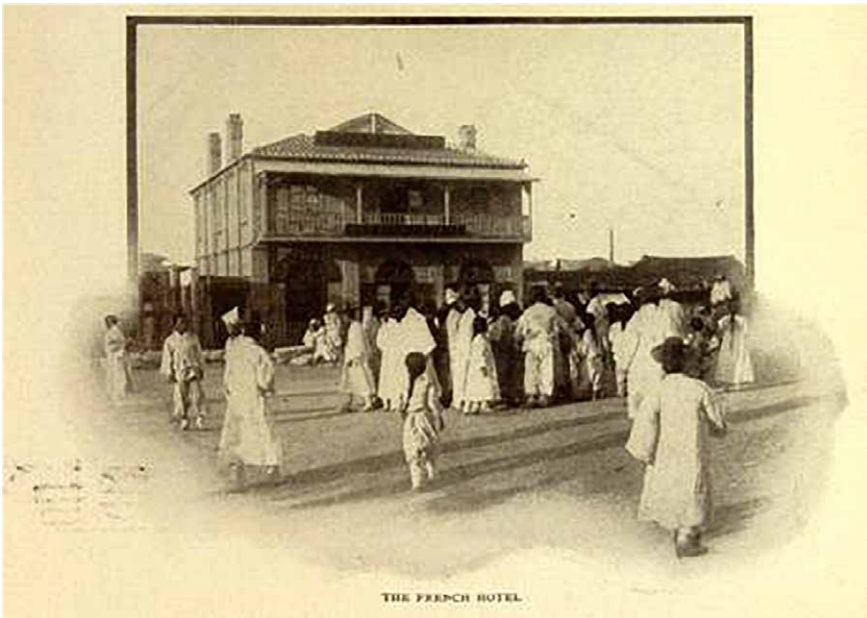


Photo 6: Hotel du Palais (French Hotel).

## Empress Sunmyeong

Sunjong, the son of Gojong and Empress Myeongseong, had two wives. The first wife was Empress Sunmyeong (1872-1904). Empress Sunmyeong (순명효황후 민씨) was born in Seoul on October 20, 1872. She was installed as Crown Princess according to Empress Myeongseong's order, and died on November 5, 1904, at the early age of 33. Her family, the Min-clan, whose city of origin is Yeohung, was already highly reputed and was gaining more power as Empress Myeongseong (whose family name was also Min) took the throne to augment her political power. Empress Myeongseong was in search of the future wife for her son from the Min family so that her clan could maintain their power. Her plan led to the appointment of Empress Sunmyeong, who was then the daughter of Min Tae Ho, a distant cousin of Empress Myeongseong. In short, Princess Sunmyeong was chosen to succeed the throne by Empress Myeongseong. Appointed when young, Empress Sunmyeong went through the whirlwind of the time she was living in. She had to flee from place to place; her fate was often shaken by the turbulent conflicts within the country. The Veritable Records of Gojong states her noble characteristics as follows: she is "innately obedient and wise. Her appearance is virtuous, which impresses other women as they refer to her correspondingly fair behaviours as exceptional." Princess Sunmyeong was equipped with attributes that the Palace was looking for. Her keen interest in history also consolidated her reputation as a descendent of a prestigious family. Her correspondence with a company officer, Kim Sang Deok, who was then a teacher of her husband Sunjong, serves as an important historical record today; the letters can be understood as a sign of her attempt to overcome mental sufferings after the loss of people close to her, including her parents, as well as Empress Myeongseong, at a young age.

According to the Veritable Records in Gojong era, Empress Sunmyeong had a serious injury to her back from her attempt to protect her mother in law, Empress Myeongseong, on the night when the Japanese armed forces attacked the palace to kill Empress Myeongseong in 1895. The event, known as Eulmi Sabyeon, may have contributed to her chronic illness, which lasted until her early death in 1904. The

public image of Empress Sunmyeong has been formed thus, of a weak Empress. However, from the letters and records she has left, one can see another side of her that is determined, solid and concerned for her country. In her letters to her husband's teacher, Empress Sunmyeong asked for his help to secure the safety of Korea. She died on November 5, 1904, at the age of 33, having borne suffering since she was installed on the throne, and alone but for her husband as there was no child between them. Emperor Gojong gave her the posthumous name of Sunmyeong on November 9, 1904, followed by the title of Empress and she has been addressed as Empress Sunmyeong since then. A few theories concern the cause of her death: stomach cancer or the effects to her after the catastrophic night of Empress Myeongseong's assassination. None has been yet been proven.<sup>31</sup>

Considering the records addressed above, I would claim the subject of death shown in Photo 1 (on page 79) is Empress Sunmyeong's funeral, which took place on November 5, 1904. I would reject the claim that the photo was taken on the day of Gojong's funeral since the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace was Daeanmun Gate. Gojong died in 1919 after serving his appointment as the last King of Joseon and first Emperor of Korea. It was 1906, over a decade before his death, when Daeanmun Gate as the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace was changed into Daehanmun Gate. The Veritable Records supports my argument, stating that the funerary procession passed through Daehanmun Gate. Empress Myeongseong was already deceased before Gojong's death, which means her funeral took place before Daeanmun Gate was built. She died on October 8, 1895, and her funeral was held on November 21, 1897. It was from March 1899 that Daeanmun Gate began to serve as the main gate. Hotel du Palais, as seen on the left side of the image, helps clarify the time of the photo taken. Hotel du Palais was an iconic French style hotel, opened in 1901 and it maintained its fame for around ten years until 1912. As Photo 1 demonstrates, the

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<sup>31</sup> Yu, Myeong-eun 유명은, "Sunmyŏnghyohwanghu hyosŏng kip'ŭn kojongŭi myŏnŭri sunmyeonghwanhu hyosŏng gupŏn gijongŭi meonŭri [Empress Sunmyeong, A Filial Daughter-in-law of Gojong]," *Sejong Newspaper* 세종신문, November 18, 2010.

hotel was in business on November 1904, when the funeral of Empress Sunmyeong was in process.

A final question remains. Under the pressing influence of Japan in 1904, was it possible for Korea to hold such a grand scale funeral of a Crown Princess who died young? Generally in the late Joseon dynasty three temporary institutions like Bingunghongungdogam (빈궁혼궁도감, 殯宮魂宮都監, responsible for keeping the coffins until they leave from the palace), Yejangdogam (예장도감, 禮葬都監, the role of making the mortuary tablet after the funeral) and Wonsodogam (원소도감, 園所都監, managing the tomb of the king) were installed in order to carry out the funerary affairs for the death of a princess. However Princess Sunmyeong's funeral had different institutions: Gukjangdogam (국장도감, 國葬都監, responsible for the protocol, finance and facilities), Binjeonhonjeondogam (빈전혼전도감, 殯殿魂殿都監, jurisdiction for the funeral ceremony) and Wonsodogam after her death. This is an exceptional case because Gukjangdogam and Binjeonhonjeondogam were normally performed in commemoration of a King or Queen. I believe that Empress Sunmyeong's funeral was an elevated affair, according to Gojong's order after he proclaimed the commencement of the Korean Empire in 1897. Princess Sunmyeong's funeral would correspond to those of the imperial class: the funeral was called Hwangtangtaejabisanje (황태자비상제, 皇太子妃喪制, the mourner for the Crown Princess). The funeral for Sunmyeong was arranged for a higher position than her then status as Crown Princess would normally have called for.

The bookkeeping record of Yooganwon Wonso account (유강원 원소, 裕康園 園所) in 1904 strengthens my assumption because the total expense allocated for Wonso costs five times more than the average expense for Hongyureung and Sanreung where Empress Myeongseong was buried.<sup>32</sup> One can assume the whole size of Empress Sunmyeong's funerary rite. Jang Kyung Hee suggests two reasons for Empress Sunmyeong's exceptional case: one, the Princess, later called Empress Sun-

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<sup>32</sup> Chang, Kyŏnghŭi 장경희, "Kojonghwangjeŭi kŭmgong hongnŭng yŏn'gu 고종황제의 금곡 홍릉 연구 [Study of Emperor Kojong's Hongreung, Imperial Tomb at Keumgok]," *Sach'ong* 사총 64 (2007): 13-14.



myeong, was a much-loved daughter in law of Gojong. Second, it was Gojong's attempt to restore the symbolic reputation of the Korean Empire in the face of the pressure of Japan. Both reasons seem to be valid for Empress Sunmyeong's grand funeral.<sup>33</sup>

The present study, therefore, reaches its conclusion that Photo 1, as well as the same photo revealed in Tacoma in 2014, is the funeral procession of Empress Sunmyeong, which took place on November 5, 1904.

### Epilogue

On November 5, 1904, the Crown Princess of the Korean Empire passed away. Her age was only 33. Appointed as a royal family member at 11, she experienced the difficult time of the Empire and ended up with a fatal illness after the attempt to protect her mother in law from the armed Japanese assassins. She sought to restore her country after it was invaded by foreign powers, but such was beyond her reach. When she died, the Emperor arranged an extra grand funeral ritual and appointed her posthumously as an Empress. The procession left the Imperial palace and the coffin reached and rested in Yugangwon. The Imperial palace was Gyeongun-gung Palace, and her funerary procession passed through Daeanmun Gate, which was then the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace. She was buried at the site of Yugangwon, located in what is known today as Neung-dong, Gwangjin-gu in Seoul today.

A photo (Photo 1 on page 79) that captures an image of the procession from Daeanmun Gate towards the direction of Yugangwon was found in Celje, Slovenia. It was Alma Karlin who acquired the photo in 1923, the year during which she was travelling on the Korean Peninsula. Making her first step in the land through Japan, Alma Karlin put authentic objects from Far East Asia in her travel suitcase. There are 39

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<sup>33</sup> Chang, Kyŏnghŭi 장경희, "Sunjongbi sunmyŏnghyohwanghuŭi saengaewa yurŭng yŏn'gu 純宗妃 純明孝皇后的 생애와 裕陵 연구 [A Life of Empress Sunmyeong, the First Wife of Emperor Sunjong, and the Construction of Yugangweon and Yureung]," *Han'guginmulsayŏn'gu* 한국인물사연구 12 (2009): 198-200.

photographs left at present, and five of them are related to funeral rites. The most impressive photograph is the image that captures the funeral procession of Empress Sunmyeong on November 5, 1904.

Because of the complicated circumstances, many accounts have speculated when and where as well as who the photo is about. The photo attracted global interest as it was revealed in the exhibitions not only in Slovenia but also in the US. It was debated in academia as much as the media. However, no distinctive research that has been published in the US and Korea suggested that the photo presents the funerary procession for Empress Sunmyeong on November 5, 1904.

Given the clues in the photo, this paper can confirm that Photo 1 is the image of the procession for Empress Sunmyeong. First, the formal rites shown in the image of the photo correspond with the historical record that Empress Sunmyeong's funeral was held on an extra grand scale to maintain the dignity of the Korean Empire. Second, the image of Daeannmun Gate, which was the main gate of Gyeongun-gung Palace at that time, was renamed as Daehanmun Gate after it had served its original function between March 1899 and 1906. The funeral of Empress Sunmyeong was the only funeral event arranged during that time period. Third, there seems a European style building on the left side of the photo. The building is Hotel du Palais, a popular hotel among European tourists, which operated from 1901 to 1912. It is known that the building was demolished due to the expansion work of Taepyeongro in 1912. In short, the photo caught the image of a funeral procession that was likely held sometime between 1901 and 1912. To reiterate, the only funeral arranged on such a national scale was that of Empress Sunmyeong.

The paper explored one photo taken from the Slovene traveller Alma Karlin's suitcase with a focus on historical particularities in Korea including architecture, the history of the palace and the signboard on the gate and the relations of the royal family. It confirmed a new theory that the image is a scene from the funeral procession for Empress Sunmyeong. This study leaves several other photos to be examined and discussed, and perhaps indicates to some degree methods of doing so, as surely this study of a single image supports the notion that a photograph may be both seen and read.

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