



**E-ASIA**

**university of oregon libraries**

**<http://e-asia.uoregon.edu>**

# THE KOREAN REPOSITORY.

NOVEMBER, 1892.

## SUGGESTIONS ON TRAVELLING IN KOREA.

THE traveller in Korea must first of all provide himself with an unlimited supply of patience. With this and but few things else he may travel where he will in the eight provinces, but without this he would better by far stay at home. He should also have if possible, one reliable native either a teacher or a servant. As to his method of travelling he can make choice of several modes of conveyance but a wheeled vehicle of any kind is out of the question, although a bicycle has been ridden to Pyongyang and back to Seoul. The native of official rank will usually be carried in a sedan chair with from four to eight coolies as bearers, but not many foreigners would undertake to travel a great distance in that way on account of the expense involved. The native official can live off the people as he travels, but the foreigner must provide food for his army of coolies. The women of the *yang ban* class and the ordinary gentlemen who can afford it will usually travel in a two man chair, a method which the foreigner may adopt, if he is willing to sit all day long

in a space about two feet square with his legs doubled under him while two men go jogging along at the rate of ten *li* an hour. Such a chair can be obtained at the rate of about 300 cash per man for every ten *li*, but one must then provide other means for transportation of baggage and also have two extra chair bearers if the distance to be covered be a long one. These chairs are very numerous around Seoul being used for short journeys but, while quite frequently used for long journeys also, this is not the usual method of travelling.

By far the most common method is the riding of a horse or donkey. The ordinary official, *yang ban*, merchant, native woman, and foreigner (Chinese, Japan and Westerner) if he does not walk will load his baggage in two well-mated bundles, one upon either side of a pack-pony, strap his blankets on top of these and mounting, ride thus with one leg dangling on either side of the pony's neck. A saddle is somewhat more comfortable but if economy is an item you will leave the saddle at home and placing your load and yourself on one pony save the expense of an extra pony. If your journey is to be one of several hundred *li*, or you expect to be gone several weeks, one pony will not carry your load and it is then very convenient to mount your teacher or servant on the second load and thus you can keep him with you or send him ahead to secure a room. If you have both teacher or evangelist or interpreter, whichever position the native may hold, and a servant, you can take turns at riding the two ponies, for you will find it quite agreeable at times to rest yourself by walking, and after a hearty meal of rice and *kimchi* the walk does one good. These pack-ponies can be hired, including the services of a *mapoo* (groom), at the rate of about 3000 cash a day (\$1.00 at present equals 3300 cash), about 1200 cash being paid for the days in which you do no travelling. If preferred the amount for the

whole journey may be agreed upon, or you may pay by the ten *li* at the rate of 400 cash. I have tried the three methods and have found it most satisfactory to agree upon the amount for the whole journey, paying one half or at most three fourths in advance leaving a good sum to be paid at the other end so as to secure good service. With this arrangement you leave the *mapoo* to provide for the expense of horse and man while on the road.

These ponies will very comfortably make 80 *li* a day in two stretches of 40 *li* each, stopping two hours or more at noon for dinner and rest. If in a hurry 100 or 120 *li* is not a hard day's journey. How to carry money has been my most perplexing question. The Korean cash is of such small value, all being of one denomination (one sixth of a cent) that a sum sufficient for a month's journey would require an extra pony or two for its transportation. To obviate this expense foreigners have had recourse to the *koan-cha*, or order on the magistrates. This has been secured from the Foreign Office through our Consuls, but its use is far from satisfactory and is objectionable on the ground that it may cause oppression of the people if the sum asked is a large one and the magistrate's treasury happens to be bankrupt. In the magistracies in the mountains of the north I found it impossible to obtain money and so was compelled to accept transportation by order of the official without being able to pay the men for their food or services. When the money is obtained and receipts given it may be several months or a year before they reach the Foreign Office and are presented to you for settlement, and as the value of cash is always fluctuating you can never know what may be the exact amount of your outstanding indebtedness. However there may be cases where the use of the *koan-cha* is not only justifiable but necessary and it is well to be provided with one.

The most convenient form in which to carry money is the

silver shoe of *sycee*. This is worth about \$75.00 Japanese currency and can be disposed of in the large cities of Pyengyang and Euiju for from 45,000 to 55,000 small cash. I suppose it can just as readily be exchanged in the capitals and large cities of the south. Small pieces of *sycee* are not used. Money sufficient for use between these larger cities can be taken upon your ponies with your baggage. A party of three men will need from 3000 to 5000 cash a day (600 to 1000 small cash) according to the amount of foreign food they may take.

I have found that for bedding a man can sleep very comfortably upon the stone and clay Korean floor or *kang* if he is provided with a cotton padded native mattress to lie upon and a pair of heavy blankets to cover him. These encased in a canvas covering make a comfortable seat while riding. A cot, simply constructed which can be closely folded and easily packed upon a pony would be still better as it would raise one off the floor which is sometimes too hot, and away from the too numerous vermin.

*The food which can be procured is not as good as that in China but it is cleaner.* The ordinary table on the main roads consists of a large bowl of rice, a bowl of soup, *kim-chi* (a kind of pickled cabbage), salt shrimp or fish, bean-curd cake, and usually another dish or two either of seaweeds, sprouted beans, an egg, or some beef. For this you pay about 300 cash a table (I have paid as low as 100 and as high as 450). If well cooked this food is not bad (though sometimes it is execrable), and after a walk or ride of fifteen miles it is even eaten with a relish. Chickens and eggs can be bought for a small sum, 500 cash, and are frequently a necessary addition to the fare. If stopping for several days at a large place, beef, chickens, eggs and in most places excellent fish can be procured and fried by your boy. Korean candy made of barley or cane seed is not to

be ignored as an article of food and the national dish of *kouksyou* (buckwheat vermicelli) makes a good lunch when one is tired of rice. However, good *kouksyou* is seldom to be obtained along the road. When contemplating a long stay in the country one should take a supply of crackers, tea, sugar, and a few cans of meat and fruits.

A foreigner will be entertained at the magistrate's if he requests it but if he desires to win the people it is far better for him to stop at an inn where he will always get a room for himself and teacher and where he can usually get an inner room if he asks for it. Not long after you have entered you are pretty sure to make the acquaintance of the landlord who considers himself entitled to the freedom of your room, a privilege which the whole community is apt to claim. In travelling off the main roads you are very apt to be told that there is no room to be had and that you must go ten *li* further on. In such a case, however tired you may be and however late it may be, anger is out of place. Take it coolly, tell your boy to find a room, and sit down somewhere to wait. You will get a room though it may become necessary for you to call for the mayor of the village and show your passport. Avoid disputes with Koreans, give them plenty of time while you keep in good humor and you will get what you want. Impatience and anger invariably give them the advantage and you gain nothing. Tired and hungry as you may be at times, all the noise and furor you can raise will not induce your landlady to prepare the meal in less than an hour.

Three small articles that should not be forgotten and which add materially to comfort are a good supply of *Buhach* (insect powder), a pair of slippers, and blacking brushes. Korean etiquette requires that a man take off his shoes before entering the house, a thing which he is glad to do after a long walk over rough, muddy roads.

With the exception of the rainy season, July and August, one may travel at any time of year although in the north the winter months will be found to be pretty severe, and the journey must be made in shorter stages.

If a man is a sportsman, a shot gun will frequently provide his table with game, as the country abounds in geese, ducks, pheasants, and quail. I have never seen the slightest reason for taking firearms as weapons notwithstanding the constant rumors of bands of robbers throughout the country. The Koreans are a most amiable people and although curious, familiar and loud in their speech at times, they are not quarrelsome or vicious. A man who adapts himself to their customs and ideas (and why should he not?) may travel anywhere among them without difficulty. I shall be glad Mr. Editor, if these notes call out some remarks from others whose experience may have been different from mine.

SAMUEL A. MOFFETT.